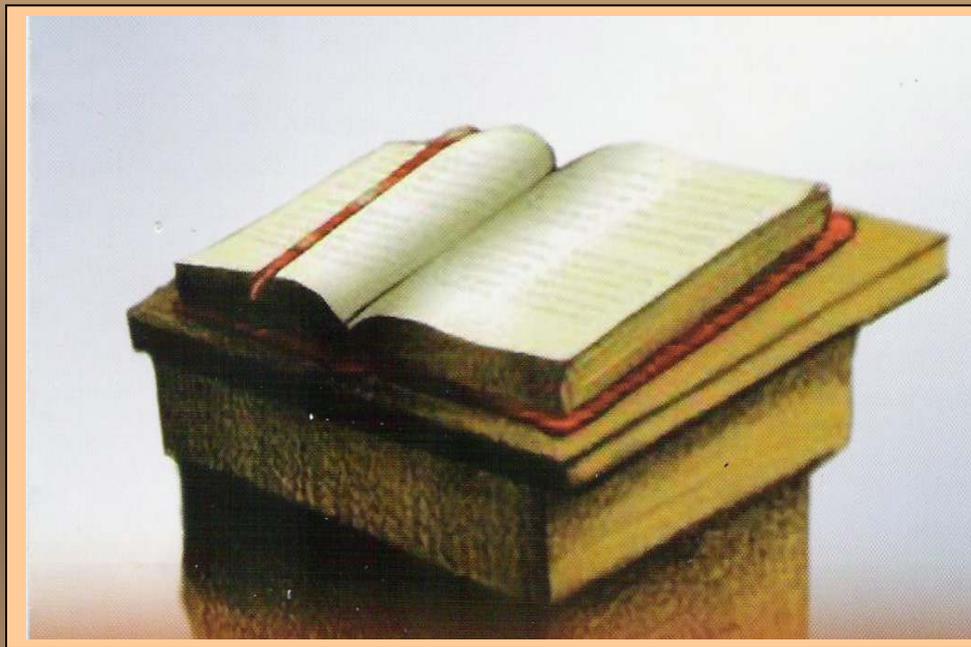


“Man’s Redemption and Destiny”



12 Lessons

**Produced by:
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2005**

Major Themes of the Bible

12 Lessons

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Table of Contents

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LESSONS	TOPICS	PAGES
1 --	God’s Promise of a Redeemer	1-3
2 --	The Redeemer has Come	4-6
3 --	Redemption Secured	7-9
4 --	Man’s Part in Redemption	10-12
5 --	Terms that Identify Redemption	13-15
6 --	The Redeemed and the Kingdom (Church)	16-18
7 --	Discipleship to Jesus	19-21
8 --	Sanctification of the Redeemed	22-24
9 --	The Second Coming of Jesus	25-28
10--	Resurrection unto Judgment	29-32
11--	Punishment for the Disbelieving	33-34
12--	Reward for the Believing	35-37

Lesson One

God's Promise of a Redeemer

To speak about man's need of a Redeemer is to infer that man is lost, helpless, hopeless unless a "redeemer" can release him from his prison of sin. Also inferred in the concept of a redeemer is the idea that God will have to be involved somehow in the process of redemption. The first part of this study will deal with the redemptive process, while the last part will deal with man's ultimate destiny.

The redemption of man is the story of the Bible! It is expressed in three phrases: (1) A Redeemer is coming; (2) A Redeemer has come; and (3) A Redeemer is coming again. All three of these concepts will be discussed in this series of lessons.

Redemption for fallen man was in the mind of God being planned before man was ever created (Ephesians 1:3-7; 1 Peter 1:17-21). Not only did God plan such, but He began to reveal his plan to fallen man shortly after his fall (Genesis 3:1-7). Titus 1:2 stated that He promised eternal life to mankind long ages ago. The purpose of this lesson is to show these promises that God has had recorded in the Old Testament.

PROMISE TO ADAM AND EVE

Shortly after man sinned, God took the time to indicate to man that his condition was not hopeless, but that He would see to it that man was redeemed (delivered) from his fallen condition. We do not know how much God elaborated on the promise—all we have is this one verse (Genesis 3:15). But Adam and Eve should have realized from it that God had a plan for their deliverance. The promise was that a descendant of the woman would deal a deathblow to the serpent (Satan) (Hebrews 2:9, 14-15).

PROMISE TO ABRAHAM

The next recorded promise was to Abraham, whom God made the father of the Jewish or Israelite Nation. Abraham's descendants became a special chosen Nation through whom God could prepare the world for the coming of the promised Redeemer. God told Abraham that this Redeemer would be one of his descendants that would bless all the families of the earth (Genesis 12:3; 22:17-18; Galatians 3:15-16).

PROMISE TO DAVID

Hundreds of years later, God's Prophet Nathan promised that a descendant of David would be established on his throne forever. It is quite obvious that this would not be a series of mere human successions that would last on and on and on. The emphasis changes in the promise from a Redeemer to a King who would reign forever (2 Samuel 7:12-17; Psalm 89:3-4; Acts 2:22-33). From this time on to the end of the Old Testament, God sent Prophets who foretold in detail of this coming Redeemer.

**OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES OF CHRIST
SHOWN AS FULFILLED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

- 1. He was to be born of a virgin.** Isaiah 7:14 (Matthew 1:23).
- 2. He was to be born in Bethlehem.** Micah 5:2 (Matthew 2:6; John 7:42).
- 3. He was to sojourn in Egypt.** Hosea 11:1 (Matthew 2:15).
- 4. He was to live in Galilee.** Isaiah 9:1-2 (Matthew 4:15).
- 5. He was to live in Nazareth.** Isaiah 11:1 (Matthew 2:23).
- 6. His coming was to be announced.** Malachi 3:1; 4:5 (Matthew 3:3; 11:10-14).
- 7. His preaching would bring good news.** Isaiah 61:1-2 (Luke 4:18-19).
- 8. His mission is to the whole world.** Isaiah 42:1-4 (Matthew 12:18-31).
- 9. He will heal people.** Isaiah 53:4 (Matthew 8:17).
- 10. He will teach in Parables.** Isaiah 6:9-10; Psalm 78:2 (Matthew 13:14-15).
- 11. He will be rejected, disbelieved and hated.** Isaiah 6:10; 29:13; 53:1 (Matthew 21:42).
- 12. He would have a triumphal entry into Jerusalem.** Isaiah 62:11; Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26 (Matthew 21:5; John 12:13-15).
- 13. He would be betrayed by a friend for 30 pieces of silver.** Zechariah 11:12-13; Psalm 41:9 (Matthew 27:9-10; John 13:18; 17:12).
- 14. He would die with criminals.** Isaiah 53:12, 9 (Luke 22:37).
- 15. He would be buried by a rich man.** Isaiah 53:9 (Matthew 27:57-60).
- 16. He would be given vinegar and gall.** Psalm 69:21 (Matthew 27:34; John 19:29).
- 17. Men would cast lots for his garments.** Psalm 22:18 (John 19:24).
- 18. His dying words were foretold.** Psalm 22:1; 31:5 (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34; Luke 23:46)
- 19. Not a bone to be broken.** Number 9:12; Psalm 34:20 (John 19:36).
- 20. His side to be pierced.** Zechariah 12:10; Psalm 22:16 (John 19:37).

These and others that could be listed show clearly of God's plan for a Redeemer to come to bless all peoples of the earth. Nothing but the mind of God could have foretold with such accuracy so many years beforehand the main features, events and many small details of the life of the Redeemer before He was born.

EAGER LOOKING FOR THE REDEEMER

The Jewish Nation was constantly looking for the Redeemer that was to come through them to bless the world. He was to be the Messiah (the Anointed One to come) that would carry out God's plan. When John the baptizer came preaching to the Jewish people, they enquired of him if he were the Messiah (Redeemer) (John 1:20-23). He told them he was not, but he was only the messenger to prepare the way for the Messiah. Jesus was asked directly if He were the Messiah, indicating that the Jewish Leaders were acquainted with the prophecies of His coming (Matthew 26:63). Time and again this question was raised in connection with Jesus as to whether He was the One that was to come to bless all nations.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The promise of a Redeemer for fallen man can be traced all the way back to the beginning of man in the Garden of Eden. A re-emphasizing of this promise in its various forms can be seen throughout the Old Testament...*"A redeemer is coming!"* Even the Angels, as well as the Prophets themselves, were desirous of looking into these things to understand what God's plans were for man's Redemption (1 Peter 1:10-12).

REVIEW QUESTIONS

True or False

1. Mankind knew from the beginning that he would be redeemed from his fallen condition.
2. Redeemer and Messiah (the Anointed One) are referring to the same person.
3. Mankind in general does not understand that they need a Redeemer.
4. God's promises of a coming Redeemer was mostly to the Jewish Nation.
5. To admit to a need of a Redeemer is to admit that we cannot redeem ourselves.
6. God planned for man's redemption before man was created.
7. God's promise of a Redeemer to Adam and Eve was made before they were driven out of the Garden of Eden.
8. God does not use the word Redeemer when He made His promise to Abraham.
9. God's concern for lost mankind was clearly shown by the promises that He made of a coming Redeemer.
10. Even Angels were interested in God's plan for man's Redemption.

Lesson Two

The Redeemer Has Come!

In the previous lesson we saw the gradual unfolding promises of the coming of a Redeemer for mankind. The Old Testament ends with a repeating of that promise (Malachi 3:1; 4:5-6). Then there was silence for four hundred years—no Prophet was raised up to repeat this promise, but in spite of this, the Jewish Nation was in earnest expectation of His coming. Granted, they probably did not fully understand His purpose for coming as we do from a reading of the New Testament—but they were expecting their Messiah! Their watching was rewarded! The Gospel accounts of Jesus announced with joy that the Messiah has been born into our world as a man child (Matthew 1:18-21; John 1:1, 14, 18). But He was not just a man, but the Son of God that has been made flesh to dwell among us (Matthew 1:23). From the human side of Jesus, the genealogies that were preserved throughout the Old Testament serve as a means of identifying Jesus as being in the lineage of Abraham, as well as David (Matthew 1:1). But there are many more evidences that Jesus was the promised Redeemer and has finally come to redeem mankind.

EVIDENCES OF JESUS BEING THE REDEEMER

1. His coming was announced by Angels. (Luke 1:26-35; Matthew 1:18-23; Luke 2:7-17). Not only did an Angel appear to Mary to announce that she would be the mother of the Messiah, but to Joseph also, and Angels appeared to the Shepherds announcing his birth. The Angels even said that His name will be Jesus, which means “savior.” And they added that He would be the Son of the Highest and that He would be given the throne of His father David and that His reign would have no end.

2. His coming was attested to by John the baptizer. (John 1:25-34; Matthew 3:3). John was sent to prepare the way for the Messiah, but he evidently did not know it was Jesus until he saw the Spirit of God descend upon Jesus and remain. This is how God told him he would know who the Redeemer would be. Seeing such, he said of Jesus, “***Behold, God’s lamb that takes away the sins of the world.***” The Redeemer has come! (John 5:32-33).

3. The many fulfilled prophecies give testimony to Jesus being the Redeemer. A great deal of emphasis is given in the Gospels (as well as other New Testament letters) about the fulfilling of prophecy by Jesus’ words and actions (Matthew 8:17). Jesus, Himself, emphasized this same thing to help people to see who He was (Luke 4:17-21). Jesus pointed out that the Old Testament Scriptures bore testimony of Him—who He was! (John 5:39).

4. The works that Jesus did bore testimony of who He was. (John 5:36). This was the Father’s way of testifying of Him before the people by allowing Him to perform all kinds of miracles, wonders, and signs. The Apostle John stated it clearly that the signs that were recorded were only a few of what Jesus did, but these were recorded so that men would have sufficient evidence upon which to put their faith in Jesus as being the Redeemer (Savior, Messiah) (John 20:30-31).

5. Jesus' own claims about Himself gives evidence of His being the Redeemer. (Matthew 20:28). He did not come in judgment upon the world, but as a Redeemer for the world (John 12:47). The world was already under condemnation because of sin. They didn't need a Judge, they needed a Redeemer! Jesus said that was the reason for His coming (John 4:26). His claims of being one with the Father caused the Religious Leaders to accuse Jesus of Blasphemy (John 5:18). Only a maniac would make such claims unless they were true!

6. The Apostles' belief of Jesus serves as a great evidence of His Messiahship. When Jesus first called them to discipleship, they recognized Him as the Messiah (John 1:41). Their evidence was probably based on John the baptizer's statements about Jesus (John 1:29, 33-41). But the more they followed Jesus, heard Him, saw Him in action, the more convinced they were of His Messiahship (Matthew 16:16; John 6:66-69). But after Jesus' death, burial, resurrection and ascension, they seem to have never doubted Jesus as being the Redeemer. They preached Him as such into all the world and even gave their lives for that belief (Colossians 1:23).

7. Possibly the greatest evidence of Jesus' Messiahship is His resurrection from the dead. He stated ahead of the time that He would be raised the third day after His death (Matthew 12:38-40). Upon His resurrection He appeared to not only His chosen disciples several times, but to a lot of others as well (1 Corinthians 15:4-8; Matthew 28:7-20, etc.). His resurrection is our assurance that there will be a Judgment Day where righteousness will prevail (Acts 17:30-31). It is also absolute proof of His Deity (Romans 1:4).

HE CAME IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME

If redemption for man was so universally needed, why did God wait so long to send His Son to make redemption possible? Why was sin allowed such a long and terrible development before the remedy was applied? The Scriptures do not specifically tell us the answer—only that Jesus came in the “fullness of time.” (Galatians 4:4-5). In God's scheme of things, Jesus came at the right time to accomplish God's purposes. Several suppositions could be suggested as to why the delay—some that Scripture might possibly indicate.

- 1) Man needed to learn the nature and effects of sin before he desired an escape from sin. If one could escape under favorable conditions, then God's help would not be needed???
- 2) Man must first try his own remedial scheme. He must learn how powerless he really is. If hope lies within his reach, then he would not accept help from another (Jeremiah 10:23; Romans 10:1-4)???
- 3) Historically considered, man first sought wealth, material benefits, worldly splendor. He learned this is not the highest good. This did not satisfy. He then turned to wisdom or knowledge in pursuit of happiness. Ancient Greece proved philosophy a failure. (book of Ecclesiastes)???
- 4) To introduce a new world religious system, it would be helpful to have a national religion that would have types and symbols representing the new order. This was accomplished through the Jewish Religion. (Hebrews 8:5-6).
- 5) A new world religion would need to have easy access to preaching this message every where. A universal language was needed. A world dominating power that offered easy travel.

All of the above things were in place when Jesus came, that made the spread of Christianity much easier. In addition to the above, the Jewish people had been scattered all over the world with their Revelation from God of the “one true God of Heaven,” as well as their expectation of the coming Redeemer. This made inroads to the Gentile world easier. How much of the above things really entered into the picture, we don’t know, but it is interesting to look back upon history and try to learn needed lessons for us today.

A factor that has helped me greatly in the question of why did God wait so long for Jesus to come is the fact that His redemption of mankind made possible the salvation of righteous people from Adam to the end of time. People were receiving the mercy and forgiveness of God from Adam on—in view of the death of Jesus for sin. In the mind of God, it was an accomplished fact! (Revelation 13:8). Redemption in Jesus was foreshadowed in God’s requirement of animal sacrifices of the people who would be right in His sight and receive His forgiveness (Hebrews 9:22-26).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The Redeemer has come! The four Gospels give us a record of this fact! He came as the fulfillment of God’s promises to Adam and Eve, to Abraham and to the Jewish Nation. He came to be mankind’s Redeemer from the bondage of sin.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

True or False

1. The delay in Jesus’ coming was because of mankind’s rejection of God.
2. Animal sacrifices were required, but were of no value in and of themselves.
3. Jesus was slain from the foundation of the world.
4. The scattering of the Jewish people was an advantage in the spread of the Gospel.
5. Jesus’ Messiahship was not recognized by His early disciples until His death.
6. Jesus never made the claim that He was the Son of God.
7. Jesus depended upon His miracles to prove who He was.
8. Jesus’ resurrection is used as proof of His Sonship with God.
9. Jesus was not aware that He was fulfilling Old Testament prophecies.
10. During his youth, John the baptiser did not know that Jesus was the Messiah.
11. Angels actually told Mary and the Shepherds that Jesus was the Son of God.
12. The genealogies of the Old Testament were actually used as evidence of Jesus being the Redeemer.
13. Jesus being of the lineage of Abraham and David was important to the Jewish people because the Messiah was to come through their lineage.

Lesson Three

Redemption Secured!

God's plan for redeeming man has been finalized! Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross is given in Scripture as the means of man's redemption.

- 1) Matthew 26:28—His blood was shed for the remission of sins.
- 2) Romans 5:9—Man is justified by His blood.
- 3) Ephesians 1:7—We have redemption through His blood.
- 4) Colossians 1:14—We have redemption and forgiveness through His blood.
- 5) Hebrews 9:14—His blood cleanses our consciences.
- 6) Hebrews 9:26—He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.
- 7) 1 Peter 1:18-19—We are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.
- 8) 1 John 1:7—His blood cleanses us from all sin.
- 9) 1 John 2:2—He is the propitiation for our sins.
- 10) Revelations 1:5—Washed us from our sins in His own blood.
- 11) Revelations 5:9—Redeemed us to God by His blood. (etc.)

When John the baptizer recognized Jesus as being the Lamb of God (John 1:29), it was with the idea of a sin offering for mankind that makes it possible for God to forgive us. He took our place and suffered our penalty so that we could be set free.

REDEMPTION, BUT AT WHAT A PRICE!

God's redemption of man did not come cheap! God paid a tremendous price in order to be able to forgive man. He was God and had to uphold His Law which states that the penalty of sin is death (Romans 6:23). The Law, in and of itself, did not have the means for forgiving men. Its pronouncement of death had to come, or God did not speak the truth! So, Redemption had to be worked out another way than law keeping (Romans 3:19-23). This other way was to be provided by God becoming flesh, living as a human, and dying as a perfect human so that our sins could be atoned for (Hebrews 5:8-9) through His sacrificial death. Jesus met the demands of the Law, so that God could justly forgive us and still uphold His Law (Romans 3:24-26).

- 1. God's Love desired our Redemption (John 3:16).**
- 2. God's Wisdom designed the plan whereby we could be set free (Ephesians 1:4-6; Acts 2:23).**
- 3. God's Power executed the plan for our Redemption (Romans 1:4, 16; Acts 2:36).**

The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus is the heart and core of the preaching of the good news to mankind (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Jesus' death is the means of our redemption, but His resurrection is the assurance of our redemption. Without the hope of a resurrection unto life, His death becomes meaningless. This is the reason why inspiration states that ***"Hope saves us!"*** (Romans 8:24). Without hope of a resurrection, we are ***"of all men most pitiable."*** (1 Corinthians 15:19). If there is no resurrection, ***"let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"*** (1 Corinthians 15:32). But Jesus has been raised and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep (1 Corinthians 15:20).

THE PREACHING OF REDEMPTION

Redemption has been made possible.....so, go tell the world about it! (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). And that is what His chosen Apostles and the early Christian did—they preached Redemption to the world in their day (Colossians 1:23). And one of the obvious factors in the preaching and teaching of the Apostles was their conviction of the message they preached! They knew the truthfulness of what they preached. Their preaching was designed to bring about that same conviction in the hearts of the hearers. Peter's sermon in Acts 2 was clear, plain and straight forward—as the first sermon to be preached under this New Covenant for mankind. He pointed out that his hearers had seen to the crucifying of the very One they had been looking for—the Messiah (the Christ). But God had raised Him up to be both Lord and Christ. Their hearts were greatly affected by the evidences that they heard and were convicted of its truthfulness. Their response was what would be expected—*“what shall we do?”* Peter's answer was simple but to the point and 3,000 responded to God's invitation offering forgiveness (Acts 2:1-47).

Sermon after sermon was recorded with the ring of conviction. There was a conviction of the truthfulness of what was preached, a conviction of the people's lost condition, and a conviction that the people needed to turn to Christ for the forgiveness they desired. This same conviction is needed today, not only on the part of the one doing the teaching, but also in the hearts of the hearers. It should be obvious, that without conviction:

- 1) We have no message to offer to lost mankind;
- 2) We have no compulsion to take a message to them;
- 3) We will have no compassion for those in a lost condition.

The early church had strong convictions about who Jesus was and His importance to their lives. Even when being persecuted, they went everywhere preaching Jesus to those who would listen (Acts 8:4).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Jesus' death delivers us from the curse of the Law, which is death (Galatians 3:10-14). This deliverance is to be offered to all men (Matthew 28:18-2). Every generation of the church should strongly feel the need and responsibility of making known to all mankind the Redemption to be found in Christ Jesus. In the words of the Apostle Peter, *“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”* (John 6:68). He and He alone can offer man eternal life!

REVIEW QUESTIONS

True or False

- ___ 1. The early church compromised their convictions about Jesus when persecution came.
- ___ 2. The Scriptures say that the blood of Christ cleanses us.
- ___ 3. Adam and Eve were forgiven of God, even though they were driven out of the Garden of Eden.
- ___ 4. Abraham and David both received the forgiveness of God, even before Jesus died on the cross.
- ___ 5. Jesus alone has the words of eternal life.

- 6. The Resurrection of Jesus is not as important as His death.
- 7. In Acts 2, the 3,000 that responded to Peter's sermon did so because they needed to be saved.
- 8. Devout religious people don't need to be saved, but rather they need to continue faithful to God.
- 9. Without hope of a resurrection, Jesus' death would be meaningless.
- 10. John the baptizer said that Jesus was God's Lamb that would take away the sin of the world.
- 11. The Law, in and of itself, has no means of forgiveness for man.
- 12. Jesus' sacrifice of Himself was to satisfy the demands of a rigid God.

Lesson Four

Man's Part in Redemption

Man's need of a Redeemer has been obvious from the beginning! God's gradual unfolding of His plan of Redemption can be seen throughout the Old Testament Scriptures. In the fullness of time, Jesus came to this earth as a man, to die as a man, as God's sacrificial Lamb. Upon Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, and ascension back to the Father redemption was secured for mankind. Now, it is up to man to either accept or reject the Redemption that God offers. The ultimate success of His plan hinged on man's receptivity. If all men had rejected Jesus as Savior, God's plan would have been defeated and Satan would have triumphed. But it did not happen that way! Mankind in general may not have accepted it, but a large portion of humanity did.

MAN'S PART—NOT BY WORKS OF MERIT!

Quite a few passages make this crystal clear! Man cannot save himself by his own works of merit! Look at the wording below to see this:

- 1) **Titus 3:5**—"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us....."
- 2) **Ephesians 2:8-9**—"Not of works, lest anyone should boast."
- 3) **Galatians 2:16**—"A man is not justified by the works of the law"
- 4) **Romans 3:20**—"By the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight"
- 5) **etc.**

The above passages are dealing with a legal (Law) system of justification. The very term "Redemption" should make this very clear...to be redeemed infers that I cannot save myself. I need a redeemer! Man cannot earn, merit, deserve, or be owed Redemption. It is not a debt that God has to pay to us (Romans 4:4). We cannot, and must not, depend upon our works of righteousness to earn or merit salvation or redemption. Our justification is not something we can boast about (see what I have done!) (Ephesians 2:8-9). Man's very best is not good enough. God says that all our righteousness is like a "filthy garment" in comparison to what we need to be to be right with God on our own merit (Isaiah 64:6).

A fact that should help man to see the above concept--is the "animal sacrifices" that were to be offer up to God on behalf of man. The shedding of the blood of an innocent animal was used by God to pre-figure or fore-shadow the death of Christ for the sins of the world. Their blood had no merit in and of themselves to accomplish redemption—only Christ's blood could do this. But the animal became the sinner's substitute; it died in the place of the sinner. This should have been obvious to the one offering the animal, but man has a way of twisting and changing things that they lose their significance. And the very fact that man needed God's forgiveness should clearly indicate that man was incapable of saving himself!!! The Apostle Paul states this to the Galatians: "***But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident.***" (Galatians 3:11) His proof was a quote from the Old Testament: "***The just shall live by faith.***" (Habakkuk 2:4).

MAN'S PART—ACCEPTING REDEMPTION

Man's pride may keep him from admitting that he needs redemption from God, but he does need God's mercy. But one thing is certain—God does not force redemption upon man. He has to desire it...seek it out (Matthew 7:7)...and meet the requirements that God has laid down to receive it. Jesus used an expression that illustrates this idea: ***“Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.”*** (Matthew 7:6). We are told not to try to force God's truth upon others, and would therefore conclude that God doesn't do that either. It is interesting to note that when the rich young Ruler went away sorrowfully from Jesus—that Jesus did not run after him to beg him to reconsider!

A great deal stress is placed on “faith” or “believing” on man's part in order to be right with God (Hebrews 11:6; Mark 16:15-16). It is to believe the good news that Jesus has come as man's Redeemer! It is to believe that He died so that we might be set free (Romans 5:8-9). Faith is obviously critical! (Romans 1:16; Ephesians 2:8-9). It is to humbly recognized that we cannot do it all by ourselves....we need God!

But “faith only” is dead and worthless in justifying man before God! This faith must be acted upon or it is dead. James points out that Abraham was justified by his faith, but it was a faith that was obedient to God and perfected or completed his faith. And He concludes with the plain statement: ***“You see then that a man is justified by works (working faith), and not by faith only.”*** (James 2:21-24)

MAN'S REDEMPTION IS CONDITIONAL

While man cannot be justified by his own efforts alone, yet God will not save a man unless his faith in God is sufficient to submit to whatever God requires of him in order to receive redemption that is offered so freely. Salvation or redemption is either conditional or unconditional! If it is unconditional, then all men will be saved—unless God is a respecter of persons! But, in reading the Scriptures it is obvious that God is not going to save or redeem everyone. He is only going to redeem those who are willing to submit to His will in their lives. The terms are simple, plain, and easy to understand. Mark's account of the great commission states that ***“those who believe and are baptized will be saved.”*** (16:16). When the Apostle Peter, for the first time, offered this Redemption through Christ to lost humanity, the people cried out and wanted to know what God expected of them in order to receive remission or forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2:1-37). The answer was simple and clear: ***“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins....”***(v. 38). Additional passages that illustrate man's need to act upon God's offer (Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Galatians 3:26-27). But the conditional concept of Redemption is not just a one time thing. It is a continual accepting of God's offer by being faithful to God (Revelations 2:10; 1 John 1:7), so that He can say to us in that Day, ***Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.”*** (Matthew 25:21). Going to Heaven is not like “lying on a bed of roses (ease),” but it is labor! We know this from the words of God: ***“Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.....Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.”*** (Revelations 14:13).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

A Redeemer for man is coming! And that Redeemer has come! Now it is up to man to either accept Him or reject Him. But, we must accept Him on God's terms or conditions, not our own! This is the grave mistake that many have and are making—they want to receive redemption on their conditions, not God's! In a world of many mixed messages on Salvation, it should be obvious that we need to diligently seek to know and do what God's Word teaches in order to be saved or redeemed.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

True or False

1. Man does not have any conditions to meet in order to be redeemed by Jesus.
2. Going to heaven does not require labor on our part.
3. God will not save a man unless his faith is submissive to the will of God.
4. Salvation by "faith only" is a doctrine plainly taught in Scripture.
5. Jesus ran after the rich young Ruler to beg him to follow Him.
6. The great stress on "faith" or "believing" shows that "faith only" is a Bible doctrine.
7. Pride is a stumbling block that keeps man from accepting redemption from God.
8. James says that Abraham was justified by faith.
9. We cannot force God's truth upon others.
10. An Old Testament Prophet is quoted to prove that man is not justified by keeping the Law.
11. Doing works of righteousness is not required to be a Christian.
12. Redemption is a gift from God, not something we can earn.

Lesson Five

Terms that Identify Redemption

One of the helpful things about Scripture is its efforts to say something important by repeating the thought several times or by using various other terms that illustrate the concept from a different perspective. When it comes to the all-important idea of redemption, such an approach becomes very obvious. It is the purpose of this lesson to look at the various terms used that are all related to our right standing before God.

ATONEMENT, RECONCILIATION, PROPITIATION

Atonement. This is mostly an Old Testament word. It is only used once in the New Testament in the King James Version (Romans 5:11). In other versions it is ***“Reconciliation.”*** ***“Day of Atonement”*** is a well-known phrase from the Old Testament. We don’t receive the atonement, but we do receive the benefit of the atonement made by Jesus when we obey the gospel. The idea of atonement is that of a substitute for another—the innocent paying the penalty for the guilty—like the animal sacrifices under the Old Testament system. Jesus became a substitute for sinful man in His death on the cross. A sacrifice has been made that is sufficient to atone for man’s sins (Romans 5:6-11).

Propitiation. This carries with it the idea of turning away of wrath by an offering. Man’s rebellion against God incurs both guilt and God’s wrath (Romans 1:18). The guilt is removed and the wrath taken away by the Sacrifice of Christ (Romans 3:25; 1 John 2:2; 4:10). Jesus is mankind’s means of averting the wrath of God for sin.

Reconciliation. The idea here is a restoration of friendship that has been broken by wrong actions. It infers that there is an estrangement between two parties, but that estrangement has been removed and the two are back together again in fellowship or friendship (Matthew 5:24; 1 Corinthians 7:11). Jesus has been the means of removing the barrier (sinful rebellion against God) that separates God and man and brings them back into fellowship (2 Corinthians 5:19-20; Romans 5:10; Colossians 1:20-22). Jesus is the great reconciler (Isaiah 53:5).

JUSTIFICATION, RIGHTEOUS

Justification. In a legal sense, it is to be tried before a court of Law and pronounced either guilty or innocent. If guilty, the just penalty of the Law will be administered. If innocent, a person will be pronounced as “not guilty,” “just,” or “righteous.” We don’t have to suffer the just penalty of our sins because Jesus met the demands of the Law for us (2 Corinthians 5:21). Thus, we can be pronounced “just” when in reality we were guilty—because our sins have been taken away (Galatians 3:13; Romans 5:1-2).

Righteous. A righteous person is one who does right (1 John 3:7). But all have sinned (Romans 3:23); therefore there is none righteous, no not one (Romans 3:10). But the sacrifice of Jesus is able to make us “right” in the sight of God (Romans 3:24-26).

REDEMPTION, FREEDOM

Redemption. Physical bondage has been a part of the human heritage. It has had man's most intense hatred and resentment. It is one of man's strongest desires—to be free! But man is faced with a greater bondage—bondage to sin (Romans 6:16)! The terrible problem is—we can't free ourselves—only God can do this! And thankfully, God has done this through Jesus (Galatians 3:13; 4:3-5). Jesus bought us and set us free (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). He paid the supreme price (Hebrews 9:12; 1 Peter 1:18; Revelations 5:9-10).

Freedom. The outcome of Redemption is freedom. But freedom is of little value if we turn around and go back into bondage (Galatians 5:1). We have been made free and are exhorted not to go back into it (Romans 6:1-2). We have given up a bad master for a greater, more loving master (Matthew 24).

REGENERATION (BORN AGAIN)

Regeneration. This word occurs twice in the New Testament in the King James Version (Matthew 19:28; Titus 3:5). The Greek word carries with it the idea of being born again or having a new beginning. Synonyms that are often used of this word are: Renewal, Revival, Renovate, or Restoration. We are all aware of the idea of degeneration—we all experience it if we live long enough! Spiritually, man is in a condition of degeneration that has him in the hold of death. He needs to be made alive, but he cannot do it himself. Jesus came that we might have life (John 10:10; 8:24; Titus 3:5; John 3:5). Regeneration is more than just being cleansed of sin, it is a new beginning, a new creation, to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:1-4)—a transformation has taken place within the heart (Romans 6:16-18). The idea of being born again (John 3:3-5) is to have the opportunity to start afresh to live right before God.

SALVATION (DELIVERANCE)

Salvation. The Greek word means: "To make sound, heal, save, preserve....to save from death or keep one alive physically." Men in places of authority or power who could help people were called "saviors." The word is used with reference to deliverance of a person from material or temporal dangers, sufferings, sickness (Matthew 8:25; James 5:15; 2 Timothy 4:18). Also, it is used with reference to deliverance from spiritual or eternal consequences of sin (Romans 5:9; Mark 16:16; Matthew 18:11). The word infers some kind of danger that a person needs to be saved or delivered from. It infers that spiritually he needs a savior who can deliver him from the just penalty of his sins.

SANCTIFICATION (CONSECRATION)

Sanctification. The Greek word is also translated: Holiness, Hallow, Holy, Holiest, Holy One, Holy Place, Holy Thing, Sanctuary, and Saint. When applied to man, it involves the concept of cleansing him from sin and setting him apart unto God (Consecrating him unto God). It is to be separated from the world and coming into a saved relationship with God. When man is sanctified, he is called "holy" or a "saint" of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Romans 6:1-2). But sanctification is a continual cleansing and setting apart process throughout one's life as a Christian (1 John 1:7;

1 Thessalonians 5:23). This sanctification is accomplished by hearing the Word of God and responded properly to it (John 17:17; 1 Peter 1:22-23).

CONVERSION

Conversion. This word occurs over 50 times in the New Testament. It is translated in the following ways: “convert, conversion, to be converted, to turn, to turn again, to turn about, to turn back, or to return.” The word can be used of someone that brings about the conversion of another person or a person converting himself. There is a strong emphasis upon man turning himself. God commands man to be converted (Acts 3:19). God has provided the means of forgiveness, the way of conversion, and the motivation to man to be converted. Man is expected to act upon these things and convert himself (turn himself) to God (1 Thessalonians 1:9). The reason given for turning to God is---“*so that your sins may be blotted out.*” (Acts 3:19). Conversion involves both the heart and the conduct of man. Man’s heart loves sin and needs to be turned to love God, righteousness, and holiness (Jeremiah 17:9). The change of a man’s heart then leads him to a changed life (Romans 6:1-2, 16-18). But conversion also involves a change of one’s state or relationship. In this conversion process he comes into a state of being right with God—having a right relationship with God. He has left the lost state and is now in a saved state.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Other words could be looked at that are identified with the above, but these should be sufficient to illustrate how clearly God is trying to make His message of salvation to man. It would be heard to miss the point! Let’s be appreciative of, not only the Salvation that we enjoy in Christ, but for His Word that makes it so plain and important.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

True or False

1. Conversion is only something God does to man.
2. The word conversion infers that there must be a new life afterwards.
3. Sanctification is the process of making one a “saint” of God.
4. Sanctification is a continuing process.
5. Salvation carries with it the idea of being delivered from something dangerous.
6. Regeneration is something that man can do by himself.
7. God alone brings about a rebirth.
8. Redemption infers that someone has paid a price for another’s freedom.
9. If one could be “just” on his own, he could boast before God.
10. Reconciliation infers that there is enmity between two people that needs to be removed.
11. Man must make his own atonement for sin.

Lesson Six

The Redeemed and the Kingdom (Church)

Not only was there an emphasis in the Old Testament of a coming Redeemer, but also of the coming of a king to reign over the new kingdom of God forever:

- 1) 2 Samuel 7:14—This new king was to sit on David's throne to rule forever.
- 2) Daniel 2:44—This kingdom would be set up during the days of the "Roman Kings."
- 3) Daniel 7:13-14—One liken unto the Son of Man was seen in a vision by Daniel. He came to the Ancient of Days and was given dominion, glory, and a kingdom.
- 4) Isaiah 2:1-2—Isaiah told of the mountain of the Lord's house that was to be established in the last days.
- 5) Isaiah 9:6-7—A person was to come that would be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, and Prince of Peace. There would be no end to his government. He would sit on the throne of David and be established on it.

The two are brought together in one person—Jesus! He is not only man's Redeemer, but He is also King (head) over His Kingdom (the Church or the Body of Christ). Thus, the Kingdom or Church would seem to be the end product of God's redemption of fallen man. Those redeemed would make up the kingdom or church.

During John's and Jesus' ministry, their emphasis was upon: "***Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.***" (Matthew 3:1-2; 4:17). John pointed to Jesus as being the Redeemer that was to come (John 1:29), and Jesus admitted to being the Messiah (John 4:25-26). Not only was the kingdom preached as being at hand, but the indication also was that it would be set up before some would die that were in Jesus' audience on one occasion (Mark 9:1). And Jesus also stated that His coming was for the purpose of being a King over His Kingdom (John 18L37).

THE KINGDOM HAS COME

Not only has a redeemer come, but the kingdom also came. It was set up on the first Pentecost after Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. The Lord's house was to be set up in the last days, and Peter stated that it was the last days (Acts 2:16-21). Jesus was raised up by God to be seated on the throne of David at the Father's right hand (Acts 2:29-36). Jesus, as one of the descendants of David sat down on his throne and is still reigning over His people. Those who believed the preaching of Peter and were obedient to the faith helped to compose the first church of Christ (Kingdom of God). From this time on in New Testament History, the kingdom or church was spoken of as being in existence (Acts 14:22; 19:8; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

VALUE OF BEING IN THE KINGDOM

Why be concerned about being in the Kingdom? If I am saved and redeemed by Jesus; why the church? Those who heard the Gospel preached for the first time in fact and responded to it—were saved! But they were also added to "the church" or added to their number (Apostles). Such composed the church (Acts 2:47). They automatically were added to the church. All who obey the Gospel are baptized into the "one body of Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:13). They make up the Kingdom of God. The church has been purchased by the blood of Jesus (Acts 20:28), which ties the

Church, Christ, and redemption together. Redemption and forgiveness of sins are also connected with being in the Kingdom of God's dear son (Colossians 1:13-14). But why the Church? Ephesians 3:10-11 indicates that God had planned the Church from the beginning of the ages so that it could make manifest the wisdom of God to principalities and powers in the heavenly places. The Church or Kingdom was to be made up of called out people of God to worship and fellowship together for their building up, but also to help make known to the world the great plan of God for their redemption (1 Timothy 3:15). God is glorified by the Church, as well as Jesus (Ephesians 3:21).

For one to be in the Kingdom or the Church infers or indicates that a person is redeemed, forgiven, is right with God, is preparing for that eternal Kingdom—and in this sense, Jesus' Kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36), for His subjects have all been called out of the world into His glorious Kingdom.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The Hebrew writer tells us that God's people are a part of a kingdom that cannot be shaken, in contrast to all that is of this world that can be shaken (Hebrews 12:28). Jesus built His Church (Matthew 16:16-18), purchasing it by His blood (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25), and is happy to be the head of it (Ephesians 1:21-23). Some day He will be coming back for the Church to take it unto Himself for all eternity (Ephesians 5:26-27). **Note: For an overview of the church, please see the next page!**

Review Questions

True or False

1. Jesus is coming back some day for the saved, but not for the church or kingdom.
2. The church and the kingdom are the same in the New Testament.
3. The Kingdom is made up of the saved just like the church.
4. A person gets into the church or kingdom by being baptized into it.
5. There is no valid reason for being in the church or kingdom.
6. Jesus is now reigning on David's throne.
7. The kingdom was set up during Jesus' lifetime on earth.
8. The kingdom is yet to be set up.
9. A Redeemer and the kingdom are tied together through the coming of Jesus.
10. Isaiah foretold of the coming of a Redeemer and the kingdom.
11. The Church or Kingdom is the end product of God's plan for redeeming man.
12. There is no way to identify this church or kingdom today.
13. Membership in the church is really a matter of choice, but not a necessity to be saved.
14. The church or kingdom had its beginning on the day of Pentecost (AD 30 or 33).

Identifying Marks of the Lord's Church

1. **BUILDER & FOUNDER** (Matt. 16:18).....Jesus
2. **BEGINNING PLACE** (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:4-5; 2:1).....Jerusalem
3. **FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH** (I Corinthians 3:11).....Jesus
4. **COLLECTIVE TERMS** (I Cor. 1:2).....Church of God
 (Rom. 16:16).....Church of Christ
 (1 Tim. 3:15).....Family of God
 (Col. 1:13).....Kingdom of God's dear Son
 (Col. 1:18).....Body of Christ
 (Eph. 2:21).....Temple of God
5. **INDIVIDUAL TERMS**
 (1 Cor. 1:2).....Saints
 (1 Cor. 12:12-13).....Members of the body
 (1 Peter 2:5).....Priests
 (Acts 11:26).....Disciples, Christians
 (1 John 3:1).....Sons of God
 (Gal. 6:1).....Brethren
6. **WORSHIP OF CHURCH** (John 4:24).....in Spirit and in Truth
 (See Homework for details)
7. **GOVERNMENT** (Universal over congregations) (John 18:37).....Jesus as King
 (Eph. 5:23).....Jesus as Head
8. **GOVERNMENT (Congregational)** (Tit. 1:5).....Appoint Elders in each Church
 (Phil. 1:1).....Bishops (Elders) and Deacons
 (Eph.4:11-13).....Evangelists and Teachers
9. **MISSION** (Matthew 28:18-20).....Preach Gospel to all Nations
 Teach all that Jesus has Commanded
10. **RULE OF FAITH** (2 Tim. 3:16-17).....New Covenant of Christ
11. **MEMBERSHIP INTO THE CHURCH** (Acts 2:37, 38, 41).....Faith
 Repentance
 Baptized
 Added to church
12. **CHURCH MEMBERS SHOULD BE CHARACTERIZED BY:**
 - a) Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6; John 8:24.....Strong Faith
 - b) John 13:35; Matt. 5:43.....Love for one Another
 - c) James 4:6-10.....Spirit of Humility
 - d) Titus 3:8.....Lives filled with good Works
 - e) Rom. 8:6.....Spiritual Mindedness
 - f) Rom. 8:24.....Hope of Heaven

Are you searching for a church like this?

Lesson Seven

Discipleship to Jesus

Jesus wants and is calling for mankind to become His disciples (Matthew 28:18-20)! He wants to teach us truth that can set us free. (John. 8:31-32). He wants us to learn of him, so He can give us rest for our souls (Matthew 11:29). He wants us to follow him because he is the Way to Eternal Life (John. 14:6). A true disciple is a learner as well as a follower!

The requirements of discipleship will vary with the person with whom we are disciples. To be a disciple of someone might require very little of us. But with others, they may require much. To be a true disciple of Jesus is costly!

- a) Jesus encourages people to count the cost of discipleship to Him (Luke 14:28-33).
- b) Jesus will not lessen His demands to make disciples (Luke 18:22-24).
- c) What is the cost of discipleship to Jesus? (Luke 14:26-27; 9:23-24).
- d) Jesus is calling for disciples who will deny themselves.
- e) Discipleship demands a Self-Disciplined Life!

WHAT THAT DEMANDS ARE NOT!

1. It is not self-denial. That is, in the sense that such is often used--*“Sacrifice or restraining of one’s own comfort or gratification.”* In the sense of doing without something we want. To illustrate:

- a) *“I do without sweets that I want, in order to lose weight.”*
- b) *“I go without food at 2 meals, in order to eat a nice meal out somewhere.”*
- c) *“I save my nickels & dimes sometimes in order to buy something I want.”*

A religious philosophy of some: *“One of the conditions of happiness is to renounce some satisfaction which men normally crave.”* (Colossians 2:20-23). This may be self-denial, but not a denial of self! Jesus demands the latter. Not a denial of something I like or want, but a total denial of self.

2. It is not just carrying a burden! Denial of self is often confused with bearing burdens of this life.

- a) *“I have poor eyesight, this is my cross.”*
- b) *“I have a poor marriage, this is my burden to be born.”*
- c) *“Old age is my burden to bear.”*

Notice an obvious fact! Most, if not all, of these things both Christians & non-Christians bear. We talk about some minor inconvenience as a cross to be born. There is a big difference between a burden and a cross.

- a) **Burden**—Something placed upon us because we live in the flesh. It comes our way because we are alive.
- b) **Cross**—A load accepted voluntarily. Not laid on us, but we pick it up voluntarily.
- c) **Burden**—A small inconvenience, usually. At most, a big problem.
- d) **Cross**—An instrument of death. It was a stumbling block because of it’s shame.

“But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness.” (1 Cor. 1:23) Denial of self is more than carrying inconvenient burdens.

3. It certainly is not modern religious “Christianity.” Much of it is discipleship without demands! It is flabby, weak, and spineless. It is belief only!

- a) All the blessings, but no real cost!
- b) Just accept Jesus as Savior—that’s it—that’s all!
- c) It is unconditional Christianity.

It tolerates any kind of a life-style; any doctrinal deviations; and any moral perversions. It is all grace, and no obedience necessary. It avoids the biting demands of discipleship. To be a true disciple of Jesus is costly. It demands a denial of self!

JUST WHAT IS A DENIAL OF SELF?

We have seen what it is not. Now, let’s see what it is that Jesus is calling upon people to do to be His disciple? It is to be crucified with Christ! ***“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”*** (Galatians 2:20). Jesus’ willingness to die for us is our example to follow! Self is put to death in order to follow Christ. (Romans 6:1-4). It is a dying to sin—to the way of sin—to disobedience to God. The old man of sin is put to death. We are then buried with Christ in Baptism. We are raised up to walk in newness of life—a life after Christ (Romans 6:6, 16, 22). This new life is not a life of sin, but a life after Christ (Romans 6:11). I became dead to sin, so that I might be alive unto God (Colossians 3:5-8). I become dead to my own will and desires. I become alive unto God’s will and His desires for me. ***“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent me.”*** (John 6:38) ***“Then He said to them all, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.’”*** (Luke 9:23). It is to die daily—take up my cross daily. As long as I live, I will face the struggle to die to self.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

But this dead man lives. He doesn’t live unto self, but unto God. Christ lives in His disciples—to do His Will. If this demand of Jesus is so great, why should I want to commit to it? ***“The wages of sin is death...”*** (Romans 6:23). This is as good a reason as any! If I am not willing to die to self here—I will die eternally away from God. But if I am willing to die to self now—I will live eternally with God after this life is over. Am I a true disciple of Jesus?

REVIEW QUESTIONS

True or False

- 1. Discipleship to Jesus requires very little of a person.
- 2. Discipleship to Jesus requires a death, but also a life.
- 3. A Cross and a Burden are the same things.
- 4. Man is going to die spiritually one way or another.
- 5. The rewards of discipleship far outweigh the demands.

- ___ 6. Giving up my will to God is a requirement of discipleship to Jesus.
- ___ 7. Modern Religions usually demand very little—especially in regards to the will of God.
- ___ 8. Inconveniences of life are burdens that all must bear, but are really not the cross that Jesus spoke about.
- ___ 9. There is no difference between self-denial and denial of self.
- ___ 10. A true disciple of Jesus is a learner as well as a follower.

Lesson Eight

Sanctification of the Redeemed

Are you sanctified? Are you Holy? Are you a Saint of God? What does it mean to be Sanctified? Can a person sin after being Sanctified? What is God's purpose in Sanctification? How is it accomplished? Can you answer all of these questions from the Bible? If not, hopefully this lesson will be of help to a better understanding of the concept of Sanctification. Unfortunately, there is a great deal of religious error taught in connection with this concept. Learning what is meant by and involved in the concept of Sanctification will help to clarify some of the problems created by false teaching.

WHAT IS SANCTIFICATION?

The Hebrew word is **Kodash** and the Greek words are **Hagios, Hagiasmos, Hagiadzo**. These words are translated by: Sanctification, Holiness, Hallow, Holy, Holiest, Holy One, Holy Place, Holy Thing, Sanctuary, and Saint. When the word or words are applied to:

1. **Deity (Father, Son, or Holy Spirit)**. It carries with it the idea of the exaltation of God...His separateness from His creatures. It is especially true in regards to his separation from sin for He is sinless. It also is used with reference to the consecration of Jesus to do the Father's Will to save mankind.
2. **Things (Mt. Sinai, Tabernacle, house, field, fasts, Sabbath, etc.)**. It is the process of setting these things apart from ordinary use to special use, usually in service to God. As a rule (in the Old Testament in particular), some kind of ceremony is conducted to denote this setting apart or making it holy.
3. **Animals**. That which can be or has been offered unto God as a sacrifice. It becomes different from other animals in this sense. It has a special benefit to man in being offered to God.
4. **Man**. Man is a sinner and needs cleansing from sin. Sanctification would involve: (1) A cleansing from sin; and (2) A setting apart unto God (consecrating man to God's service). It is the process of the man being separated from the lost world and coming into the kingdom of God. When sanctified, man is called holy or a saint of God.

It is important to realize that sanctification does not make one sinless for the rest of their lives. The process is not brought about by a "baptism of the Holy Spirit" coming upon a person. It is not a cleansing of "inbred sin," but of committed sin! It is generally recognized, with reference to man, that it is a cleansing and setting apart for service to God.

HOW DOES SANCTIFICATION TAKE PLACE?

In the first place, Deity has to be involved in the process for it to be of value. God had to provide the cleansing agent—the blood of Jesus (Hebrew 13:12). Without this, there could be no sanctification. Jesus' suffering and death provided the means of our cleansing. So, the Scripture can tell us that God can sanctify us (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

In the second place, Deity had to provide the means of telling man about sanctification—the words of the Holy Spirit of God (John 17:17; 1 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:11; 1 Peter 1:2; Romans 15:16). The Holy Spirit revealed the message to the Apostles and Prophets so that it could be

proclaimed accurately to the whole world and be preserved in a book form for future ages (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Hebrews 1:1-3; 2:1-4).

In the third place, man must do something in order to be cleansed and set apart unto God's service. He must hear the message of God about the possibility of being sanctified (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). But it is not enough to hear the message, but we must act upon that message (James 1:21-25)—we must be doers of the Word of God that can save our souls (Hebrews 10:29). Saul (later the Apostle Paul) had the privilege to have seen the risen Lord on the road to Damascus, but God did not sanctify him at that time. Saul was told to go into the city and there he would be told what he must do to be sanctified. When Ananias came to Saul, he exhorted him not to tarry but to get up and be baptized so that his sins could be washed away (Acts 22:16). Saul was then sanctified (washed, cleansed by the blood of Jesus). 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 gives a list of sins that people had been guilty of—but they had been washed, sanctified, and justified from their sins. Without sanctification, we cannot see God (Hebrews 12:14).

SANCTIFICATION IS ALSO A CONTINUING PROCESS

Constant efforts must be put forth to wean us, as far as possible, away from sin in our lives (Romans 6:1-2). We should want to be a servant of righteousness, not a servant of sin. Thus, there is the need of constant, even daily, sanctifying of ourselves before God (1 Thessalonians 4:3, 7; Romans 6:19, 22). This sanctification makes us fruitful vessel of honor unto God (2 Timothy 2:20-21). The concept of sanctification is a call to the Christian to live a holy, set apart, consecrated life before God and man (1 Peter 1:15-19). The Christian is strongly admonished to come out from the world and be separate (2 Corinthians 6:14-18). And the end result of a holy life is fruitfulness and reward (Romans 6:22; 1 Thessalonians 5:23).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

God commands men to be holy, sanctified, cleansed, or set apart unto His service. He has provided the **means** of this sanctification—the blood of Jesus. But man must hear God's truth and obey that truth to be cleansed, purified, or set apart. What a great privilege that we have to be among those who have been sanctified by God. But His invitation is to all men....Be Holy!

REVIEW QUESTIONS

True or False

1. Man can become so sanctified in his life that he never sins again.
2. Sanctification is a one time thing that must happen in one's life.
3. Sanctification is a continuing process in the life of a Christian.
4. Sanctification is only something that God does, not man.
5. Man cannot go to heaven unless he is continually holy.
6. Sanctification comes to a person upon being baptized with the Holy Spirit.

___ 7. Man needs to be sanctified in order to serve God acceptably.

___ 8. Sanctification can involve God, man, animals, or things.

___ 9. A Christian becomes a saint when he is sanctified.

___ 10. Sanctification does not deal with the idea of purification.

Lesson Nine

The Second Coming of Jesus

The one great theme of the Bible is: THE REDEEMPTION OF FALLEN MAN! This theme is summed up in 3 expressions: A Redeemer is coming (O. T. Scriptures); The Redeemer has come (Gospels); The Redeemer is coming again (Letters to Christians). This lesson will be dealing with the 3rd expression...The Redeemer is coming again! Two extremes have been taken on this subject:

- a) Sensationalism—Date setting, sign-watching, various unusual happenings at Jesus' return.
- b) Indifference—To be unconcerned, indifferent to Jesus' return, engage in unrighteousness.

It is important that we guard against being deceived by false teaching or the other extreme of being indifferent to Jesus' return.

TERMS THAT DENOTE HIS COMING!

A "second coming" certainly infers there was a "first coming." His "first coming" gives an assurance of His "second coming." The expression, "Second coming," is not found in KJV, but Jesus does say: *"...I will come again..."* (John 14:3). So, the concept is obviously there. Several Greek terms are used to describe Jesus' 2nd coming:

- 1) **Apokalupsis**—Revealing, Revelation. 2 Thess. 1:7—*"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels...."*
- 2) **Epiphaneia**—Manifestation, Appearance. 1 Tim. 6:14—*"That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ..."*
- 3) **Ophthesetai**—Shall appear. Heb. 9:28—*"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."*
- 4) **Parousia**—Presence, Coming. 1 Thess. 3:13—*"To the end he may stablish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints (Holy ones)."*
- 5) **Hemera**—Day, Day of the Lord. 2 Peter 3:10—*"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night..."*
- 6) **Erchomai**—Coming. John 14:3—*"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again...."*

Why so many terms? We are not directly told, but it certainly does help to stress the importance of Jesus' return!

NATURE OF HIS RETURN.

1. **He will come in person.** 1 Thess. 4:16—*"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven."*
2. **He will come with a great noise.** 1 Thess. 4:16—*"...with a shout, with the voice of the*

archangel, and with the trump of God..."

3. He will come in the clouds. Rev. 1:7—"*Behold, he cometh with clouds...*"
4. His coming will be visible to all. Rev. 1:7—"*And every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.*"
5. He will come with his holy angels. Mark 8:38—"*Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.*"
6. He will come in glory. Matt. 25:31—"*When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.*"

Let's look at some observations from Scripture concerning Jesus' coming

1. We should earnestly believe in His coming.
2. We should look for His coming. 2 Pet. 3:12—"*Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God...*"
3. We should eagerly await it. 1 Cor. 1:7-8—"*So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"
4. We should always be in readiness for His return. Matt. 24:44—"*Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.*"
5. We should love & desire His return. 2 Tim. 4:8—"*Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*"
6. We should look forward to the great joy at His coming. 1 Pet. 4:13—"*But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.*"

EVENTS TO OCCUR BEFORE HIS COMING

1. Time will obviously have had to elapse. As we have already seen---almost 2000 years! Matt. 25:19—"*After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.*"
2. Jews & the Gentiles are to become one in the church. John 10:16—"*And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.*"
3. A great apostasy from the Faith to occur & the man of sin be revealed. 2 Thess. 2:1-3; 1 Tim. 4:1—"*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith...*"
4. The long delay will cause doubters to arise. 2 Pet. 3:3-4—"*Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.*"
5. The Events described in Revelation to occur before Jesus comes to reward and punish. Rev. 1:1—"*The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass...*"
6. The destruction of Jerusalem. Matt. 24:1-3

(Note: As far as we know....all of the above have occurred!)

ARE THERE SIGNS OF JESUS' RETURN?

What about the "signs" in Matt. 24?

1. Vs. 4-5—Deceivers to come.
2. Vs. 6—Hear of wars, and rumors of wars. *"end is not yet."* End of what?
3. Vs. 7—Nation against nation, Famine, pestilence, earthquakes.
4. Vs. 8--- *"All these are the beginning of sorrows."* For whom?
5. Vs. 9—Apostles delivered up & killed & hated of all nations.
6. Vs. 10—Many to fall away.
7. Vs. 11—Many false prophets to arise.
8. Vs. 12—Lawlessness abound, love of many grow cold.
9. Vs. 13—*"But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."* End of what?
10. Vs. 14—Gospel to be preached to all nations. *"then shall the end come."* What end?
Col. 1:23—*"...the gospel....which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."* (This was written in AD 63!)
11. Vs. 15—When you see the "Abomination of Desolation" stand in the holy place—spoken of by Daniel!! (Dan. 9:20-27) (70 weeks). This became the SIGN for believers!! Those who make desolate....destruction of city & temple. Luke 21:20—*"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh."* The Roman army withdrew for short time. The Jews signed with relief....They are gone! But the Christians believed Jesus and fled the city...with no loss to life.
12. Vs. 16-22—Why only those in Judea to flee? If this was talking about the end of world, what difference would all this make? These are the days of vengeance upon Jewish unbelievers. (Luke 21:22-24)
12. Vs. 23-31—This is highly figurative language. This is describing the coming of the Lord in destruction upon Jerusalem. (O.T. example—Isa. 13:9-10---Fall of Babylon). Matt. 23:31-39 triggered what was said in Matthew 24. The Horrible destruction by the Romans occurred in AD 70. Christians had an opportunity to get out! They were spared because they believed & fled!
13. Vs. 32-33—What is near? The destruction of Jerusalem! This was very significant to the Jewish Christians! God's punishment upon unbelieving Jews showed God's rejection of them. The destruction of the Temple meant that the Jewish people who rejected Jesus were no longer acceptable! The New Covenant had already gone into force for all peoples. **Can we know when Jesus will return?** Jesus clearly gives the answer!
14. Vs. 36—*"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."* Two other statements makes this very clear.
 - a) 1 Thess. 5:2—*"For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night."*
 - b) 2 Peter 3:10—*"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night..."*

In spite of these plain statements, there are Religious leaders who have predicted the date of the Lord's return. Making them smarter than the Lord Jesus!

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Let's be thankful for the great promise of the Lord's Return for His people. Let it console us in tribulation & persecutions. Let it stimulate us to our duty as children of the day, and not the night. May we always be expectant, watching and ready in attitude & life for His coming. But let it be a terrible warning to the unbeliever—of the impending doom to those unprepared for His return....who will not repent and become obedient to the gospel.

Jesus' second coming is more than just a matter of belief—it is a hope, a glorious hope, in a great promise. It is a firm expectation of things to come. It will be the completion of our Salvation. Are you anxiously looking for the promised coming of Jesus Christ?

REVIEW QUESTIONS

True or false

1. We should watch and be ready for the Lord's return because we do not know when it will be.
2. Only the Father knows when Jesus will return.
3. Matthew 24 is describing the overthrow of the city and temple in Jerusalem by the Roman Army.
4. The listing of events in Matthew 24 are all signs leading up to the second coming.
5. The events described figuratively or symbolically in Revelation must come to pass before the 2nd coming of Jesus occurs.
6. Christians should love the Lord's appearing.
7. When Jesus comes, He will be visible to all to see.
8. Jesus' return will be a secret and only the righteous will be taken from the earth.
9. The "rapture" of the righteous only is a scriptural teaching.
10. Jesus will be coming back by Himself when He returns.
11. Jesus' coming is a promise that the Christian can fully believe and put their trust in.
12. The destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple was God's way of showing the Jewish unbelievers that they are no longer acceptable to God.
13. The expression "second coming" is not found in Scripture.

Lesson Ten

Resurrection unto Judgment

An old man insisted on running a race with 3 young runners. The young men laughed: *"You are too old, your legs are bent, you are stiff.... How do you think you can run with us?"* The old man kept on insisting. The young men laughingly gave into his wishes. He was slow at first, and got far behind, but then began to run faster, faster, and faster. He finally overtook the 3rd one, touched him, and he fell by the way. Then, he caught up with the 2nd, touched him, and he fell by the way. When he caught up with the 1st, the young man asked him: *"How could you do it?" "Who are you?" "What's your name?"* The old man replied: *"I told you I had run many races--And have run with the best!" "I ran with Adam! It was a long race, but I overtook him." "I ran with Abraham, Moses, David, the apostle Paul, and won all the races."* The young man finally realized....His name was "Death." God has ordained that all will die! (Heb. 9:27) But He has also ordained for all men to be raised, and brought into Judgment.

GOD HAS PROMISED A RESURRECTION OF ALL MEN!

A Resurrection is talking about man's body that will be raised.

- 1) Rom. 8:11—***"He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."***
- 2) 1 Cor. 15:42—***"So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption."***
- 3) 1 Cor. 15:53—***"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."***

The Concept of a General Resurrection of All Men is stated! Most references deal with the resurrection of Christians. They state what will happen to the righteous. The unrighteous are not discussed, other than the fact that they too will be raised (John 5:28-29). "The Hour is coming"---Set time! "All in the grave will hear his voice"---No one left out. "Some will be raised unto life. "Some to the resurrection of condemnation." ***"I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust."*** (Acts 24:15; Rev. 20:11-15). At that time, heaven and earth fled away and are not found anymore. The dead were standing before God....resurrected, judged & sentenced!

What will happen to man's body in the Resurrection? The Scripture say, concerning those who have died, ***"And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be."*** (1 Cor. 15:37). It will be just like a grain of corn when it is planted in the ground. It will come forth a new plant to produce CORN! Even though the plant looks different as it comes forth, it has it's identity....It is CORN! So it will be with our bodies (1 Cor. 15:42-44). The identity, personality of the person survives the death of the body. Notice about our physical bodies that they are constantly changing. A body of 8 is not body of 68, but the identity is there. The soul or spirit will be clothed with a new body (a spiritual body), one that is fit for living with God (Phil. 3:21; Matt. 22:30; 1 Cor. 15:49).

GOD'S ASSURANCE OF A RESURRECTION!

God's assurance to us of a resurrection someday has been shown by those he has already raised!

- 1) Recorded in the O.T. books:
 - a) 1 Kings 17:20-23—(Elijah)—Son of Widow of Zarephath.
 - b) 2 Kings 4:18-37—(Elisha)—Son of Shunamite woman.
 - c) 2 Kings 13:21—A dead man who was thrown into grave of Elisha—upon touching bones of Elisha raised to life.
- 2) Recorded in the Gospels of Christ:
 - a) Luke 7:13-16—Jairus' daughter raised by Jesus.
 - b) Luke 8:55—Jesus raised the son of the widow of Nain.
 - c) John 11:23-44—Jesus raised Lazarus.
 - d) Matt. 27:52—Many nameless saints were raised after Jesus was raised..... and appeared to many!
- 3) Recorded in the Acts:
 - a) Acts 9:36-41—Peter raised Tabitha back to life.
 - b) Acts 20:9-12—Paul raised Eutychus back to life.

Notice about the above that all of these were raised to live again in a world of sin, sorrow, tears, and pain, and then to die again! But they demonstrate the great power of God to give new life to our mortal bodies.

But God's greatest assurance has been shown by the Resurrection of Jesus, Himself (1 Peter 1:3-4). Jesus' resurrection not only assures us of our own resurrection, but gives assurance of Judgment Day as well (Acts 17:30-31). It is also an assurance to us that Jesus is truly the Son of God (Rom. 1:4). And His resurrection is also an assurance that Jesus is both Lord & Christ (Acts 2:32-36).

God has also given ample evidence or proof of the Resurrection of Jesus! Old Testament prophecies foretold the coming of the Messiah that would be put to death, but raised up from the dead (Isa. 53; Psalms 16; Acts 2:25-31). And Jesus, Himself, foretold of His coming death & resurrection (Matt. 16:21). In addition there was the empty tomb of Jesus that furnished great proof that He was raised. Then, there were also the appearances of Jesus that gave evidence to the ones who would preach His Message to mankind. He appeared to the disciples upon different occasions, to some women twice, to individuals (Peter, James, and to 2 disciples on road to Emmaus), to over 500 brethren at once, last of all to Paul. Paul's changed life can only be explained by His belief in the resurrection of Jesus, for he turned immediately from persecuting to proclaiming Jesus as the resurrection Son of God.

RESURRECTION UNTO JUDGMENT!

We have already seen that both the just & unjust will be raised. *"Then, what advantage is it to be a Christian if both are raised?"* The difference is in what we are raised unto! We will discuss this in our last two lessons. But this lesson states that we are raised unto judgment (Rom. 14:10). ***"For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."*** And just imagine what it will be like!

Man's Redemption and Destiny

Page 31

THE NATURE OF THE JUDGMENT

- 1. God will judge through His Son!** (Hebrews 12:23; John 5:22). And who better to judge mankind that the “God-Man?” He shares both Divinity and Humanity!
- 2. This judgment will be an awesome sight and experience!** (Revelation 20:11; 2 Corinthians 5:10-11; Hebrews 10:30-31). Preparation for this great occasion is an absolute necessity!
- 3. This Judgment will be in Righteousness!** (Revelation 20:12; John 12:48). The perfect standard will be used. This Judgment will not be perverted, unreasonable, nor unfair. It will be according to Truth! (Romans 2:2).

WHY HAVE A FINAL JUDGMENT?

Mankind will have already been judged in a sense! This has been seen in the terrible judgments that have come upon individuals and nations, physically! It is seen by the suffering that mankind has had to endure! We are either saved or lost...now! So, why have a final judgment?

- 1. To see that Justice is completed!** Not all wrongs are punished, even here. Not all right actions are recognized and rewarded here. God’s justice will make all known and clear (Romans 2:16).
- 2. To help man see himself in the true light!** Man has the power of memory (Luke 16:25). We retain a record of all our actions. In Judgment, God just has to revive it to our consciousness. Man has a conscience (Romans 2:15). Our conscience voluntarily anticipates punishment for wrong deeds. It will be self-revelation and self-condemnation when our lives are compared to God’s Truth. Man’s thoughts and deeds develop into the character of the person. Sin leaves its mark upon the soul (Matthew 15:19-20). Thus, our character reveals our past thoughts and actions. Thus, man’s true condition will be fully made manifest in judgment! God’s Justice will be made obvious to all. The righteous will be upheld. The wicked will be shown for what he really is.
- 3. To pronounce the final verdict upon mankind!** (Romans 2:5-6).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Christ's resurrection and our resurrection are inseparably tied together. A denial of one is a denial of the other. A belief in one is a belief in the other. The evidence is overwhelming for believing in both! And when we face death, this hope will give great assurance! Unto what will you be resurrected someday? The choice is ours to make!

We are being judged every day by our thoughts and actions. We are judging ourselves every day, as well. Every honest person knows that he will be judged someday by God. Those not honest are just deceiving themselves. Death is coming to one and all. After death comes the judgment. Will you be prepared?

REVIEW QUESTIONS

True or False

- 1. The resurrection of both the good and bad is taught in Scriptures, but they will not be raised at the same time.
- 2. Resurrection is talking about delivering the soul from the Hadean world, not the body of man.
- 3. The only evidence upon which to base our faith in a general resurrection of all mankind is that the Scriptures say so!
- 4. The purpose of the resurrection is so that men can be brought into judgment.
- 5. The advantage of the Christian in being raised up is in what he will be raised up unto.
- 6. Man's eternal destiny is actually determined at his death.
- 7. A final judgment has no practical purpose.
- 8. The basis for judgment will be the Word of God only.
- 9. The eternally saved will be perfectly happy with the decision God makes about their loved ones in judgment.
- 10. If we are judged by the deeds we have done, then God's grace is not needed.
- 11. Jesus' resurrection has nothing to do with the Judgment.
- 12. Jesus' purpose for coming to earth the first time was not for judgment, but to provide salvation for man.

Lesson Eleven

Punishment for the Disbelieving

Jesus warned: ***“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”*** (Matt. 10:28). Hell is not a very pleasant word to think about! Men avoid talking about it seriously. They use it as a curse word to take away its seriousness. And most people do not think they are going there. Surveys show that the vast majority do not-----90% in heaven-----20% in hell. It is much more desirable to only believe in reward and not punishment. But common sense and our conscience lets us know that there is both reward and punishment. And most of all—God says there is a Hell! Do you believe in God—then you will also believe in Hell! God is not a liar—there is going to be such a place! Jesus said it is a place “prepared.” (Matt. 25:41).

DESCRIPTION OF “HELL”

A place of outer darkness. ***“Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness.”*** (Matt. 25:30). It is to be driven from the presence of God—who is Light! Mankind has a normal dread of total darkness.

A Lake of fire. ***“And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire”*** (Rev. 20:15). How do you reconcile fire & darkness? God is merely trying to communicate what Hell will be like in terms we can grasp. Hell may neither be literal fire or literal darkness as we know it here. But whatever it will be—it will be terrible!

A place of pain! ***“Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*** (Matt. 25:30). ***“And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night...”***(Rev. 14:11). ***“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment.”*** (Matt. 25:46). Punishment, torment, weeping & gnashing of teeth—doesn’t sound too desirable, does it?

A place of divided families! (Matt. 10:34-37). Jesus is the Prince of Peace, but His message will divide families. Some will obey Him, others will not. Some will be faithful, others will not. None of us like to think of our loved ones being lost! But the truth is...many families will be divided. We need to do all we can to avoid such!

Because it is forever! ***“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment.”*** (Matt. 25:46). There is no end...never to cease! Hell will be just as long as Heaven for the same word is used to describe both.

WHO WILL GO THERE!

The Devil & his angels will be there. ***“Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”*** (Matt. 25:41). Not a very desirable group to be with!

The wicked. “*The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God.*” (Ps. 9:17). “*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.*” (Rom. 1:18). This is the next most obvious group of people.

The disobedient. (2 Thess. 1:7-9). We either obey or make up the population of Hell. It doesn't matter how morally good we are—we must also obey the gospel (Acts 2:38).

Deceived religious people. (Matt. 7:21-23). Jesus' warning to religious people—“*You serpents, you generation of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of hell?*” Being religious, morally good, or even being zealous is not enough. We must do the “will of the Father.”

Unfaithful Christians. (Rev. 2:10). What about those who are unfaithful? (Heb. 10:26-31).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Hell is just as real as Heaven! It is just as terrible as Heaven is wonderful. And it is just as long as Heaven. God has warned us about it! So, believe it—or be prepared to suffer in it forever! Cast yourself on the mercy of God now! Obey His gospel—live faithful to death! Jesus warns us that most people will go the broad way that leads to death (Matthew 7:13-14).

REVIEW QUESTIONS

True or False

- ___ 1. Only the most wicked of people will be sent into Hell.
- ___ 2. I want to be sent into Hell with the Devil and His Angels.
- ___ 3. Those who do not obey the Gospel will be lost!
- ___ 4. Jesus' message about Heaven is designed to divide families.
- ___ 5. Hell will not be conscious punishment.
- ___ 6. To be destroyed is to cease to exist.
- ___ 7. Jesus is the “Prince of Peace” that divides families.
- ___ 8. Once a person becomes a Christian, he can never be lost in Hell.
- ___ 9. Man has the responsibility to seek after God.
- ___ 10. Sincere people will not go to Hell.

Lesson Twelve

Reward for the Believing

Two well-known men in the 1800's had a well-publicized debate. It was on Atheism. The two men were Campbell and Owen. Mr. Campbell represented the Christian's view, while Mr. Owen represented the Atheistic view. Mr. Owen visited Mr. Campbell at Bethany, WV, to arrange for the debate. That evening as they strolled over the farm they came to the family burial grounds. Mr. Owen stated, *"There is one advantage I have over the Christian—I am not afraid to die. And if some few items of my business were settled, I would be perfectly willing to die at any moment."* Mr. Campbell's reply was: *"You say you have no fear in death; do you have any hope in death?"* After a solemn pause, Mr. Owen answered, *"No."* Mr. Campbell then reminded him, *"Then,"* pointing to an ox standing in the shade, whisking off flies, *"you are on the level with that brute. He has fed until he is satisfied, and there he stands in the shade, and has neither fear nor hope in death."* Mr. Owen made no attempt to answer.

Is it the lot of our existence to be like that brute beast—no fear nor hope in death? Is it just to live a short time and die with no hope of anything beyond this existence? ***"If a man dies, shall he live again?"*** (Job 14:14). Certainly, we should all want to say—Yes, there is hope after death! All past civilizations have entertained such a hope. Not only from the standpoint of wanting to continue to exist but also as a Reward concept for striving to live right. Giving man hope is what redemption is all about! And Jesus has made this hope possible.

JESUS HAS GIVEN US THE HOPE OF HEAVEN

Jesus came down from Heaven to live among men, NOT only to make Heaven possible, but to help us understand more about Heaven. ***"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word, was with God, and the Word was God....And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."*** (John 1:1, 14). Jesus gave us His word that there is reward for the believing. ***"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."*** John 14:11-12). If He has been there—He ought to know about it!

Jesus has given us insights to this place by using descriptive terms: (a) Life without end in the presence of God (Matt. 25:46); (b) A place of glory (2 Cor. 4:17); (c) A place of Rest (Heb. 4:9; Rev. 14:12); (d) A new world different from this one to exist in (2 Pet. 3:13); and (e) A place of great reward (Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:8).

MOTIVATIONS TO GO TO HEAVEN

The shortness of this life! "For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away." (Jas. 4:14). Without hope of heaven—it is all over in a very short time. Is that the purpose for our existence?

The Wickedness we have to deal with here. (Matthew 5:10-12). The world was so wicked at one time that God destroyed all but 8 souls. Wickedness often reigns among mankind. Morals continually are lowered to the level of beast. Honesty and truth are compromised and laughed at. Man needs to have hope of something better than this.

The Trials and Tribulations of this life. (James 1:2-4). Life is often filled with: *“Blood, Sweat, and Tears!”* We Struggle for survival as a Christian by putting our emphasis upon the more important thing (Matt. 6:33). The temptations and calamities that often befall us sooner or later that we have to deal with. Like the lady that had been stricken with arthritis. Her limbs gnarled & twisted and had to have help to walk. Such is a pitiful sight to see, but we see it far more than we would like. But this particular lady sat through the worship service with a smile and a hopeful outlook because she had just the day before been baptized into Christ. She now had hope in spite of her physical ailments. Jesus’ invitation had real meaning to her--*“Come unto me all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.”* What a blessing to have hope in such bad circumstances.

WE DECIDE OUR DESTINY

The Choice is between Heaven or Hell (Matt. 25:46). Heaven is designed to be a reward for the faithful to God. But this hope is held out to all men to accept. The Apostle Paul expressed this concept in 2 Corinthians 5:20: *“Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.”* But Hell is designed for punishment of the Devil and his angels as the primary ones (Matt. 25:41). But sinful man will also suffer the consequences unless redeemed by the blood of Jesus (Rom. 6:23). The contrast between the two certainly makes Heaven more desirable. A young teen that was angry, rebellious, and always getting into trouble needed to make a radical change or he would wind up dead or in prison. A friend of the family was a policeman. He offered to take the teen into the local prison to see and talk with prisoners. The visit helped him to see which was the better choice. I want to go to Heaven because it is by far the better choice. Choosing to go to heaven is easy because of how it is described

- 1) Rev. 21:5—*“Behold, I make all things new.”*
- 2) 2 Pet. 3:13—*“Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.”*
- 3) 1 Pet. 1:4—*“to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.”*
- 4) 1 Cor. 15:42-44
- 5) 1 Thess. 4:17—*“Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”*
- 6) New, Unchanging, Complete holiness, complete satisfaction (Revelation 21:8, 27).
- 7) No pain, tears, death, persecution, crippling diseases (Revelation 21:4).
- 8) Phil. 1:23—*“For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.”*
- 9) 1 Cor. 2:9—*“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”*
- 10) Lk. 6:23—*“Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven.”*

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The obvious choice would be to believe in and want to go to Heaven! Why shouldn't everyone want to go to heaven! But going to Heaven is not without a cost! And this is where the problem comes in—the Willingness to pay the cost! The cost is spelled out clearly: ***“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”*** (Matt. 16:24). Jesus must become Lord of my life....what He says, I must do! ***“Unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.”*** (Matt. 18:3). Have you made the choice to go to Heaven?

REVIEW QUESTIONS

True or False

1. The reason why only a few will go to Heaven is because of the cost to be paid!
2. Heaven is described in physical terms, but it is a spiritual place.
3. The new Heaven and Earth is Heaven.
4. Choosing Heaven over Hell is very easy.
5. Heaven is made greater because of what it is contrasted to.
6. Trials and Tribulations should help us to appreciate the hope of Heaven.
7. Man's destiny is decided in time.
8. Lack of fear of dying does not guarantee that we are ready for death.
9. Wanting to believe in a desirable after-life has been the general desire of mankind.
10. Jesus' promise of Heaven should be sufficient to cause us to want to go there.

