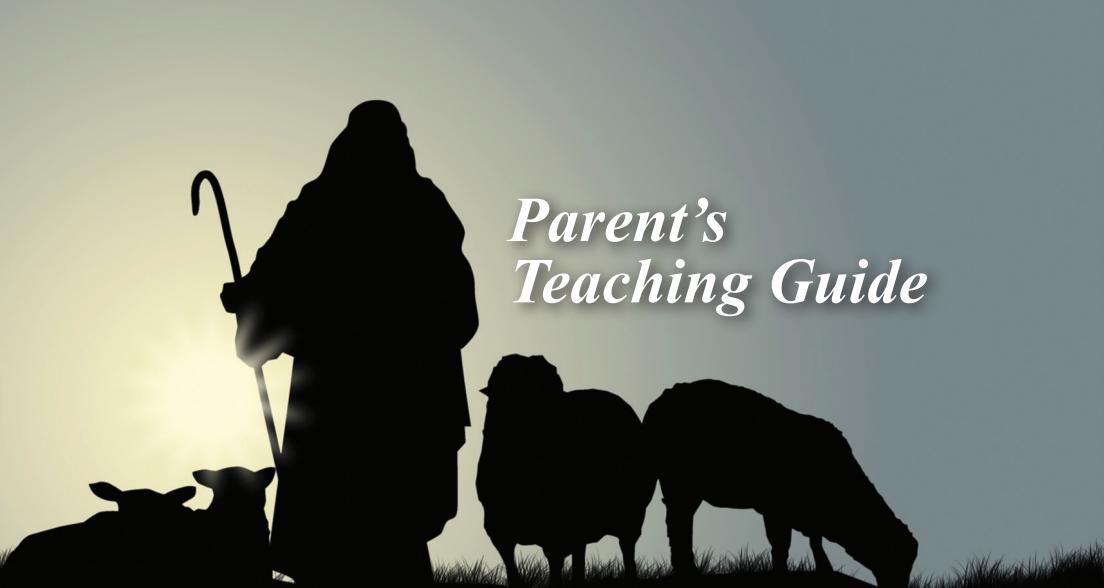




# ADAM TO ZION





# *Parent's Teaching Guide*

**O**ne of the greatest blessings as parents is to follow the guidance of God towards our children: *"And ye shall teach them [God's Words to] your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."* (Deut. 11:19) This teaching guide can assist in approaching Bible subjects with our children of all ages.

The 93 Bible events provided in this book are valuable lessons to learn about God and His plan in the creation of all things—His plan for mankind's lessons of experience with Good and Evil. By discussing these subjects one at a time, at a level based on the child's development, the child may begin to understand the purpose of free-will lessons and their rewards and consequences. When possible, relate the subject to a family, school, or community experience.

We suggest the parent prepares for their teaching opportunity by pre-reading the Bible event, then reading the Scriptures cited in the lesson. Reading the Scriptures before and after the cited verse will provide additional background information.

The next step is to develop a mental summary of the story and how the Scriptures support the importance of the lesson. This can be followed by developing questions about any blessings or consequences for the individuals associated with the story. Identifying personal experiences with your children can make the lesson more relevant.

**Remember Proverbs 11:25 —**  
*“... he that watereth shall be watered also himself.”*

**MAY THE LORD BLESS YOUR EFFORTS.**

# ADAM

—TO—

# ZION

The Bible from A to Z for younger minds,  
inspired by *The Photo-Drama of Creation*.

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## Preface

One of the highlights of the early Bible Student movement was the 1914 production of *The Photo-Drama of Creation*. This unique blend of moving pictures, hand-painted slides, and recorded voice on phonograph records was shown around the world to millions.

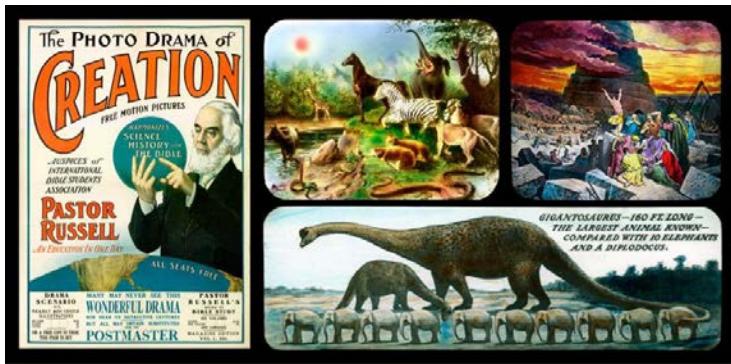
The approach was chronological, tracing man's history from creation to the present time and included Biblical events and church history. Such an approach made it suitable for most ages, except the language was difficult for the young to grasp.

Beverly Christiansen, from the State of Washington, wrote this book for younger readers in 1996. She used the original *Photo-Drama* book as an outline and inspiration. This revision continues in that spirit following Beverly's desire to provide a beneficial tool in the Scriptural instruction of young minds. We are thankful for the help in providing updated illustrations and enhancements.

Scriptures are quoted from the New International Version unless otherwise indicated.

A children's workbook is accessible by using the following link: [www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-workbook.pdf](http://www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-workbook.pdf). Each lesson has a link to a supplement worksheet.

*The Publishers*



The Bible from A to Z for younger minds, inspired by *The Photo-Drama of Creation*.

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## God's Glory in the Heavens

“The fear [reverence] of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.” Psalm 111:10

Every day of our lives we can pray to “our Father in heaven” because we know he loves us dearly and cares for us tenderly. He is the Great Creator. He made the powerful sun and many more stars than we can see. He also made the little things—the soft petals of the flowers and the colorful birds, and each blade of grass, and more things than we can count.

The earth seems large to us, yet it is much smaller than Saturn or Jupiter. And those two planets are tiny compared to the sun. Imagine the sun’s diameter as that of a large barrel: Jupiter would compare as a small orange, Earth and Venus as peas, and Mercury and Mars as raspberry seeds.

The sun is really a star, which means that it gives light and heat. Some heavenly bodies such as the planets and the moon can only reflect light that comes from the sun. There are billions of stars and perhaps planetary systems in the universe. How great is our God!

An earlier beginning before the universe was created is described in John 1:1-3. God had no beginning, which is impossible for us to understand as everything in our experience has had a beginning. The “Word” (Greek: Logos, a name for Jesus—John 1:14) was the first of God’s creation and the last. Revelation 3:14 and Colossians 1:15

God made the plans—we can say he was the architect—and the Logos was the builder of all creation (Proverbs 8:22-30). The

Logos, as God's master workman, carried out all of God's instructions for the creation of the universe, including the earth; but it was God's work and all of that work was perfect.

Genesis means "beginning." Genesis 1:1 says: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." This is all we are told about the beginning of the universe. The rest of the chapter tells how our earth was prepared so that people could live on it.

We have day and night because the earth turns on its axis. Earth's orbit or circle around the sun marks our year.



God was the architect and the Logos the builder of all creation.

Link to supplemental lesson worksheet:

[www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-1.pdf](http://www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-1.pdf)

## The First Day of Creation

“And God said, ‘Let there be light’ . . . and there was light. God called the light ‘day’, and the darkness he called ‘night’.” Genesis 1:3, 5

The Bible does not tell us how long ago the earth was created, nor how long that process took. It does not tell us exactly how the earth was made. Genesis 1:1 tells us that in the beginning the earth was. There were neither mountains nor valleys, trees nor shrubs, rivers nor oceans. The earth was empty and shapeless.

The Bible does tell us about the six creative days in which God prepared the earth as a place to live for mankind (Isaiah 45:18). And it gives us the length of the seventh creative day: seven thousand years. It may be that each of the creative days was the same length of time, forming a creative week.

At first the earth did not have a definite shape—it was just a mass of material spinning round and round. As it spun, we believe its water and minerals were thrown off as gases. They then cooled and took the shape of rings around the earth. As the rings would take shape, so would the earth. It would have begun to look more like a ball than like a messy lump of formless elements. And as the mess took definite shape some light shone onto the earth, possibly similar to the Aurora Borealis (lights in the night at northern latitudes caused by electrically-charged particles from the sun). Sunlight, as we have it today, was not seen until the fourth day, but there was some light. The earth began to look more like the globe we know.

Our universe is still developing, and scientists spend much time studying and trying to explain creation. When they learn a

new fact we can sometimes find a Scripture that also describes that fact. For example, Job 26:7 tells us the earth hangs in empty space.

Men do not understand all Scripture, nor do they understand all about creation, but God gave us the Bible and planned the creation of the universe. So the Bible explains creation correctly, although briefly, when it speaks of it.



Our universe is still in the process of developing.

Link to supplemental lesson worksheet:

[www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-2.pdf](http://www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-2.pdf)

## The Second Day of Creation

“O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done marvelous things, things planned long ago.” Isaiah 25:1

How long is a day? We usually think of a day as being twenty-four hours long. But Psalm 95:8 (King James) speaks of the “day of temptation” in the wilderness, and we know that it is speaking of the forty years which the Israelites spent in the wilderness.

The apostle Peter wrote that “with the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day” (2 Peter 3:8). One of the definitions for “day” given in the dictionary says, “any particular amount of time.” We see then that many different amounts of time can be called a “day.” Thousands of years were needed for the work of each creative day.

During the second creative day God made the firmament—the air around the earth. Air would be needed in the future when humans and animals were created and they would need to be able to breathe. The earth, we believe, had rings of water and minerals around it, some of which would fall to the earth and become oceans, lakes, and rivers. The remaining waters probably have become clouds. In between would have been the clearer, drier air (called an atmosphere or firmament).

Day Two ended with the earth prepared for lower forms of plant life. Step by step God was preparing the earth to be a home for creatures not yet created and for an immense number of plants and lower animals. His plans and purposes are intelligent and orderly and show a wonderful design.

Of all the nine planets in our solar system only the earth has life-giving oxygen. If we go beyond about four miles up into the atmosphere, we need another way to get oxygen or we die. The astronauts always carry their own “atmosphere” with them.

Let us give thanks to our great heavenly Father and his dear son! How wisely and carefully they planned every detail of creation.



Only the earth has sufficient oxygen to sustain life.

Link to supplemental lesson worksheet:

[www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-3.pdf](http://www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-3.pdf)

## The Third Day of Creation

“Our help is in the name of the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.” Psalm 124:8

If you go to the beach and pour a bucketful of water onto one place in the sand, the force of that water will make a big hole and the sand from that hole will get pushed to the side and make little mountains. You will have a tiny lake surrounded by hills.

This gives us an idea of how God and the Logos may have created the oceans and the mountains. When the rings around the earth forced through the firmament, their strong power would have made the earth buckle and wrinkle, forming deep valleys and high mountains—like the lake and the hills you might make at the seashore.

This was the work of the third creative day: the separation of the sea from the land and the growth of grasses and trees upon the land. The earth was cooling off considerably as it became prepared for people to live on it.

When the land dried out enough and fresh water supplies were able to maintain the plant world, many kinds of grasses, shrubs, trees, and plants of all kinds (vegetation) began to appear. Genesis 1:11, 12

The seeds of this vegetation reproduced “after their kind.” God’s purpose in his creation of living things—from grasses and microbes to animals and man—is that each variety should reproduce “after its kind.”

During Day Three there still would have been an enormous amount of carbon in the air. It likely had not rained yet, but dense mists watered the newly formed land which was still warm by its

own heat. These conditions would cause the vegetation to grow quickly to a giant size.

When we look at an ocean or a lake, we are thrilled to know that in the kingdom “the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea” (Habakkuk 2:14). When we see the grand majesty of mountains, we, like David the psalmist, can think, “I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.” Psalm 121:1, 2



*Original Photo-Drama Slide*

On the third day vegetation grew quickly to a giant size.

Link to supplemental lesson worksheet:

[www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-4.pdf](http://www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-4.pdf)

## The Fourth Day of Creation

“O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.”

Psalm 8:1

The Bible story of creation was written 3,500 years ago in the Hebrew language (Hebrews were also called Israelites or Jews). The King James Bible was first printed in the year 1611. The scholars who translated the Hebrew words into English tried to help the readers understand what was meant by the writers, but sometimes they made mistakes.

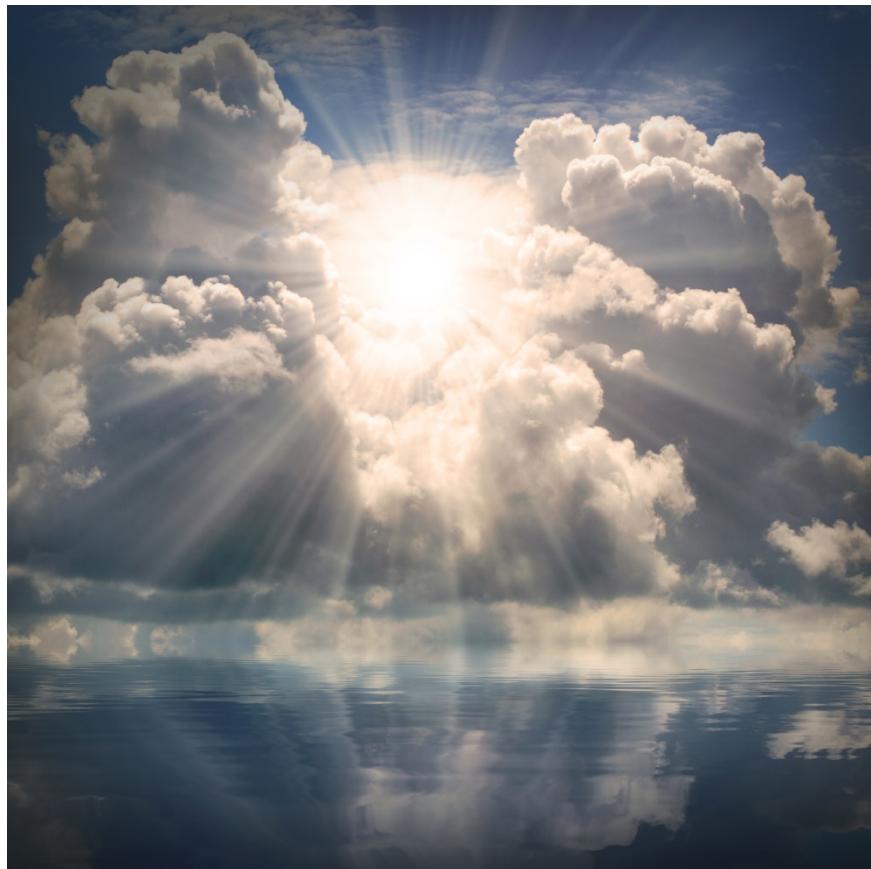
For instance: the King James translators wrote in Genesis 1:16, “And God **made** two great lights . . . he **made** the stars also.” The Hebrew word translated “made” does **not** mean “to create,” but one of its meanings is “to appoint” or “cause to shine.”

We can now understand that the work of God on Day Four was causing the sun, moon, and stars to shine upon the earth. They had been in the heavens long before that, but their light could not get through the heavy fog and the carbon-laden air. But, as we understand it, another ring of water and minerals had broken and fallen to the earth so that the earth’s atmosphere was clearer than ever before. Now the sunlight, moonlight, and the light of the stars could break through.

The rays of the sun and the moon began to prepare the earth for higher forms of plant and animal life. God was now going to use these great lights to have an influence upon the earth. The sun would mark time for man and beast. It would also begin to oxygenate the air to prepare it for breathing animals. The moon would influence the tides and mark time in the night for man. Long

before there were calendars people regulated their ceremonies and seasons by the moon. Psalm 104:19

The increased influence of the sun and moon brought many advances. Plant life progressed and many more varieties came into being. There was also an abundance of insects, snails, crabs, and fish. The creative days show the wonderful design and planning of our great God of the universe!



The sun, moon, and stars, created earlier, finally shone upon the earth.

Link to supplemental lesson worksheet:

[www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-5.pdf](http://www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-5.pdf)

## The Fifth Day of Creation

“God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.” Genesis 1:21

The atmosphere of the earth was now pure enough to permit life in breathing animals. Much of the carbon that was in the water and the air was absorbed into the chalky organisms of the sea. These eventually became beds of limestone. The huge forests sunk deep into the earth to form coal beds and this, too, took large amounts of carbon from the air, enabling animals to breathe.

The waters swarmed with fish and sea creatures. Reptiles and animals living partly in the water and partly on land belong to this period of time.

The King James translation of Genesis 1:21 reads: “God created great whales,” but the Hebrew words should be translated, “God created great monsters.” That is a good description of the dinosaurs. “Every winged fowl” includes flying reptiles—some of whose wings measured twenty-five feet across—as well as birds.

We marvel at God’s wisdom and power when scientists tell us that cereals and grasses which would be needed for food began to grow just before these animals were created. This is one of the many facts that show God is a perfect timekeeper. When we learn that bees, wasps, and other insects were used to spread the seeds of the food plants, we are thrilled with God’s planning. How could these animals have lived without the proper food?

Modern plants need strong sunlight as well as moisture to grow and develop. We can see that God in his great wisdom waited

for the cloudy, swampy, humid conditions of the previous creative days to pass and for the sun to shine onto the earth. Then he began creating plants with their sparkling colors and delightful perfumes.

How completely God prepared the earth for us! How lovingly he considered all our needs! “Great is our Lord and mighty in power . . . he supplies the earth with rain and makes grass grow on the hills. He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call.” Psalm 147:5, 8, 9



God created great monsters (dinosaurs) during the fifth epoch (day).

Link to supplemental lesson worksheet:  
[www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-6.pdf](http://www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-6.pdf)

## The Sixth Day of Creation

“God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.”

Genesis 1:31

At last the earth was ready for man. As more and more carbon was used up, the air became pure enough for man to breathe. Vegetation became more normal. Animals changed. The heavy-boned monsters died and in their place came the animals we know today. Toward the close of the sixth creative day God created man.

And God said to the Logos, “Let us make man in our image” (Genesis 1:26). So man was made from the elements of the earth and given the breath of life—a wonderful, perfect being, a living soul. Genesis 2:7

Because man was made in the “likeness” of God, he had the power to rule over the beasts of the field just as God has rulership over all of his creation. Man was given the gift of speech and the ability to think and figure things out; he was given a conscience so he could know what was right and what was wrong. He could enjoy music and could make music, too. Man was given a desire to worship and please the Creator. He was clever and kind, generous and inventive.

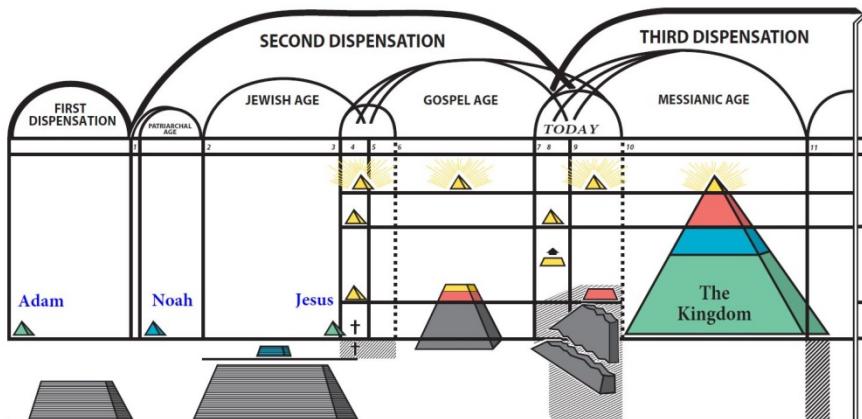
The prophet David said of himself that he was “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14). The more we learn about the human body the more we realize how true that is.

Adam and Eve were the only humans who were directly created and not born as babies like the rest of mankind.

As we study the history of man, it is wise to also study the Chart of the Ages. It is a helpful way to learn and remember God’s plan for mankind. We can use this chart all our lives in our study

of the Bible. It will help us place Scriptures exactly where they belong. Habakkuk 2:2

We can look at the Chart and say, “This is when Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden.” “This is where Noah was saved from the great flood.” “Here is where Jesus died.” “There is the kingdom for which we pray.” The one who puts Scriptures in the right time period is said to be one who “rightly divides” or “correctly handles the word of truth.” 2 Timothy 2:15



The Chart of the Ages helps us place Scriptures exactly where they belong.

Link to The Chart of the Ages:

[www.blessedbible.com/linked/Chart\\_Ages.pdf](http://www.blessedbible.com/linked/Chart_Ages.pdf)

Link to supplemental lesson worksheet:

[www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-7.pdf](http://www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-7.pdf)

## The Seventh Day of Creation

“God blessed the seventh day and made it holy.” Genesis 2:3

Adam was created near the very end of the sixth creative day. Eve was really a part of Adam, separated for the purpose of being a mother to their children and a helpmate and companion to Adam. Then God rested from his work of creating.

The seventh creative day was set apart for the purpose of filling the earth with people and spreading the perfection of Eden everywhere. For six thousand years people have been multiplying —every baby born is a result of God’s command in Genesis 1:28.

Yes, God has rested these past six thousand years, but during this time many things have happened. God did not plan sin, evil, and wickedness so why didn’t he stop it, or perhaps leave his resting long enough to keep people from suffering? God does have the ability to look ahead and know what will happen as easily as we look back on yesterday and the day before and know what happened then. God knew that Adam would sin and disobey him, but he did not stop him. After all, what is the value in an obedience which is forced and not freely given out of choice in love and loyalty.

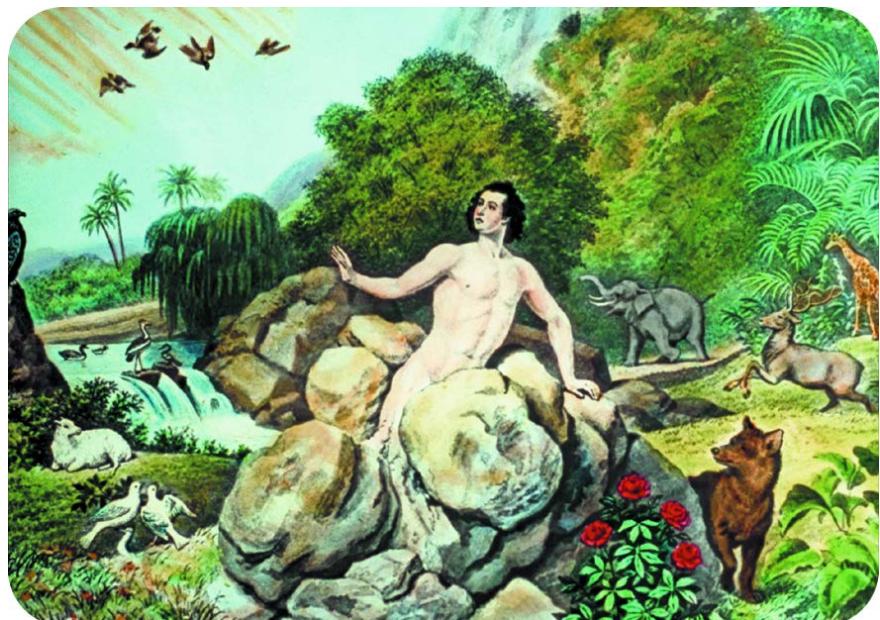
God’s will shall be done even though Adam disobeyed. During the Millennial age mankind will be restored to perfect humanity and the earth shall become as perfect as Eden was so long ago. This is called *restitution*.

What a wonderful blessing it will be when all of mankind have returned from their graves in the resurrection. They will then learn the ways of righteousness and willingly follow the laws of God

(Isaiah 26:9). Their experience with sin and evil will help them make right choices.

Then mankind will again be in the image and likeness of God. “In the image” means to have a mind to plan and reason. “In the likeness” means to have dominion over the earth as God has over the universe. This will all happen gradually.

We see God’s love in the working out of his plan, as well as his power, wisdom, and justice.



*Original Photo-Drama Slide*

Adam was created at the end of the sixth creative day.

Link to supplemental lesson worksheet:

[www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-8.pdf](http://www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-8.pdf)

## Mother Eve Created

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.”

Genesis 2:24

For a time Adam was alone in the Garden of Eden. He had some companionship with the animals and the birds, but he was lonely for someone like himself. Eve was made from one of Adam's ribs; she was a part of him. Genesis 2:21, 22

Adam loved Eve. He helped her learn about their wonderful Creator and the blessings he had given them. And Eve loved Adam, and sharing his life in the garden. In her gentle way she would point out the beauties of God's handiwork which seemed even more beautiful because they could share them.

No wonder they were happy together! This was God's plan. He wanted men and women to marry and have children. He wanted them to love him and enjoy his blessings.

Many of the most beautiful stories in the Bible tell of brides and bridegrooms, marriages, parents, and children. Jesus is called a bridegroom in Matthew 9:15 and 25:1. The 144,000 saints are called a bride in Revelation 21:9 and 22:17.

In the kingdom there will be no weddings or newborn babies for the earth will be filled with people (Matthew 22:30). Then God's blessings will be for everyone on earth, fulfilling his plan just as he originally intended.

The saints are called children of God, joint-heirs with Christ, just as in a family arrangement (Romans 8:16, 17). In Isaiah 9:6 Jesus is given the name of Everlasting Father because his death

and resurrection will make it possible for all people to live forever in the kingdom on earth.

The family arrangement is important to God and to mankind. Adam and Eve had many children, and because they were so near to being perfect, their children could marry each other and start their own families. And so the human family began to multiply and fill the earth. Genesis 1:28



It was God's design for people to live in families.

Link to supplemental lesson worksheet:  
[www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-9.pdf](http://www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-9.pdf)

## Mother Eve Beguiled

“‘You will not surely die,’ the serpent said to the woman.” Genesis 3:4

Eve wanted to know all about God and the beautiful garden he had prepared for her and Adam. There were so many things she wanted to know. Why was there one kind of tree from which they could not eat? Why did the beautiful intelligent serpent eat of the fruit of that tree and not die?

Satan was cunning in his attempt to deceive this perfect pair. If he had said to Eve, “Come and worship me instead of God,” she would have been shocked and have turned away from him. But Satan watched Eve and studied her ways: she was happy, she loved Adam, she loved God. What was there in her character to which he could appeal? It was her great desire for knowledge!

Knowledge is good. God gives us as much knowledge as we can use wisely. He could have given Eve more knowledge as she continued to love and obey him. At that time the important thing in God’s plan was to teach Adam and Eve that obedience to his laws would be the best for them.

To eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was forbidden for a while as a test of their loyalty and obedience to God. The penalty for disobedience was death. Death is the absence of life. One who is dead does not know anything, nor can he do anything. Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10

Satan wanted to be like the Most High God and have the people worship him (Isaiah 14:12-14). He caused the clever serpent to eat the forbidden fruit. Eve saw that nothing happened to the serpent so she took a bite of the fruit. When Adam realized

what she had done, he chose to follow her into death (Genesis 2:17) rather than live without her.

Instead of trusting God, Adam disobeyed and ate of the fruit just as Eve had done. The death penalty came upon him and Eve and all their children.

And so the first lie—"You will not surely die"—caused mankind to start on a downward course of sin and death. We know what the terrible results have been!



*Original Photo-Drama Slide*

Satan studied Eve to see how he could tempt her.

Link to supplemental lesson worksheet:  
[www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-10.pdf](http://www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-10.pdf)

## **Expulsion From Eden**

“The soul who sins is the one who will die.” Ezekiel 18:4

The word of God must stand whether it is promising eternal life or the sentence of death. If God changed his mind, we would not be able to trust him; but we know that he never changes and is always faithful to his word. James 1:17; Malachi 3:6

The sentence of death would be carried out. Adam did not die instantly from a thunderbolt from heaven, but began to die from the moment he was sentenced. It was a slow process—Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years (Genesis 5:5). During Adam’s day (time period), the death sentence of Genesis 2:17 “thou shalt surely die” can be very emphatically stated by the Hebrew idiom, “Dying thou shalt die.” All of Adam and Eve’s children would be born imperfect and under the same sentence of death. Adam and Eve were sent away from the trees of life in Eden and into the part of the earth that was still a wilderness. For six thousand years their descendants would suffer and die. The death penalty brought with it much sorrow and pain and trouble to everyone.

So the disobedience of Adam and Eve caused them to lose their lovely garden home and their fellowship with their Creator. God placed a cherubim with a flaming sword at the entrance to the garden so Adam and Eve could not eat of the perfect food that was there, especially from the Tree of Life. As time passed, Eden would become full of weeds and thorns and thistles like the rest of the earth.

Adam and Eve had to work hard to get enough to eat. They worked long hours to make gardens and a new home to live in. It must have been difficult for them as they remembered how

wonderful it had been when they lived in the garden God had made for them.

Eventually they died, and their children and their children's children died also because all were under the sentence of death through Adam.

But God knew this would happen and had already planned how he would some day bring them all back to life on earth. It was for this cause that Jesus came to earth and died for mankind. His death and resurrection rescued mankind from the death sentence that came upon Adam. He did this willingly and with love for all people.



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Adam and Eve were sent away from the tree of life in Eden.

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## Pride, Jealousy, Anger, Murder

“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” Ephesians 4:31, 32

Adam and Eve were sent away from Eden and they could not return. They had been busy in the beautiful garden and they had been happy and comfortable. Now things were different!

The wilderness outside was not beautiful to look at. There was no food such as they had eaten in Eden. Which of the plants of the field would taste good and nourish their bodies? They could no longer pick fruit from a tree or a bush every time they were hungry. Now they spent hours looking for food, and the thorns and thistles pricked their fingers and made them bleed. The perspiration ran down their faces as they tried to get rid of the weeds and help the plants for food grow better.

Perhaps Adam looked at Eve and thought, “Life was easier before she was created, when I lived alone with the animals.” Eve might have looked at Adam and thought, “Why didn’t he tell me this would be our punishment? He lived before I did and God talked to him. He should have helped me and not followed me into the sin of disobedience to God.”

When their first son was born, Eve looked at her child and felt happy and hopeful. She hugged him to her and said, “With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man” (Genesis 4:1). The boy was called Cain. Adam and Eve thought he would be the “seed” or son whom God had promised would help them (Genesis 3:15). Adam and Eve had many more children.

Abel became a shepherd while Cain was a farmer. They brought offerings to God to receive a blessing. God accepted Abel's gift of a lamb, but did not accept Cain's gift of fruits and vegetables. This made Cain jealous and angry with Abel. Cain attacked and killed his brother.

Cain should have asked Abel for a lamb which he then could acceptably sacrifice to God. The lamb pictured the Lord Jesus and his sacrifice. Instead, Cain allowed anger and hatred to burn in his heart, and he became a murderer.



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Cain and Abel made offerings to God to receive a blessing.

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## **Abel, the First Martyr**

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.” Psalm 32:8

Cain did not think about killing Abel—he had never seen a human being die and he had never heard of murder. Adam and Eve had been so sure that this son would destroy Satan and restore their happiness. Cain had expected this too, and that he would be God’s favorite. What a shock to see that Abel’s sacrifice was accepted and not his.

Instead of looking to the LORD for guidance (Genesis 4:6, 7), Cain’s pride was hurt. He lost control of his temper with terrible results. Abel was the first person who had ever died and when Cain saw that he did not get up or move, Cain became afraid and tried to hide from God.

This same sin was later committed by other people with whom God was dealing. Leaders of the Jewish people schemed to have Jesus killed because they wanted a great and mighty king who would deliver them from the Roman soldiers and the tax collectors. They wanted the Gentiles to admire their kingdom, but they did not follow God’s ways. Most could not accept a carpenter’s son even though he was performing miracles. Instead of looking to the Scriptures for an explanation (Isaiah 53), Israel’s pride was hurt. They became jealous and angry and killed the Messiah who had come to deliver them.

Long before Jesus’ time Abel had become the first martyr. Over the years many more people were to become martyrs. It was not until four thousand years after Adam and Eve lived in the

garden that God sent his son into the world to become the Savior of all mankind. John 3:16; 1 Timothy 2:5, 6

At that time Jesus allowed himself to be taken captive and put to death. He did not need to die since he was perfect and had done nothing sinful. But he knew God's will was that he should take Adam's place in death—a ransom sacrifice—so that the death sentence on mankind could be done away with in due time. Hebrews 2:9

Everyone will come back to life in the Millennial age and have an opportunity to live forever—a wonderful promise from God!



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Abel was the first person to die.

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## Sorrow and Mourning Begun

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.”

Psalm 23:4

The first death in Adam’s family caused deep sorrow. Not only was it a horrible shock to see human death for the first time, but all the years of their lives Adam and Eve would miss their beloved Abel. And what of Cain? He could hardly be the promised seed of Genesis 3:15.

What a difference from Eden where they had been God’s friends! Now they did not know what to do—one of their sons was dead and the other son (with their daughter whom he had married) had left their home, shamed and punished by God.

Who was there for Cain to fear? Many children were born to Adam and Eve. We do not know how many or what their names were. The Bible only says that they had sons and daughters (Genesis 5:4). The population could have been large at that time.

Cain and his wife went into the land of Nod where Cain built a city and named it after his firstborn son, Enoch. God protected Cain with a mark that would warn men that they must not kill him. Genesis 4:15

When Adam was one hundred and thirty years old, another son was born to him and Eve. They named him Seth. They hoped that he would be the man promised by God.

Seth, of course, was not the great Deliverer (seed) who would one day destroy Satan. But Jesus, who was that seed, was born of the family of Seth, even though this happened thousands of years later.

Hope, joy, and peace come to us through God's promise that the time is coming when sorrow and dying, sin and pain shall all be gone forever. Messiah's kingdom shall conquer all the things that bring ill health and unhappiness to all people. And then God's will shall be done on earth as fully as it is now done in heaven (Matthew 6:10). The plan of God is reasonable and harmonious and he will bring it to pass. Isaiah 46:9-11



The time is coming when sorrow and dying shall be gone forever.

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## **Sons of God, Daughters of Men**

“The sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose.” Genesis 6:2

Long before the creation of mankind, angels were created. Most of these angels were happy to serve God and enjoy the many blessings bestowed upon them. When God and the Logos formed the earth and placed Adam upon it to be its ruler, the angels sang with happiness! Here would be more beings—Adam and his millions of children—in the wonderful universal family of God.

But there was one spirit being who was not pleased with God’s plan. His name was Lucifer (Son of the morning, Day Star) and he was handsome and talented. He would have been a great help working along with God and the Logos in their exciting projects. Unfortunately, Lucifer did not desire to cooperate with his Creator. He was ambitious and jealous and probably wondered why the Logos should have such an important part in the universe. Isaiah 14:12-14

He became rebellious. Some of the angels would follow him, but just a few might not help much. Then Adam and Eve were created. Children would be born until the planet earth would be filled with people. Perhaps Lucifer thought: “Here will be a large number of individuals who will not know as much as the angels do about God and his love. They might accept me as their god.”

Then a terrible thing happened. Lucifer, who came to be known as Satan (which means adversary, hater, enemy of good) caused Adam and Eve to sin against God. He tempted Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit by lying to her, saying that she would not surely die. Genesis 3:4

It was possible for angels to materialize at that time, and many of them did materialize so they could marry the daughters of men.

God saw that it would be good for mankind to have experience with sin and evil, so he permitted Satan and his followers, the fallen angels, to continue in their disobedient ways. This experience with sin will help mankind choose righteousness in the Millennial age for they will have learned sin's dreadful results.



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Lucifer was handsome, talented, and not pleased with God's plan.

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## **While the Ark was Preparing**

“The LORD then said to Noah . . . I have found you righteous in this generation.” Genesis 7:1

The angel-men and their human wives had children called nephilim (giants). They were much stronger than the other boys because their fathers were angels. Their minds were clever, but they did not spend their time thinking of better ways to serve God. Instead they thought of cunning schemes to enable them to rule the earth.

God watched mankind for hundreds of years, seeing them become more and more wicked and violent. Finally only eight people on earth were worth saving. All the other families had intermarried with the angelic stock which was contrary to God’s will. The father of this exceptional family was named Noah. He and his wife had three sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth—and each of the sons had a wife.

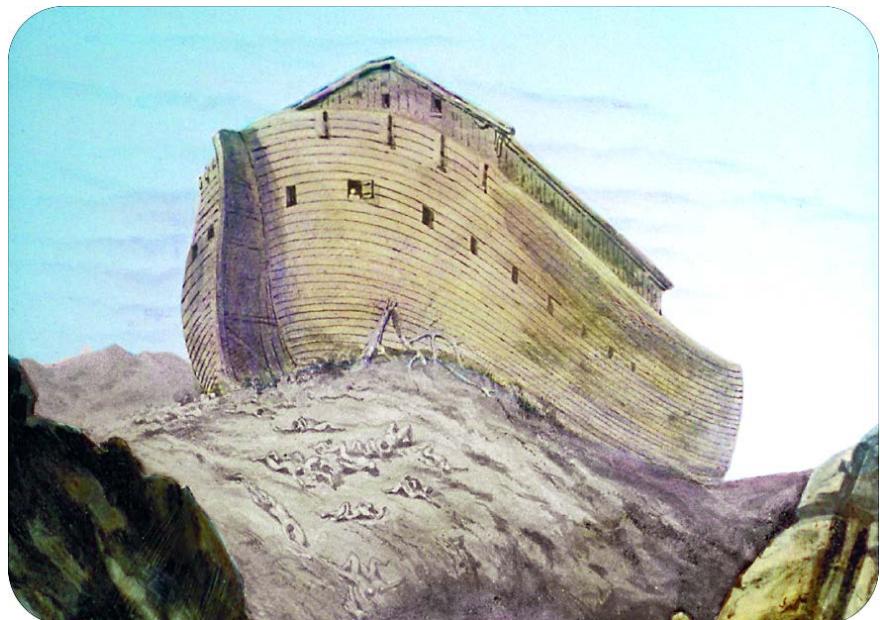
Noah was given exact instructions for building an ark (boat) which would save him and his family and some of each of the animals and birds from the coming flood. Everyone must have laughed to see Noah building a boat on dry land since it had never rained on the earth up to that time!

The earth was like a great greenhouse. Plant life grew in the warm, moist climate; there were no seasons. When the ring of water that surrounded the earth broke, the rains poured down in great torrents to become the great flood the Bible tells us about. Genesis 2:5, 6 and 7:18

The ark was a peculiar and enormous structure, approximately five hundred feet long, eighty feet wide, and fifty feet high. It had

three stories and was built of gopher wood; pitch was used to make it watertight. An opening for light and ventilation ran around the four sides just under the eaves. Noah was told how to shape the ark so the flood would not smash it.

Since the ark was not built for navigation but merely as a float, no room was taken up by steering apparatus. This would allow much more room for the animal pens and for storage of food and water.



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Noah was told how to shape the ark so the flood would not smash it.  
Read Genesis 6:14-16

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## Nephilim Destroyed

“God did not spare angels when they sinned.” 2 Peter 2:4

All of Adam’s family died because he sinned by being disobedient to God’s command. That family includes all of the human beings who were ever born on the earth, and each of them will be made alive again because Jesus died for them. Romans 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:22

But there is one class of beings who died that will not be resurrected because their fathers were not children of Adam. They were the offspring of disobedient angels. Jesus did not die for the angels nor for the children of angels (called nephilim).

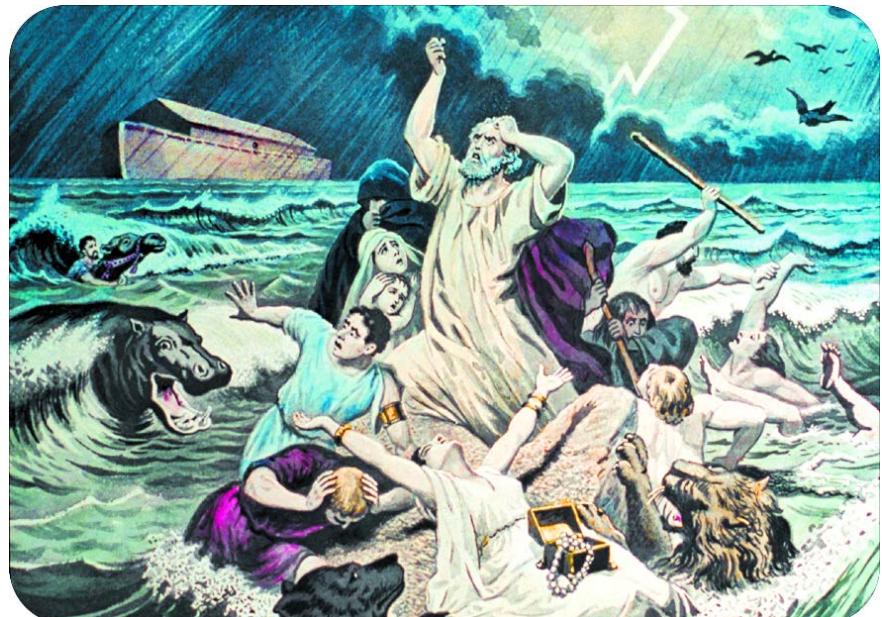
Life is a wonderful blessing, but God never intended for nephilim to come into being. When the flood destroyed them, they died forever. They would not fit into a kingdom where no one will hurt or destroy (Isaiah 65:25), where everyone will live by the Golden Rule, and peace and goodwill shall prevail.

The mothers of the nephilim will be resurrected in the earthly kingdom because they were daughters of men—daughters in Adam’s human family. The angel fathers had been alive in heaven before Adam was created and were not sentenced to death because of Adam’s sin.

After the flood, the disobedient angels (who had become so wicked) were no longer welcome back into heaven nor could they stay on the earth as humans. They were cast into Tartarus (a name for earth’s atmosphere). God restrained or limited their powers so that their ability to materialize and associate with humanity was gone. Jude 6

They may, however, act through any who invite their companionship, but they can do no more. They have no honor, no dignity, no favor from God. We associate them with spirit mediums, false gods, and many other forms of the occult.

We should have no dealings whatever with these occult systems. In due time they will be judged in righteousness. This means that never again will Satan and his cohorts be permitted to deceive mankind.



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All human beings who die will be made alive again because of Jesus.

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## The End of That Age

“By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed.” 2 Peter 3:6

People die and people are born, but the earth lasts forever (Ecclesiastes 1:4). God had a reason for creating the earth—he formed it for mankind to live on forever (Isaiah 45:18). The wicked ones were destroyed in the flood but the planet earth remained. The flood water settled into lakes and rivers, and dry land was again visible. The First Dispensation had ended and another age had begun.

The First Dispensation lasted from the time of Adam’s creation to the beginning of the flood—a period of 1,656 years. During that time the angels watched over mankind, but they brought so much wickedness to the world that God would not let them continue.

The Second Dispensation is known as the “present evil world.” It is divided into the Patriarchal, Jewish, and Gospel ages.

Following the flood the Patriarchal age began. It lasted until the death of Jacob. At that time God’s dealings and favors were only with a few individuals. Some of these were Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The patriarchs were counted perfect because of their faith in God and not because they were actually perfect as Adam had been.

God changed Jacob’s name to Israel—his twelve sons and their families became the tribes of Israel. At his death, the Jewish age began when God dealt only with the Jews (the nation of Israel).

The Gospel age started with the first advent of Jesus. When its work is complete, the Millennial age will begin, which also starts the Third Dispensation—the ages to come. God's plan of the ages develops slowly, but it surely will come to pass. The earth will be made glorious and restored to all that was lost in Eden and redeemed at Calvary.

Calvary was a hill not far from the walls of Jerusalem where Jesus was crucified and buried. Since the hill was shaped like a skull, it was called Calvary, a word that means skull.



The earth itself was not destroyed in the flood.

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## The Rainbow Pledge

“Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

Genesis 9:11

When the rain stopped and the land was drying out, Noah and his family and the animals went out of the ark. They built an altar and offered sacrifices to God to thank him for his loving care over them.

No one had seen a rainbow before the flood, for the sun’s rays could not come directly through the watery envelope around the earth. But when the envelope broke, the sun shining through the fine vapors caused a beautiful rainbow—the first one ever! It was a symbol of God’s promise to Noah and to all mankind that the whole earth would never again be overcome by a flood of water.  
Genesis 9:13, 15

Many changes were brought about by the flood. Genesis 9:2 tells of the first time that the animals feared man; Genesis 9:3 that animals could be killed for meat. And in Genesis 9:21 we are told that grape juice changed to wine. Noah had not expected this.

Science tells us that the earth had been like a greenhouse. It had been damp and warm and the same temperature everywhere. The flood caused great changes—around the North and South Poles the weather turned exceedingly cold, and around the equator the weather became hot.

It happened rapidly. An antelope was eating green grass in northern Siberia. Suddenly the water around it turned into ice and the antelope froze to death. When it was found, green grass was still in its stomach—undigested! In the same way, a huge creature

was found imbedded in ice with vegetation still in its mouth and stomach. Hundreds of elephant tusks have been found in the same area even though today it is a place where grass cannot grow and these types of animals cannot live.

This sudden huge downpouring of water produced the great ice fields and ice mountains of the arctic regions. The movement of the glaciers cut deeply into the earth's surface causing tremendous changes. This is referred to as the Ice Age or Glacial Period by scientists.

The Bible is precious to us because it is the Word of God, but it is also remarkable because it is the world's oldest textbook.



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The first rainbow was not seen until after  
the flood because light could not break through.

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## Demigods of Greece and Egypt

“We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 1:16

There are many fairy tales and fables that we have read and enjoyed, knowing that they are not true stories. There are also many myths from the ancient Greeks and Romans which are interesting to read, but are also just imaginary. These stories often have a lesson in them.

The Greeks and Romans really believed the myths at that time, thinking that Bacchus, Ceres, Apollo and others were actual gods and goddesses. Gifts of sacrifice were burned in their honor, and special acts were performed to please these imaginary gods. People prayed to them—asking for good crops, strength, happiness, etc.

We know that Jehovah, the Almighty Creator of the universe, is the only true God. Where did the idea of these other gods come from?

The word *god* means a *mighty one*—strong and powerful. There have been many strong and powerful persons, good and bad. The strongest and most powerful individuals who ever lived on earth were the nephilim who were destroyed in the flood. They were the demigods of Greece and Egypt and the angels who materialized were the gods.

*Demi* means *half* or *lesser*. So the demigods were less than the angels, who were the gods. They were more than humans because of their angelic fathers. They were a hybrid race which had not been authorized by God. Hybrid means the offspring of two animals or

plants of different breeds or species. (A mule is the hybrid offspring of a horse and a donkey.)

The gods and demigods did many supernatural things to gain power among the people. They had this power because of their angelic background. Their mighty and wicked deeds were told about long after they themselves were gone. Their foolish and sinful acts were admired and imitated by some men who considered the giants as gods.

In the tombs of the Egyptian pharaohs there are lists of names of some of the families, beginning with the creation of man. One list includes the names of Adam and his sons, his grandsons, etc., all the way down to the Pharaoh who had the list written. Most of the lists, however, have extra names of individuals who were not really a part of Adam's family. These would be the giants, or nephilim.



The gods of mythology are really the fallen angels.

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## From Adam to Moses

“The LORD said to him [Moses] . . . I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.” Exodus 4:11, 12

When the Greek, Herodotus, wrote his history book, he gave the same information as that which was written on the Abydos Tablet. When the Egyptian, Manetho, wrote his history book, he also used these same facts. When the great prophet of Jehovah, Moses, wrote the first five books of the Bible, he was familiar with the best sources of historical information.

The Abydos Tablet, a slab on which records were kept of Pharaohs and kings, was found in the tomb of Pharaoh Seti I. It is not as long a list as some of the others, yet Seti took great care to preserve it. He sank a shaft sixty feet deep through solid rock and there his stone masons cut out a staircase on which the Tablet is portrayed. An exact copy of it is in the British Museum today.

Although Moses had been born a poor Hebrew boy, God arranged that he would be adopted by an Egyptian princess. In the palace he learned all the wisdom of the Egyptians.

To be used in God’s service, Moses received the finest education from the best schools in Egypt, as well as all that his Hebrew mother could tell him of God’s marvelous leadings and care for his people. Moses’ mother knew well the history of her people. She had heard it from Moses’ father, who had heard the story from the patriarch Levi, who had heard it from his grandfather, Isaac, who (with his father, Abraham) had heard the story from Noah’s son, Shem, who had heard it from Methuselah, who had heard the story from Adam.

When he was a young man, Moses chose to serve God and be counted among his people, even though they were in bondage to the Egyptians. In doing so, he gave up the riches and pleasures of the comfortable life he had had in the palace.

Besides having all the knowledge of the best schools in Egypt, and belonging to the family of God's chosen people (thereby knowing their history firsthand), Moses was blessed by the greatest advantage of all: God guided and instructed him. What a wonderful way for Moses to know what he should write in God's holy Bible!



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Moses was adopted by an Egyptian princess.

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## The Tower of Babel

“[The city] was called Babel—because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world . . . [and] scattered them over the face of the whole earth.” Genesis 11:9

Noah and his family praised God for his justice and power. They were glad for the rainbow which was a sign to them from God that there never again would be such a flood.

But as the years passed, many began to forget what God had done for mankind. When they saw the rainbow in the sky, they did not think of Noah or God or the promise. Because the people had lost confidence in God, they began to build a great tower. They thought if they built a tower so tall, it would reach up to heaven, it would save them from any flood of waters in the future. God saw what they were doing but did not want them to complete the tower. He confused their language so they could not understand one another. See Genesis 11:4-8.

How odd it must have been to want to talk to your neighbor and suddenly your words were completely strange to him, just as his words were strange to you. Perhaps he was speaking Hebrew and you were speaking Arabic, and someone else was speaking Greek, or Ethiopian.

This effectively stopped the building of the tower so they could not work together anymore. It also scattered people to various parts of the earth. This is what God wanted them to do, so that all of the earth would eventually become populated.

The unfinished tower fell into ruins and nothing is left now but a huge hole which is used as a place to dig out building stones, such as marble and limestone. When standing, the tower had many

platforms, one on top of the other, each smaller than the one below.

Today the language barriers are breaking down and the tendency of humanity is to reunite for protection. There are many people who speak more than one language. There are also those who act as interpreters between speakers of different languages. This allows meetings and conferences to be held with the people of many countries participating.



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The people began to build a great tower because they had lost confidence in God.

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## Abraham, God's Friend

"The LORD had said to Abram . . . all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." Genesis 12:1, 3

Abraham became the friend of God because of his great faith (James 2:23). He followed God's instructions to leave his own country and go to Canaan. Abraham became heir to the promise of our text: "Through you all peoples on earth will be blessed." This is called the Abrahamic covenant. A covenant is an agreement or contract between two or more individuals or parties. God had changed Abram's name to Abraham because he would become the father of many nations. Genesis 17:5

Many stories in the Old Testament are pictures of things that will happen later—and on a larger scale. These stories are called *types*, and the things which happen later are called *antitypes*. Types help us understand God's plans and purposes.

Abraham's beloved wife, Sarah, waited and waited to have a child (Isaac), just as the Abrahamic covenant had to wait and wait for the Messiah, Jesus, to be born and begin the work of that covenant.

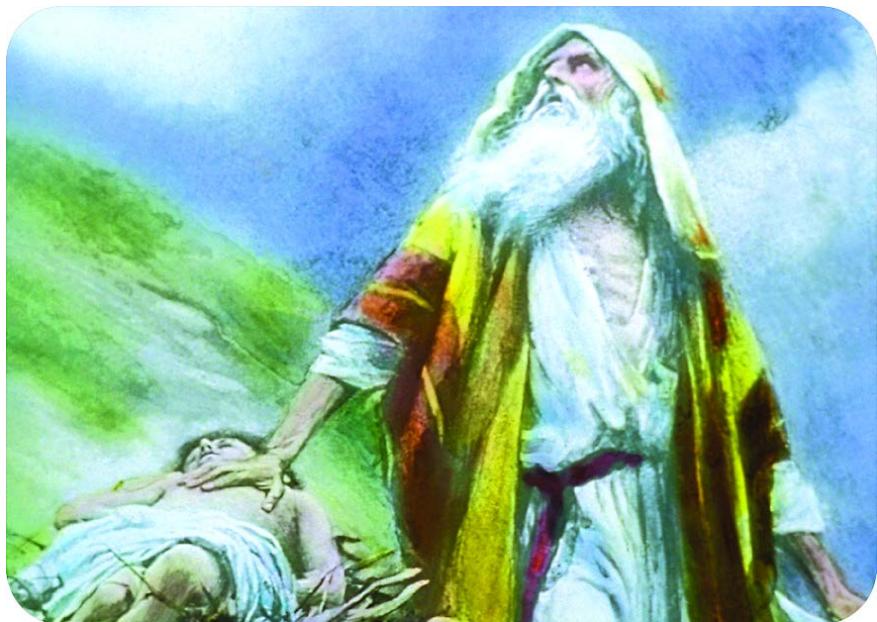
Rebekah represented (or typified) the 144,000 saints, the church, because she was Isaac's bride and the mother of his children. The church is called the Bride of Christ, and will help him resurrect and restore the world of mankind to perfect life in the kingdom.

The offering of Isaac in sacrifice on Mount Moriah was a type of the sacrifice our Lord Jesus made for all mankind at Calvary. Just as Isaac was willing to let his father, Abraham, kill him in sacrifice, so Jesus was a willing sacrifice when he was hung on the

cross. God intervened for Isaac and provided a ram as a substitute sacrifice. Not so with our Lord Jesus because his perfect human life was a necessary sacrifice for the life of Adam. 1 Timothy 2:5, 6

Hagar represented the Law Covenant because she was a servant in Abraham's household and mother of his child, Ishmael. The Law Covenant served a purpose in God's plan by helping the Israelites realize their need of a savior; since they were imperfect, they could not keep a perfect law.

Ishmael was like the nation of Israel. He was a part of Abraham's household, but he was not the promised seed. The nation of Israel is a part of God's plan, but not the heavenly seed, which is Christ and the church.



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Offering Isaac in sacrifice was a type of the death of our Lord Jesus.

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## The Destruction of Sodom

“This was the sin of . . . Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy.” Ezekiel 16:49

The people of Sodom lived in a rich valley. They did not have to work as hard as others to have good crops and become prosperous. They had many luxuries; they became idle, full of pride, selfish, and extremely wicked.

God saw that it would be better for the Sodomites in the resurrection if he destroyed them before they became even more wicked. There were only four people in Sodom who were righteous: Lot, his wife, and their two daughters. Two angels were sent to warn Lot’s family of the coming disaster. Lot then warned others to escape, but they merely laughed at him.

Apparently an earthquake took place in the valley causing shifting and pressing down of the earth onto the oil, sulfur, salt, and gases under the earth’s surface. A tremendous explosion occurred which destroyed the entire city, as well as the city of Gomorrah and other cities nearby.

Tons of fiery oil, sulfur, and gases were expelled into the atmosphere. The two angels helped Lot, his wife, and daughters, to flee the city. But Lot’s wife, evidently not wanting to give up her home and all her treasures, lingered and looked back. She was caught in the “rain” of salt and was completely covered, making a kind of pillar. This is one of the strange stories from the Bible that many have thought to be a myth, but researchers have proven it to be a fact. Genesis 19:24-26

The destruction of the Sodomites is an example of what happens to sinners (all of mankind) at death. Death—the absence of life—and not eternal torment is the penalty for sin. Romans 6:23

The Bible teaches that the people who lived in Sodom are not hopelessly lost (Ezekiel 16:53, 55). Rather, in the Millennial age, they will have an opportunity to hear of God's great plan of salvation for all. They will have a chance to accept God's laws and rejoice in his truth, just as will all those who have not had an opportunity beforehand to do so. These Sodomites will actually be judged less severely in the kingdom than those who were able to see Jesus' miracles and hear his words, yet rejected his message.

Matthew 10:15



Death and not eternal torment is the penalty for sin.

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## **Melchizedek, Priest and King**

“The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: ‘You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.’” Psalm 110:4

Melchizedek was a priest of God and at the same time he was the king of Salem, a word which means peace. Salem was later called Jerusalem. As a king he ruled the people, and as a priest he blessed them and taught them of God’s ways. Abraham acknowledged Melchizedek and paid tithes to him (a tenth of all his goods).

The Bible tells us little about Melchizedek. It is stated that he was without father or mother and without beginning of days or end of years. This is puzzling until we realize that it is referring to his position as priest and king. No record was made of him as to when his priesthood began, nor was any provision made for a successor. In this way he was a picture of the Messiah in the Millennial age.

There are other priests in the Bible, and also other kings, but only Melchizedek held both these positions at the same time. In the kingdom, the 144,000 members of the church with their head, Jesus, will be like Melchizedek. They will rule the world and they will bless the people and teach them God’s ways—they will act as priests and kings.

It is possible that Melchizedek was one of the Shepherd kings who peacefully ruled Egypt and built the Great Pyramid of Giza. That pyramid is one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It was built about 2170 B.C. It is located on the Nile River near Cairo, Egypt, in the geographical center of the land surface of the whole world. This enormous structure covers thirteen acres and is referred to in the Bible in Isaiah 19:19, 20.

There are many fascinating things we can learn about the pyramid which support the plan of God. Its interior passages represent all of human history. The downward passage pictures the course of sin and death; the upward passages represent the Law age, the Gospel age, the kingdom glory of the church, and human restitution. Its measurements indicate the length of the year, the weight of the earth, the distance to the sun, and many other scientific facts.



It is possible Melchizedek built the Great Pyramid of Giza.

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## Job's Adversity and Restitution

“The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised.” Job 1:21

About the time of Melchizedek and Abraham there also lived a man named Job. Job was a good man of great wealth, learning, and influence. He loved and reverenced God and appreciated justice, and God loved him. Job and his wife had seven sons and three daughters.

A merchant prince, Job was considered to be one of the great men of his time, yet he thought of the widows and orphans and was generous to them. Satan told God that Job loved him only because he had been so greatly blessed. So God allowed Satan to test Job.

Suddenly terrible disasters came upon Job—his children, wealth, influence, and health were all taken from him. In spite of all that happened, Job’s faith did not waver. He said, “Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him.” Job’s wife did not share his trust and said to him, “Curse God and die.” Job 13:15; 2:9

Three friends came to visit Job and comfort him in his trials, but they, too, felt that Job was to blame for all the misfortunes that had come upon him. They said that he must surely have sinned against God. Job is remembered to this day for his great patience, yet at one point, his trials were so heavy and severe that he wished he were asleep in *sheol* (a Hebrew word meaning grave—the condition of being dead) and asked only that he would be remembered in the resurrection. Job 14:13

Eventually God brought blessings again to Job. He received more than he ever had before (Job 42:10). What a beautiful picture this is of the history of mankind!

Man was removed from his perfect garden home and suddenly found himself having to work hard to have enough to eat. In the Millennial age humanity will be restored to all that they have had, and even more! The curse of sin and death will be removed and the blessings of God will flow to the human family for a thousand years, giving life to all who have gone into death, and multiplying the blessings of the earth more than double.



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Terrible disasters came upon Job but his faith did not waver.

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## **Seeking a Bride for Isaac**

“The LORD . . . will send his angel with you and make your journey a success, so that you can get a wife for my son from my own clan and from my father’s family.” Genesis 24:40

Abraham had been willing to sacrifice his son, Isaac, on Mount Moriah but could not understand God’s reason for asking him to do what must have seemed to be a terrible thing. His faith and trust in God were rewarded when a ram was provided as a sacrifice instead of Isaac—he would not have to kill his son after all!

A picture had been made: Abraham represented God and Isaac represented Jesus, the son who was to be sacrificed for the life of the whole world. When God told Abraham to raise Isaac from the altar, it was a picture of Jesus being raised from the dead.

After Sarah died, Abraham sent his trusted servant, Eliezer, to find a bride for Isaac. He was to go to Haran where most of Abraham’s family still lived and select a girl from his own people.

Eliezer took ten camels and many servants with him, as well as beautiful gifts for the girl and her family. This is a picture of God sending his holy spirit to choose a bride for his son, Jesus. This “bride” will consist of 144,000 members. Revelation 14:1

When Eliezer and his servant reached Haran, they were tired, hungry, and thirsty. Eliezer had prayed that the girl who would give him a drink of water and also water his camels would be the one God had chosen for Isaac.

Rebekah was a lovely girl, young and pure, and she worshipped the one true God. After giving Eliezer, his servants, and his camels water from the well, she led them to her father’s home where they were given food and lodging.

When Rebekah's mother and brother heard Eliezer's message, they wanted her to stay home several days before going to Isaac. But Eliezer felt they should leave the next morning and Rebekah, with no hesitation, said she was willing to go.

It was evening when Rebekah neared her new home and saw Isaac in the field. She got down off the camel, covered herself with a veil, and went to him. Together they represent Christ and his church who will resurrect and rule over the world of mankind in the next age. Genesis chapter 24 tells us this beautiful story.



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Rebekah was a lovely girl who worshipped the one true God.

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## Jacob's Ladder Dream

"He saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it." Genesis 28:12

Jacob and Esau were twin brothers, but they neither looked nor acted alike. Esau was born first and was a strong, athletic boy; he enjoyed hunting more than anything else in the world. Jacob was quiet and gentle. He often thought of God and his promises and knew he wanted God's blessing more than anything else.

One day when Esau came home from hunting, he was extremely hungry. Jacob was cooking a thick vegetable and meat stew called pottage which looked and smelled delicious. Esau begged Jacob to give him some.

Jacob had always realized the great value of the promise God had made to Abraham and then to Isaac. He felt it was more important than the earthly riches which were also part of a first-born son's inheritance. He asked Esau to give him his birthright promise in exchange for the pottage. Esau cared little for God's promises at the time; he was only interested in something to eat so he agreed to the exchange.

Later Jacob deceived Isaac, who was now blind, into believing he was Esau so his father would give him the blessing. When Esau found out, he wanted to kill Jacob, for now the birthright seemed more valuable than when he sold it.

Jacob fled from Esau's anger. That night he found a quiet place and, using a stone for a pillow, wrapped himself in his warm cloak and went to sleep. God encouraged Jacob by giving him a dream.

In the dream he saw a flight of steps rising from earth to heaven. It was crowded with angels coming and going. The God of glory stood above it and God assured him that he had secured his father Isaac's blessing and God now recognized Jacob as the legal heir to the great Abrahamic promise.

The dream was a picture of the fulfillment of this promise made to Abraham (Genesis 28:14 and Acts 3:25). It will bring about, once again, peace and fellowship between heaven and earth, between God and man.



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Jacob's dream assured him God was hearing his prayers.

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## Joseph's Coat Identified

"They got Joseph's robe, slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. They took the ornamented robe back to their father." Genesis 37:31, 32

Jacob had become the father of twelve sons. The oldest son was Reuben who was kind but not wise. Simeon was clever, but not kind. Each of the sons was quite different from the others. Joseph and Benjamin were the youngest and still at home while the ten other brothers were tending the flocks. Jacob especially loved Joseph and made him a beautiful coat of many colors. The older boys became jealous of Joseph and when he had two dreams which seemed to indicate that all of the family would some day bow down to him and he (Joseph) would bless them, it only made them more jealous.

One day Joseph went out to the fields to bring messages and food to his brothers from their father. The brothers could see him coming and they plotted to get rid of him. The cruel brothers sold him as a slave to a caravan of Ishmaelite merchants on their way to Egypt. Then they killed a goat and smeared Joseph's beautiful coat with its blood. When they gave Jacob the coat, he thought exactly what they wanted him to think: Joseph had been killed by a wild beast.

Jacob was heartbroken and bitter—no one could comfort him. He cried, "In mourning will I go down to the grave [*sheol*] to my son." Genesis 37:35

This is the first use of the word *sheol* in the Bible and it is the only word translated *hell* in the Old Testament, King James Version. Jacob did not think of his beloved son as having gone to a

place of eternal torture. He knew of no such place. Some teach that because *sheol* is translated hell in the common version it means a place of everlasting punishment, yet the words “hell,” “grave,” and “pit,” were used interchangeably as a translation of *sheol* in the Old Testament. Bible scholars now agree that it simply means tomb or grave (condition of death).

In the New Testament, the similar Greek word is *hades* means tomb or grave. Some modern translators leave *sheol* and *hades* untranslated (such as the Revised Standard version). One of the meanings of the word hell is “a place that is covered or hidden.” There is neither eternal fire nor everlasting torment associated with either *sheol* or *hades*.



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Joseph's brothers sold him as a slave to Ishmaelite merchants.

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## Joseph Sold Into Egypt

“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good.”

Genesis 50:20

God was watching over Joseph. His trials and difficulties were helping him develop a character that would eventually bring him a position of honor in Egypt second only to the Pharaoh!

Pharaoh had two dreams which Joseph interpreted to mean there would be seven years of plenty and seven years when food would not grow. Joseph directed the people to store up enough grain in the first seven years to carry them through the famine years.

The famine also affected Joseph’s family in Canaan. When they had no more food to eat, ten of Jacob’s sons came to Egypt to buy grain. They were completely unaware that they were dealing with their brother, whom they had sold into slavery so many years before.

Joseph was kind to them, although he did not let them know who he was, inquiring instead about their family, and giving them grain. He told them the famine would continue and they would be needing more grain. He also said when they came again, to bring with them their youngest brother, Benjamin, to prove they were not spies.

Jacob at first refused to let Benjamin go, but as the famine worsened, he finally said they could take him. But, he said, if Benjamin did not come back, it would mean his death: “You will bring my gray head down to the grave [*sheol*] in sorrow.” Genesis 42:38

This is the second occurrence in the Bible of the word *sheol*, which means the tomb, but mistranslated hell thirty-one times in the King James version. It did not even come into Jacob's mind that his sons would be in a place of burning torment and that he would join them there—this is a God-dishonoring doctrine. No, Jacob expected to be unconscious in death, out of existence, when he spoke those words. Ecclesiastes 9:10

Joseph was a type of Jesus who was also rejected by his brethren (the Jewish nation), but was eventually exalted to a place of honor and glory next to the Heavenly Father. And, just as Joseph gave bread to the Egyptian people, so Jesus will give the bread of everlasting life to the willing and obedient in the next age. What a beautiful picture this is! John 6:48



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Joseph was a type of Jesus who was also rejected by his brethren.

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## **Joseph and His Brethren**

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” Ephesians 4:32

When the brothers returned to Egypt with Benjamin, Joseph had a feast prepared for them. This astonished the brothers and made them fearful for they did not know what he had in mind. Finally, Joseph sent his servants away and told his brothers that he was their brother whom they had sold into slavery. He assured them of his forgiveness and explained that God had caused all his hard experiences to work out for good. Now he was able to save his family, as well as all the Egyptians, from starving to death.

The brothers were overjoyed! They all wept and hugged each other and could hardly believe that this was truly their brother. Joseph asked about his father and told them to bring him and all their families to Egypt where there was plenty of stored grain for all. Pharaoh gave them the land of Goshen, the best land for raising animals.

So Jacob, now called Israel, lived in Goshen, and his people began to prosper. They had many children and became a great nation. Joseph said to his brothers, “God turned into good what you meant for evil.” Genesis 50:20 (Living Bible)

Joseph pictures Christ and his church. These have endured and overcome their trials and lived according to God’s commands to the best of their ability. This will bring them the highest kingdom honors. Joseph’s brethren represented the Jews, the Egyptians pictured the rest of mankind. Both Jews and Gentiles will be blessed because of the glorious exaltation of Messiah. Isaiah 25:6-9

Joseph, in his dying request, wanted the Israelites to carry his bones with them when they returned to Canaan. The families of Israel lived in Egypt for two hundred and fifteen years from the time Jacob entered Egypt to when Moses came on the scene to lead them back to their homeland. This period was the second half of the 430 years from the Abrahamic Covenant to their exodus. Genesis 47:28; Exodus 12:41

We see how Joseph trusted God because of his knowledge of the promise made to Abraham. So also it was with all the worthy ones of the past, and the same principle holds true today!



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Joseph told his brothers he was their brother whom they sold into slavery.

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[www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-31.pdf](http://www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-31.pdf).

## Moses the Deliverer

“I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.”

Exodus 6:7

When Jacob died, the age of patriarchs such as Noah, Abraham, and Isaac was over, which meant the end of God’s special favor to individuals. His favor was now with the nation of Israel. All the families had grown large; they were called “the twelve tribes of Israel.”

The families continued to grow until the Egyptians became worried that the Israelites would become too powerful, perhaps even taking over their country. They made slaves of the Hebrew people and worked them hard, but still they multiplied. So an order went out that all the Hebrew boy babies were to be killed. Exodus 1:16

When Moses was three months old, he was placed in the little covered basket his mother made and set afloat in the Nile River. His older sister, Miriam, watched over him from among the reeds along the river bank.

There he was found by the Egyptian princess and brought to the palace of her father, who was Pharaoh, to be reared as an Egyptian. Moses’ own mother was asked to care for him—surely she could feel that her prayers for the safety of her little son had been answered.

Moses received an excellent education in “all the learning of the Egyptians,” as well as the instruction he would have had from his Hebrew mother. But Moses could not enjoy the honors he had in Egypt because of the way his people were being persecuted.

Eventually he killed an Egyptian while defending a mistreated Israelite and fled to the land of Midian. He became a shepherd and lived there for forty years.

When God was ready for the Israelites to leave Egypt, he appointed Moses to lead them. His brother, Aaron, was appointed to speak for the Israelites in Pharaoh's court.

This commission was given to Moses at the burning bush. This was a bush which apparently was on fire, yet it did not burn up! Moses had learned a great lesson in humility while he lived in Midian and now God could use him in his plans to have the Israelites return to Canaan. So Moses became the great leader and man of God whom Pharaoh dreaded and the Hebrews needed. Acts 7:30-36



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Baby Moses was placed in a basket  
in the Nile River and found by a princess.

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## Let My People Go

“When I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.” Exodus 12:13

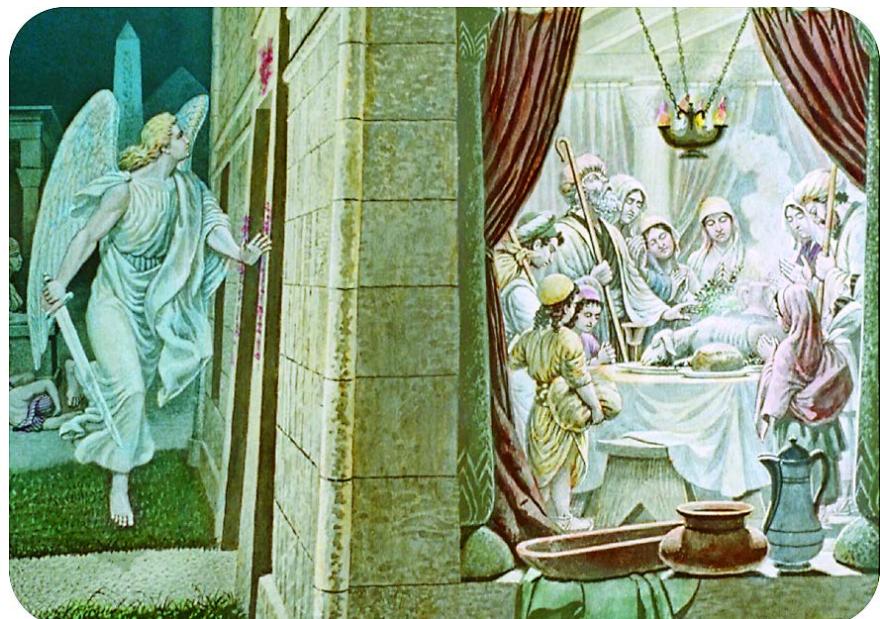
Let my people go! Time and again Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh with this message from God. But Pharaoh had no intention of losing the Israelites; they were slaves and worked hard for the Egyptians. More bricks were made while this Pharaoh was king than at any other time in the history of Egypt. The Egyptian task-masters pushed the Israelites to work harder than ever, thinking this would keep them from rebellion.

Of course God knew the condition of his people. He sent various plagues to force Pharaoh to let the people go. The Nile River was turned into blood, thousands of frogs left the river and went into the homes—into beds, ovens, and even the bread dough! When the frogs died, there were lice, then there were flies everywhere. The Egyptian animals contracted a deadly disease, the Egyptian people were covered with boils, hail fell from heaven to ruin the land, and millions of locusts ate every bit of vegetation the hail had left. Darkness then covered all of Egypt—a darkness so thick it could be felt! Still Pharaoh would not let the Israelites go.

Finally the Israelites were instructed to select a lamb—a male, not over a year old, and with no blemishes of any kind. On the fourteenth of the month of Nisan they were to kill and roast the lamb whole with bitter herbs. In the meantime, they were to pack their belongings, gather their flocks and herds, and get everything ready for a journey. God would send an angel of death throughout the land of Egypt and the firstborn male in every household would die.

The Hebrews would be spared if they took the blood of the lamb and sprinkled it on the doorposts and lintels of their houses. This would be a sign to the angel to pass over that home.

At midnight the angel of God passed throughout the land of Egypt and every firstborn male died, both of men and animals. The one thing Pharaoh loved more than himself was his son, whose death was a terrible blow to him. He called Moses and told him to leave Egypt at once and take all the Israelites with him.



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The death angel did not strike the Israelites  
because they were “under the blood.”

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## **Israel's Wilderness Experiences**

“Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: He gave them bread from heaven to eat.” John 6:31

At last the Israelites were free from their slavery. They began the long journey through the desert to the land of Canaan. God led them by day with a cloud and by night with a pillar of fire. The Israelites were taught many lessons of faith during the forty years they wandered in the wilderness.

Every night God sent manna for them to eat. It took time and patience every morning to gather and prepare the small grains. Each person was allowed an omer, about seven pints. The manna would spoil after twenty-four hours except whatever was gathered on the sixth day, which stayed fresh over the Sabbath.

In spite of all that God had done for them, the Israelites soon became dissatisfied with the manna. They cried for the fish of Egypt as well as its cucumbers and onions and melons (Numbers 11:5, 6). So God sent a wind from the sea and many birds (called quail) flew with this wind. The quail grew tired from their long flight; they flew low so the people easily caught them. They ate and ate and ate—so much that many became ill and some died.

At different times the people complained to Moses because there was no water to drink. He sweetened the waters at Marah by throwing a particular tree into it. At other times he struck a rock with his rod and water gushed forth to refresh the people. What a beautiful picture of the death of Jesus (smiting the rock) with the gushing water picturing the great river of truth that came forth because of his death.

Another experience was a plague of fiery serpents. God told Moses to make a serpent of copper and raise it up on a pole where all could see it. When the people looked at the copper serpent, they were healed of their snake bites. The serpents represented sin, which would bring death. God provided life for the sin-bitten world through the crucifixion of Jesus. He was treated as a sinner so that all mankind might one day be freed from sin and death.

A man named Korah led a conspiracy against Moses' leadership. The result was that Korah and those with him were swallowed up in an earthquake. This is a picture of Satan and all the opponents of Messiah perishing in the second death in the next age.



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The brazen serpent was a picture of the death of Jesus.

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## The Law Covenant at Mt. Sinai

“If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands . . . I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people.” Leviticus 26:3, 12

The Israelites looked to Moses for guidance. They complained to him when they were not pleased even though they found that God’s blessings always came through him. Moses was their mediator. This is one who brings about friendly relations between two parties that do not agree. Moses explained God’s will to the people and begged God’s forgiveness when they sinned against his laws.

God gave the Israelites many rules or laws; the most important ones are called the Ten Commandments. Moses went up to Mt. Sinai where God explained the law to him. Some were rules of health: what foods to eat, what to do when there was sickness; others told how to conduct business fairly. And, most importantly, the law taught the people how to deal with God and with each other. All the people agreed: “We will do everything the LORD has said.” Exodus 19:8

The law was perfect and the Israelites, being imperfect, could not keep it. God knew this but he allowed them to try as it would help them realize their need for a Savior. One of God’s greatest mercies and kindnesses is his promise that in the kingdom the Israelites will be resurrected and he will make a new covenant with them. It will be easier for them to keep this New Covenant and, if they do so, they will live forever on earth.

Moses was the mediator between God and the Israelites in the wilderness which pictures The Christ (Christ and his church) as mediator between God and mankind in the Millennial age.

## The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:3-17)

1. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make any graven image or idol to worship.
3. You shall not use the name of the LORD God irreverently.
4. Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. You shall not kill.
7. You shall not be unfaithful to your husband or your wife.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not tell lies about other people.
10. You shall not have a strong desire for what belongs to others.



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The Ten Commandments were given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai.

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## The Typical Tabernacle

“Those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.” Hebrews 10:3, 4

There are many lessons we can learn from the tabernacle. This remarkable tent of worship was built as God instructed Moses. It had to be carefully made, for it was to be a picture of God’s plan of the ages.

The people were eager to help build the tabernacle. They brought far more silver and gold and beautiful cloth than was needed. The finest artists and most skilled craftsmen put their best efforts into making it. Exodus 12:35, 36; 35:29-32; 36:5

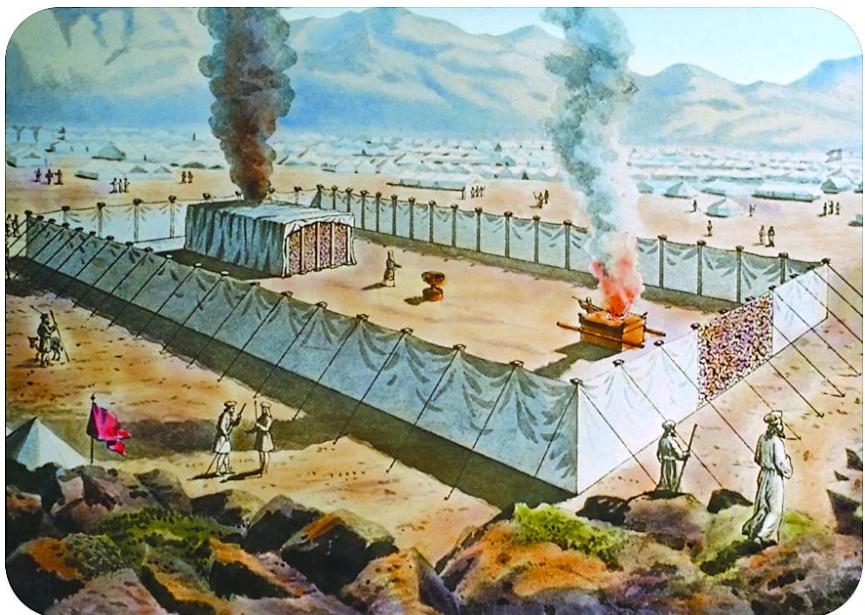
Every year, on the Day of Atonement, a bullock was sacrificed on the altar in the outside court of the tabernacle. Although many other sacrifices were burned throughout the year, this was a special sacrifice. It was the people’s way of telling God they knew they were sinners and wanted to do better—they wanted to be his people.

The bullock represented Jesus’ human life and everything that happened to the bullock later happened to the goat, which represented the 144,000 members of the church. Because Jesus voluntarily died on the cross—a perfect man (Jesus) for a perfect man (Adam)—all mankind will be resurrected to life on earth and be given an opportunity to live forever.

The Court, the Holy, and the Most Holy, the furniture, the priests, and the sacrifices of the tabernacle illustrated the more important features of the divine plan. The three items of furniture in the holy were: the golden candlestick, representing the light of

truth; the table holding what was called the bread of the Presence, representing the Old and New Testaments; and the incense altar, representing the consecrated church class continually offering the incense of faith, love, and obedience to God.

The only piece of furniture in the Most Holy was the Ark of the Covenant. It was a box about the size of a cedar chest covered with gold inside and out and had a lid made of solid gold. On the lid were two golden angels and there was a bright light between them that showed God was present with his people. Inside the ark were the two tables of the law, Aaron's rod that budded, and the golden pot of manna that never spoiled. These were all pictures illustrating portions of God's great plan.



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The tabernacle contains many pictures of the plan of God.

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## Crossing the Jordan

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you.” Isaiah 43:2

Moses, the faithful leader of the Israelites, died on Mt. Nebo. Joshua, his friend and follower, became the new leader. The people had wandered in the wilderness forty years because of their unfaithfulness to God. Finally God led them to the Jordan River, beyond which was Canaan, the promised land.

Four hundred and seventy years had gone by from the time God had promised to give Canaan to Abraham before his descendants actually crossed Jordan and began to inherit the land.

The Canaanites no doubt felt secure from attack because the Jordan was a swift river and at that time of year it was overflowing its banks and much wider than usual.

We do not know exactly how God held back the waters of the Jordan but this might be what happened: about twenty miles above the camp of the Hebrews, at a place called Adam, a great amount of earth swept down from a hillside into the river. No longer could the water flow along as it had done before—it could not get through that huge pile of dirt. Soon the river on the other side of this landslide began to dry up. Now the people could walk across the place where the Jordan had so recently been flowing.

The priests, carrying the Ark, led the people. When they reached the center of the river bed, they stood until all the hosts of Israel had passed over.

Twelve large stones (one for each tribe) were taken from the bed of the Jordan and piled on the shore. Similarly, twelve stones

from the shore were placed in the river bed where the priests stood. The two piles of stones were a memorial of the miracle that had taken place. Joshua 3:17; 4:1-10

The land of Canaan was a picture of the new earth condition in the Millennial age. The Jordan represents the sentence of death against mankind. People will learn God's righteous laws in the kingdom. Some, however, will want to go back to the old ways that brought so much suffering. If they continue to oppose the laws of the kingdom, they will be cut off in second death from which there is no resurrection.



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The people walked across the Jordan River because God held back its waters.

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## Conquest of Canaan

“Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Be strong and courageous.” Joshua 10:25

There are many unusual stories in the Bible that tell us of God’s dealings with and watchcare over his chosen people, the Israelites.

In Canaan, the city of Jericho was heavily walled for protection against its enemies. God directed Joshua to take the city in a strange way. At the end of seven days of marching around the city while blowing trumpets, the walls crumbled. Joshua and his small army were able to take the city easily.

The story about Joshua’s long day sounds strange, when he apparently asked the sun and moon stand still; however, it is not to be understood literally. It is unlikely God would arbitrarily suspend all the laws of our universe to do such a thing. The Scripture is speaking of the *sunlight* and the *moonlight*. These were perhaps darkened by a violent storm in which great hailstones rained down on Joshua’s enemies, killing many. The intense darkness would have frightened the Midianites and confused them. They were used to bright sunlit days, and indeed, even worshipped the sun! The darkness of the day and the moonless night gave Joshua the advantage and he won the battle. This is one way to interpret the sun and moon “standing still.” Joshua 10:12-15

Gideon had an army of 32,000 men, but God had him reduce the number to three hundred! With this tiny army, Gideon defeated the Midianites and the land was at peace for forty years. Read the fascinating account of Gideon’s little band in Judges Chapters 6, 7, and 8.

Another army captain, Jephthah, promised God that he would give him the first thing that came to meet him when returning home after his victory over the Ammonites. The “thing” that came to meet him was his daughter, his only child! Jephthah understood that a vow to God was a serious thing—if you do not want to pay a vow, do not make it (Ecclesiastes 5:4, 5). His daughter felt the same way and did not rebel against her father. She asked him only for a little time to go into the mountains with some of her friends and prepare herself for a life without a husband and children; the rest of her life would be dedicated to God’s service. Judges 11



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Jephthah's daughter was given to the Lord by her father.  
She lived without a husband, completely devoted to God.

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[www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-38.pdf](http://www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-38.pdf).

## Anointing of David

“Do not consider his appearance or his height . . . The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” 1 Samuel 16:7

The Israelites wanted a king just as the nations around them had their kings. God had been their invisible king and Samuel the Prophet guided and judged them according to the direction of the LORD. But the Israelites wanted a human king and a royal family who would live in a palace! To please the people, God chose Saul to be the first king of Israel.

Saul was tall, strong, handsome, and, at first, humble. In the beginning he led the people in the right way. But after a few years, he became careless about obeying God’s commandments.

God directed Saul to attack the Amalekites and completely destroy them and all their goods. Instead, Saul and his men captured their king and kept the best of the sheep and oxen and anything else that appealed to them. When Samuel asked him why he did this, Saul said he wanted the animals to give to God in sacrifice. But Samuel told him God would much rather have obedience than sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:22). Eventually, God took the kingdom away from Saul.

God told Samuel he had chosen one of Jesse’s sons to be the next king of Israel, and Samuel was to anoint him. Seven of Jesse’s sons passed before Samuel; they were tall and handsome young men, but God rejected them all. Samuel was surprised, and asked Jesse if these were all his sons. Jesse answered that the youngest, David, was outside taking care of the sheep. When David came

before Samuel, God said, “Rise and anoint him; he is the one.” Samuel poured the olive oil upon David’s head and the spirit of Jehovah God came upon David. 1 Samuel 16:12, 13

We are especially interested in the story of David because his name means beloved, and also because he was a picture of The Christ—Jesus and his faithful brethren, the church.

David was anointed many years before he became king. Just as the years of trials and testings David experienced were to prepare him for his office as king, so Jesus and the church also have a period of trials and testings in preparation for their roles as kings and priests in the next age.



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David was anointed many years before he actually became king.

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## **Jealousy of Saul**

“Jealousy is cruel as the grave.”

Song of Solomon 8:6 (King James)

King Saul was a tall man, good looking, and he possessed much wisdom. From the human standpoint he was quite ideal. But King Saul tried to rule the people in the same way other kings ruled. He completely ignored the fact that his kingdom was different from the other kingdoms. He also overlooked the fact that God was the true king of Israel and he as king only represented God and should be guided by him in every way.

David, on the other hand, was anxious to do God’s will and was repentant whenever he made a mistake. He was called a “man after God’s own heart.” 1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22

When Saul became unusually nervous and depressed, he was glad for David’s music to cheer him. When Saul was desperately frightened of Goliath and the Philistines, he was grateful for David’s bravery which saved the battle. But when the people praised David more than they did Saul, the king became exceedingly angry and jealous and tried to kill the young man.

Saul tried to get help from his son Jonathan in his wicked plan to kill David, but Jonathan loved David and helped him escape from his father’s wrath. Even though the anointing of David was kept a secret, Saul realized that God’s favor was with this young man which only served to increase his jealous feelings.

It was a hard trial for David to wait for God’s due time to become king of Israel, since his life was always in danger from the angry Saul. However, he learned many valuable lessons in patience!

David was humble but he was also courageous. In the name of the LORD he fearlessly killed Goliath. David was courageous but he was also merciful. When Saul tried to kill David, he ran away and hid to save his life. But twice when David could have killed Saul, he would not do so, even though others thought he should. He said, “I will not lift my hand against my master; because he is the LORD’s anointed.” 1 Samuel 24:10



When angry and jealous, King Saul tried to kill David.

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## Saul Disobeys God

“Why did you not obey the LORD? Why did you pounce on the plunder and do evil in the eyes of the LORD?”

1 Samuel 15:19

God gave King Saul special instructions through his prophet Samuel. Saul, however, was always self-willed and did things his own way. The Amalekites were a wicked people. When they were at war with Israel, God told Saul to slay every one of them and not to take any of their things.

Not only did Saul take King Agag captive, he took the best of the animals, telling Samuel he planned to give them to God as sacrifices. The lesson we should learn from this is in Samuel’s reply to Saul: “To obey is better than sacrifice.” 1 Samuel 15:22

If the slain people had gone into eternal torment (hell fire), it would have been a terrible thing for God to command that they should all be killed. But the Bible does not teach that there is such a horrible place for the “dead.” Because of Jesus’ death and resurrection, all the families of the earth will be brought back to life in a resurrection. God had sentenced Adam to death which meant everyone would die. So it does not matter if people die by famine, war or illness. God will, in the kingdom, resurrect everyone and give them an opportunity to live forever under much better conditions.

The resurrection of all people is a most wonderful truth taught in the Bible (Hosea 13:14; John 5:28, 29). All who do not receive a knowledge of God in this life will have a chance to learn to know him and his marvelous plan in the next age when Messiah rules.

In the past, many people were in ignorance because they were not allowed to study God’s word or did not know how to read. During the Dark Ages there were few Bibles because they had to

be hand-copied; it took months and years to complete just one. Because we have printing presses today, we have many Bibles from which to read, study, and learn of God's plans and purposes for all mankind. Most people can now afford to have several Bibles in their home, as well as concordances, Bible dictionaries, and other study helps.



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Those who died in ancient battles will all be resurrected.

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## The Witch of Endor

“Let no one be found among you who . . . engages in witchcraft. . . . Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD.” Deuteronomy 18:10-12

The angels who were disobedient before the flood were not permitted to live on earth like men anymore. Nor were they allowed back into their former home in heaven.

Their punishment for being disobedient was to be restricted to the area around the earth. There they could invisibly influence those human beings who would allow themselves to be “used” by them. Those who were so used are called mediums and they work with the angels of Satan to deceive other humans. It is wise to stay away from them. Moses had warned the Israelites to drive all wizards and witches out of the lands they conquered or put them to death.

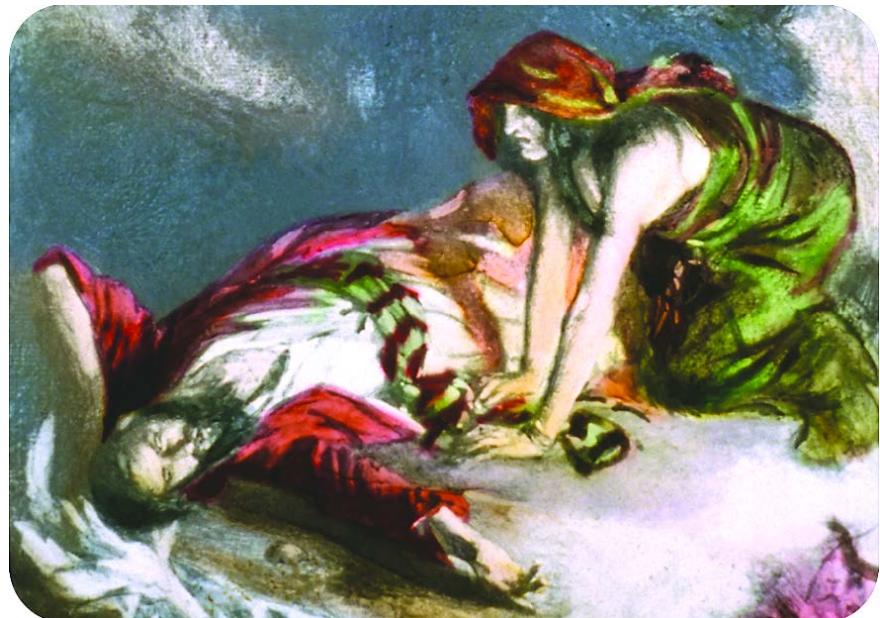
The Philistines gathered to battle King Saul’s army and the frightened king knew he could not win, but he hoped he could find help. There had been a time when God had guided him, but now he had sinned against God so he could not expect a blessing from that source. In desperation, Saul turned to a witch at Endor to contact the dead Samuel for advice. 1 Samuel 28:3-25

Because Samuel was dead and could not actually respond to the witch, evil spirits or fallen angels impersonated him. They gave the witch information she used to convince Saul she had really seen and spoken to Samuel.

She told Saul his army would lose the battle the next day and he and his sons would be killed. When the battle did take place,

Saul and three of his sons were killed (including David's close friend, Jonathan), but one son, Ish-bosheth, survived, reigned as king over Israel for two years, and was killed by two of his captains. 2 Samuel 2:10; 4:5-7.

Fallen angels work with Satan to continue the lie Satan told Eve in the garden: "You will not surely die" (Genesis 3:4). Although mediums claim they receive information from those who have died, the Bible assures us that "the dead know nothing." Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10



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The witch at Endor used evil spirits to impersonate dead Samuel.

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[www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-42.pdf](http://www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-42.pdf)

## **David Reproved**

“The Lord disciplines those he loves.” Hebrews 12:6

The Bible is completely honest when it describes people. King David’s wrongs are mentioned just as fully as are his good and heroic deeds. David had been a humble shepherd boy; he became a brave soldier and was a loving friend to King Saul’s son, Jonathan. He had been a loyal subject to the king who hated him.

But David was overcome in a weakness of the flesh when he had one of his soldiers, Uriah, killed in battle so he could marry his beautiful wife, Bathsheba.

God sent his prophet Nathan to King David who had deadened his conscience about his transgression. Nathan told the king a story about a wealthy man stealing a sheep from a poor man. It made David angry that such a thing could happen and he asked Nathan the man’s name.

The prophet declared, “You are the man!” This humbled David as he realized his terrible mistake and he wept and asked God to forgive him. Because he was truly repentant, God did forgive him, yet he still punished David for his evil act. 2 Samuel 12:1-25

The honesty of the Bible is shown in both the Old and New Testaments. Even though Abraham was faithful and was called “God’s friend” (James 2:23), yet he made mistakes in his life.

The apostles had many faults. When Jesus was accused and condemned to die on the cross, his beloved friend, Peter, was so frightened he would not admit he even knew Jesus. Paul, the apostle who took the place of Judas, had been the cruel Saul of Tarsus. He consented to the stoning of Stephen and brought much

persecution upon the early church. Peter and John were called “unschooled, ordinary men.” Acts 4:13

God loves us and helps us when we ask for his forgiveness and strive to do better. In spite of his faults, David was loyal at heart to God. He became Israel’s most beloved king and God promised that the future kingdom would come through his descendants.



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Nathan told King David: “You are the man!”

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## Solomon in All His Glory

“The fear [reverence] of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.” Proverbs 9:10

King David loved God with all his heart, but most of his years were spent in battle. When he wanted to build a temple for God, he was not permitted to do so. David experienced sorrows, testings, and lessons just as all God’s people do during their lives on earth.

King Solomon was the second son of David and Bathsheba. Just before his father died, he became Israel’s third king. He had been educated by the prophet Nathan. His reign was peaceful and prosperous and he was permitted to build God’s temple. The world marveled at his wisdom and great riches. Solomon was like God’s people in heavenly glory—able to bless wisely from abundant riches.

Solomon’s fame spread throughout the civilized world. The Queen of Sheba, who lived in southern Arabia and was also very wealthy, came to visit him and see for herself. She was amazed at what she saw and said, “Not even half was told to me.” 1 Kings 10:7

After Nathan’s death, Solomon turned to the ways of the heathen gods. Therefore God took away from him the privilege of having the Messiah, Jesus, born from his line of descendants.

Jesus was the perfect son of God and much wiser than Solomon. Strangely, the people of Palestine did not appreciate Jesus. They wanted a great warrior, a strong athlete, a rich king, a clever ruler. They heard Jesus, a poor carpenter’s son, talking about flowers and fish and ordinary people. Few were impressed.

The “eyes” of our understanding must be opened to be able to truly appreciate spiritual things (Matthew 13:16). Only then can we see the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the love of God.

Only a few will have their eyes opened at the present time (during what is called the Gospel age). In the kingdom everyone will know of the love, wisdom, and great riches of God and his dear son. Then they will worship their Creator in spirit and in truth. John 4:24; 12:32



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The Queen of Sheba was impressed with Solomon's glory!

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## The Temple

“God’s temple is sacred, and you are that temple.”

1 Corinthians 3:17

King David greatly desired to build the temple, the house of the LORD, but God did not allow him to do so because of the wars and bloodshed that occurred during his reign (1 Chronicles 22:8). King David represented the church members while they are here on earth.

King Solomon, who represented the church members after they have been glorified, did build the temple of God. His peaceful rule pictured the reign of Christ in the Millennial age.

The tabernacle in the wilderness represented God’s temporary home with the Israelites. Later the temple was built in its place and this let the people know God would always dwell with them.

What is the difference between a tabernacle and a temple? A tabernacle is a temporary structure and a temple is a permanent structure.

The tabernacle represents the church during the Gospel age, for this is their temporary home while they are being prepared and built up as a spiritual temple.

The temple represents the church in glory. Solomon’s temple took thousands of workers seven years to complete. It was erected without the sound of a hammer, ax, or any tool of iron (1 Kings 6:7). In the same way each member of the church is being fitted and polished for a place in the spiritual temple even though others know nothing about what is happening.

The temple was a beautiful place to pray and worship God away from the busy noises of the world. It was holy, set apart from

the world for the worship of God. It was beautiful and glorious, and built to last forever. But Solomon's temple was destroyed in 606 B.C. when the Chaldeans conquered Judah. Much later, in Jesus' day, King Herod built another temple of great splendor on the same site. Eventually it was also destroyed.

The followers of Christ Jesus are being shaped for a place in God's spiritual temple. Just as David spent his lifetime fighting the enemies of God's people, so the saints spend their lives fighting sin in their lives. All of God's faithful saints will be "living stones" in his temple. 1 Peter 2:4, 5



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David was not permitted to build the temple because he was a man of war.

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[www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-45.pdf](http://www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-45.pdf)

## Elijah and the Priests of Baal

“If the LORD is God, follow him.” 1 Kings 18:21

Elijah the Tishbite was a faithful servant and prophet of God. At that time Ahab was the king of Israel. His wife, Jezebel, who was exceedingly wicked, prayed to the gods of her father—Asherah, the goddess of wood represented in trees and wooden poles, and Baal, represented in stone pillars. She also brought hundreds of false prophets from her home in Tyre so they could teach the people to pray to them too. Worst of all, they killed God’s true prophets.

Elijah (whose name means “My God is Jehovah”) boldly faced the powerful Ahab and told him there would be a great drought in the land for many years. This angered King Ahab and he sought to kill Elijah. But God protected the prophet and told him to hide near the brook Cherith where he sent ravens to feed him twice a day. Eventually the brook dried up. However, God continued to protect Elijah by sending him to the home of a widow and her little son who were almost out of food. Through God’s power, Elijah caused her containers of meal and oil to stay full until the rains returned. Later, he restored the widow’s son to life after he died of an illness.

Finally Elijah returned to Israel, not to surrender to the king, but to show the people that Jehovah is the true God. He called together over eight hundred priests and prophets of Baal and told them to prepare a sacrifice to their god. Elijah also built an altar and a bullock was placed on each altar. Elijah and the priests were each to pray for their gods to consume the sacrifices with fire.

All day the heathen priests called upon Baal to accept their sacrifice. There was no response. The prophets called loudly and leaped up and down at the altar. Finally they cut themselves with knives, shedding much of their blood. Still Baal did not answer.

Elijah had several barrels of water poured upon his sacrifice until it was completely soaked! Then Elijah prayed to God and immediately fire came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifice, and even licked up the water in the trench around the altar. The people fell on their faces, convinced that Jehovah was the true God. All the priests and prophets of Baal were killed and the rains returned to water the earth. 1 Kings 18:20-46



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Elijah was miraculously fed by ravens twice a day.

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[www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-46.pdf](http://www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-46.pdf)

## Zedekiah: Last King of David's Line

"I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land."

Jeremiah 23:5

King Saul of Israel did not remain faithful to God and, as a result, his kingdom was given to David. King David was beloved by God who promised him that the great Millennial king, the Messiah, would be one of his descendants.

For several centuries all of Israel's kings were of David's family. Some of the kings were good, many were bad. The last king of David's line was Zedekiah. He was so evil that God said of him, "O profane and wicked prince of Israel, whose day has come, whose time of punishment has reached its climax . . . A ruin! A ruin! I will make it a ruin! It will not be restored until he comes to whom it rightfully belongs; to him [Messiah] I will give it." Ezekiel 21:25-27

When God took the kingdom from Zedekiah, he told him that he would be taken a prisoner to Babylon and that he would never see Babylon! Both of these prophecies came true. When Zedekiah was taken prisoner, his sons were slain and his eyes were put out; he entered Babylon a blind man. Since then God has allowed the Gentiles to have dominion or rulership over the nation of Israel for 2,520 years. That domination ended in 1914 A.D.

In Bible symbolism one literal day represents a year. The Jewish year had twelve months of thirty days each, so each year of three hundred and sixty days represented three hundred and sixty years. There would be a complete overthrow of Israel's government for a period of "seven times". Leviticus 26:18, 21, 24, 28

By multiplying 7 and 360 we can see that the period of time the kingdom would be “ruined” (though not completely destroyed) would be 2,520 years. In August of 1914 World War I began. This marked the end of the Gentile times of 2,520 years. World War I caused tremendous changes in all the governments of the world. They have been in a state of change ever since, with few monarchs still reigning. Those who do, have no power.

Yes, the throne was taken from God’s chosen people and the land lay desolate. But they were left with one hope: “Until he comes to whom it rightfully belongs . . . to him I will give it.” Ezekiel 21:27



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Zedekiah's sons were slain and his eyes were put out just before he was carried off to Babylon.

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## **Jerusalem Desolated Seventy Years**

“The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you . . . [it] is to be holy for you.” Leviticus 25:11, 12

The Jewish nation was to keep a Sabbath every seven years when they would let the land rest for a full year (Leviticus 25:1-7). Every fiftieth year was a jubilee year. During this jubilee year these rules were to be followed:

1. Slaves were set free—liberty was proclaimed for all the Israelites who were in bondage to any of their countrymen.
2. All debts were canceled—the land and other possessions were to be returned to those who had been compelled to sell them because of poverty.
3. The land was to rest—no sowing, no reaping, no pruning of vineyards. Spontaneous or natural growth was to be left for the poor and the traveler. Leviticus 25:8-16

The Israelites, like many people, were selfish. They did not want to lose money on land they had acquired during the forty-nine years. So they only kept the jubilees halfheartedly, and eventually they did not keep them at all.

When Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, took King Zedekiah and his people captive to Babylon, this conquering monarch destroyed Jerusalem and destroyed the temple with fire. The city lay desolate for seventy years. The city’s desolation was God’s punishment upon the Israelites for not properly keeping their jubilee years.

The Israelites did not understand how important it was to keep the jubilees; they did not know it was a picture of a grander time to come in God's plan.

The number seven is closely connected with all God's works and plans. It pictures perfection—and God will eventually have everything perfect. This will be after the times of restitution, which is when all mankind will come back in the resurrection and learn to live in accordance with God's laws in the Millennial age (Isaiah 26:9; 35). How wonderful to think of a perfect earth filled with perfect people! This was God's plan from the beginning.



Every fiftieth year was a jubilee year.

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## Daniel Interprets a Dream

“Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.”

Daniel 1:17

Daniel was a young Israelite who was taken captive to Babylon along with many others. He and three other captives were chosen to be trained for special jobs in the Babylonian government. They served well for that was their duty, but they continued to pray to God and obey him, and live according to his commands. They loved God with their whole heart.

One night King Nebuchadnezzar awoke from a terrible nightmare—he was trembling with fear. But in the morning he could not remember his dream except it seemed important. He became extremely angry with the “wise men” of Babylon because they could not tell him what his dream was, or what it meant.

If he had been able to tell them the dream, they would have guessed at its interpretation; but they could not easily explain something the king himself could not remember. The king was so furious with them he ordered them all killed. Daniel and his companions would be included for they were among those who counseled the king.

The young men prayed for God’s help and guidance. God then revealed Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and its interpretation to Daniel. Daniel asked the commander of the king’s guard not to execute the “wise men,” but to take him to the king and he would explain the dream.

This is what Daniel told the king: He had dreamed of a huge statue which had a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, and legs of iron. The feet and toes were of iron mixed with clay. It was awesome!

Then a stone, cut out of the mountain without hands, hit the feet of the statue and it fell to the ground. It was ground to powder and the wind carried it away. The stone grew until it became a great mountain and filled the whole earth!

Daniel explained that the head of gold was Nebuchadnezzar himself—king of Babylon. The kingdom of Medo-Persia was represented by the silver, Greece by the brass, and the Roman Empire by the iron legs. The iron and clay mixed showed that the Roman Empire would become divided. Each kingdom was followed by an inferior kingdom.

The stone that struck the statue represented the kingdom of God, which will replace the governments of earth and stand forever. Daniel 2:44



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Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a huge statue.

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[www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-49.pdf](http://www.blessedbible.com/linked/a2z-lesson-49.pdf)

## Daniel's Dream of Great Beasts

“The sovereignty . . . of the kingdoms . . . will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom.” Daniel 7:27

God revealed many things to Daniel, for he faithfully served and openly worshiped him. Nebuchadnezzar had a dream of a great statue which represented the kingdoms of the world. Daniel also had a dream of earthly kingdoms.

The world looks at the kingdoms of this world and sees them as great and powerful and glorious. God, however, sees them as wicked and beastly.

In Daniel's dream Babylon was represented by a lion-like beast with eagles' wings—splendid, proud, ruler of all. The second beast was like a bear—big, heavy, stubborn, powerful—and represented Medo-Persia. The third beast was leopard-like—clever, sneaky, unreliable, deceitful—and represented the kingdom of Greece. The Roman Empire was represented by a fourth beast that could not be described—hideous and ferocious and extremely strong. It was so terrible it could not be compared with any other beast!

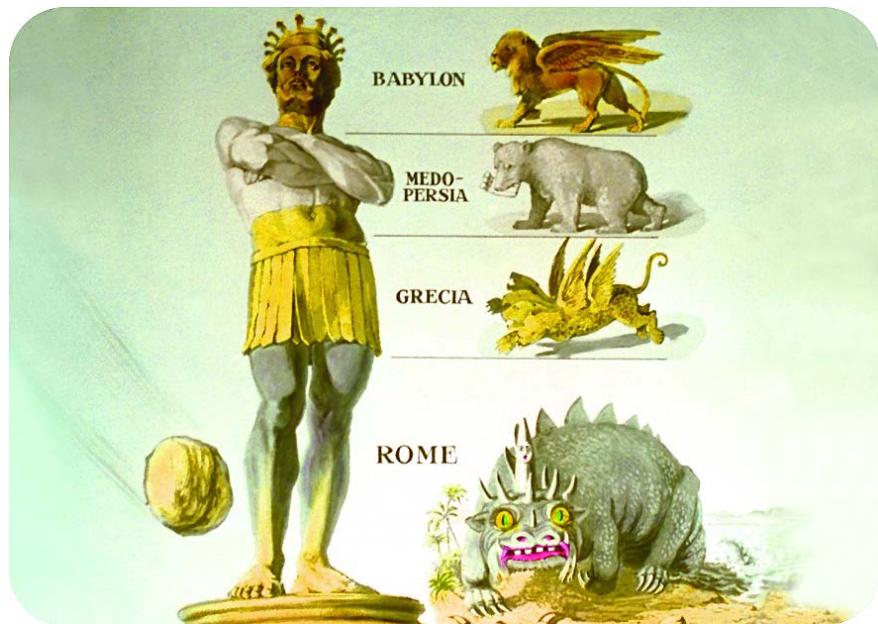
The last beast had ten horns (horns represent power). These horns are like the ten toes on the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Then a small horn grew and replaced three of the ten horns—the Roman Empire was changing. Instead of being a heathen kingdom of armies and false religions, it became Christian. But the Holy Roman Empire was just as wicked and ungodly as the heathen empire had been.

This change from heathen to Christian was in name only. It was shown in Daniel's dream when another horn grew in size until

the three little horns (the divisions of the old Roman Empire) were pushed out of the way.

Although this fourth beast still exists, its power and influence have gradually lessened and, in due time, this beast will be destroyed. The cause of the fourth empire's fall will be the establishment of the fifth universal empire of the world, the Kingdom of God, under Christ and his church. Daniel 7:18, 27

The fifth kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all the people of earth will learn its laws and obey them. What joy to look forward to this kingdom for which so many have prayed for so long: "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." Matthew 6:10



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What the king saw as glorious, Daniel saw as beastly.

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## The Fall of Babylon

“So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.” Isaiah 55:11

When King Nebuchadnezzar became full of pride, he had a great statue erected of himself as earth’s ruler. Then he made a law that everyone had to bow down and worship it. Anyone who would not kneel to the statue would be thrown into a burning fiery furnace.

Nebuchadnezzar had been pleased with Daniel’s three Hebrew friends for they were excellent servants in the Babylonian kingdom. He did not expect them to refuse to worship the statue, but that’s what they did because they loved God and were loyal to Him. The king was furious and had the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual and the three Hebrews were thrown into it. Even the soldiers who bound them and threw them into the furnace were killed by the extreme heat. Daniel 3:20-22

The king and his lords were amazed when another person was seen with the Hebrews walking around in the furnace—one “like unto the son of God.” None of them was hurt! Nebuchadnezzar realized that the God of the Hebrews was powerful and commanded the people to worship him.

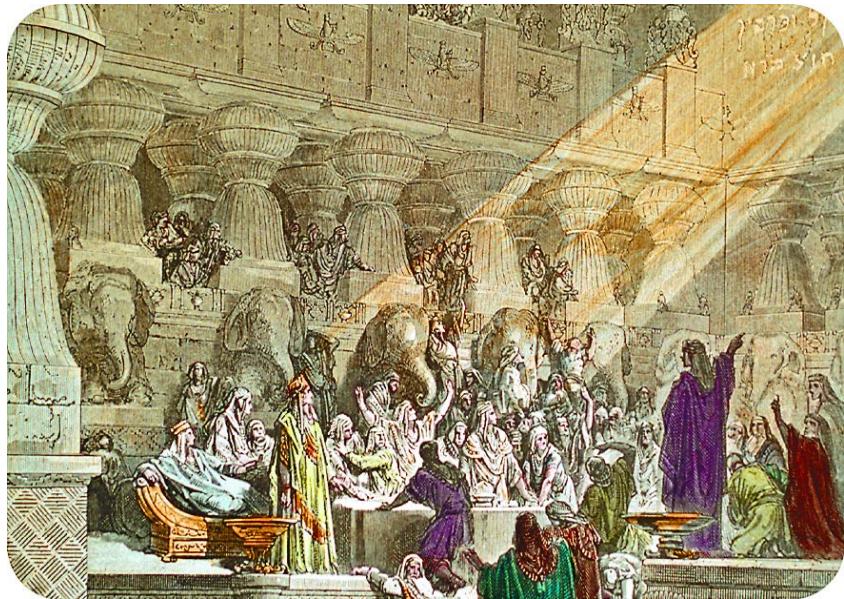
But Nebuchadnezzar was still full of pride because of his riches and power as king of Babylon. He became insane and acted as though he were a beast. He lived with the animals in the fields and ate grass like cows. He remained that way for seven years before his reason returned.

Belshazzar, Nebuchadnezzar’s grandson, became king of Babylon. He was also full of pride. The kingdom was rich and

there was much idleness. All these things helped to bring about the fall of Babylon.

Belshazzar had a great feast for a thousand of his officers to celebrate the greatness of Babylon. While they were eating and drinking, the fingers of a man's hand were suddenly seen writing upon the wall of the palace in letters of fire: *Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin*. The king asked Daniel for an interpretation and what he heard was like a crushing blow: "God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end. You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting. Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians." Daniel 5:26-28

That night Cyrus the Mede and his army marched into Babylon through the dried-up river bed and captured the city which the Babylonians thought could never be taken. King Belshazzar was put to death and Cyrus became king!



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Daniel told the king the meaning of the handwriting on the wall.

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## Kings Darius and Cyrus

“Praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.” Daniel 4:37

During the Israelites’ seventy years of captivity in Babylon, four kings learned of the God of Israel. First was King Nebuchadnezzar who, when he returned from his insane life with the animals, lifted up his eyes to heaven and gave praise and honor to the God of Israel.

The second was King Belshazzar, who once had his wine served in goblets stolen from God’s temple and that night was slain. This ended the Babylonian kingdom. Daniel 5:2-4, 30

Third was King Darius, the Mede, who took the kingdom of Babylon that night, and who took Daniel as well. He wanted Daniel to be the first prince over all the princes and rulers of that kingdom.

Darius appreciated Daniel’s honesty and grew to love him as a noble friend. But the princes and rulers were jealous and hated the king’s favorite, not just because they wanted the favor of the king; with Daniel watching everything so carefully they could not steal from the empire’s wealth.

They plotted against Daniel yet could find no fault in him. The only thing he did besides work long hours for the king was to pray to his God. Three times each day Daniel went to an upper room where it was quiet and restful. There he prayed to God before an open window. Daniel was not ashamed to be seen praying to his God. Others too realized he was not pretending to pray to Darius.

This was enough, to have him thrown into the den of hungry lions! The story of his experience and rescue is in Daniel Chapter 6.

The fourth king was King Cyrus of Persia whose heart was stirred by God to issue a proclamation giving the Israelites liberty to return to Palestine. He also gave money and decreed that the precious vessels of the Lord's temple should be returned.

About fifty thousand Israelites went back to Palestine. This was not many out of the great number who had been captured. These remembered God's promises and wanted to live in the land he had promised them. They rebuilt the city, and in due time, they rebuilt the temple as well.



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Daniel's enemies plotted to throw him into the lions' den.

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## The Valley of Dry Bones

“They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your fathers lived. They and their children . . . will live there forever.” Ezekiel 37:25

Ezekiel, a priest, was used by God to prophesy as was Daniel. The faithful Israelites yearned to know about their future as a nation—what were God’s plans for his chosen people? Daniel had worked in a heathen palace and spoke about his God to the Babylonians, but Ezekiel taught his own people and lived among them.

The elders of Israel came to Ezekiel to learn God’s will. Although they had obeyed God’s prophets in peacefully surrendering to Nebuchadnezzar and being taken captive to Babylon, they longed to return to their homeland.

God caused Ezekiel to see a vision. In that vision the prophet saw a valley full of dry bones. He knew these bones represented the nation of Israel—scattered throughout Babylon, their hopes dead. Ezekiel 37:1-6

As Ezekiel walked among the bones in this vision, God asked him if they could ever live again—could the nation of Israel ever be restored? Then the vision from God showed that the day would come when the scattered bones would come together to form a full skeleton. The breath of life would enter that body and it would live again. Yes, the nation of Israel would live again!

This would happen at a time of great commotion—thunder and earthquakes—picturing that God would restore Israel during the time of trouble at the end of the Gospel age. Daniel 12:1-4

Evidence that the bones had come together to form a skeleton came in 1948 when Israel was recognized as a nation. Near the end

of the Gospel age God brought the dry bones back from where they had been scattered for so many centuries! This was not a resurrection from the dead, but of the “dead hopes” of the Israelites.

Yet the prophecy’s fulfillment had only just begun. The complete fulfillment belongs to a future time, to the Millennial age, when God will remove the stony hearts of the people and replace them with new hearts of flesh. This will not be an instantaneous work. It will come about gradually through the troubles and afflictions of the “day of wrath.” By instruction in righteousness and blessings from God, the transformation to hearts of flesh will take place. Ezekiel 11:19



Israel has come back to life, in 1948 it was recognized as a nation.

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## The Logos Made Flesh

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:14

Long before Jesus lived on the earth, he was in the heavens as a spirit being with his Father, Jehovah God. He is called the *Logos*, a Greek word that means *word* or *mouthpiece*.

The Scriptures also call him the *Alpha* and *Omega* (Revelation 21:6), which means the *first* and the *last*. He was the first and last work of God’s creation. Revelation 22:13

The Logos created marvelous worlds and creatures, always according to God’s instructions. The Logos had more power and skill than anyone except God himself. He never worked against God’s plans and he took great pleasure in doing God’s will.

This dear son of God, the Logos, is described in Colossians 1:15-18 as the image of God, God’s firstborn, the creator of all things in heaven and earth. Although the Logos was a spirit being, he was not immortal—he could die.

Even in that long ago time the Logos knew he would be asked to come to earth as a human baby, grow up as a perfect man and then give up his human life for Adam. (Psalm 8:5; Hebrews 2:6, 7; Isaiah 9:6) This would take away the sentence of death that was upon Adam and every person who has ever lived.

If the Logos had been immortal, he could not have died in Adam’s place. To be immortal means having life within one’s self—not dependent on anyone or anything else for existence.

God and the Logos loved each other and together they created the universe and all that is in it. One of the most loving things they did was to create man (Genesis 1:26). How sad it made them feel when Adam disobeyed the command to not eat the fruit of a certain tree. However, God knew that Adam would fail the test of obedience and he had already arranged for his redemption. 1 Peter 1:18-20

The Logos was willing to give up the honor and glory that he had in heaven and the close association he had with his Father because he loved mankind. He humbled himself to take on a nature a little lower than that possessed by the angels. Hebrews 2:9

In John 17:5 Jesus prayed only to be restored to the life he previously had with his Father as the Logos. But because he had remained faithful, God rewarded him with the glory and honor of the divine, or immortal, nature!



Before Jesus was born he was a spirit being, called “The Logos.”

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## Tidings of Great Joy

“I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.” Luke 2:10

The Logos was rich in spiritual privileges, glory, and honor, yet for our sake he became poor, giving up everything he had as a perfect spirit being. God transferred his life principle to Mary’s womb. Mary provided and nourished the baby’s body and God provided the life spark. When Jesus was born, the angels rejoiced to announce his birth to the shepherds—they knew this was the Logos made flesh.

God’s law is exact: “life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth” (Deuteronomy 19:21). Only a perfect human life could redeem Adam who had disobeyed God and was sentenced to death. This life could not be that of an ordinary human because all were sinners and imperfect; nor could this life be that of an angel. It had to be a perfect man as Adam was before he had sinned. 1 Timothy 2:6; Psalm 49:7

Since there was no perfect human being to take Adam’s place in death, God prepared a perfect human body so the life principle of the Logos could be born as a baby, the baby of a faithful young Jewish woman named Mary. This baby was holy, harmless, and separate from sinners, and his name was Jesus. (Hebrew 7:26) No longer was he the Logos, for he was no longer a spirit being but a dear little baby boy—a perfect human life. That baby would grow up to be the man Christ Jesus. When he reached the age of thirty, he was an adult according to Jewish law. Then he could offer himself as a sacrifice for Adam and become the Savior of the entire human race! The word *savior* means *life-giver*.

We know that the angel's prophecy of "peace on earth, good will to men" has not yet been fulfilled. We also know that it will be fulfilled in God's due time when all the families of the earth will be blessed.

Thus we see that the "good news" announced by the angels so long ago will, in due time, truly be "good news that will be for **all the people!**" What wonderful blessings God has in store for all mankind because of his great love for his earthly creation. 1 John 4:10; Luke 3:6



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The angels announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds.

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## John the Forerunner

“[John] is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:  
A voice of one calling in the desert, Prepare the way for the  
Lord, make straight paths for him.” Matthew 3:3

Lovely young Mary had her baby, Jesus, the most wonderful baby in all the world. Six months before this her cousin Elizabeth also had a child, John, and he was also used by God. He became known as John the Baptist.

The overruling providences of God brought about the birth of John. Luke 1:5-25 tells us about it. He was the one who would tell the people that the Messiah was coming.

Luke 1:80 says that John grew and became strong in spirit. He lived a simple life in the desert, a life that would help him in his work of ministering to the nation of Israel. Desert life would call for much courage and strength of character.

John was the last of the prophets of the Jewish age. Jesus began a new age, called the Gospel age, when the church class would be developed.

John believed God’s promise that he would send someone to deliver Israel. He realized that the Messiah would come and sinners would not be able to receive his blessings. So John preached to the people, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” And when some did repent and were sorry for their sins against the law, John baptized them. Baptism was a picture of washing their sins away.

John’s baptism was not intended for Gentiles for they were not under the Law of Moses and therefore could not sin against it.

John's baptism was not for faithful Jews, those who were striving to follow the law, but for those Jews who had cared nothing for the law and had constantly sinned against it.

John's baptism is not for Christians. Their baptism is for a different purpose, not to wash away their sins against the law. Instead Christian baptism shows a new life devoted to God.

When the nation of Israel left Egypt to follow Moses, it was a picture of baptism in the Gospel age. The Israelites agreed to do God's will and follow Moses when they marched after him into the sea which separated so they could pass over it. So when they are baptized, Christians agree to do God's will and follow Jesus, leaving worldly pleasures behind.



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Jesus was six months younger than his cousin, John the Baptist.

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## The Baptism of Jesus

“I have come to do your will, O God.” Hebrews 10:7

Jesus presented himself to John to be baptized. This surprised John for he knew Jesus was a perfect man and did not need to repent or be sorry for his sins: he had none. John told him that he had more need for Jesus to baptize him. But Jesus said, “Let it be so for now.”

Jesus’ baptism had a new and special meaning—it symbolized the full consecration of his life to God as a sacrifice, even to death. John did not understand, but he did as Jesus asked and baptized him in the Jordan River. To the others who were there John said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” John 1:29

John saw the holy spirit come upon Jesus in the form of a dove and he heard God speak, saying, “This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.”

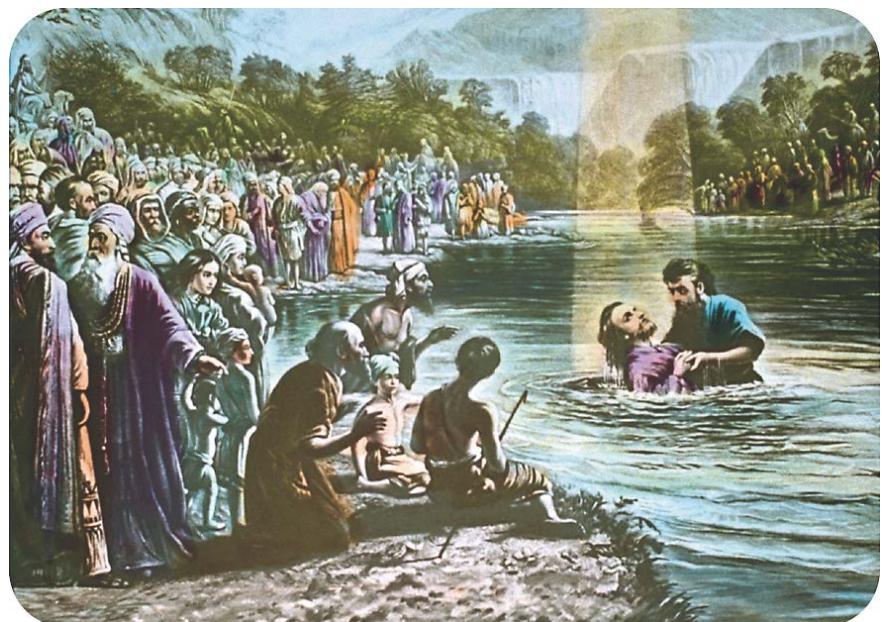
As Jesus came up out of the water, the heavenly truths became clearer for he had received the holy spirit and could understand the “deep things” (or truths) of God (1 Corinthians 2:10). From the time Jesus was immersed at thirty years of age until he died on the cross three-and-a-half years later, he was being baptized. In other words, immersion in water is only the beginning of true baptism. It is a symbol of what is in the heart, the desire to do the Father’s will (Luke 12:50). As Jesus was dying on the cross, he cried, “It is finished!” His baptism into death, begun at Jordan, was now completed.

Christians are baptized into Jesus’ death (Romans 6:3). When a Christian is raised up from the water, it shows the “burial” of his

personal desires forever. He now begins a new life completely dedicated to the Lord. This would be impossible to do on one's own, but Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection have guaranteed that all the needed help will be there.

Those who are baptized receive the holy spirit to help them understand and "correctly handle the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15

Baptism into death is the real baptism for the church, as it was for Jesus. Water baptism is only a symbol, or picture of it. Those who have willing, honest, and teachable hearts will try to follow in the footsteps of Jesus the rest of their lives. (1 John 2:6) If they remain faithful in doing this, they will share with him in the first resurrection.



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When a Christian is baptized, he begins a new life completely devoted to the Lord.

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## Gospel of the Kingdom

“Give ear, O God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name.” Daniel 9:18

For more than sixteen hundred years God’s chosen people, the Israelites, had waited and prayed for a deliverer who would be greater than Moses. They looked for a king who would be greater than David, a man after God’s own heart, or even Solomon in all his glory.

Now the deliverer, the Messiah for whom they had looked for so long, was among them. John the Baptist (Matthew 3:2), Jesus (Matthew 4:17), and Jesus’ followers (Luke 10:9, 11) told the people that the kingdom was at hand, but most of the Jews did not believe it.

Many were too busy to remember God’s promises. Some were too selfish to fit into God’s plan for a kingdom—they wanted rich and powerful rulers like the heathen emperors of their day. They did not want to follow a poor carpenter’s son who did not even have his own home. Matthew 8:20

Jesus had come to his own people and they rejected him—indeed, they crucified him. But a few did understand and believe what Jesus was telling them. These were given the privilege to become sons of God. Hebrews 3:1-6

God’s people were like beloved, well-cared-for servants. They remembered Moses as their greatest leader and knew that they should serve God by obeying, to the best of their ability, the laws God had given to them through Moses.

Now these faithful and obedient ones could be more than favored and protected servants. Now they could be sons of God, part of the house of sons, brothers of Jesus, joint-heirs of the kingdom!

At Pentecost they received God's holy spirit—the power and understanding they needed to work with God.

The offer to the Jews was taken away because there were not enough who were worthy to become part of the church. The invitation then went to the Gentiles. When the number of the church (144,000) is complete, no more will be called to become a part of it (Revelation 14:1). They are called a “little flock” and they will reign with Jesus Christ in the kingdom. Luke 12:32; Revelation 5:10

When the work of gathering out a church class has been completed, the Gospel age will end, Israel's blindness will be removed, and the blessings of the Millennial age will come to the whole world!



Jesus opened up the opportunity for believers to become sons of God.

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## **Parables of the Kingdom**

“The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables.”

Mark 4:11

Jesus is considered a great and remarkable teacher even by many who are not Christians. One of his methods of teaching was to tell parables. There are about thirty parables in the New Testament.

Parables are short stories that illustrate a moral lesson or religious principle. It is a comparison of two objects for the purpose of teaching.

Teaching with parables was done so that only a few would understand the message. Jesus taught the deepest truths of the kingdom in these interesting stories. We can read and study them and gain a much better understanding of the plans and purposes of God.

The parable of the king’s son in Matthew 22:2-10 tells us that the Jews had the first invitation to receive the highest place in the kingdom. After that, because there were many positions left, the invitation went to the Gentiles.

In those days wedding guests had to wear a “wedding garment” (Matthew 22:11-14); it was provided with the invitation. The man who removed his wedding garment was thrown out of the wedding party!

This story shows that those who reject Christ’s sacrifice as an atonement for their sins will have the light of truth taken away from them. They will lose their opportunity to become a part of the church. Those who wish to have a part in the marriage of the bride

(the church) and the bridegroom (Christ) must wear the robe of Christ's righteousness, which is invisible! It is a symbolic robe that Jesus' death provided his followers to cover their sinful flesh. This is called justification which means "to make right."

In Matthew 13:46 we read about the "pearl of great price." The pearl illustrates the value of the kingdom—it has a value beyond all price! It is worth everything we have!

The parable of the talents shows that those who follow Jesus are responsible for the talents they have. Each disciple should be faithful in using even one talent to the best of his or her ability in the Lord's service. Matthew 25:14-29



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Even many who are not Christians consider Jesus a great teacher.

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## Two Parables

“He told them many things in parables.” Matthew 13:3

In the parable recorded in Luke 15:11-32, the man represents God, the older son the Jewish religious leaders, and the younger son the Jews who were careless of their spiritual privileges. Many of these careless Jews were sorry for their sins and were baptized by John.

When the prodigal son saw the error of his ways, after having recklessly spent all of his inheritance, he wanted to return to his father's home as a servant. The father not only welcomed him and forgave him but gave a great feast in his honor.

The proud older brother (who represented the scribes, Pharisees, and religious leaders) did not want to see the father give his wealth and love to someone he thought did not deserve it. However, the father was extremely happy to have his second son home again.

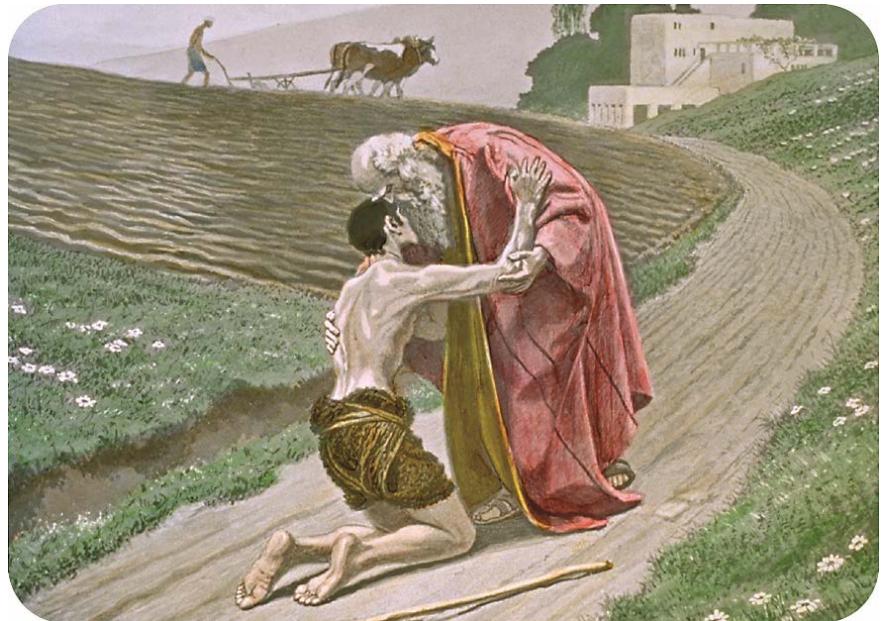
These are the gifts the father gave to his prodigal son: a beautiful robe (picturing the robe of Christ's righteousness), an expensive ring (showing God's influence and power and favor), shoes (sandals of peace), and a fattened calf (as in the tabernacle sacrifices, showing forgiveness).

Those people represented by the older brother were outwardly righteous in following the law, but in fact they were self-righteous, and full of pride and jealousy.

The same lesson is found in another interesting parable (Luke 16:19-31). The Jewish nation was represented by the rich man. His table was loaded with elegant foods, representing the rich promises of God. The Jews were the only ones to have these promises at that

time. Lazarus, the poor beggar, who wanted only to eat crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, represented the Gentile nations. The Gentiles were poor concerning spiritual promises. But the rich man died and great blessings then went to the Gentile nations for God's favor was no longer only for the Jews. The Gentiles could now be invited to become part of the church class. Lazarus also died, picturing the end of his condition of disfavor.

There are many more lessons in this parable, and in the other parables. Remember, they are simply stories designed to illustrate lessons Jesus wanted his disciples to learn.



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The "prodigal son" was a picture of the publicans and sinners in Israel.

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## Awakening

“Meanwhile, all the people were wailing and mourning for her. ‘Stop wailing,’ Jesus said. ‘She is not dead but asleep.’ They laughed at him, knowing that she was dead.”

Luke 8:52, 53

Jairus’ only daughter, a girl of about twelve, had died. Jesus assured Jairus and the people gathered around that the child was only “asleep.” He took her hand and she awakened!

When the brother of Mary and Martha died, Jesus said, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep.” Yet Jesus waited four days before awakening him—his body had already started to decay! John 11:11-14, 17, 39

It is interesting that Lazarus and the others who came back to life after being dead said nothing about where they were or what they felt during the time they were dead. Surely they could have described a beautiful heavenly home if they had been there, or tried to warn others if they had been in a fiery hell.

David is said to have slept with his fathers (1 Kings 2:10, King James). In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-15 Paul speaks of those who have “fallen asleep” in death. The word *sleep* has long been used to describe the death condition. Abraham died and “was gathered to his people” like his fathers who were asleep in their graves. Genesis 25:8

While death and sleep are not exactly alike, yet they are much the same. When you sleep, you know nothing of what is happening around you. Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10 and Psalm 146:4 describe death in just that way.

When a man or beast loses the breath of life, he is dead. It is a condition of quietness or unconsciousness—it is the absence of

life. Mankind was promised an awakening from the sleep of death in the resurrection. Life on the human plane was lost in Eden, but will be restored in the next age. Luke 19:10

Jesus awakened only a few of those who died. This was to illustrate the resurrection in the Millennial age, which will give everlasting life to all who are obedient to God's laws.

We see then that when people die, they are not alive anywhere. They are "asleep in Jesus" in the sense that he is their promised Savior and Redeemer whose sacrifice, called the ransom, provided a way for their future awakening (Daniel 12:2). What a wonderful promise this is!



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The Bible describes death as a sleep from which you expect to awake.

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## Judgment

“I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you [Capernaum].” Matthew 11:24

Jesus performed many of his miracles in the city of Capernaum, yet today it is only a ruin. This fulfills Jesus’ prophecy in Matthew 11:23. The people of Capernaum had been given many privileges and blessings from the Lord, which meant they had a responsibility to use them wisely.

The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah had not received such great blessings and so not as much was expected from them (Matthew 10:15). These cities were notoriously wicked and unholy, yet the Scripture assures us that they would have repented had they had the light and knowledge given to those of Capernaum.

The first judgment day was in Eden—Adam was tested and he failed. Because of his failure, Adam was sentenced to death and this also plunged all of mankind into death. If Jesus had not provided his life a ransom for the life of Adam, thus releasing him and all his children from the death sentence, all would have stayed in the death condition forever!

The Day of Judgment (Millennial age) is not a twenty-four hour day but a thousand-year day (2 Peter 3:8) when all the world will be tested and judged worthy or unworthy of everlasting life. This includes all who lived in Sodom or Gomorrah, and other cities destroyed because of their great sinfulness, and even those that never knew God. Luke 3:6

An individual will be judged only after being given every possible opportunity to do that which is right in God’s sight. Satan’s

influences will be done away with and every help and blessing will be made available so that obedience to the laws of the kingdom will be so much easier.

Those who become followers of Jesus during the Gospel age are released from the punishment that came upon Adam for his disobedience to God's laws. These followers, the little flock, have their own time of testing before the world's great day of judgment.

1 Peter 4:17

When they are given their reward of immortal life, they will become heavenly judges with Jesus (1 Corinthians 6:2). Remembering God's mercy and love in their own experiences, they will be able to help the awakened people learn the ways of righteousness, so that they may gain everlasting life on earth.



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Today the city of Capernaum is only a ruin.

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## Second Death

“Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.” Matthew 25:34

The parable of the sheep and goats (Matthew 25:31-46) pictures kingdom conditions after the church class has been glorified in heaven. It is the only one of Jesus’ parables which explains the work of the kingdom after it has been set up.

All people of all nations, including those who are now asleep in death, will be on trial before The Christ (Jesus and his church) during the thousand years of the Millennial age.

Their true desires will be determined—whether or not they are willing to come into full harmony with God and the laws of the kingdom.

The sheep in the parable represent the people who willingly learn of the love and righteousness of the Heavenly Father and his son, Jesus Christ, and strive to obey the laws of the kingdom. These people will gradually come into harmony with the laws; because they do, they will be judged worthy of everlasting life—to live forever on the perfected earth! Like sheep, they are meek and willing to be led to the “pastures” of truth and righteousness.

The goats, which are not nearly as numerous as the sheep, will show their stubborn and self-willed ways and refuse to receive the instruction which would give them everlasting life. Since they make no attempt to change their sinful ways, they will be judged worthy of second death or destruction—being cut off from life. Revelation 21:8; Acts 3:23; Proverbs 2:22

Many Scriptures use fire as a symbol of destruction. God never intended us to think of fire as punishment for sin. He is a God of love and mercy and would never torture any creature forever in such a terrible way.

Because fire destroys things so completely, the Bible often uses it to show total destruction. The garbage dump of Jerusalem was in the Valley of Hinnom, where a fire was kept burning constantly. Not only was garbage thrown into it, but also dead animals and even the bodies of vicious criminals whom no one had bothered to bury. The Valley of Hinnom was also called Gehenna, often mistranslated “hell” in the Bible. Gehenna represents the second death, from which there will be no redemption, no coming back to life ever again.



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The parable of the sheep and goats pictures conditions in the kingdom.

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## Illustrations of the Kingdom

“Our Father in heaven . . . [may] your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Matthew 6:9, 10

Jesus and his disciples taught others about the kingdom through parables and by performing miracles. The miracles were a sample of what is to happen in the kingdom. Just as many of the Old Testament stories were pictures of things to come, so the miracles, too, were pictures of the kingdom blessings.

Instead of only a few people being healed in the kingdom, all the diseased and disabled of mankind will be healed. Deaf ears will hear, the blind will see. Isaiah 35:5, 6

Leprosy is a picture of sin. When Jesus healed the ten lepers, only one returned to thank him. Only a few in this age appreciate that Jesus died to save all the world from sin. Luke 17:11-17

The healing of the sick represented the fact that in the kingdom all the physical, mental, and moral diseases will be healed by the “Good Physician.” God’s work in Christ is to save the whole world from sin.

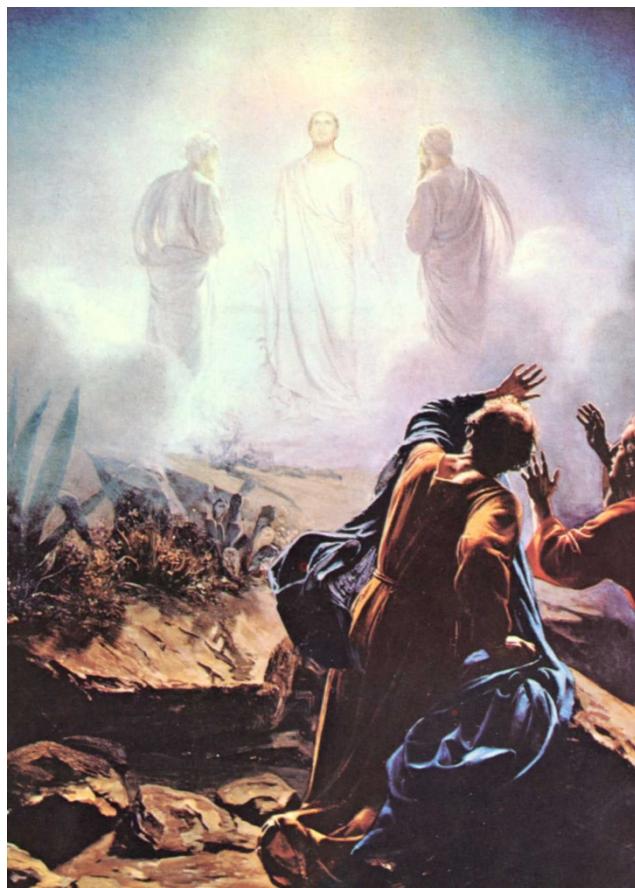
The opening of the blind eyes and the deaf ears represented the opening of the eyes and ears of understanding in the kingdom. Then mankind will realize how much God loves them and the wonderful provisions he has made for everyone.

Our Lord’s transfiguration on the mountain was another illustration of the kingdom. Transfiguration means that while Jesus’ appearance seemed to change, it did not actually do so. It was a vision, or picture, of himself as the glorified divine being he would become.

Peter, James, and John, who were with him, could see the vision as had been promised in Matthew 16:28. They also heard

the voice of God, “This is my Son, whom I love . . . Listen to him.”  
Matthew 17:5

Moses and Elijah, who had been dead for a long time, were also seen in this vision. Moses represented the law and the faithful ancient ones who will be princes in all the earth. Elijah represented the heavenly phase of the kingdom, the church class. The vision assures us that the kingdom will come in God’s due time!



When Jesus was transfigured on the mountain,  
it provided a vision of the kingdom.

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## Hosanna in the Highest

“Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Blessed is the King of Israel!” John 12:13

Near the end of Jesus’ ministry, he visited his good friends, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, in Bethany. (This was the same Lazarus whom Jesus had awakened from the sleep of death.) He had often been a guest in their home and had been a blessing to them.

To express her appreciation, Mary took a box of expensive perfume and poured it on Jesus’ head and on his feet, wiping them with her hair. A wonderful fragrance filled the room. This box represents our hearts, and the sweet perfume represents good wishes, kindness, and love toward all, and especially to Christ and the church.

One disciple whose name was Judas criticized Mary. He said the perfume should have been sold and the money given to the poor. However, Jesus was pleased with Mary’s example of love and devotion, and said it was like anointing him for his burial. He knew that not many days later he would be taken from them and it would be too late to give him anything.

The next day he sent for a donkey and rode into Jerusalem, as was the custom of Israel’s kings. The crowd of people hailed him as their Messiah or Savior. They scattered clothing and palm branches before him as they shouted: “Hosanna to the son of David . . . Hosanna in the highest” (Matthew 21:9). Hosanna means praise, joy, and gratitude—similar to Hallelujah.

The Pharisees were unhappy about the attention being given to Jesus and told him to stop the people from shouting. Jesus said

they were fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 and if they did not shout, the stones would cry out!

The people thought Jesus would become a great earthly king who would destroy their enemies and they would no longer have to serve the Roman government. But Jesus wept over the city. He knew his kingdom would not begin at that time and that the people would be greatly disappointed and many would be angry, so angry they would soon be shouting for his death!

He went to the temple and saw merchants selling doves for sacrifices. The noise and bargaining were not like a place of prayer. There were huge profits being made from the market booths which went to enrich the family of the high priest. Jesus was greatly offended and drove the money changers out of the temple.



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Jesus knew the people would soon be clamoring for his death.

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## The Cost of the Kingdom

“Small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.” Matthew 7:14

As Jesus was walking along the road a young man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. This rich young ruler was living a good life, obeying the law to the best of his ability. This was merely his duty, as no one has a right to live a bad life.

He was a Jewish religious leader and was well acquainted with the law. He realized that he was lacking in some way and asked Jesus, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” He had recognized something good and true in Jesus and knew of the things he had been teaching.

Jesus told him to keep the commandments. The law promised life to any Hebrew who would keep it. The young man had always tried to be pleasing to God and so he said, “Teacher . . . All these things I have kept since I was a boy.”

The young man probably felt quite satisfied that he had done all he could, yet something was missing in his life and so he asked “What do I still lack?” He knew he was not perfect, that something was wrong, and he wanted to know how to gain eternal life.

Jesus loved the young man for he showed earnestness and humility in coming to him in a public manner. Jesus told him, “Sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” Matthew 19:21

The young man’s face fell and he went away sad for he had great wealth and was unable to give up his luxurious way of life. He did not realize that Jesus meant that he should use his riches in the best way he could to help others, not that he would have to sell everything he owned all at once. The rewards of following the

Lord would be far greater and richer than any of his material possessions.

The parable of the camel going through the eye of the needle illustrates perfectly what Jesus was talking about (Matthew 19:23, 24). The “needle’s eye” was a small gate in the walls of ancient cities. After sundown the main gates were closed. A camel could enter the small gate on its knees as long as the load on its back was first removed. We, too, must remove all that is unnecessary in our lives if we would follow the Lord.



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The young man went away sad for he had great wealth.

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## The Memorial Supper

“For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed [for us].” 1 Corinthians 5:7

Five days before the Jewish Passover, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, offering himself as Israel’s king. The Feast of the Passover was celebrated every year for seven days, beginning with the fifteenth day of the first month, named Nisan. It reminded the Jews of Moses leading the Israelites out of their slavery in Egypt many years before. It was also a picture of the passing over, or sparing from death, of the firstborn of that nation. They were all subject to death when the tenth plague came upon Egypt unless a lamb’s blood had been sprinkled on the sides and upper door posts of their homes. It was an event that marked the birth of the nation of Israel. Passover is still celebrated to this day.

Jesus would become the Passover lamb to fulfill the picture of the first Passover. Jesus and his followers ate the Passover supper each year. The last time Jesus was with them and they had finished their meal, Jesus gave them something new to observe. In place of the Passover he started the Memorial Supper.

Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “This is [represents] my body, which is for you” (1 Corinthians 11:24). Then he took the cup of wine (fruit of the vine, grape juice), gave thanks, and passed it to his disciples saying, “Drink from it, all of you” (Matthew 26:27). He said it represented his blood which was to be shed for the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus’ followers do this each year in remembrance of his death. They realize in their hearts that Jesus’ death is the ransom, the corresponding price, for the sins of the whole world. They lay down their lives in sacrifice and develop a new creature (or new

mind). If they remain faithful, they will receive a spirit body in the kingdom and become members of the church, living and reigning over the earth with Jesus Christ for a thousand years. Revelation 20:4

The sacrificed lives of the church are not necessary to redeem the world, yet God will give the divine nature to those who eagerly walk in the Master's footsteps, sacrificing all they have (their time, money, talent, and strength) faithfully unto death.



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Each year we remember Jesus' death  
by participating in the Memorial Supper.

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## **Behold the Man**

“Pilate came out and said to the Jews, ‘Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him.’” John 19:4

When the supper was finished, Jesus went with eleven of his apostles to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. While they were there, Judas came to Jesus with a band of men armed with swords. They took Jesus to the high priest, Caiaphas. This priest and all the council wanted to put Jesus to death and accused him of many things.

Then they took him to Pontius Pilate, the Roman ruler of the country. Pilate could see that Jesus was a good man and that the Jewish priests wanted to kill him for their own selfish reasons. Mark 15:10

Just the week before, Jesus had ridden on a donkey into Jerusalem and the people had hailed him as a king. The priests thought the Romans would surely put Jesus to death for that!

Learning that Jesus was from Galilee, Pilate tried to get rid of the responsibility of condemning a man he believed to be innocent. He sent him to King Herod, ruler of Galilee. But Herod was fearful of dealing with Jesus for he had heard about the miracles he had performed, so he sent Jesus back to Pilate.

Even though Pilate did not like the Jews, he did like this man they had brought to him. Hoping to avoid more trouble from the Jews, Pilate tried to satisfy them by having Jesus beaten. But this did not satisfy the mob and they cried, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

Jesus was not their idea of a king and conqueror. They expected someone like Alexander the Great who would save them from their Roman captors. They despised him for his nonviolent ways and for the meekness, gentleness, patience, and love he expressed to everyone. The Jewish leaders knew many were praising him as the son of God and that Jesus was warning people about dishonest and greedy priests. They wanted this stopped!

At Passover time it was customary to release one criminal from prison. Pilate offered the Jews their choice of releasing Jesus or Barabbas, a convicted criminal. The mob chose Barabbas (Luke 23:13-25). Although Jesus could have asked God to save him from his enemies, he knew his death was needed to save all mankind so he did not try to escape.



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Pilate did not want to have Jesus crucified,  
but felt he had no other choice.

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## The Crucifixion

“Jesus answered him, ‘I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.’” Luke 23:43

Pilate felt Jesus was innocent but gave orders to have him executed according to the wishes of the people. Crucifixion is a cruel form of death.

The soldiers had taken Jesus’ robe from him; they put a crown of thorns upon his head. They spat on him and mocked him unmercifully. His closest friends did not know what to do. Three times Peter denied that he even knew Jesus for he had lost his courage. Suddenly Peter heard a rooster crow and remembered that Jesus had told him that he would do this. He was so ashamed that he ran out and cried bitterly. Luke 22:54-62

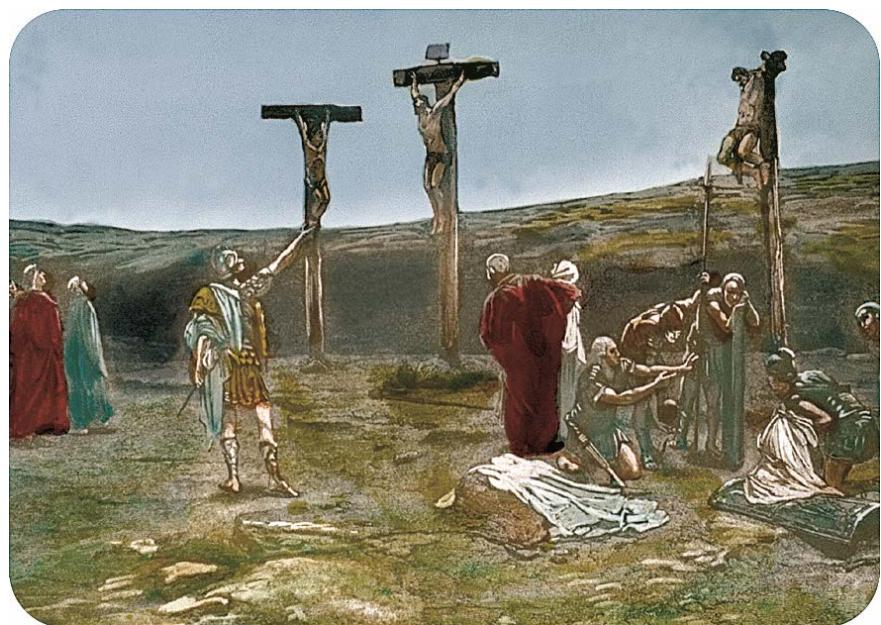
Two thieves were crucified at the same time as Jesus, one on either side of him. Over the head of Jesus was a sign: “THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.” It was written in three languages and told of his “crime.”

Jesus’ enemies had heard of his miracles so they taunted him to come down off the cross. But Jesus trusted God completely, and he knew his time to die had come in God’s plan. Jesus willingly accepted the cross, even though he knew he could save his own life. He knew that if he did not die, he would never be the Savior of all mankind, and that was why he came to earth!

One of the thieves scorned Jesus and said to him “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” The other thief scolded the first and said, “We are receiving what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.” He then asked Jesus to remember him when he came into his kingdom.

Jesus answered him kindly, “I tell you the truth today, you will be with me in paradise” Notice that the comma in this text at the start of this lesson is in a different place. It comes **before** “today” but it should appear **after** “today.” One little comma makes a big difference in the meaning of the sentence.

The writers of the Bible used no punctuation. It was not invented until about four hundred years ago when Bibles were first printed and distributed to the people. We know it is not correct in this instance to put the comma before instead of after “today”, because Jesus did not go to paradise the day he died, and neither did the thief. Paradise means “garden.” The Garden of Eden was simply an illustration of what the earth will be like when it is perfect and beautiful in the Millennial age!



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“This is the King of the Jews”  
were the words over Jesus’ head on the cross.

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## The Empty Tomb

“It is sown a natural [physical] body; it is raised a spiritual body.” 1 Corinthians 15:44

The hopes of the disciples were shattered. They had expected so much of the Lord; they had loved him dearly, and trusted his great wisdom and power. They were ready to follow him right into the kingdom. But now he was dead. Crucifixion! The shame of dying with criminals! They hardly knew what to do next.

The disciples were unable to understand spiritual things until they received the holy spirit. They could not understand that Jesus had been resurrected and was now a spirit being—he was no longer a man, no longer flesh and blood. Jesus had to show himself to his followers so they would know he was alive, though he had a different nature. As a spirit being he had the power to appear to them as a human being. They could see him, and eat and speak with him.

It was the third day after the crucifixion when Mary Magdalene went to the tomb with embalming spices and saw that the stone at the entrance had been moved away. She looked inside the tomb and saw an angel who said, “Do not be afraid . . . He is not here: he has risen.” Matthew 28:5, 6

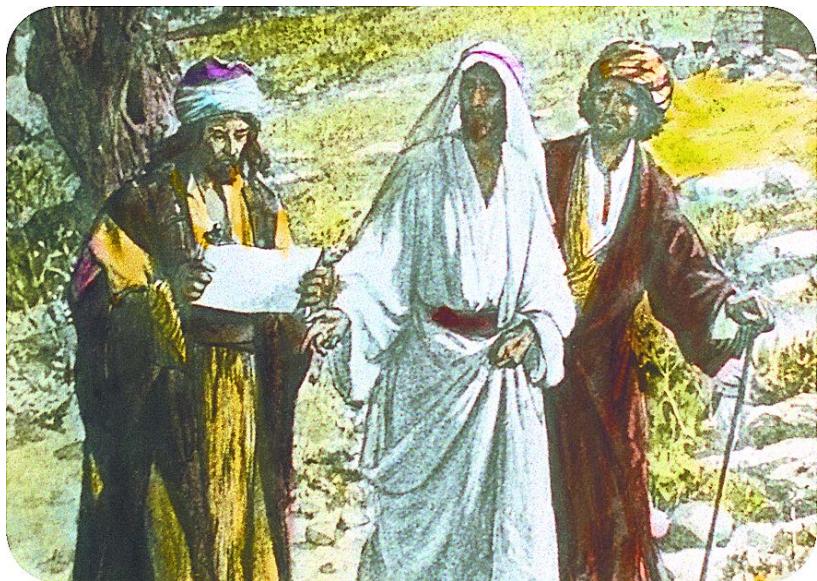
Mary spoke to Jesus but did not recognize him for he appeared to her as a gardener. But when he spoke, she knew his voice. He explained that he had not yet returned to his Father and his God in heaven (John 20:17). He told Mary to tell the others what had happened.

Later that day, Cleopas and another disciple were walking to Emmaus and talking about the sad events of the last few days. Jesus joined them but they did not recognize him. As he walked

with them, he explained many of the prophecies which foretold of his death and resurrection and why it was necessary for him to suffer before being glorified.

They were so interested in what Jesus was saying that they urged him to stay and eat with them. It was then that he made himself known to them and disappeared from their sight. His blessing went deep into their hearts, and they said, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” Luke 24:32

That evening many of the disciples gathered in the upper room; the doors were locked and bolted for fear of the Jews. They were discussing the amazing events of the day, when suddenly Jesus was there with them! He appeared as the man they had known, but they were frightened. He calmed their fears and explained he had the power to materialize. Luke 24:36-43



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On the road to Emmaus Jesus explained  
how his death was prophesied in the Old Testament.

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## No Longer Flesh

“Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

John 20:29

The apostle Thomas thought his brethren had been too easily convinced that they had seen Jesus. He felt more proof was needed and said he would believe only if he felt the nail prints in Jesus' hands and the spear wound in his side.

It was important that the disciples believe that Jesus had been resurrected so they would have a basis for their faith. Most of the disciples realized that Jesus was with them by the tone of his voice or his manner of “breaking bread” or praying.

One evening they were gathered together when Jesus suddenly appeared and said, “Peace be unto you.” This time he looked like the Jesus they had known. He told them to touch him and he ate with them. This put them at ease. He was able to explain many Scriptures and reviewed the prophecies he had fulfilled. He showed them the reason and necessity for his miracles and his death. Luke 24:33-48

He told Thomas to be convinced that it was he, Jesus, but also said that those who believed without those proofs were more blessed. Jesus appeared to his followers three times on his resurrection day and five times more during the next thirty-nine days. They realized Jesus had indeed risen and was now a spirit being, highly exalted. Philippians 2:9

Judas had been a traitor and thus lost his right to be one of the twelve apostles. The word apostle means “one who is sent forth” or “a messenger.” All the true followers of Jesus can be called apostles for they are sent forth to preach the good news of the 144

kingdom to all nations. But there were to be twelve who were especially chosen. Saul of Tarsus took the place of Judas.

Shortly before Pentecost, Jesus went to be with his heavenly Father. Saul was on his way to Damascus when he saw a vision of the glorified Jesus. The glory and brightness were so overwhelming, it left Saul blinded. His name was later changed to Paul.

In another vision, the Lord spoke to Ananias (a disciple in Damascus) and told him to go to Saul and tell him he was to be a “chosen vessel,” that is, chosen by God to be an apostle. As Ananias was speaking to Saul the “scales” fell from his eyes and he could see (Acts 9:18). Saul had been doing everything he could to destroy Christianity, but now was ready to lay down his life to serve Jesus Christ.



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Thomas said he would believe only if he felt the spear wound in Jesus' side.

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## Pentecostal Rest

“Suddenly a sound . . . filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.” Acts 2:2, 3

A part of the ancient Jewish law required every fiftieth year to be a year of Jubilee (fiftieth anniversary). This meant that all those in bondage to their countrymen were freed, homes and lands were restored to their original owners, and no crops were planted, giving the land a rest.

Leviticus 23:15, 16 also speaks of a fiftieth day after the gathering of the sheaf of first-fruits, which happened two days after Passover. It was a day of rejoicing and thanksgiving and was later called Pentecost.

Just as the Jubilee year followed a cycle of seven times seven years, so the Jubilee day (Pentecost) followed a cycle of seven times seven days.

After Jesus’ death and resurrection, the eleven apostles were instructed to stay in Jerusalem until they received power from on high. These eleven were the Lord’s special representatives who would bring the message of the kingdom to others.

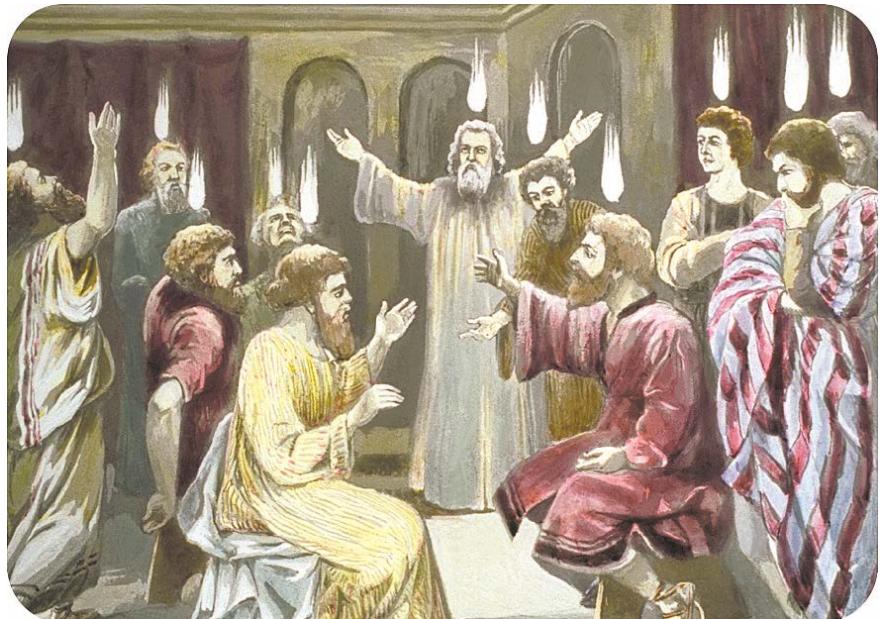
The eleven were in the upper room on Pentecost waiting in an attitude of prayer and expectancy and ready to fulfill their mission of “feeding” (or teaching) Jesus’ “sheep and lambs” (those who would believe and follow the Lord).

The Pentecostal blessing was the pouring out of the holy spirit upon those gathered, shown as a tongue of fire which “sat” upon the head of each one. With the sound of a mighty wind and the appearing of the flames, the disciples were filled with the holy

spirit! This was the beginning of the development of the church. Jesus had completed his sacrifice for Adam and now, because God had accepted it, his blood was to be used on behalf of those who were to become the church.

During the time they awaited their own acceptance by God, the apostles chose a successor for Judas. However, instead of recognizing their choice of Matthias, God later selected Paul.

These twelve will be the foundation stones in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2, 14); more will not be chosen.



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The holy spirit was given to the disciples on the Day of Pentecost.

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## Pentecostal Preaching

“Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my spirit in those days.” Joel 2:29

The unfaithful apostle, Judas, had killed himself in shame for having betrayed Jesus to his enemies. There were only eleven apostles until Paul was chosen to take Judas’ place.

In Jerusalem, the eleven and many others were given the holy spirit. They also received miraculous gifts for the purpose of starting the Christian church. God gave these humble Christians the ability to speak in foreign languages, so they could preach in various places and the people could understand them.

The crowds were amazed that they could understand the Galileans who were speaking to them in their own languages. Jesus’ followers could also prophesy the future, heal the sick and the lame, and even a few times raised the dead!

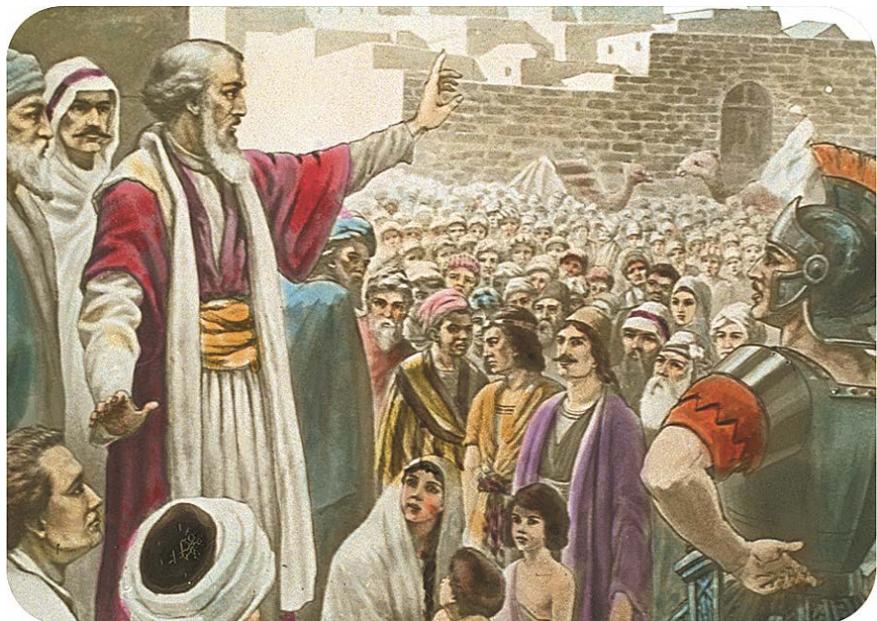
They taught the people about Jesus, the Savior, who had died and was resurrected, so that all the world might have an opportunity for life in the kingdom.

There were many followers of the Lord at that time, both men and women; however, only the apostles were specially used of God. To them only, Jesus said, “whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:19). The words *bind* and *loose* were expressions used in those days which meant *forbid* and *permit*.

It was the apostles who were given this instruction and they were able to understand which things of the Jewish law were binding upon the church and which were not. The apostles were

God's representatives; the words they spoke and wrote were authoritative. The Lord's overruling would make the apostles safe guides for his church. The instruction was given only to the twelve and does not apply to any other person at any time.

Peter was told in Matthew 16:19 he would receive the keys of the kingdom. These were symbolic keys which Peter could use to open the door of the kingdom message. He did this first to the Jewish nation. Three and a half years after Jesus' death he used the second key to open the door to the Gentiles. The first Gentile convert to membership in the body of Christ, the church, was Cornelius.



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The apostles were specially given as guides to the new church.

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## The Apostle Paul

“This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel.” Acts 9:15

As the early church grew, deacons were selected to share the work of caring for the needs of the brethren (Acts 6:1-6). Stephen, a deacon, “a man full of God’s grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people” (Acts 6:8). He was stoned to death for his beliefs. A man named Saul was present at the stoning, holding the coats of the assailants. Stephen was the first to die as a Christian martyr.

Saul thought he was helping God’s cause by consenting to the stoning and putting others in prison because they loved Jesus and were telling others about him.

Saul was sincere and zealous about what he was doing—he believed it was God’s will. When Jesus appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus, he told Saul he was wrong and what a privilege he would have by following God’s true teachings. Because Saul’s heart was right, he converted to Christianity and spent the rest of his life serving God. His zeal and faith were so great he was chosen to be the twelfth apostle. He had more visions and revelations than the others and wrote many letters to the churches that later became books of the New Testament. His letters are called epistles.

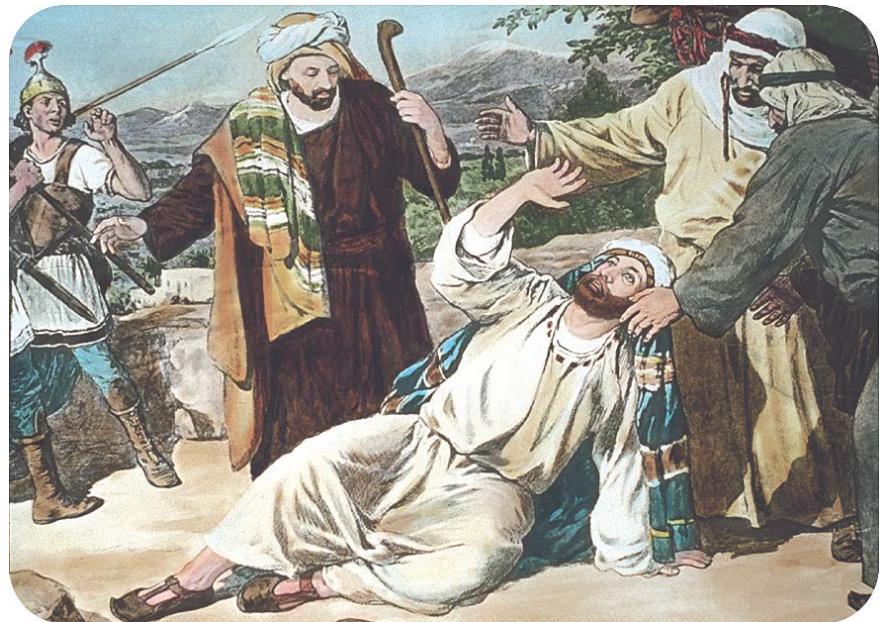
On his first missionary journey, Saul’s name was changed to Paul. He was the apostle to the Gentiles and went into many countries preaching the gospel. Never does he (or any of the others) teach of a fiery hell or torment for anybody. He emphasized that Jesus must come a second time, and then reign until he has put all

enemies under his feet. He taught the resurrection of the just and the unjust, and many other doctrines.

The power of the truth in Paul's life was great and we are richer in learning and faith because of his writings.

Paul made several missionary journeys. He suffered greatly because of his fearless and courageous preaching, writings, and travels. He sacrificed his life every day in the service of God; he was stoned, beaten, starved, cold, almost drowned, shipwrecked, and finally beheaded.

Even though Paul never met Jesus in the flesh, his conversion was complete and his life was one of self-sacrifice! What an example he was to all the followers of Jesus Christ throughout the Gospel age.



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Jesus appeared to Saul and converted him to Christianity.

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## Conversion of Cornelius

“And you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root.” Romans 11:17

Cornelius, a Gentile, prayed to God and respected him, but he was neither a Jew nor a Christian. He knew about Jesus and wanted to follow him and do God’s will, but that opportunity was not available to him nor any other Gentile.

An angel of the Lord appeared to Cornelius in a vision. He told Cornelius that God had heard his prayers and that he should find a man named Peter who would explain God’s will to him. So Cornelius sent two of his servants to the house where Peter was staying.

In the meantime, God instructed Peter about Cornelius. Up until that time God had dealt only with the Jewish people. But now, three and a half years after Jesus’ death on the cross, God’s invitation to become part of the church class was to be extended to the Gentiles. Cornelius would be the first Gentile convert.

This was a new concept to Peter and the others for they had been forbidden by the law to have close friends among the Gentiles or to marry into their families. Had the Jews faithfully followed Jesus Christ, the entire church would have been selected from that nation. However, comparatively few responded to the call and so the invitation went to the Gentiles as soon as the Jewish age ended.

Peter learned through a vision that God’s instructions about the Gentiles were changing. Peter saw a great sheet come down from heaven which contained many different four-footed beasts, all of which had always been forbidden for Jews to eat, as they were considered unclean. Now God told Peter to kill and eat them.

This happened three times. While Peter thought about the vision, three men came to ask him to go to the house of Cornelius. Peter and several others went to Cornelius' home immediately.

They found Cornelius and his family eagerly waiting to hear what Peter had to say. Peter told them the true story of Jesus—his death, his resurrection, the call to the church to be his bride. They were delighted to hear the message and fully accepted the terms of discipleship.

God poured out his holy spirit upon them and they received the gifts of speaking in foreign tongues just as the Jewish believers had at Pentecost. They were all baptized in the name of the Lord—and Peter learned that “God does not show favoritism” (Acts 10:34). The Gospel age had begun.



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Peter's vision showed him to accept the Gentiles into the church.

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## The Church at Antioch

“The Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.” Acts 11:21

Except for Jerusalem, the city of Antioch in Syria was the most important city in the history of the early church. The gospel message brought there found many “hearing ears” among the Gentiles. It was at Antioch that the followers of Jesus were first called Christians. Acts 11:26

The Antioch church had simple arrangements, much like those practiced by Jesus and the apostles. They met to grow in knowledge, fellowship, and to help each other in the Christian way. They helped send missionaries to other cities. Paul started his first and second missionary journeys from Antioch. His third journey also started there but ended with his imprisonment in Jerusalem.

When the brethren at Jerusalem heard of the growing number of believers at Antioch, they were delighted. Earlier, at the stoning of Stephen, some of Jesus’ followers escaped to Antioch and there they taught the people about Jesus and the wonderful plan of God.

Barnabas was a good and faithful minister to the church at Antioch. He was a native of Cyprus, an island in the Mediterranean Sea; he was a Levite and well-learned in the law. The name Barnabas means *son of consolation* or *helper*. He was a kind and loving comforter who helped teach the new Christians. There were so many who were hungry for more knowledge of the plan of redemption that Barnabas sent for the apostle Paul, the best teacher he knew. Acts 13:1-3; 15:36

Paul and Barnabas were loved and respected by the Antioch brethren. The Jews, however, hated and persecuted them. Not long after this, terrible persecutions were directed upon the Christians by the Roman emperors who took pleasure in doing such things just to relieve their boredom!

God permitted these evil things to come upon the church to test their faith and loyalty to him. Such experiences are needed by those who follow Jesus, so that their characters can be developed.

The experiences of the church throughout the Gospel age often have been extremely cruel and difficult, coming in many different forms. These experiences also help the church become sympathetic with all who have gone through trying and difficult experiences. It will give the church an understanding of and compassion for everyone in the next age.



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Roman emperors took pleasure in persecuting Christians.

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## Berean Bible Students

“The Bereans . . . received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.” Acts 17:11

The believers at Berea, in Macedonia, are famous among God’s people because of their diligence in searching the Scriptures. They did not just take the word of Paul or Silas without proof. They were a little class, but their faithfulness to God’s word caused them to be known as Berean Bible Students.

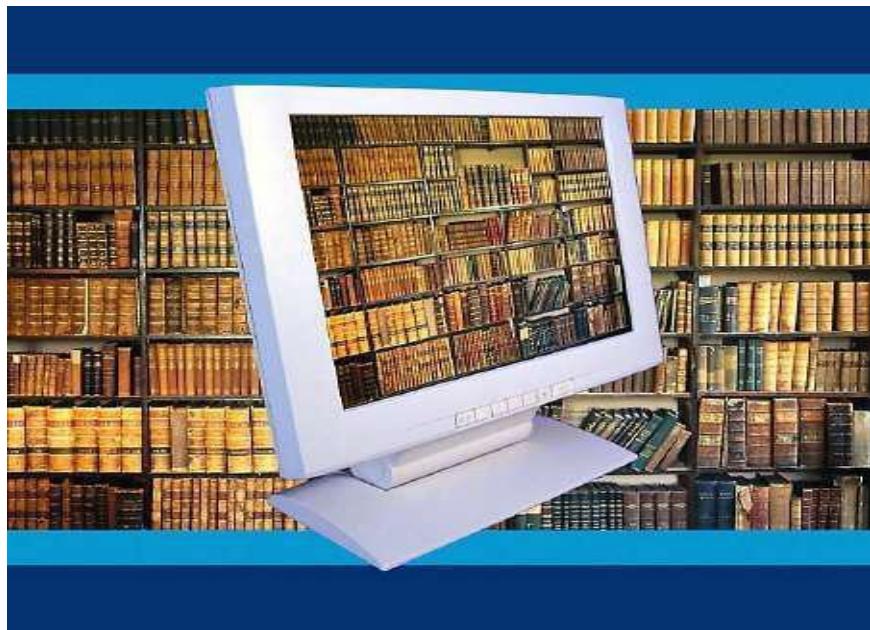
They gathered together as children of God, begotten by the holy spirit, to study the message of Jesus that was brought to them. The early church did not meet in splendid churches or temples; their elders and deacons did not wear rich robes of office. There was no showy display of any kind. They simply met together with those of similar faith (2 Peter 1:1) to study and prove the Scriptures under the direction and care of Jesus, the only head of the church.

Bible students today have the advantage of convenient, inexpensive Bibles in many translations and versions, as well as many other helpful books. These include concordances, Bible dictionaries, Scriptural comments, etc. And we can learn from these books in our homes. For hundreds of years there were few Bibles in the world, and most people could not read—even kings and queens! Today most people know how to read and write. And we can turn a light on when the sun goes down!

We are living in the days of Daniel 12:4 when “many will go here and there to increase knowledge.” This applies to our generation more than any other: trains, airplanes, space ships, books, radios, television, computers—all are on a scale never before imagined.

We can go to Bible studies, not just in our own homes, but other places as well. Many can attend conventions of Bible students throughout the world and, more recently, computer assisted attendance. We are blessed at this end of the age, but we must remember there is a great responsibility because of these bounteous blessings.

Many people today deny that the Bible is the word of God, showing that they do not have the faith taught in the Bible. It is time in God's plan for a fuller, deeper understanding of his word than ever before. Let us be faithful to learn all we can, building up our characters in the most holy faith, and then share our knowledge with others.



We are living in the days when knowledge is increased.

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## The Holy Roman Empire

“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

After the apostles died, the church began to look to other leaders, giving them much more authority than they should have had. Because the early church was without the benefit of Bibles and education—the common people could not read—it was easy to make this mistake. Those in power (those who could read) were the bishops and other leaders who often taught different and contradictory doctrines, not inspired by the holy spirit.

The Emperor Constantine called a council of all the “apostolic bishops” in A.D. 325. It was held in the city of Nicea in Turkey. The council was called by Constantine to try to keep his kingdom from disintegrating; it was a political move.

The bishops argued for months and finally the emperor decided which doctrines were “correct.” Apostolic succession and the trinity were two of the erroneous doctrines forced on the people. All who would not accept the new Nicene Creed were cast out.

Christianity spread throughout Europe and western Russia but without the Master’s spirit. The Holy Roman Empire was established: the pope and the emperor sat side by side on the throne. This is called a “marriage” of church and state. Bible Students consider such a union to be contrary to the teaching of the Bible.

This system received a hard blow when, in 1799, Napoleon refused to allow the pope to crown him; in fact, he took him captive to France. It was a humiliating experience for the pope. Since that time the authority of the Papacy has greatly declined.

As Christianity spread, many visited the land where Jesus lived and died. These journeys were made peaceably until the Moslem Turks captured Jesus' homeland and took over Jerusalem. They treated the Christians with great cruelty.

Christians came from all over Europe, traveling hundreds of miles, determined to fight the Turks and win back the Holy Land. But they forgot Jesus' teachings of love, and that how you worship is much more important than where you worship. Jesus warned men that if they fought with the sword, they would die by the sword. The Crusaders killed many innocent people in their frantic attempts to regain control of the Holy City.



How you worship is much more important than where you worship.

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## The Middle Ages

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” Matthew 7:21

During the Middle Ages terrible things were done by many of those in power to others who did not agree with them. Some were tortured; others stoned to death or burned at the stake. All these terrible things were done in the name of God, Christianity, truth, and righteousness. However, Charlemagne (whose name means Charles the Great) was an excellent emperor who realized that knowledge and law and order are necessary in a good kingdom.

When Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne ruler of the Holy Roman Empire in 800 A.D., many people hoped that this would be the end of wars and that peace would come at last. But his empire was not God's kingdom; all of his schools of learning and courts of law were made by men and could not last forever or give perfect justice. He accomplished much to advance civilization during his short reign of fourteen years, but it was not God's time to set up his kingdom.

The Crusades did much to break down the old system of poor peasants working for rich lords and stimulated the economic and intellectual life of the Western world. Groups of people came into being who held and spread ideas which were in conflict with the doctrines and government of the Roman Catholic Church.

One such group was the Albigenses who lived in France, Spain, and Italy. They completely rejected the clergy and the claims of the Church of Rome. They lived lives of self-denial and moral purity, and made great use of the Scriptures. They were

considered heretics (a word describing those who hold religious beliefs opposed to the official and established views of a church).

Followers of Peter Waldo were called Waldenses. They were also from France and Italy. They believed that the Bible, and especially the New Testament, provided the only rule of faith and life for Christians. Their preaching caused a great desire among the people to read the Bible. Both groups were non-trinitarian.

Terrible persecutions completely destroyed the Albigenses within a hundred years. The Waldenses fled to the high valleys of the Alps where they still live; they are the only group from the Middle Ages that has survived to the present time. They carry out evangelistic work in Italy today.



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Many Christians were tortured for their beliefs during the Middle Ages.

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## Reformers

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly [accurately] handles the word of truth.”

2 Timothy 2:15

Here and there were men who were not satisfied with the plans of emperors or the words of priests and bishops. They wanted to study the Bible for themselves and learn to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

Two early reformers were John Wycliffe, born in England in 1320, and John Huss, a Bohemian. They did not believe that God spoke only through the pope, nor that he had a right to take tax money from the people. They admired men who lived simply and served the church faithfully. Huss was burned to death for his beliefs. Many people like Huss loved liberty and hated wickedness and were willing to fight for their beliefs. The various wars caused by this philosophy killed a great many people.

Another English reformer was William Tyndale who wanted to help others study God’s word. He translated the Bible into the English of his day. He, too, was killed for his efforts to serve God and his people.

Martin Luther, perhaps the most well-known of the reformers, was the head of a Roman Catholic college that trained young men to become priests. He studied the writings of other priests and the beliefs of the church. He did not study the Bible because he thought the Catholic books explained it all.

One day Luther read a copy of the New Testament and was surprised that it was so easy to understand. Certain Scriptures showed many errors in Catholic teachings.

Because most people were uneducated and could not read, they could be easily tricked by evil preachers who taught false doctrines. One of the most notorious was Johann Tetzel, a German monk. He convinced many to pay for sins not yet committed, by buying pieces of paper called Indulgences. Schemes like this brought wealth and prosperity to the Roman Catholic Church and eventually caused a revolt called the Protestant Reformation.

Luther listed ninety-five objections against the selling of Indulgences and nailed them to a church door. Printing had recently been invented, so these were soon printed and distributed to people in many countries.

Eventually the Roman church ordered Luther to give up his beliefs. He refused, and even made more reforms. He translated the Bible into German and established the Lutheran church.



Tyndale and Luther translated the Bible into the people's language.

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## The Inquisition

“A time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God.” John 16:2

The “Holy Inquisition” was instituted by Pope Innocent III in Europe. This was a church court for finding and punishing so-called heretics (those whose beliefs differed from those in control).

This court was terrible in its power. It required everyone to inform against any person the least bit suspect. It became one of the most devilish things in human history. Horrible forms of cruel and inhuman torture were inflicted on those unfortunate enough to be caught. The pope was determined to crush the Reformation. This dreadful work went on for five hundred years.

Eventually the ruling church’s power began to decline. Many scholars and thinkers realized that errors were being taught, so they spoke out against them. Although they were usually killed for their beliefs, they influenced the thinking of many others and brought about the Reformation.

Both Catholics and Protestants now realize the Inquisition was unholy. We need to remember that those were times of widespread ignorance and superstition. However, with the invention of the printing press and as education became available to more and more people, the light of a better day began to shine.

The commandment given to Moses in Leviticus 19:18 and later to the disciples in Mark 12:33, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” had been completely neglected. Thus there was little love or sympathy, and justice usually was either violated or non-existent.

John Calvin, a French Reformer, studied hard and drove himself to learn all the religious knowledge then available. When in his twenties, Calvin converted to Protestantism. He wrote a book

about Bible truths as he saw them. Later he imposed his strict beliefs on those to whom he preached. He felt it was his duty to punish anyone who held other views. When Michael Servetus published a book attacking the doctrine of the trinity, he was tried, found guilty, and burned at the stake. Calvin, too, forgot the commandment of love.

Calvin thought God selected only a few to have a spiritual resurrection and all others would suffer the pains of “hell fire” forever. What an extremely narrow and erroneous view of the Scriptures with no acknowledgment of a kind and loving God!

The reforms started by Ulrich Zwingli in Switzerland were continued by Calvin. These reforms were more sweeping than those of Luther.



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The Inquisition was a religious court that persecuted true Christians as heretics.

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## The Wesleys

“Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” 2 Timothy 3:12

John and Charles Wesley were sons of an Anglican minister and his deeply religious wife who lived in England. There were nineteen children in the family, and Bible stories and Scripture reading were a vital part of their growing up years in the early 1700s.

When their father became somewhat older, John left Oxford College to assist him in the parish. In the meantime, Charles, still at Oxford, formed a club with two other students to have Bible studies that would be helpful to the Christian life. It was called a “Holy Club.” The members learned to live regular and orderly lives. Some students made fun of them; some called them “Methodists” and the name stuck.

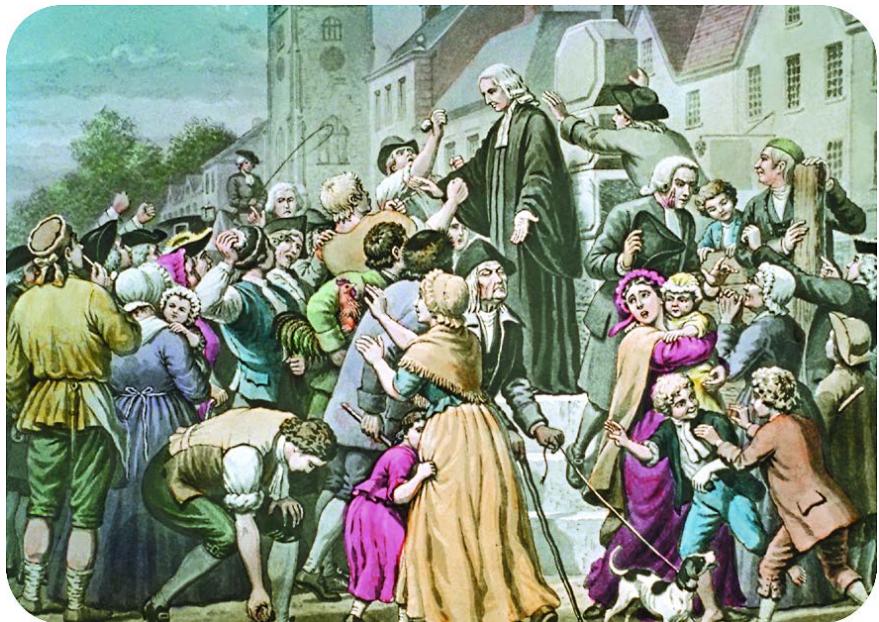
In 1735 the two brothers sailed to America to answer a call for missionaries. Charles fell ill and returned to England. By 1738 John, too, was back in England, his mission work considered a failure. However, John had been impressed with some German Moravians who showed a quiet trust in God even throughout a dangerous storm during their journey aboard ship. He learned much from them about Christian behavior and appreciated their deep and complete faith in God.

The Wesleys returned to the simplicity of the early church in preaching, class gatherings, and Bible studies. They were strongly opposed by those of other faiths who sometimes drove cattle among the worshippers to interrupt their meetings. John Wesley

was a great preacher, which only caused others to stir up hostility and mob action against him.

In 1784 John Wesley broke with the Church of England, and founded the Methodist Church. Charles Wesley was the hymn writer for Methodism. He wrote thousands of hymns, a great many of which are still being sung today.

A precious Bible truth uncovered by Wesley was that of God's love in Free Grace. His favorite Scripture was Revelation 22:17, "The spirit and the bride say, Come . . . take the free gift of the water of life." However he did not see the full extent of this truth—that in the kingdom **all** mankind will have the opportunity to have life on earth forever. Charles Wesley preached in London until his death in 1788. In 1791 John Wesley died in London in his eighty-seventh year. The influence of his teachings was very great.



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Often there was hostility against John Wesley, a great preacher.

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## Pilgrims and Pacifists

“Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD.”

Psalm 31:24

On December 21, 1620, the Pilgrims landed on the rocky coast of Massachusetts. They thanked God for their safe arrival in the New World. These were deeply religious people who had separated from the Church of England. It took great courage to separate from the church, as well as their homeland.

About nine years later the Massachusetts Bay Colony was established by the Puritans. They, too, were men and women of deep religious life and conviction who left England because there was no religious freedom.

A few years later in England, George Fox, a serious and deeply religious young man who firmly believed in the Bible, was distressed at the worldliness of so many in the churches of his day. This inspired him to become the founder of Quakerism. He began preaching about 1640.

Many groups were pacifists. This means they opposed war and would not fight. They were persecuted for their beliefs. Pacifists were found among the Amish, the Mennonites, the Quakers (properly called “The Society of Friends”), and others. Many left Europe because of their anti-military beliefs. They also believed that each local church or congregation was a complete church in itself and no church should have anything to say about any other church.

The Friends based their religious life on the principle that kindness produces kindness. They are a plain people and firm in their belief in divine guidance, not only in meetings, but in their

daily lives. They have become famous for their relief work in wars and disasters, and were the only religious group in colonial times to take a definite stand against slavery.

In spite of being severely persecuted, their numbers continued to grow. In 1634 there were sixty Quakers in America—four years later there were thirty thousand!

Bible Students are also opposed to carrying guns in wartime, preferring to remember Paul's statement that our weapons are not the weapons of the world (2 Corinthians 10:4). We are opposed to killing human beings—our desire is to save them! If you are compelled by the government to enter military service, look for other ways to serve your country, such as the conscientious objectors' program in the United States.



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It took great courage for the Pilgrims to leave their homeland.

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## Higher Critics

“Build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the holy spirit. Keep yourselves in God’s love.” Jude 20, 21

Most Christians do not suffer physical persecution today. They are not burned at the stake or thrown into a den of hungry lions. However, they are frequently attacked by critics—people who believe that Christianity is a weak and foolish faith.

It is important to study the Bible for in it we can see God’s beautiful plan to bless all mankind. As we continue to study and pray, we are building a sound faith which will strengthen and encourage us every day. Many errors can creep into our thinking and take us away from the reasonable and harmonious lessons we have learned. We need to prove all that we believe with the Bible because it is the inspired word of God. 1 Thessalonians 5:21

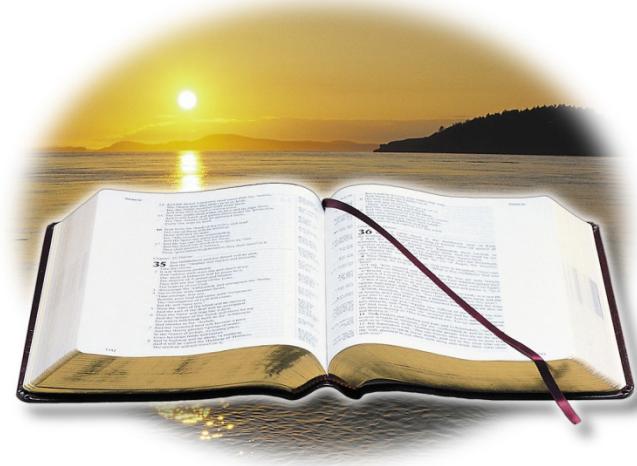
There are those who study mainly for the purpose of denying the Bible. Their study does not bring them the truth or a desire to understand God’s plans and purposes. These are called “higher critics.” Paul referred to them as “scoffers” a word describing those who laugh at another’s beliefs. 2 Peter 3:3

Those who consider themselves higher critics do all they can to discredit Daniel and other Old Testament prophets. Thus they also discredit Jesus and the apostles who felt that these prophets were inspired by God. The book of Daniel has many wonderful prophecies that describe our day. We have seen and are seeing many of these prophecies being fulfilled.

Many people are intelligent about worldly subjects which can cause them to become full of pride. Those who study their Bibles and have a good understanding of the truth can also become full of

pride and high-minded. We need to remember that the truth is from God; we are to glory in his wisdom, not our own. We can have complete confidence in God's word—his promises will never fail (Jeremiah 9:23, 24). This will bring us understanding of what it means to be a follower of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

As people began to believe more and more religious errors, the hope of the resurrection and a wonderful kingdom here on earth was swept away. Eventually this unbelief will lead to anarchy, which is no government at all, and a state of lawlessness. We are living in early stages of the “time of trouble” spoken of in Daniel 12:1 (King James). But in due time, this time of trouble will lead to the establishment of Christ’s kingdom. Haggai 2:6, 7



God's beautiful plan for all mankind is described in the Bible.

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## Church of the Living God

“[So] you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.”

1 Timothy 3:15

Throughout the Middle Ages there were many church movements and many leaders who influenced the people in different ways.

As early as 330 A.D. there was rivalry between the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Greek Orthodox Churches with the move of the civil seat to Constantinople. The final split between them came in 869 A.D. Because the Orthodox Church refused to recognize the authority of the pope, the division never healed (See Photius and Council Constantinople IV *Encyclopedia Britannica*).

The Orthodox Church held back the Islam religion from “flooding” western Europe. There have been many martyrs among this church—they were willing to suffer and die for their faith.

Great temples and cathedrals have been built throughout the civilized world. It was usually the poor people who donated the money to build and keep them in good repair.

In Jesus’ day it was not “Christian work” to raise money for church purposes; today some think money-raising is the ideal work for Jesus. The apostles taught that the real work of the church of Christ is not to build churches, but to build itself up in the most holy faith. Jude 20

God’s people are like living stones; they are being shaped and polished by their experiences for places in the spiritual temple. This temple is not a church of stone or brick; it is, rather, made up of those who follow Jesus in the service of the truth during the

Gospel age (1 Peter 2:5, 9). These will *do good unto all people as they have opportunity*. Galatians 6:10

The fellowship of the brethren is important (Hebrews 10:25). Gathering together to study and pray and sing praises will help those following Jesus to keep themselves in “the light” of God’s word and to let that light shine out to others. This can be done anywhere, not just in a church building. Acts 17:24; Colossians 4:15

Some do not have an opportunity to meet with others of similar faith, yet they are clear in their knowledge of the truth and have a deep appreciation of God’s plan because they have done so much reading and studying. So the Lord provides for all who are called and seek to follow Jesus and become “living stones” in the temple of God.



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Great cathedrals have been built with money from poor people.

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## **U.S. Christianity Moves Westward**

“He . . . gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers.” Ephesians 4:11

In the early 1800s, there were many influences on the churches in the United States, including the westward movement, the new immigration, and the Civil War. Many divisions occurred as people left established churches and started new ones. Missionary societies were formed and were often interdenominational. In 1816 the American Bible Society was founded and began to distribute Bibles to even the remotest areas.

In 1786 the Methodists brought to the United States the idea of religious instruction for children. By 1816, only thirty years later, Sunday Schools could be found in every section of the country.

As the American West was being settled, there was growing need for religious leaders. Many denominations founded schools for religious education where future priests and ministers were trained.

Evangelists and missionaries became part of this move to the West. Evangelists are those who preach the gospel. They are Protestant ministers or ordinary people who speak at special services, often moving about to different places. Missionaries also preach the gospel, often in newly settled regions or in foreign countries. As a rule, they also do educational and hospital work.

The early nineteenth century also saw the beginning of camp meetings. These became a common practice in American evangelism and were held in every section of the West.

Immigrants from Europe as well as the large number of people moving westward caused the rapid growth of many new religious groups. Some of these were Mormons (known as Latter Day Saints), Adventists, and Christian Scientists. Evangelist Dwight Moody carried on Christian work among the Civil War soldiers.

Many churches, in the South as well as the North, felt an obligation to the black people who had been freed from slavery, so they set up schools to provide their religious instruction. Eventually, American people of African ancestry organized their own unique churches.

These fulfill the words of the text at the start of this lesson and are examples of how God's word was brought to the people.



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Missionaries preached the gospel  
in newly settled areas and in foreign countries.

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## **Many Shall Run To and Fro**

“You, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge.” Daniel 12:4

There has been a greater development of knowledge within the past one hundred years than at any other time in the history of mankind. Most of the inventions which are so common today were unknown a century ago. Not many realize that these are the beginning of the blessings to come in the long-promised kingdom of Messiah.

The invention of printing using movable type by Johann Gutenberg in 1454 A.D. has allowed us to accumulate a store of knowledge over the years as never before. As a result, the world has become flooded with literature in every language and on every subject.

The increase of knowledge, including a knowledge of God’s word, has followed along with “going here and there.” This tells us we are living in the period referred to as the “time of the end.” This time includes the closing of the Gospel age and the dawning of the Millennial age which will finally end the long period of sin and death.

In God’s due time, men’s minds were opened to the possibilities of some inventions, which then inspired more complicated inventions. In the nineteenth century men realized they could use steam to power machines. Later, electrical power and gasoline began to be used. Automobiles replaced horses for personal transportation. Now electronics and nuclear power have opened up

newer and faster means of communication and transportation than ever before thought possible.

Think of the knowledge that went into planning and building the space shuttles—and the advent of men walking on the moon! It is amazing that these inventions have developed within a comparatively short space of time. For centuries mankind was unable to travel any faster than on horseback and the majority of people rarely traveled even fifty miles from where they were born.

The first locomotive was built less than two hundred years ago; now we have many forms of transportation. The automobile is the most common and widespread means of transportation and is the best example of “going here and there” described in Daniel 12:4 and Nahum 2:4.



*NASA Mars exploration robot*

There has been a greater increase of knowledge in the last hundred years than at any other time.

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## **Knowledge Shall Be Increased**

“For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming [presence] of the Son of Man.” Matthew 24:27

Twenty-five hundred years ago God foretold through Daniel’s prophecy that in the time of the end knowledge would be increased. Not only do we see this increase of knowledge in earthly things, we also see it in spiritual things. God’s plan was hidden from the world for hundreds of years—until our Lord returned in 1874.

Since that time the truth of God’s word, the Bible, has become available to thousands of people. Ideas and myths that had been prevalent throughout the Middle Ages could not stand in the light of truth. An enlightenment of minds to spiritual things started and is still going on.

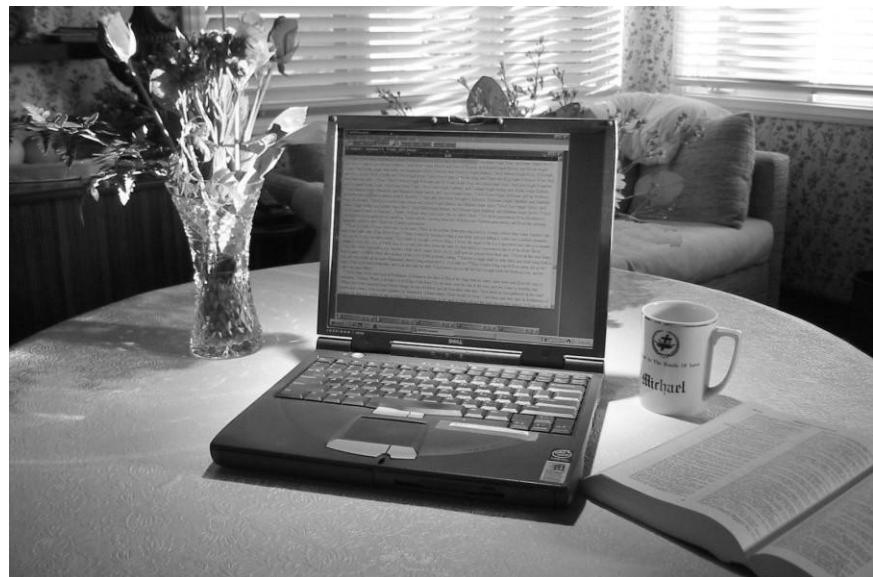
The lightning referred to in Matthew 24:27 is from the Greek word *astrapē*, which can be translated *bright-shining*. Since lightning actually gives little light, the reference is to the sun which floods the earth with light as it progresses from east to west. So the Sun of Righteousness, Jesus Christ, will shine into all corners of the world, bringing to light the hidden things of darkness and revealing the truth on every subject!

When children are born into a world of television, computers, jet planes, and space exploration, it is hard for them to realize their grandparents when they were young knew nothing of those inventions. Looking back at the way things were done in the past, we quickly realize we are, indeed, in the time of increased

knowledge, and the time of the end (the end of the present age of evil).

Not only has the industrial age changed life on earth, but nature is also experiencing changes which will prepare the earth for habitation in areas never before possible. Major earthquakes, storms, and floods all contribute to these changes. In due time the curse will be removed and the blessings of God will flow to everyone. Isaiah 35:1; 45:18; 65:17, 21, 22

The Bible tells of the coming glory of earth; it will become a wonderful paradise. This will fulfill God's plan for all mankind and bring blessings beyond what we can imagine. The earth is God's footstool and he will make his footstool glorious! Isaiah 60:13; 66:1; Acts 7:49



In the time of the end knowledge would increase.

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## A Time of Trouble

“For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again.” Matthew 24:21

In the present time we are realizing the fulfillment of the predictions of this text and Daniel 12:1—“there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation” (King James). But it gives us comfort to know that this will be the last of the troubrous times coming upon the earth.

The lessons are severe for all who are living in this time because the people need to learn that God is in control of all of earth’s affairs, and always shall be. He will not allow the literal earth or mankind to be destroyed but in the kingdom he will destroy any who persist in destroying or corrupting the earth. Revelation 11:18; Psalm 37:9, 11

When the time is right for Christ and his church to take over the rulership of the earth, Satan and his followers will be restrained from their deceitful and wicked works (Revelation 20:2, 3). There will be a resurrection of all the dead (Acts 24:15) and peace and righteousness will predominate everywhere. What wonderful blessings! And because these things were promised by God, we can be sure they will happen.

We do not like to hear about wars and rumors of wars, or of the terrible ways in which some people treat others. We do not like to think about the building and use of machines of war which have been produced to destroy others. Nor do we like to think about plagues of diseases, widespread starvation, strikes and layoffs, huge corporations merging and increasing their control of wealth

and power, and the excessive greed and selfishness among people of all nations.

These are things that will be made right in the coming age so that all mankind will live together in peace and harmony. Even the religious institutions will experience great upheavals so they also will eventually come together in peace and harmony.

These upheavals in all realms of earth's society are called *anarchy* (complete disorder and lawlessness) which cause a time of trouble such as never was! While we do not look forward to such a terrible time in the world, yet we rejoice that a better time is coming afterwards and that this "better time" will be for everyone—all who have ever lived upon this earth. Luke 21:25, 26, 28



The present "time of trouble" will be  
the last troubulous time for the people of earth.

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## The Church, Militant, Triumphant

“He will rule them with an iron scepter; he will dash them to pieces like pottery.” Revelation 2:27 (also Psalm 2:9)

The church during the Gospel age is spoken of as being “militant.” This does not mean they go to war with swords, guns, and tanks. God’s people battle in an entirely different way because their warfare is against the temptations of the world, of human desires, and the deceitfulness of Satan.

The church does not fight for their “rights.” It was a terrible mistake when, in the Middle Ages, the church battled with swords and spears against nations and those who did not accept the dominant church’s beliefs.

When Jesus and the apostles were on earth, they did not interfere in any way with earthly powers. On the contrary, they taught their followers to obey the laws of the land and to respect those in authority because of their office even if they were not personally worthy of this respect (Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:1). Jesus and his apostles were law-abiding, although they were separate from and took no part in the governments of this world.

Ephesians 6:11-17 describes the “armor” the church militant is to wear. The Christian does battle by wielding the sword of the spirit, the word of God, the truth. He proclaims the good news of the coming kingdom and has the spirit of service to others.

The breastplate of righteousness symbolizes our Savior’s death. It is a covering for us provided by the merit of Jesus’ sacrifice. Our hearts would fail from discouragement without it.

The sandals of peace symbolize our full consecration to the Lord. They help us over the rough places without compromising the truth.

The shield of faith is our trust in God and his truth. It helps us withstand the “arrows” of Satan and his followers.

We put on the helmet which symbolizes knowledge, an intelligent hope of salvation. We need this as the adversary Satan will try everything in his power to take us away from the truth. We carry the sword of the spirit which helps us defend the doctrines of Christ from the attacks of error. We can own this sword only by careful and constant study of God’s word and by being ready to use it in defense of the truth.



God’s people do not battle with swords, guns, or tanks.

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## New Heaven and New Earth

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.” Revelation 21:1

Many Scriptures in the Bible use symbolic language. In this text *heaven* represents the various religious or spiritual powers, *earth* is symbolic of the lower or social order of things, *mountains* represent earthly governments, and *seas* are the restless and discontented masses of the people of the earth.

When John was given a vision of the new earth, he saw the same physical earth with a new social order—a better way of life based on God’s righteous rules and principles.

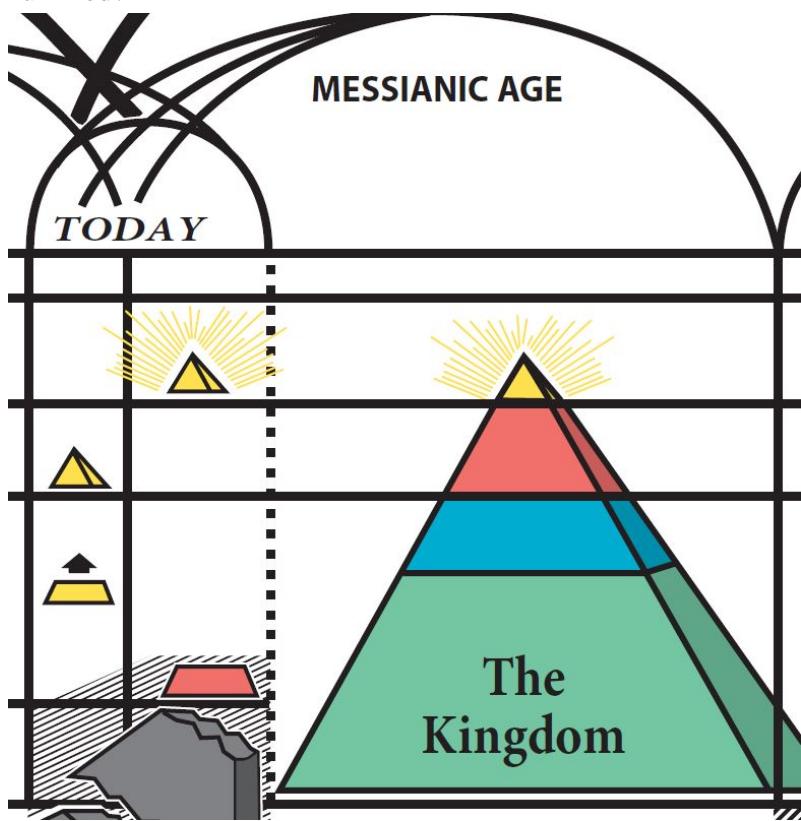
When John saw the vision of the new heaven, he was not seeing God’s throne in a new place. The heavens here referred to are the religious systems in the world all claiming to be the “right” religion. Eventually these will give way to the establishment of Christ’s kingdom of truth and righteousness.

Christ’s kingdom is the third “heaven and earth” or “the world to come.” The first was the world that was flooded with water in Noah’s day (2 Peter 3:6). It had been under the rule and influence of the angels.

The second world or social order then started and it will end in the great time of trouble. This world is also called the “present evil world” because of Satan’s power and influence; indeed, he is called “the prince of this world” (John 12:31). The new heaven and the new earth in the world to come will be based on love and justice rather than might and oppression; righteousness will prevail.

The blotting out of evil will be gradual and it will take a thousand years of Christ's kingdom before it will be completely accomplished. This will be a time when *the righteous will flourish* (Psalm 72:7), and the willing and obedient "will eat the best from the land" (Isaiah 1:19). Eventually all evil men will be cut off. Psalm 37:9

Mankind has been hoping and praying for these conditions since our Lord walked this earth and taught his disciples to pray: "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). This is a wonderful promise and is yet to be fulfilled!



Christ's kingdom is "the world to come."

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## The Desert Shall Blossom

“The wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.” Isaiah 35:1, 2

At this time when the world is in terrible turmoil, many things are being done to save the earth and the environment. We see human ingenuity working miracles. New inventions are being made so rapidly that many become obsolete in a short time.

Many of these inventions are not being used to make things better for mankind because men’s hearts are still filled with pride and greed. Those who try to bring about a better world may have some success but it will take God’s power during Christ’s reign to bring about the perfect earth and social conditions.

The “blossoming of the wilderness” assures us that provisions will be made for the physical and spiritual needs of millions who will be brought forth from the grave. Their minds will be freed from superstition, knowledge will replace ignorance, and love will replace hate and sinfulness. The next age will be a time of education!

The Jewish nation had a wrong idea of the kingdom of God because they thought it would be only an earthly kingdom. Many today make the opposite mistake in thinking it will be only a heavenly kingdom. Yet Jesus clearly taught that a kingdom, a government, will be established right here on earth, and that there would be a heavenly government which will reign over all. Isaiah 65:17; Revelation 21:1

It is hard to imagine a perfect earth where everyone lives in peace and harmony, but that will happen some day. All the

destructive forces will be gone and the earth will truly “rejoice and blossom” for there will be plenty of water for the dry places (Isaiah 35:1, 2, 7; 41:18). The restored earth will be like the Garden of Eden before sin destroyed it. The earth will then be called “paradise” and mankind will appreciate the blessing of living forever in such a beautiful place.

The opportunity to experience both good and evil, and the memory of the fruits of evil in this world, will enable mankind to choose good in the kingdom, and be granted everlasting life on a perfected earth. Those who continue to practice evil will be destroyed in the second death.

During the thousand years of restitution work under the reign of the Messiah, the earth will be brought to the condition God intended when he created it. Then the creative work will be complete—both of the earth and of mankind!



The restored earth will be like  
the Garden of Eden before sin destroyed it.

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## **Hallelujah Chorus and Ages to Come**

“Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty.  
Just and true are your ways, King of the ages.”

Revelation 15:3

At the close of the thousand year Messianic kingdom the Mediator will deliver the kingdom over to the heavenly Father (1 Corinthians 15:24). Our great God is truly worthy of worship, obedience, and love (Psalm 86:9). Yet there will be those who obey only because they are forced to do so, not because they are loyal to God in their heart.

God will not give everlasting life to the human family without first teaching them to obey his will. That is why Satan will be let loose from imprisonment (Revelation 20:3, 7, 8) and will try again to deceive the people.

At that time mankind will have had experience with both righteousness and evil. They will be given a choice—to follow Satan which will eventually end in second death, or to follow the laws of the kingdom and live forever on a perfected earth.

Even when we were “dead in sins,” God had great love for us (Ephesians 2:1; Romans 5:6-8). Those who are “dead in sins” are all mankind for they are all under the sentence of death and have no right to everlasting life. Romans 3:10, 23

Satan has never given up his desire to be higher than God and have mankind worship him. This goal will not change during the time he is bound. Fallen angels, as well as mankind, will be tested when Satan desperately tries to regain control of the world.

The end of the Millennial age will see all the wicked destroyed, cut off in second death. All the willing and obedient

will be brought to complete perfection the way God had originally planned (Isaiah 45:18). This, then, will complete God's oath bound promise to Abraham in Genesis 22:16, 18 to bless all the families of the earth.

Then there will be no more sickness and dying (Revelation 21:4). The earth will be completely cleansed and will "yield her increase." Every creature in heaven and earth will exclaim, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!" Revelation 5:13; Ephesians 2:7; Philippians 2:10, 11

"Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Hallelujah!



Praise, honor, glory, and power be to God for ever and ever!

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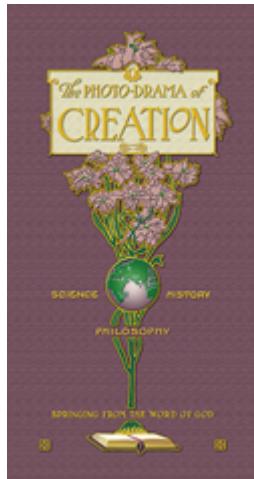
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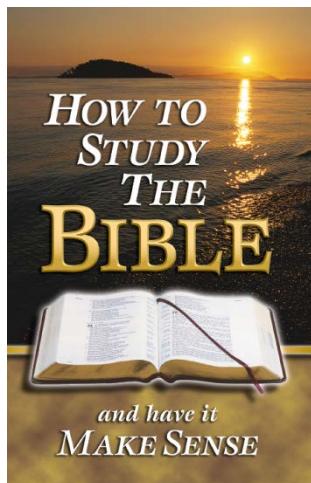
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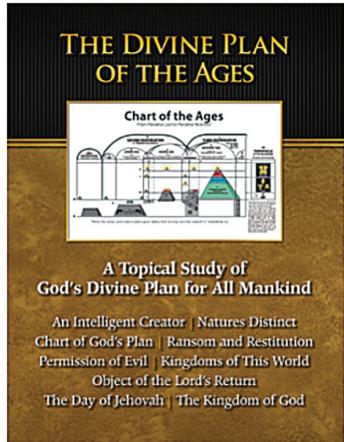


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... And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

*Isaiah 35:10*

