

Biblical Accounts
For
Basic Training and Beyond

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Introduction

The world today is filled with people of every pluralistic philosophy and personal persuasion. The “watch-words” are “Tolerance and Acceptance” for everyone and everything, no matter who they are and what they are propagating or practicing.

As a result of the “status quo,” many individuals have been led to believe that they can set out on their own courses and choose to do just anything they desire and, sad to say, this includes the service of the Lord, as well. This, therefore, has given rise to all kinds of religious groups springing up with no sound doctrinal direction and no Biblical foundation upon which to build a work that honors God and properly impacts and influences the lives of others spiritually.

The “litmus test” for truth is no longer, “What saith the Lord” but “Is one’s efforts involved in helping others socially in some benevolent or humanitarian way.” Whatever is done in Jesus’ name is taken to be acceptable with God because it is thought to be characteristic of what Jesus would have done.

It needs to be seen that God has a standard and that standard is the Word of God. This means those who would serve the Lord need to be properly spiritually equipped for service. This is an absolute and essential pursuit that involves a process of spiritual growth. This work is offered as a help in attaining that goal so that one’s life may be well-pleasing to the Lord and be used of Him to produce an abundance of spiritual fruit for His glory.

Biblical Accounts That Call for Believers to Recognize God's Power

A. THE POWER OF GOD IS REVEALED TO US IN HIS AWE-INSPIRING ACTS OF CREATION.

1. God simply “spoke” and the heaven and the earth were created by His own omnipotent Word (Gen. 1:1; Heb. 11:3; Isa. 45:12).

Just how vast is the universe? Using the speed of light which is roughly 186,000 miles per second (to be exact 186,282.397 miles per second) there are 5,878,639,427,505.244 miles in one light year. Astronomers estimate the following dimensions:

The universe is immensely large and possibly infinite in volume. The region visible from earth is a sphere with a radius of about 46 billion light years... our Milky Way Galaxy is roughly 100,000 light years in diameter and our nearest sister galaxy, the Andromeda Galaxy is located roughly 2.5 million light years away. There are probably more than 100 billion galaxies in the observable universe. And the observable universe contains 300 sextillion (3 times 10 to the 23rd power) stars (Wikipedia, October 12, 2012).

Just recently (Wednesday, October 24, 2012) a news article appeared entitled, “Amazing Photo Captures 84 Million Stars in Our Milky Way Galaxy” and reads as follows:

Astronomers have catalogued 84 million stars at the heart of the Milky Way Galaxy using an enormous cosmic photo snapped by a telescope in Chile, a view that is billed as the largest survey ever of the stars in our galaxies core. The staggering 9 Gigapixel picture was created with data gathered by the Visible and Infrared Survey Telescope for Astronomy (VISTA), an instrument at the European Southern Observatory's Paranal Observatory in northern Chile. The zoom able image is so large that it would measure 30 feet long by 23 feet tall (9 by 7 Meters) if printed with the resolution of a typical book, researchers said (Space.com, October 24, 2012).

But in light of such discovery, rather than giving glory and praise to God for the awe-inspiring wonder of His creation, the study's leading author Roberto Saito said the following:

By observing in detail the myriads of stars surrounding the center of the Milky Way we can learn a lot more about the formation and evolution of not only our galaxy, but also spiral galaxies in general.

What a stark contrast this is to what David exclaimed when he peered into the starry heavens and saw the handiwork of God: “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained, what is

man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him?” (Psa. 8:3, 4). The Psalmist also said in Psa. 147:4, “He telleth the number of the stars: he calleth them all by their names.” In Psalm 19:1 he said: “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork.”

2. God simply spoke and created the heavens, the earth, and all that is within them in Six literal days (Exod. 20:11 says: “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day...”

The Bible says that God spoke on the first day of His creation and said, “Let there be light” and there was light (Gen. 1:3-5). On the second day God spoke and said, “Let there be a firmament to divide the waters from above and beneath the firmament and “it was so” (Gen. 1:6-8). On the third day God spoke and the land, the seas, and plant life came into existence (Gen. 1:9-13). On the fourth day God spoke and the sun, moon and stars were created (Gen. 1:14-19). On the fifth day God spoke and the fish and creatures of the sea were created (Gen. 1:20-23).

3. God then “spoke” again on the sixth day and created all the living creatures. Then He made man out of the dust of the ground (Gen. 1:24-27; 2:19; Psa. 148:5).

David came to realize just how amazing man’s creation was and exclaimed, “I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psa. 139:14).

Sources from the American Heart Association have answered the question of how many miles of blood vessels are in the human body? The answer is an “unbelievable” 62,000 miles... it could go around the world 4 times and reach half way to the moon. An on-line source, Random Facts, has listed a number of interesting facts about the human heart:

- a. The average adult heart beats 72 times a minute, 100,000 times a day, 3,600,000 times a year, and 2.5 billion times during a lifetime.
- b. Though weighing only 11 ounces on average, a healthy heart pumps 2,000 gallons of blood through 60,000 miles of blood vessels each day.
- c. A kitchen faucet would need to be turned on, all the way, for at least 45 years to equal the amount of blood pumped by the heart in an average lifetime.
- d. Every day, the heart creates enough energy to drive a truck 20 miles. In a lifetime, that is equivalent to driving to the moon and back.
- e. Because the heart has its own electrical impulse, it can continue to beat even when separated from the body, as long as it has an adequate supply of oxygen (Random Facts, “*Ten facts about the heart you didn’t know,*” May 30, 2014).

B. THE POWER OF GOD IS REVEALED TO US IN HIS MAINTENANCE OF HIS CREATION

1. God's power assures us that the things He created will continue as long as the present earth remains (Gen. 8:22; Psa. 72:5).
2. Through Christ, God's power upholds all things (Heb. 1:3; Col 1:16).
3. It is because of the Lord's mercy and grace that we live and are not consumed (Acts 17:28; Lam. 3:22).

C. THE POWER OF GOD IS REVEALED TO US IN HIS USE OF NATURE'S FORCES

1. God uses **fire** in some instances to manifest His power.
 - a. When the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, because of their wickedness, He reigned down fire and brimstone (Gen. 19:24).
 - b. When the Lord smote the Egyptians, because Pharaoh would not let the Israelites go free, He used hail and fire mingled with the hail (Ex. 9:23, 24).
 - c. When the angel of the Lord would assure Gideon that God had sent him, He used fire to consume the offering which Gideon gave to Him (Jud. 6:16-23).
 - d. When God judges those in the tribulation period He will use fire as part of that judgment (Rev. 16:8).
2. God uses **flood waters** in some instances to manifest His power.
 - a. When God judged the people of Noah's day it was with a flood (Gen. 6:17; 7:17).
 - b. God told Jeremiah He would destroy the Philistines with a flood (Jer. 47:1).
3. God uses the **wind** in some instances to manifest His power.
 - a. After the judgment of the flood, God used the wind to dry up the waters (Gen. 8:1).
 - b. As part of God's judgment upon Pharaoh, He used the east wind to bring in a plague of locusts (Ex. 10:13). He also used the west wind to take the locusts away Ex. 10:19).
 - c. God used the wind to part the waters of the Red Sea for the children of Israel (Ex. 14:21).

- d. God also used the wind to destroy the Egyptians who pursued after the Israelites (Ex. 15:10).
 - e. God used the wind to bring quails into the camp of Israel for food (Num. 11:31).
 - f. God used the wind to show Elijah His power (I Kings 19:11).
 - g. God will calm the wind that it will not blow as part of the judgment upon unsaved people in the tribulation period (Rev. 7:1).
4. God uses **earthquakes** in some instances to manifest His power.
- a. God used an earthquake to show His power to Elijah (I Kings 19:11), and His judgment upon rebels (Num. 16).
 - b. God used an earthquake in answer to Paul and Silas' prayer while they were put in jail at Philippi (Acts 16:26).
 - c. God will use earthquakes also in the tribulation period as judgment upon unbelievers (Rev. 6:12; 8:5; 11:13; 11:19; 16:18).
5. God uses the **heavenly bodies** in some instances to manifest His power.
- a. According to the song of Deborah, the stars in their courses fought against Sisera and the Canaanites (Judges 5:20).
 - b. During the tribulation period God will use the sun, the moon, and the stars in His judgment upon unsaved men (Rev. 6:12; 8:12; 16:8; 19:17; Isa. 13:10).
6. God uses **clouds** in some instances to manifest His power.
- a. God manifested His presence in a pillar of clouds to His people (Ex. 13:21; 14:20).
 - b. God spoke from a cloud on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:5, 7; Luke 9:35).
 - c. When Christ ascended back to heaven a cloud received Him (Acts 1:9).
 - d. When Christ returns at His Second Coming He will come in a cloud (Lk 21:27).
 - e. During the tribulation period clouds will be associated with the angels which God will use to pour out judgment (Rev. 10:1; 14:14, 15,16).
7. God uses **storms** in some instances to manifest His power.
- a. God revealed to Isaiah that He would use a tempest or storm as part of His

judgment in the latter days (Isa. 28:2, 6).

- b. God used a storm in Jonah's life (Jon. 1:12).
- c. God used a storm in the lives of the disciples to cause them to trust in the Lord (Matt. 8:24).
- d. God used a storm in Paul's life to show his protection and blessing (Acts 27:18).

D. THE POWER OF GOD IS REVEALED TO US IN HIS MIRACULOUS ANSWERS TO PRAYER

1. When Joshua prayed to God for the sun to stand still over Gibeon in his battle against the Amorites, the power of God was revealed. God heard his prayer and stopped the sun in its course (Jos. 10:12 - 14).
2. When Elijah prayed for God to answer by fire in his contest with the prophets of Baal, God revealed His power for all Israel to see (I Kings 18:30 -39).
3. When Hezekiah prayed for God to extend his life, the power of God was revealed in turning back the shadow of the sun dial ten degrees (II Kings 20:1-11).
4. When the church prayed for Peter when he was put in prison, the power of God was revealed in answer to their prayers (Acts 12:1-19).
5. When Paul and Silas were put in jail in Philippi, the power of God was revealed in answer to their prayers (Acts 16:16-26).
6. When Jerusalem was surrounded by the armies of Assyria and Hezekiah prayed, the power of God was revealed in answer to his prayer (II Kings 19:14-36).

E. GOD'S POWER IS REVEALED TO US IN THE INCARNATION OF HIS SON AND THE WONDERFUL WORKS WHICH HE WROUGHT

1. Christ's incarnation manifested God's power (Luke 1:34, 35).
2. Christ's works manifested God's power (Acts 10:38; Matt. 9:6; 28:18).
3. Christ's atonement for sinful mankind manifested the power of God (Jn. 10:18).
4. Both the resurrection and the ascension of Christ manifested the power of God (Rom. 1:4).
5. Finally His coming again at the Second Coming will manifest God's power as well (Matt. 24:30).

F. THE POWER OF GOD IS TAKEN FOR GRANTED OR DISMISSED AS NON-

ESSENTIAL BY THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE IN THE WORLD

1. Most people take little thought that their breath is in God's hand (Job 12:10; 33:4; Dan. 5:23).
2. Most people have no fear of God because of their spiritual ignorance (Rom. 3:18; Luke 12:5).
3. Most people are not aware that God's power, as revealed in nature, renders them without excuse (Rom. 1:18). This means they are accountable for this light of God's revelation.

G. THE POWER OF GOD SHOULD LEAD MEN TO PRAISE HIM (PSA. 150:6)

1. This was the response of David as he considered God's awesome creative power (Psa. 21:13; 145:3).
2. This was the response of David as he considered how God had created him (Psa. 139:14).
3. This is what Daniel did in response to God hearing and answering his prayer (Dan. 2:23).
4. This is what the shepherds did in response to the angels announcement of the birth of Christ (Luke 2:20).
5. And this is what we should do, as well, when we consider God's power, we should give Him praise.

Biblical Accounts That Call for Believers to Respect God's Holiness

A. THE HOLINESS OF GOD CAN BE SEEN IN THE NAMES BY WHICH HE IS CALLED AND THE CHARACTER WHICH HE POSSESSES.

1. The Bible says God's name is holy (Psa. 111:9; Isa. 57:15; Luke 1:49). That means that His name is to be respected and hallowed or revered above all other names. Note also Deut. 5:11. Donald Clarke has written on the diligence taken by the Masoretic scribes. When they were copying the Old Testament Scriptures, they especially revered God's name:

In making copies of Hebrew manuscripts which are the precious heritage of the Church today, the Jewish scribes exercised the greatest care... counting, not only the words, but every letter, noting how many times each particular letter occurred, and destroying at once the sheet on which a mistake was detected, in their anxiety to avoid the introduction of the least error in the sacred Scriptures, which they prized so highly and held in awe. Moreover, each new copy had to be made from an approved manuscript, written with a special kind of ink, upon sheets made from the skin of a clean animal. The writers also had to pronounce each word before writing it, and on no account was a single word to be written from memory. They were to reverently wipe their pen before writing the name of God in any form and to wash their whole body before writing Jehovah, lest that holy name be tainted in the writing. The new copy was carefully examined with the original almost immediately; and it is said that if only one incorrect letter was discovered the whole copy was rejected. It was through the extreme diligence of the Masoretic scribes that God preserved the Old Testament word-for-word (www.learnthebible.org., October 24, 2012.) Writer's emphasis.

2. The Bible says that God's holy character is also incomparable with anyone in heaven or on the earth (Ex. 15:11; I Sam. 2:2). That means that He is set apart from all manner of sinfulness and all sinners (Hab. 1:12, 13).

B. THE HOLINESS OF GOD CAN BE SEEN IN THE WORDS BY WHICH HE SPEAKS AND THE WORKS WHICH HE PERFORMS.

1. The Bible says that God speaks in His holiness (Psa. 60:6; 89:35). That means that God cannot lie and whatever He says is absolutely true and trustworthy (Titus 2:1).
 - a. For example, when God said that He would send a flood and destroy all flesh that's exactly what God did (Gen. 6:17; II Pet. 3:1).
 - b. When God said He would give Abraham a son in his old age that's exactly what He did (Gen. 17:15-19; 18:14; 21:2, 3).
 - c. When God said that He would give the land of Canaan to Abraham's seed

that's exactly what God did (Gen. 12:3; 13:14-17; Josh. 21:45).

2. The Bible says that God is holy in all of His works (Psa. 145:17). That means when God does something, it is always righteous and above reproach. He never acts sinfully or unjustly.
 - a. Firstly, when God judged the world in Noah's day with the flood, it was done on the basis of God's holiness and His displeasure toward sin (Gen. 6:5-7).
 - b. Secondly, when God destroyed the people of Sodom and Gomorrah it was done on the basis of God's holy character and His displeasure toward sin (Gen. 13:13; 18:16, 20; 19:24).

C. THE HOLINESS OF GOD DEMANDS CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS OF THOSE WHO WOULD WORSHIP HIM (Psa. 29:2; 26:9; Isa. 6:1-7).

1. The holiness of God demanded the death of an innocent substitute for sinners to approach Him and to worship Him.
 - a. This is what we see illustrated when God slew innocent animals to clothe Adam and Eve after they had sinned (Gen. 3:21; Ezek. 18:4; Rom. 3:10, 23).
 - b. This is what we see illustrated in the offerings of Abel and Cain (Gen. 4:3-7).
 - (1) Abel's offering was accepted because he met the requirements of a holy God (Gen. 4:4; Heb. 11:4).
 - (2) Cain's offering was rejected because he did not meet the requirements of God's holiness (Gen. 4:3, 5; I Jn. 3:12).
 - c. This is what we see illustrated on the Day of Atonement when the high priest would enter into the holy of holies in the presence of God (Lev. 23:28; Heb. 9:6-12). There had to be a sacrifice made for himself and for the sins of the people to meet the requirements of the holiness of God.
2. Notice, all the animal sacrifices in the Old Testament typified the only means by which a sinner could approach God and be accepted by Him.
 - a. This is what Christ fulfilled as the Lamb of God. He became our substitute and was offered for our sins (Isa. 53:5, 6; Jn. 1:29; Rom. 5:6-8; I Cor. 15:3, 4; II Cor. 5:21; I Pet. 3:18).
 - b. This is why a sinner can only come to God through Christ (Rom. 3:23 -25). The death of Christ is therefore the only means by which a sinner can approach and be accepted by Him (Eph. 1:6).

D. THE HOLINESS OF GOD CANNOT BE DISREGARDED WITHOUT FACING THE JUDGMENT OF GOD.

1. This is what we learn as we consider the presumptive act of Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1,2). It would seem that those two sons of Aaron, the high priest, had gone into the holy place to keep the fire burning on the altar of incense. After their death God commanded Moses concerning drinking strong drink and ministering about the tabernacle (Lev. 10:1-10)). Nadab and Abihu had failed to regard the holiness of God (Lev. 10:10).
2. Korah and his following were others who faced the judgment of God because they disregarded the holiness of God (Num. 16:1-35; Heb. 5:4). Korah and his crowd faced the judgment of God because they presumed to do what God had not called them to do.
3. Others who murmured against Aaron were also facing the judgment of God when They presumed to take the place which God had called Aaron to fulfill (Num. 17:1-13).
4. Uzziah, also called Azariah, faced the judgment of God because he disregarded the holiness of God (II Kings 15:5; II Chron. 26:16-21).
5. Saul, king of Israel, also faced the judgment of God because he disregarded the holiness of God (I Sam. 13:5-14). Saul intruded into the priests office and offered a sacrifice. This presumptuous act resulted in God's rejection of him.

E. THE HOLINESS OF GOD DEMANDS CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS OF THOSE WHO WOULD SERVE THE LORD.

1. Those who serve the Lord are commanded to be holy (I Pet. 1:15,16; Rom. 12:1). That means they are to be set apart from things which are sinful.
2. Those who are saved should live a holy life in order to fulfill God's purpose in saving them (Eph. 1:4; Col. 1:20, 21; II Tim. 1:9). That means that Christians are to live a clean and consecrated life before the Lord and others (Isa. 52:11; II Pet. 3:11; I Thess. 4:4).
3. Those who would serve the Lord must stay in fellowship with Him and follow His will. That involves living a life of separation from the sinful things of this world (Psa. 24:3; Heb. 12:14; Eph. 4:22-29). It involves the kind of life as demonstrated in Psalm 1:1-6.

Biblical Accounts That Serve As An Encouragement to Pray

A. GOD HEARD AND ANSWERED THE PRAYERS OF SOME WHO DESIRED TO BE DELIVERED.

1. Notice, God heard and answered the prayer of Hezekiah when he prayed for deliverance from the Assyrian armies (II Kings 19:15)).

In this account we find that, Sennacherib, King of Assyria, had brought his armies to destroy Jerusalem and the Lord's people, but when Hezekiah besought the Lord, his prayer was answered and God sent an angel who killed 185,000 that same night and Sennacherib returned home the next day (II Kings 19:35-37).

2. God heard and answered the prayers of Daniel and the Jews when their lives were in jeopardy (Dan. 2:1-47).

In this account, we find that King Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed a dream and had forgotten what he had dreamed. When none of the king's wise men could tell him what he had dreamed and the interpretation of it, he sought to slay Daniel and all the wise men. We find when Daniel and the three Hebrew children prayed, God made known to Daniel what the dream was and what it meant. As a result, instead of being slain, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were promoted (Dan. 2:46-49).

3. God heard and answered the prayer of Jonah when he cried out from the belly of the fish (Jon. 1:1-2:10).

In this account we find that Jonah had been disobedient to the Lord and as a result he incurred a storm aboard a ship and was tossed overboard. We find that God caused a great fish to swallow Jonah, and out of this dilemma, Jonah prayed to God and God answered his prayers (Jon. 2:10).

4. God heard and answered the prayers of the disciples when they prayed for Peter's release from prison (Acts 12:1-23).

In this account we see that King Herod had put Peter in prison. In answer to the prayers of the church, God sent an angel who delivered Peter in a miraculous way and foiled the plans of Herod.

B. GOD HEARD AND ANSWERED THE PRAYERS OF SOME WHO INTERCEDED FOR OTHERS.

1. God heard the prayer of Job when he prayed for his friends (Job 42:10-17).

In this account we find that Job prayed for his friends in spite of all the condemning things they had said about him. As a result of Job's prayer God turned his captivity in which the devil had held him and God, not only blessed Job's friends, He restored Job and gave him twice what he had before (42:10).

2. God heard the prayer of Abraham when he prayed for God to spare the life of his nephew Lot (Gen. 18:23-19:29).

In this account we find that Abraham's nephew, Lot, was living in the wicked city of Sodom. When God revealed to Abraham that He would destroy this city, Abraham began to intercede in prayer for Lot (Gen. 18:17-22). As a result, Lot's life was spared (Gen. 19:29).

3. God heard the prayer of Moses when he interceded for the children of Israel (Num. 14:11-30).

In this account it shows how the Lord was displeased with the Israelites when they came to Kadesh-Barnea and would not obey the Lord's command because of their unbelief. The Lord was ready to destroy them all and to make a nation out of Moses, but Moses interceded for them and God pardoned their iniquity (Num. 14:19,20).

C. GOD HEARD AND ANSWERED THE PRAYERS OF SOME WHO PRAYED TO BE HEALED.

1. God heard the prayer of Hezekiah when he was sick unto death (II Kings. 20:1-11).

In this account we find that Hezekiah was sick and the prophet Isaiah was sent to tell him that he was going to die. We notice Hezekiah prayed to the Lord and wept. God answered his prayers and gave him fifteen more years (II Kings 20:6).

2. God heard the prayers of Manasseh when he was afflicted (II Chron. 33:1-20).

In this account we see, despite all the sinful things that Manasseh had done, God heard his prayer and healed him when he humbled himself and prayed.

D. GOD HEARD AND ANSWERED THE PRAYERS OF SOME WHO SOUGHT TO HAVE GOD'S BLESSINGS.

1. God heard the prayer of Jabez when he prayed for God's blessings (I Chron. 4:9, 10).

In this account we find that Jabez prayed for God's blessings and God granted him his request.

2. God heard the prayer of Solomon when he prayed for God's blessings to be upon his people (II Chron. 6:12-7:3, 12).

In this account Solomon prayed a prayer of dedication concerning the temple when it was finished and God answered with His glory filling the temple (II Chron. 7:1-3).

3. God heard the prayer of Hannah when she prayed for a son (I Sam. 1:1-20).

In this account we see that Hannah was barren (1:5,6) but when she asked the Lord for a son the Lord was entreated by her prayer. This was also true when Zacharias prayed for a son (Lk. 1:13).

4. God heard Cornelius' prayer when he prayed for God's blessings upon his household (Acts 10).

In this account we see that God answered Cornelius' prayer and showed him in a vision what he was to do so that Peter might come and share the gospel with him and his household (Acts 11:12-14).

E. GOD HEARD AND ANSWERED THE PRAYERS OF SOME WHO TURNED IN REPENTANCE AND CALLED UPON THE LORD.

1. God heard the prayer of Manasseh when he turned in repentance and called upon the Lord (II Chron. 33:12, 13, 18, 19).

In this account we see in spite of all his wickedness God forgave Manasseh when he turned in repentance and called.

2. God heard the prayer of the repentant thief when he turned in repentance and called upon the Lord (Lk. 23:39-43).

In this account we see that God hears and answers the prayers of those who turn in repentance and call upon Him. This is true for all others as well (Rom. 10:13).

Biblical Accounts That Solicit Every Believer For Service

A. SERVING THE LORD INVOLVES USING ONE'S SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND EVERY BELIEVER IS EQUIPPED TO DO SOMETHING.

1. Some believers have been equipped with speaking gifts.
 - a. This includes those who have the apostolic or missionary gift (I Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11).
 - b. This includes those with the gift of preaching (Rom. 12:6; I Cor. 12:10, 28; 14:3, 29 - 32).
 - c. This includes those who have been given the gift of evangelism (Acts 21:8; Eph. 4:11; II Tim. 4:5).
 - d. This includes those who are called to pastor and teach (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; I Pet. 5:1, 2).
 - e. This includes those who have been given the gift of exhortation (Rom. 12:8).
 - f. This includes those who have been given the gifts of knowledge and wisdom (I Cor. 12:8). One gift is to discern truth from error and the other is the gift to apply truth.
 - g. This includes those with the gift of teaching (Rom. 12:7; I Cor. 12:28).
2. Some believers have been equipped with serving gifts.
 - a. This includes those with the gift of discernment to help others from being deceived (I Cor. 12:10).
 - b. This includes those with the gift of ruling or administration (Rom. 12:8, 14; I Cor. 12:28).
 - c. This includes those with the gift of faith (I Cor. 12:9; 13:2).
 - d. This includes those with the gift of showing mercy (Rom. 12:8, 15).
 - e. This includes those with the gift of hospitality (Rom. 12:13; I Pet. 4:9).
 - f. This includes those with the gift of giving (Rom. 12:8, 13).
 - g. This includes those with the gift of helps (Rom. 12:7, 10; I Cor. 12:28).
3. No believers are given sign gifts today.

These gifts were given to authenticate the gospel message and as a sign to the unbelieving Jews. These all ceased during the apostolic age.

B. SERVING THE LORD INVOLVES DOING GOD’S WILL AND EVERY BELIEVER IS ENCOURAGED TO FIND OUT WHAT IT IS.

1. It is the Lord’s will for some believers to accept God’s call for full-time service.
 - a. This is seen in the Lord calling His disciples (Matt. 4:19; 9:9; Mk 2:14).
 - b. This is seen when the Lord called Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:1 - 16).
 - c. This is seen when Paul and Silas were called by the Spirit of God who separated them (Acts 13:2).
2. It is not God’s will for believers to participate in a sinful life style (Eph. 4:17 - 5:17; I Thess. 4:3-7; Titus 2:11-14).
3. It is God’s will for believers to live a life that pleases Him.
 - a. This is the kind of life that Enoch of old lived (Heb. 5:5,6).
 - b. This is the kind of life Paul exhorted other believers to live (I Cor. 7:32; I Thess. 4:1).

C. SERVING THE LORD INVOLVES TAKING PART IN THE MINISTRY OF A LOCAL CHURCH AND EVERY BELIEVER IS EXHORTED TO FUNCTION AS PART OF A BODY OF BELIEVERS.

1. To function as a part of a body, individuals are required to exercise their gifts in unity (I Cor. 12: 12 - 19).
2. To function as a part of a body, individuals are required to exercise their gifts in love (I Cor. 13:1 - 13).
3. To function as a part of a body, requires individuals to do things in a prescribed manner.
 - a. Believers are to be faithful in assembling themselves together (Heb. 10:25).
 - b. Believers are to do everything decently and in order (I Cor. 14:40).
 - c. Believers are to edify one another (I Cor. 14:26).
 - d. Believers are to show love for one another (John 15:12; 13:35).
 - e. Believers should endeavor to keep unity and be at peace with one another (Eph. 4:1 - 3).

- f. Believers should conduct themselves in an orderly manner (I Tim. 3:15).
4. Taking part in the ministry of a local church means following the example which is laid down in the Word of God.
 - a. When people got saved in the early church they were baptized (Acts 2:41).
 - (1) This included those on the day of Pentecost when the church began (Acts 2:41).
 - (2) This included others who were saved later on (Acts 8:12; 8:39; 9:18; 10:47, 48; 16:15; 16:33; 18:18; 19:5).
 - b. When people got saved they were taken in as members (Acts 2:47).
 - c. When people got saved they continued in the teachings of the apostles (Acts 2:42) and others are exhorted to do likewise (I Tim. 4:13).
 5. Taking part in the ministry of a local church means being involved in carrying out the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19, 20).

D. SERVING THE LORD INVOLVES FOLLOWING THE LEADERSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND EVERY BELIEVER IS ENLIGHTENED TO KNOW HOW HE SHOULD WALK.

1. Following the leadership of the Holy Spirit is never contrary to the will and the Word of God.
 - a. This means that the Holy Spirit will never lead a person to do what is contrary to God's Word (I Tim. 4:1, 2).
 - b. This means following the flesh or sin nature is not following the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5: 16 - 18).
2. Following the leadership of the Holy Spirit involves being sensitive to what He commands.
 - a. Notice how the apostle Peter was sensitive to the leadership of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:19; 11:12).
 - b. Notice how the apostle Paul was also sensitive to the leadership of the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:7; 21:4).
 - c. Notice how Phillip was also sensitive in this manner (Acts 8:29).

E. SERVING THE LORD INVOLVES SHOWING A MEASURE OF LOVE AND LOYALTY AND EACH BELIEVER IS ENTREATED TO SHOW THESE TRAITS.

1. Showing a measure of love and loyalty was lacking in the lives of certain believers.
 - a. Notice this is what was lacking in the lives of the Corinthian believers (I Cor. 14:1).
 - b. This is the thing that was lacking in the church of Ephesus (Rev. 2:4).
 - c. This is the thing that Demas was lacking (II Tim. 4:10).
2. Showing a measure of love and loyalty was demonstrated in the lives of certain believers.
 - a. Peter demonstrated a measure of love and loyalty for the Lord (Jn. 6:66 - 69).
 - b. Paul also demonstrated a measure of love and loyalty for the Lord Jesus (II Tim. 4:7).
3. Showing a measure of love and loyalty is what certain believers were challenged to demonstrate.
 - a. This is what the Lord Jesus told His disciples to do (Jn. 14:15).
 - b. This is what Paul told the Corinthian believers to do as well (II Cor. 8:7,8; I Cor. 16:14).

F. SERVING THE LORD INVOLVES BEING DETERMINED AND DISCIPLINED AND EVERY BELIEVER IS EXPECTED TO DEVELOP THIS DISPOSITION.

1. Being determined and disciplined is what some believers have lacked.
 - a. John Mark illustrates a young man who was not disciplined as he should have been in the Lord's work (Acts 13:5, 13).
 - b. The Corinthian believers certainly lacked this disposition as well (I Cor. 11:17 - 22).
2. Being determined and disciplined is what some believers have demonstrated (II Cor. 5:14; Acts 20:22 - 24).
 - a. The apostle Paul demonstrated determination and discipline as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (II Cor. 5:14; Acts 20:22 - 24).
 - b. Timothy also demonstrated determination and discipline (Phil. 2:19 - 22).

G. SERVING THE LORD INVOLVES HAVING SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO.

1. Those who are saved and serve the Lord can look forward to a life of blessing as they serve the Lord the faithfully (Psa. 1; Matt. 19:29; Mark 10:30; Gal. 6:7).
2. Those who are saved and serve the Lord can look for the Lord to come for them (Titus 2:13, 14; I Thess. 4:13 - 17).
3. Those who are saved and serve the Lord can look forward to being with their loved ones who have died in Christ (I Thess. 4:13 - 17).
4. Those who are saved and serve the Lord can look forward to a time when their service will be examined and then rewarded (I Cor. 3:11 - 15; Matt. 10:40, 41; I Cor. 15:58).
5. Those who are saved can look for an eternal abode with the Lord in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2, 3, 9 -27; Psalm 16:11).

Biblical Accounts That Admonish Believers Against Disobedience

A. THERE WERE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE DEVIL WHEN HE ACTED OUT OF PRIDE AND DISOBEYED THE LORD.

1. When the devil acted in disobedience he was cast out of his position in heaven (Isa. 14:12-15).

Prior to his sinful act of rebellion against God, Satan occupied a position over all the angelic host and was second only to God. Satan was not content with the high position God gave to him, he wanted the position that God held.

When Satan was lifted up with pride and rebelled against God he was cast down to the earth.

2. When the devil acted in disobedience he took on a sinful nature and became the adversary of God (II Pet. 2:4; I Jn. 3:8; II Cor. 4:4).

As a result of his sinful nature he hates God and God's people and works to defeat the work of God and to damn the souls of all those who are lost (I Thess. 2:18; Jn. 8:44; Eph. 6:11).

3. When the devil acted in disobedience his doom was sealed (Matt. 25:41).

Not only did the devil lose his position in heaven when he sinned against God, he forfeited every right to the things of God. Although he works against God and God's people he will be cast one day into the lake of fire which will be his eternal abode (Rev. 20:10).

B. THERE WERE CONSEQUENCES FOR ADAM AND EVE WHEN THEY DISOBEYED THE LORD IN THE GARDEN (Gen. 3:6, 16 - 19).

1. Their disobedience resulted in their "spiritual" death which led to their "physical" death (Rom. 5:12).

Prior to their disobedience Adam and Eve walked with God and enjoyed sweet fellowship with Him. But the moment they disobeyed God they experienced "spiritual" death which separated them as sinners from a holy God and they began to die physically. Like flowers begin to die when they are cut from their source of life, Adam and Eve began to die physically when they were cut off from God, who is the source of life and they experienced spiritual death.

2. It was through their disobedience that Adam and Eve acquired a sin nature with a propensity to sin (Gen. 3:7-13). Notice the result of Adam and Eve's disobedience is the only valid explanation for the "sin nature" which became operative in all of mankind and it's why that man has a propensity to sin and do wrong.
3. As a result of their disobedience they were driven from their garden paradise and

began to experience the curse that God placed upon them (Gen. 3:14-24).

Prior to their act of disobedience Adam and Eve had not suffered any pain or physical problems and had not known anything related to death.

As a result of their disobedience Adam and Eve began to suffer the physical hardships which came upon them for their sin (Gen. 3:16-19).

4. Their act of disobedience brought the curse for sin, which is death, upon the whole human race (Rom. 5:12).

Prior to Adam and Eve's sin in disobeying God there was no physical death. Despite what evolutionists may propagate, death is the result of sin and their act of disobedience and its consequence is the only explanation as to why men die.

C. THERE WERE CONSEQUENCES FOR THOSE WHO DISOBEYED THE LORD BY ACTING IN SELF-WILL.

1. This is seen in what happened to Nadab and Abihu when they took upon themselves to do what the Lord had not commanded them to do (Lev. 10:1,2).

It seems from the following verses that Nadab and Abihu had gone about to minister about the things of the Lord while being intoxicated (Lev. 10:9).

2. This is seen in what happened to King Azariah (Uzziah) when he went in the temple to burn incense (II Chron. 26:16-21).
3. This is seen in what happened to Jonah when he acted in self-will (Jon. 1:1-17).
4. This is seen in what happened to Moses when he acted in self-will and smote the rock the second time in the wilderness (Num. 20:8-12).

D. THERE WERE CONSEQUENCES FOR THOSE WHO DISOBEYED THE LORD BY TRANSGRESSING THE LAW (Heb. 2:2).

1. Take for example, the consequences for committing adultery (Lev. 20:10).

If a man committed adultery with another's man's wife, both he and the wife were put to death. Note Dt. 17:2-7).

2. Take for example, the consequences for breaking the Sabbath day (Ex. 31:15).

According to the law the Sabbath was to be a day of rest and if anyone did anything which was considered work then he was stoned (Num. 15:32-36).

3. Take for example, the consequences of disobeying one's parents (Deut. 21:18-21).

These examples point out that there were consequences for every act of

transgression under the law of Moses which God gave to the Israelites.

E. THERE WERE CONSEQUENCES FOR THOSE WHO DISOBEYED THE LORD OUT OF UNBELIEF.

1. The example of Pharaoh demonstrates this fact (Ex. 5:1, 2).
 - a. Note the consequences of Pharaoh's first act of disobedience (Ex. 7:14, 20, 21). The waters of the river were turned to blood.
 - b. For Pharaoh's second act of disobedience frogs covered the land of Egypt (Ex. 8:5, 6).
 - c. For Pharaoh's third act of disobedience, the land of Egypt was plagued with lice (Ex. 8:16 - 19).
 - d. For Pharaoh's fourth act of disobedience Egypt was plagued with swarms of flies (Ex. 8:20, 21).
 - e. For Pharaoh's fifth act of disobedience all the livestock in Egypt was stricken (Ex. 9: 1 - 7).
 - f. For Pharaoh's sixth act of disobedience God afflicted man and beast with boils (Ex. 9:8 - 10).
 - g. For Pharaoh's seventh act of disobedience God sent hail and fire upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians (Ex. 9:13, 22 - 26).
 - h. For Pharaoh's eighth act of disobedience God sent a plague of locusts (Ex. 10:12 - 15).
 - i. For Pharaoh's ninth act of disobedience God caused darkness to fall upon the land of Egypt (Ex. 10:21 - 23).
 - j. For Pharaoh's tenth act of disobedience God slew the first-born of all the Egyptians (Ex. 12:29 - 36).
2. The example of the Israelites at Kadesh-Barnea also demonstrates the fact that there are consequences for those who disobey the Lord out of unbelief (Num. 14:29 - 34; Heb. 3:7-19). Notice the sin of unbelief will characterize many who will spend eternity in the lake of fire (Rev. 21:8).

F. THERE WERE CONSEQUENCES FOR THOSE WHO DISOBEYED THE LORD BECAUSE THEY WERE DECEIVED.

1. Eve bore the consequences of her disobedience despite the fact that she was deceived by the devil (Gen. 3:1 - 6, 16; I Tim. 2:14).

2. This fact can be seen in what happened to the disobedient prophet (I Kings 13:1 – 30).

When God sent this prophet to cry out against the altar that Jeroboam had set up at Bethel he was charged not to eat or drink with anyone in that place (I Kings 13: 7 - 9). The man of God, however was deceived by the lie of an old man. Despite this fact he was still judged for his disobedience to God (I Kings 13:11 - 22).

3. This fact can be seen in what will happen to people in the last days as well (II Tim. 3:13; Eph. 5:6; II Thess. 2:11).

Biblical Accounts That Enlighten Believers About Things to Come

A. THERE'S A TIME COMING WHEN THOSE IN CHRIST WILL BE RAPTURED OUT OF THIS WORLD.

1. This coming event is what Paul shared with the Thessalonian believers (I Thess. 4:13-18).
2. This coming event will fulfill God's purposes for believers.
 - a. The rapture will be the means by which the Lord will deliver His people from "the wrath" of the tribulation period (Rom. 5:9; I Thess. 1:10; 5:9; Rev. 3:10).
 - b. The rapture will fulfill God's promise to all those who are awaiting His return (Titus 2:13; Jn. 14:1-6).
3. This coming event will separate and include certain individuals and exclude others.
 - a. The rapture will only include those who have died "in Christ" (1 Thess. 4:16) and those living believers who are "in Christ" (1 Cor. 15:5 I). This means it will include all those who have received Christ from the day of Pentecost until the close of the church program (Acts 15:14).
 - b. The rapture will not include the O. T. Saints. They will be resurrected and judged after the tribulation period (Dan. 12:1,2; Hos. 13:14; Isa. 26:16-21; Matt. 25:31-40).
 - c. The rapture will not include the whole realm of Christendom but only those born-again believers who are blood-bought and blood-washed by faith in Christ (Matt. 7:21-23; Lk. 13:23-25; 1 Cor. 6:9-11).

4. This coining event is an “imminent” event meaning that it could happen at any moment (Rom. 3:11,12; Heb. 10:37; Jas. 5:8; I Thess. 1:9,10).
- a. Notice because the rapture is an “imminent event” there are no signs as to when it will occur.
 - b. The Bible teaches there are signs concerning the Second Coming of Christ which will occur after the tribulation period. Since therefore, the rapture will occur before the tribulation period, it must be near as one would look at the signs being fulfilled concerning the Jews and the events which will occur before His return.
 - (1) before the Lord’s return at the Second Coming there will be wars and rumors of wars (Matt. 24:6).
 - (2) before His return, the Antichrist will arise and make a peace treaty with Israel (Dan. 9:24-27).
 - (3) before His return, all nations will be against the Jews (Isa. 1:8; Zech. 14:1-3).
 - (4) before His return, two witnesses will come on the scene and prophecy and multitudes will be saved (Rev. 11:3-14).
 - (5) before His return, the one-world church and the one-world government will come into prominence (Rev. 17:1-7).

B. THERE’S A TIME COMING WHEN THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED THE LORD WILL BE REWARDED FOR THEIR SERVICE. THIS WILL BE A JUDGMENT OF THE BELIEVER’S WORKS WHICH HE HAS DONE

1. THE PERSON AND THE PARTICULAR THINGS INVOLVED

- a. This judgment will take place in heaven following the rapture of the church and it is called the “Bema” or Judgment Seat of Christ.
 - (1) Notice there are two words used for judgment seats. One means a judicial Bench where sentences are handed down for crimes (James 2 : 6) . The other word “bema” means a “reward chair” and this is the word used of the seat before which the winners of Greek games came and were rewarded.
 - (2) From this necessary and proper distinction we should gather that the judgment seat of Christ (bema) has absolutely nothing to do with judgment of any sins. Christ paid the penalty for our sins and there is no condemnation upon those who are in Christ (Jn. 3:18; Rom. 8:1; Col 2:10). As far as sins in the believer’s life are concerned, they are judged on earth either by the believer himself (I Cor. 11 :3) or by the Lord (I Cor. 11:32; Heb.12:3-5; I Jn

5:16).

(3) It should be noted also that this judgment has nothing to do with whether a believer will enter heaven or whether he will remain there. When the Lord comes for His own they will never be separated from Him (I Thess. 4:17).

b. This judgment will involve believers as servants and how they have served the Lord.

(1) In this relationship we notice first of all that every believer will stand before the Lord Jesus and give an account of himself. (Rom.14:10; II Cor. 5:10).

(2) In this relationship every believer will have to give an account of the way he has used his own particular spiritual gifts (I Pet.4:10,11; 5:1-4). Secondly, the service we have performed as God's stewards will be judged (I Cor.4:2,4). And finally the way we have used the opportunities which the Lord has given to us will no doubt be involved (Gal. 6:10; Mart. 20:1 -16).

(3) In this relationship we find that every believer, in spite of all our failures, will receive some praise from the Lord (ICor.4:5).

c. This judgment will take into consideration then every work that a believer has done in his service for the Lord (I Cor. 3:1 1-15).

(1) Notice the figure of a foundation and two different kinds of building materials are used to illustrate this judgment of a believer's works. Every believer is building upon the spiritual foundation of Christ and everything that he does in the Lord's service is one of two kinds of materials (I Cor. 3:11,12).

(2) Notice the two kinds of building materials fall into two categories of that which is unburnable or indestructible and that which is burnable or destructible.

(a) From this figure and the context of what Paul is saying to the Corinthian believers we may conclude that any and all works done by believers in their fleshly efforts and for their own glory is that which will be burned.

(b) On the other hand the works done under the leadership and control of the Holy Spirit which is done for the Lord's glory will be indestructible.

(3) The figure of fire in determining what sort of work was done

illustrates the refining process. One can't see impurities in metal until it is heated. So it is with believers' works. We can't observe and determine many times what sort of work a believer is doing, but at the judgment seat its true character will come out.

d. This judgment will be carried out for the glorification of Jesus Christ and not for the glorification of believers.

(1) We see this is the purpose that is involved in our being saved and serving the Lord (Rom.15:6; 1 Cor.6:20;10:31; I Pet, 2:12; Eph.1:12).

(2) We see this is the idea demonstrated when believers will cast their crowns before the throne of God and ascribe praise to the Lord (Rev. 4:10,11).

e. This judgment will occur after the rapture and it will be completed before the Second Coming of Christ back to earth.

(1) Notice the reference to "that day" must refer to the time just after the church is raptured (I Cor.4:5; I Thess.4:13-18; II Tim. 4:8; Rev. 22:12).

(2) The picture we have at the Second Coming is one of the saints Having been judged and rewarded for their works. Notice the white linen is the "righteous deeds" of the saints (Rev. 19:8,14).

2. THE BASIS OF THIS JUDGMENT

a. This judgment will be made according to what sort of works a believer has done.

(1) It will take into consideration every work that believers have done. It will involve every word (Matt. 12:36) and every deed (Rev. 22:12).

(2) It will take into consideration both the good works and the bad works (II Cor. 5:10). But notice the word "bad" is not the word for evil but rather it means that which is "good for nothing". Keep in mind that sin in the believer's life is judged on earth.

b. This judgment will determine both the motive and the method by which every work was done. In this respect everything done for show, vain glory, or otherwise will be made manifest (I Cor.4:5).

3. THE RESULTS OF THIS JUDGMENT

a. This judgment will result in believers receiving and losing rewards for their service.

- (1). Every work which abides or which was done in obedience to the Spirit of God for the glory of God will receive a reward (I Cor.3 :14).
- (2) Every work which is burned or which was done in the strength of the flesh and for one's own glory will suffer loss of reward (I Cor.3:15).

b. This judgment will be the Lord's acknowledgment of every service which believers have rendered unto Him and they will be rewarded by bestowing upon them certain crown for their service.

(1) Notice the word crown here is not that of a King but rather that which a conqueror would wear. This more properly applies to believers in Christ (Rom.8:37).

(2) In this connection we find there are five crowns described in the N.T. which believers may receive for faithful, spirit-led and God-honoring service.

(a) An incorruptible crown will be given to believers who discipline themselves to serve the Lord according to Him will rather than letting the flesh direct them (I Cor.9:25).

(b). A crown of rejoicing will be given to believers who win souls to Christ (I Thess. 1:5-7; 2:1-13; 2:19).

(c). A crown of righteousness will be given to believers who love and live for Christ's coming (1 Tim.4:7,8; I Jn.3:3).

(d). A crown of life will be given to believers who endure testings, trials and sufferings for the Lord (James1:12; Rev. 2:10).

(e). A crown of glory will be given to pastors who faithfully and unselfishly feed the flock which God has given them (I Pet. 5:2-4).

(3) As far as rewards and/or crowns are concerned there seems to be two factors involved here. One factor is no doubt faithfulness because this is illustrated and required in every case recorded in the Lord's teachings (I Cor. 4:2; Matt. 25:14-30; Lk.19:12-17). The second factor seems to be that of endurance which goes hand in hand with faithfulness. To apply this, one must have some endurance which results in faithful service if we would receive rewards.

(4) Although these rewards are given for the Lord's glory and not for ours as believers which is demonstrated in Rev. 4:10,11, they will no doubt be a personal manifestation which will glorify the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all eternity. Note Dan. 12:3; Matt. 13:43; I Cor. 15:40, 41,49 in this connection.

C. THERE'S AN AWFUL TIME OF TRIBULATION AND SORROWS COMING AFTER THE RAPTURE WHICH WILL PRECEDE THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST (Dan. 12:1).

1. First of all, after the rapture of the Church, the Antichrist, who is the man of sin, will be revealed and come to power during the first 3 ½ years of a seven year period.
 - a. This man of sin will come on the scene and gather together a ten nation confederacy out of the borders which, at one time, comprised the old Roman Empire. These ten nations will be the ten toes of the image described in Dan. 2:40-43 and the ten horns described in Dan. 7: 23,24. This confederacy will be the revival of the fourth beast mentioned in Dan. 7:7 and Rev. 13:1. This confederacy will be used by the Antichrist to bring about a peace settlement with Israel and her hostile Islamic neighbors.
 - b. This man of sin will sign a peace treaty for one week of seven years with Israel which will initiate a false peace in the Middle East (Dan. 9:24-27).
 - (1) Notice some 2600 years ago, God predicted through the prophet Ezekiel that the Jews would be regathered in their land (Ezek. 36,37). What were the odds after all those years that Israel would be gathered again in her land as it was prophesied? However, despite the time and the odds, on May 14, 1948 Israel became a nation again and the Jews began to return from all parts of the world to Israel. It is now estimated that 40% of all Jews presently live in Israel.
 - (2) Notice Ezekiel 38:8,11 says, before Israel is invaded during the battle of Gog and Magog in the middle of the seven years, she will be dwelling securely and living in a time of peace and prosperity. This false peace will be the result of the covenant of peace which Antichrist will make with Israel at the beginning of the Tribulation Period.
 - c. This man of sin will win the world's approval through his diplomacy and will have the political and ecclesiastical support of the Western leaders and the head of the one-world church (Rev. 13:1-10; 17:1-15).
 - d. This man of sin will break his covenant of peace with Israel in the middle of the Tribulation Period or after 3 ½ years. Note Dan. 9:27; Rev. 6:4.
 - (1) This breaking of his covenant will happen when the Northern armies invade Israel (Ezek. 38:11; Isa. 10:12; 30:31-33; 31:8,9).
 - (2) When the Northern armies invade Israel, God Himself will destroy these armies but the Antichrist will claim this victory as his own (Ezek. 39:1-4; Dan. 11:40-45).

- (3) After this invasion and claims, the Antichrist will put his image in the temple and demand worship of himself (Dan. 9:27; Rev. 6:4; Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14; II Thess. 2:4; Rev. 13:15). Notice during the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation Period. The Jewish temple will be rebuilt and Jewish sacrifices will be restored (Dan. 12:11; Matt. 24:15). When the Antichrist places his image in the temple and demands worship this will be the abomination that Christ mentioned in Matt. 24:15.
 - (4) At this time the false prophet will call upon the world to worship the Antichrist and to receive his mark. All those refusing will be persecuted and multitudes will die during this time (Rev. 13:12-17).
 - (5) This man of sin will use the one-world church to accomplish his rise to power but will cast the church aside after the armies invade Israel (Rev. 17:1-18).
- e. This man of sin will rule the world politically, economically and religiously for the last 3 ½ years. According to Rev. 13 the world will have to give allegiance to the Antichrist or suffer persecution and death. During this time, the Anti-christ will set out to destroy the Jewish people (Rev. 12:1-6).
2. Secondly, after the rapture of the Church, God's program with Israel and the Gentiles will follow.
 - a. God's program with Israel will be to chasten His people in order to bring them to repentance (Jer. 30:7; Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:4-25:30).
 - (1) This will involve the various judgments involving the seals, the trumpets and the bowl judgments (Rev. 6:1-11:19).
 - (2) This will involve persecution of the Jews by the Antichrist (Matt. 24:15-28; Rev. 12:5,6,13-17).
 - (3) This will involve the ministry of the two witnesses (Rev.11:3-13;Matt. 24:9-14).
 - (4) This will involve the salvation of a remnant and Israel being established as head of the nations in the millennial kingdom (Rev. 7:4-8; 14:1-5).
 - b. God's program with the Gentiles will be to punish unbelievers, to save a number of people, and to put down all Gentile powers (Rev. 7:9-17; Dan. 2:44; 7:19-27).
 - (1) This will involve the judgments which will come upon the earth from God and also the rule of Antichrist (Rev. 6:1-19:10).

(2) This will involve multitudes being saved as a result of the ministry of the two witnesses (Rev. 7:9-17).

(3) This will involve the battle of Armageddon and the Second Coming of Christ (Matt. 24:26-28; Rev. 19:17-21).

D. THERE'S COMING A TIME WHEN AMERICA WILL HAVE NO ROLE IN THE PROPHETIC EVENTS OF THE LAST DAYS.

1. Notice why this fact is irrefutable.

a. First of all, America is not “prophesied” in the events which will unfold in the last days. Some Bible commentators have tried to prove that America will have some significant role in the last day events, but there are no references to America to substantiate this claim either directly or indirectly.

b. Secondly, as one would look at the events of the last days which are described in the books of Daniel, Ezekiel, and Revelation, America is not “seen” as a nation involved in the events of the last days (Hitchcock, *The Late Great United States*, 39-41).

2. Notice how this lack of involvement could play out.

a. One scenario might involve God judging America because of her immorality which would result in God giving her over to seek her wickedness as He did with those mentioned in Romans 1:26-32.

b. A second scenario could involve military attacks from within. America has opened her doors to militant religious groups whose purpose is to destroy America. Terrorists cells are being trained in places all over America and are poised for attacks.

c. A third scenario which could neutralize America and bring about the loss of her power and prominence could be the results of a total economic collapse because of her massive indebtedness and inability to meet her financial obligations (Hitchcock, *Iran and Israel*, 94-102).

E. THERE'S COMING A TIME WHEN IRAN, RUSSIA, AND OTHER ALLIES WILL HAVE KEY ROLES IN THE PROPHETIC EVENTS OF THE LAST DAYS.

1. Notice according to prophecy, during the middle of the Tribulation Period, Iran will be apart of the Russian-Islamic Coalition which will invade Israel (Ezek. 38,39). This coalition is identified as follows:

a. The name Gog is mentioned 11 times in Ezek. 38, 39. This word means “height or mountain” and probably refers to an arrogant leader who is called a prince Ezek. 38:2; 39:1). Gog will be the leader of the Islamic

Coalition who leads the Northern forces in the invasion of Israel.

- b. Magog probably refers to the land of Russia which was inhabited by the ancient Scythians.
 - c. Rosh also refers to Russia and represents the armies “from the distant north” (Ezek. 38:6, 15; 39:2).
 - d. Meshech and Tubal have been identified as the land which comprises modern day Turkey which is also an Islamic nation (Ezek. 27:13; 32:26).
 - e. Persia is the modern day country of Iran which became the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979.
 - f. Cush is the land of Ethiopia and it comprises the Sudan which is divided in the north by Muslims. This country harbored Osama Bin Laden from 1991-1996.
 - g. Put is identified as modern day Libya (Ezek. 38:5).
 - h. Gomer is identified as a part of modern day Turkey as well (Ezek.38:6).
 - i. Beth-Togarmah (Ezek. 27:14; 38:6) is also a reference to the inhabitants that occupy the area of present-day Turkey. Not counting Russia, Iran alone comprises 80 million and Libya has 6 million (Hitchcock, *Iran and Israel*,124-136).
2. Notice the reasons why this Russian-Islamic Coalition will invade Israel. One writer has given four main reasons why this invasion will take place:
 - a. To cash in on the wealth of Israel (Ezek. 38:11,12).
 - b. To control the Middle East.
 - c. To crush Israel and seize her land and coastal position in the Middle East.
 - d. To challenge the authority of the Antichrist (Hitchcock, *Iran and Israel*,146,147).
 3. Notice after God destroys the armies of the Russian-Islamic Coalition, the Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel and then he himself will invade Israel (Dan. 11:41-44).
 4. Near the end of the Tribulation Period the Antichrist will extend his conquering exploits into Egypt. While he is there, he will hear a report of the Eastern armies coming against him and he will move his headquarters into the land of Israel and make preparations to meet these armies (Dan. 11:42-45; Rev. 9:13-19; 16:12).

As the armies of Antichrist and the Eastern armies clash, Christ will return at His Second Coming. When He appears this will cause both armies to turn their

hostilities toward Him and His armies (Matt. 24:30; Rev. 19:19).

At this time, Christ will destroy these armies (Dan. 2:34,35; 7:9-12; 11:45; Zech. 14:3,4; Rev.19:20).

F. THERE' S COMING A TIME WHEN THE JEWS WILL BE JUDGED BY THE LORD. THIS PROPHETIC EVENT CAN BE OUTLINED AS FOLLOWS:

1. THE PERSON AND THE PARTICULAR THINGS INVOLVED

a. This Judgment will take place at the close of the Tribulation Period after the Second Coming of Christ.

(1) As for the order of events, we notice first of all, that the Tribulation Period will precede Israel's judgment (Dan.12:1; Matt. 24:4—26).

(2) Secondly we see that the Messiah will come back to the earth but this time in power and glory (Matt. 24:27—30)

(3) Next we notice that the Lord will regather all Israel for this judgment (Matt. 24:31; Dt.30:3—6)

b. This judgment will not only involve those Jews who are living at the time of the Lord's Second Coming but it will include all of the O. T. Saints as well.

(1) Because this judgment of the Jews and the blessings which follow will involve all of Israel, we find therefore a resurrection of the O. T. Saints will follow the Lord's return and precede this judgment (Dan. 12 : 2, 3)

(2) We should understand however that these O. T. Saints who are resurrected will be examined for rewards and not judged like those living Jews. Those living Jews will be judged to see whether they will enter the Millennium or not (Mal. 3:16—16; Dan. 12:13; Matt. 16:27).

C. This judgment will occur on the earth and apparently will take place just outside the borders of the land of Israel.

(1) We notice it will take place in the wilderness where the Lord will bring all Israel (Ezek.20:33—44).

(2) The picture hat we have here is reminiscent of the judgment of the Jews at Kadesh—Barnea when those unbelieving Jews were not permitted to enter the land because of their unbelief (Num. 14)

d. This judgment will determine two things primarily.

(1) First of all this judgment will determine those who are genuine believers and those who are not. In this respect it will be a separation of the rebels or unbelievers from those who are saved (Ezek. 20:38; Ran.9:6).

(2) We notice secondly that this judgment will determine those who will enter the Millennium with all of the promises which were made to Israel and those who will not (Matt.8:11,12).

e. This judgment and the things leading up to it are illustrated very clearly in the Olivet Discourse which was given concerning Israel.

(1) First, we note in the parable of the fig tree how the Jews may know it is near by the things which will happen in the Tribulation Period (Matt. 24:32— 35).

(2). Secondly, we see it will catch many by surprise (Matt. 24:36-41) . Note here while many old premillennialists applied those verses to the rapture, it is undoubtedly referring to the Jews and those taken away in judgment (Compare Luke 17:27, 37).

(3) Next, we notice in the parable of the householder an exhortation for the Jews to be prepared and the consequences for those being unprepared when the Lord returns (Matt. 24:42-51).

(4) Then we see in the parable of the ten virgins how that many of the Jews will not enter the Millennial Kingdom because they will be unprepared when the Lord does come (Matt. 25:1-13). These ten virgins no doubt represent the Jews who will hear the gospel of the Kingdom during the tribulation period (Matt. 24:14) and speaks of those who are saved and those who are not.

(5) Finally, in the parable of the talents we see the judgment of those believing Jews along with the rewards for their faithfulness (Matt. 25:14—30). Here we see also the judgment of the unbelieving Jews and the reward for their unfaithfulness (Matt.25:29,30)

f. This judgment makes it clear that only saved Jews will be permitted to enter the Millennial Kingdom of Christ. Unsaved Jews will go to hell just like any other unbeliever.

2. THE BASIS OF THIS PARTICULAR JUDGMENT

a. This judgment will be based upon repentance and faith in the coming Messiah for salvation.

(1) These Jews who are alive when the Lord returns will have heard the gospel of the Kingdom (Matt.24:14).

(2) Those Jews will have known about the ministry of the two witnesses (Rev. 11:3-12).

b. This judgment will reward those believing Jews on the basis of their faithfulness in light of the Lord's coming.

(1) This is illustrated by those servants who gained more talents (Matt. 25:20,22).

(2) But notice on the other hand how the unfaithful servant was not only unrewarded, but condemned for his lack of faith in the Lord's return.

3. THE RESULTS OF THIS JUDGMENT

a. This judgment will separate the saved Jews from the unsaved Jews before the Kingdom age begins on this earth.

(1) The unsaved Jew will not be granted entrance into the promised land with all of the blessings promised to Abraham and to his seed forever (Ezek. 20: 37).

(2)The unsaved Jews will be consigned to the same place of punishment that all unbelievers will inhabit (Matt.25:30).

b. This judgment will leave those Jews who believe to comprise the final representation of the nation of Israel and they will enter the Millennial reign of Christ and inherit all the blessings of the promises made to Israel (Rom. 11:26,27).

G. THERE'S A TIME COMING WHEN THE GENTILES WILL BE JUDGED. THIS PROPHETIC EVENT CAN BE OUTLINED AS FOLLOWS:

1. THE PERSONS AND THE PARTICULAR THINGS INVOLVED

a. This judgment will also take place at the close of the Tribulation Period at the Second Coming of Christ.

(1) Notice once again the order of events which take place at the Second Coming are outlined in Matthew 24 & 25. We have the tribulation period (24:4—28) then the Jews regathered and judged (24:29—25:30).

(2) As for the time of this judgment we see it will follow the judgment of the Jews and take place prior to the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom (Matt. 25:31—46).

b. This judgment, like that of the Jews, will take place here on the earth and will

determine those who will enter the Millennial Kingdom and those who will not.

(1) As for the particular place, it is prophesied to be in the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:1—2).

(2) Just where this is located is uncertain. But when we look at Zech. 14:4 that Jehoshaphat means Jehovah judges' will surely be applied to that time and place.

c This judgment will involve only that generation of Gentiles who are living when the Lord returns.

(1) Notice, unlike the judgment of the Jews, it has nothing to do with those who are dead.

(2) The word “nations” (Matt. 22:32) is the word used for peoples and its reference is to Gentiles or non—Jewish. For this reason we see this judgment will involve people on an individual basis.

d This judgment will consummate or bring to a close the times of the Gentiles (Luke 21:24). Notice the times of the Gentiles began when the Jews went into the Babylonian captivity and the Gentile nations ascended over Israel (II Chron 36:1—21).

e. This judgment of the Gentiles at the Second coming will destroy their ascendancy over Israel and make her the head of the nations once again (Dan. 7:9-12; 24—27)

2. THE BASIS OF THIS PARTICULAR JUDGMENT

a This judgment of the Gentiles will be based upon their treatment of the Jews during the Tribulation Period (Matt. 25:40,45)

(1) It would appear on this basis that we have here a case of salvation by works. It must be understood however that salvation is always by grace through faith and never by works (Eph. 2:8,9; Titus 3:5; Isa. 64:6)

(2) What we have here rather is an illustration of living faith which is evidenced by particular deeds done to the Jews in the Tribulation Period. Faith without works is dead (Jas. 2:26). But where there is a living belief in the Lord it will be demonstrated by good works (Heb. 11).

(3) Just what is involved must take into consideration several facts which will take place during the Tribulation Period.

(a) First of all, we see that 144,000 Jews will be sealed during

this time and will have a ministry along with the two witnesses which will result in multitudes being saved (Matt.24:14; Rev.7:4—17; 11:3—13)

(b) Secondly, we find that the Jews (“my brethren”) will be persecuted with an unprecedented flood of Anti-Semitism (Rev.12:6; 13—17).

(4) Now it will be in this context that the fulfillment of Gen. 12:3 will come to the forefront. Most Gentiles will be involved in the persecution of the Jews and will be the goats of Matt. 25:33. But some Gentiles will believe the gospel which is preached (Matt.24:14) and will be saved. These then who are saved will evidence it in the way they treat the Jews who are being persecuted. These will be like Rahab of Jericho who believed and evidenced it by helping the Jewish spies (Josh.2; Heb. 11:31) . They therefore will be the sheep of Matt. 25:33). This judgment on this basis brings up an important principle. An individual who is saved will have a living faith which will be evidenced in good works. But notice it is possible for an individual to have good works and yet not be saved (Matt.7:22,23). This was the fundamental failure of the Jews and the reason they were not saved. They were trusting in their works to save them (Rom.9:30—32).

b. This judgment is “national” in the sense that it will end Gentile world dominion but is an “individual” matter when it comes to those who are saved and those who are lost.

(1) That this judgment will be on an individual basis is supported by other parallel passages which speak of the judgment at this time (Matt. 13:30;47— 50; Jude 14,15).

(2) We should understand also that the results of this judgment involves personal salvation or damnation (Matt.25:34,41)

3. THE RESULTS OF THIS JUDGMENT

a This judgment will separate those Gentiles who are saved from those who are lost. The saved will be on the Lord’s right hand and the lost on His left hand (Matt. 25:32,33).

b This judgment will result in those Gentiles who are saved inheriting the Millennial Kingdom with all its blessings. Those on other hand who are lost will be cast into hell (Matt.25:41,46) Jones, *Simple Outlines in Systematic Theology*, May 30, 2013.

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H. THERE'S COMING A TIME WHEN CHRIST WILL SET UP HIS KINGDOM ON THIS EARTH. THE THINGS CONCERNING CHRIST'S REIGN ARE OUTLINED IN CHAPTER TWENTY OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

1. THE THINGS WHICH WILL OCCUR BEFORE THE MILLENNIUM (1-5)

a. Before the Millennium occurs, Satan will be bound (1-2)

(1) Here we see an angel who has the key to the abyss lays hold upon the devil, binds him, and casts him into the abyss. There, he will be shut up with a seal upon him.

(2) The period of time in which Satan will be bound is a literal one 1000 years or during the whole Millennial reign of Christ (2).

(a) Notice the purpose for which Satan is bound is so he won't deceive the nations any more until the Millennium is fulfilled (3).

(b) As to what will happen to Satan after this time John was given a revelation of him being loosed for a little season (3).

b. Before the Millennium is established, there will be the resurrection and judgment of the tribulation saints and the O.T. Saints (4).

(1) Those whom John saw sitting upon thrones and judging are probably the apostles. Note this prophecy in Luke 22:29-30.

(2) Notice while the martyred tribulation saints are mentioned specifically as living and reigning with Christ it is also apparent that the resurrection and judgment of O.T. saints is also in view at this time. Note Dan. 12:12; 12:13; Isa. 26:18,19; Job 9:25; Hosea 13:14.

(3) We also gather from Mart. 25:31-46 that the Gentiles will be judged before the millennial reign begins.

c. Before the Millennium is established, there will be the completion of the first resurrection (5-6).

(1) According to verse 5 this resurrection of the tribulation saints and the O.T. saints is the first resurrection.

(a) This first resurrection is the resurrection of the just and extends from the rapture of the church (I Thess. 4:13-18) to the resurrection of the O.T. and the tribulation saints at Christ's Second Coming. Note Jn. 5:28,29; Dan. 12:1,2.

(b) The first resurrection involves only those who are saved and takes place before the Millennium.

(2) According to verse 5 the rest of the dead lived not again until after the Millennium.

(a).. This resurrection after the Millennium then will be the second resurrection or the resurrection of the unjust. This will involve all those who are unsaved from all the ages.

(b) This resurrection then of the unjust is a 1000 years after the resurrection of the just.

(3) According to these verses we see there is no such thing as a general resurrection and judgment taught in the Bible. All the saved dead mentioned in Scripture will be raised before the Millennium (Psa. 1:5).

(4) Notice those who have part in the first resurrection will be blessed and holy and the second death will have no power on them (6). The second death is the lake of fire (Rev. 20:12; 21:8) and will be the eternal abode of those unsaved.

2. THE THINGS WHICH WILL OCCUR DURING THE MILLENNIUM (20:6)

a. During this time the saints will be ruling and reigning with Christ (4,6).

(1) From related Scriptures we see that Christ will reign in Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3; 40:4,5; Zech. 14:9).

(2) During this reign His Word will go forth from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3; 11:2,3).

b. During this time the whole world will also be commanded to worship and obey Him (Isa. 2:11,12; Pa. 86:9; Zech.. 14:16-19).

c. From other references we see that the church saints will sit on thrones with Christ and judge (I Cor. 6:2,3; Rev. 20:4). As joint-heirs they will share in Christ's glories at this time (Rom. 8:17,18; Jn. 17:24).

d. We see also that the 12 apostles will sit on thrones and administer judgment over Israel (Lk22:28-30); Matt. 19:27-30; Isa. 32:1.

e. During this reign Israel will be head over all the nations (Dt. 28:13; Isa 14:1,2; 49:22,23; 60:14-17; 61:6,7).

f. The Gentile nations then will be in subjection to Israel (Isa. 2:4; 11,12;16:1-5; 18:1-7).

g. As to who these saints are, we note there will be five groups of saved persons who will enter the Millennial reign of Christ.

- (1) Those two groups with natural bodies will be the saved Jews (Matt. 25:1-30) and saved Gentiles from the tribulation (Matt. 25:31-46).
 - (2) Three groups with glorified bodies will be resurrected O.T. Saints (Dan. 12:2,3; Isa. 26:19,20), the resurrected tribulation saints (Rev. 20:4-6), and the church saints (I Thess. 4:13-18).
- h. During this time the situation of the whole world will be changed (Isa. 35:1-6).
- (1) Once again from related Scriptures we see there will be universal peace (Isa. 2:2-4; Mic.4:1-5) and prosperity (Mic. 7:4,5; Zech. 3:10; Isa. 65:21-25).
 - (2) During this time we see that cities will be rebuilt (Isa. 61:3,4; Jer. 31:38-40; Amos 9:14,15).
 - (3) There will be also a multiplication of births among both Jews (Jer. 30:19,20) and the Gentiles (Ezek. 47:22).
 - (4) Life will be prolonged because of these more perfect conditions (Isa. 65:20).
 - (5) Finally, we notice during this time that the Edenic curse will be partially lifted so that the animal kingdom will undergo a change (Isa. 11:6-9; 65:25) but there will still be physical death (Isa. 65:20).

3. THE THINGS WHICH WILL OCCUR AFTER THE MILLENNIUM (20:7-15).

- a. After the Millennium, Satan will be loosed and lead a revolt (7-10).
 - (1) When Satan is loosed he will go out to deceive the nations once again and gather Gog and Magog to battle (7,8).
 - (a). The terms Gog and Magog are not references to the battle which takes place in the middle of the tribulation period (Ezek. 38,39) but they refer rather to the rulers and the people under them. Russia could however be a leading force. In the battle of Ezek. 38, 39, 5/6 of the armies were destroyed; here all are destroyed (20:9).
 - (b) Those who make up Satan's army to rebel against Christ will be from among those children born to those with natural bodies. They will apparently grow up giving outward obedience to Christ but will have no real heart conversion.
 - (c) This loosing of Satan will prove that man needs redemption and not just better living conditions. Even under the perfect rule of Christ with the devil and world system inoperative, man will still fail to do what's right.
- b. When Satan has gathered his army of the unsaved he will attack Jerusalem which will result in immediate judgment (9-10).

- (1) As soon as they compass the city, fire will come down from heaven and devour them.
- (2) The devil then will be cast into the lake of fire where the Antichrist and the false prophet will be (10). Note these two will have suffered at this time a thousand years in this place of eternal torments.
- (3) Those who followed Satan in his final revolt will be resurrected at the Great White Throne Judgment which follows.

c. After these things there will a Great White Throne established (11)

- (1) When this throne is established the then present heavens and earth will pass away (Man. 24:35; II Pet. 3:10).
- (2) Where this throne will be is apparently established somewhere in the stellar heaven.
- (3) Who sits upon this throne is apparently Christ (Jn. 5:22), but this is not to be confused with the judgment seat (II Cor. 5:10) or with Christ's earthly throne (Matt. 25:31).

d. There then will be a resurrection and judgment of the unjust or unsaved (12-15).

- (1) Who will be resurrected and judged is all the unsaved from all walks of life (12). These will all stand before the G.W.T.
- (2) How they will be judged will be on the basis of their works and there will no doubt be degrees of punishment (12). Compare Matt. 11:20-24; Rev. 21:8.
- (3) Note that none will escape this judgment because both those buried in the grave and those in the sea will be resurrected (13).
- (4) What this judgment involves is death and hades being cast into the lake of fire (14). Death and hades refers to the abodes of both the body and soul. The unsaved will have resurrected bodies which will be reunited with their souls and then be cast into the lake of fire. Since this second death has power on all those of the second resurrection it means they will be eternally lost.
- (5) According to verse 15 those whose names are not found in the book of life will be proof that they are unsaved and therefore a part of those judged.
- (6). There is no mention in Scripture about translation of those saints who are alive at the close of the millennium or the resurrection of those saints who die during the millennium.

H. THERE'S COMING A TIME WHEN GOD WILL MAKE SOME NEW THINGS FOR OUR ETERNAL EXPERIENCE. NOTE REVELATION 20:1-27.

1. THE NEW THINGS WHICH GOD WILL MAKE (1-2)

- a. These new things will come into existence after the millennium and after the Great White Throne Judgment (1-2).
 - (1) John saw a new heaven and a new earth (1). Note the first heaven and earth were passed away.
 - (2) Along with the new heaven and earth John saw a new Jerusalem (2). It was coming down out of heaven.
 - (a) Some hold that new Jerusalem will be a satellite city suspended over the earth during the Millennial.
 - (b) Others like myself hold new Jerusalem to be a new city created after the Millennium. The things spoken about this city are related to the eternal state of the saints rather than to the Millennial kingdom.
 - (c) It logically follows since Christ will be reigning during the Millennium on the earth in Jerusalem and since Rev. 20:6 states the saints will reign with Him they will not therefore be out in space in some satellite city. Also since Rev. 21:2 is the first mention of new Jerusalem there is no Scripture to support its existence until after the Millennium. Note also if this city is coming down for the saints to inhabit, as a bride adorned for her husband, for whom would it be?
- b. There will be a renovation of the first heaven and earth (1).
 - (1) Note the word "new" here means new in quality and not in kind.
 - (a) This is the same word spoken of a Christian convert (II Cor. 5:17).
 - (b) According to II Pet. 3:7-10, the old heaven and earth will be renovated by fire after the Millennium.
 - (c) What we see here then is the old heavens and earth cleansed by fire and hence new in quality. According to the Abrahamic Covenant Palestine belongs to his seed forever and God won't create another Palestine only cleanse the old.
 - (2) Note the new earth will have no sea. The only water described is that of the river in Rev. 22:1.

- (3) Concerning the new heaven, the new earth, the new Jerusalem, logical sequence would demand after the Millennium the heaven and earth will be renovated by fire then a new heaven and earth will appear with a new Jerusalem on earth.

2. THE NEW BLESSINGS FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD (3-8)

a. Will begin with a new kind of relationship with God (3-4).

- (1) We see God will dwell with men in a personal and intimate way as before the fall (3).

- (2) God will remove the curse completely and as a consequence all the former things such as death because of sin, sorrow, and pain will pass away (4).

- (a) Some contend that this text teaches the saints will shed tears in heaven for their former failures on earth.

- (b) The emphasis here is not on the remorse of saints but the comfort of God. It's speaking about the curse being finally lifted with all its consequences.

- (c) If the tears are to be identified they will be those of people in the Millennium. During that time the curse will not have been completely removed. People will still die and loved ones will still sorrow. After the Millennium when Satan heads his revolt, death, sorrow, crying and pain are still existing (Rev. 20:9).

b. Will include the establishment of an eternal abode (5-8).

- (1) Note the words "it is done" is a reference to God's completed work to provide the saints of all the ages with an eternal abode (5-6).

- (2) Here we see the saints will not just possess certain provisions or dwell for eternity as they did in the Millennium but rather will inherit all things (7). Note here in all of John's writings this is the only time he referred to a believer as a son. This reveals further the new relationship of verse 3.

- (3) The unsaved by contrast are characterized in verse 8 and will be burned with fire and brimstone eternally as prior judgment has been given (20:15; 21:8).

3. THE NEW CITY FOR THE SAINTS OF GOD (9-27).

a. Is identified as the Lamb's wife (9-11).

- (1) Note this city is called the Lamb's wife being pictured as a bride

meeting the Bridegroom (9). If the saints and Christ were in it during the Millennium why would this figure be used?

- (2) John was carried to a high mountain to see that new city descending from God (10-11). This means it will be on the new earth.
- (3) The identification of the new Jerusalem as the Lamb's wife should not be confused with the Lamb's wife of Rev. 19:7 which is the church.

b. Will have foundations, walls, gates (12-14).

- (1) There will be 12 gates inscribed with the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel and each gate will be guarded by an angel (12,13).
- (2) The walls will be built of twelve foundations each inscribed with the names of the twelve apostles (14).

c. Will be equal in length, breadth, and height (15-16).

- (1) The reed measured about 10 feet and each dimension of the city was 12,000 furlongs.
- (2) A furlong is 582 feet so 12,000 furlongs is equivalent to 1,342 miles.

d. Will have a wall around it like jasper (17-18).

- (1) The wall measured 144 cubits. Assuming a cubit to be 18 inches the wall around the city measured 216 ft. high.
- (2) If new Jerusalem were a satellite city why would there be gates and a wall around the city?

e. Will have a wall with foundations of precious stones (19-20).

f. Will have pearly gates and streets of pure gold (21).

g. Will have no temple in it (22).

- (1) This is unlike the Millennial reign which will have a temple for the worship of God.
- (2) Here we note all shadows and types will be done away with.

h. Will be lighted by the Lamb (23)

- (1) Once again we note a distinction between this city and that of the Millennium. During the Millennium the sun and moon will light

the earth.

(2) This city will transmit the glory of God in the form of light.

i. Will be open to those saved for eternity (14-27).

(1) Apparently in God's renewed universe there will be nations on the earth (24) compare 22:2.

(2) The gates will never be shut (25).

(3) All glory will be brought and given to God to Whom it belongs (26).

(4) The emphasis in verse 27 is not on keeping anyone out of this city but rather on the character of the perfect environment and the objects of God's grace

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Conclusion

The matter of where a person abides eternally after this life is a serious matter. Just who serves the Lord and how they go about that service is certainly no matter with which to trifle either. There should be no room for presumption and self-assuming ideas which are not soundly substantiated in the Word of God.

Make no mistake, when a person's practices and teachings are not in-line and in agreement with the Word of God, no matter how serious or sincere he may be, his efforts are in error and he is doing eternal detriment to the souls of men.

This present work is meant to caution those who may be self-assuming, to call upon others to concern themselves with God's will and His Word, which never run contrary, and to follow the mandates that He has given in the great work of winning others and instructing others. The Lord Jesus said, "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matt. 15:14). Hopefully this work has been eye-opening and will help to equip those who desire to serve the King..

Plan of Salvation

Oftentimes when individuals are unsaved and they are searching for truth it may seem only logical and reasonable for them to try to discern which Church or Denomination is the right one. I know personally before I was saved, I reasoned that all of the different Denominations could not be right. I figured that only one could be the right one and that all the others had to be wrong. I wanted to find the right one through which I could be saved. Little did I understand that salvation is not in a particular Denomination, neither is it in some religious rite, such as baptism or confirmation, it is in a person and that Person is Jesus Christ. The Bible states very emphatically in Acts 4:12:

“Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

It may be that you are as I was- searching for truth and looking toward some religious Denomination. If salvation is what you need or perhaps assurance of your salvation then please don't lay this book down without reading further, because the question of how to be saved is one of life's most important questions.

Now let's look at what the Scriptures say and see if you have a spiritual need. Just as no one will go to a doctor when he is well, people won't come to the Lord Jesus unless they see the sin-sick condition they are really in.

Notice the Bible says that we are all sinners and that there's absolutely nothing we can do to earn salvation. It doesn't matter how many good works we might do, how sincere we might be, or even what religious affiliation we might have. The Bible says:

“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”(Romans 3:23)

“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags...” (Isaiah 64:6)

The Bible also says that God must punish sin and that the penalty for sin is death:

“For the wages of sin is death...” (Romans 6:23)“... the soul that sinneth, it shall die.” (Ezekiel 18:4)

Notice death means separation and the Bible mentions two kinds of death. First, there is physical death when the soul and the spirit leave the body. And everyone of us is going to experience physical death because we all sinned when Adam sinned, being in his loins, and the penalty for sin is exacted from each of us. Romans 5:12 says:

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

The Bible mentions a second kind of death and that is spiritual. This means for a sinner to be separated from God, who is holy, for all eternity. Notice what Revelations 21:8 says:

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and

brimstone, which is the second death.”

At this point you should be able to see that you definitely need a Saviour if you are not already saved, because we all stand condemned as sinners with no way to atone for our sins.

Here’s what is so wonderful about the gospel message. The word gospel means “good news” and so it is. The Bible says that God loved us in spite of our sins and showed that love in giving His Son to die for our sins. Notice what Romans 5:8 and John 3:16 say:

“But God commendeth His love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

The song-writer expressed this wonderful truth when he wrote Love Found A Way:

Wonderful love that rescued me, sunk deep in sin
Guilty and vile as I could be, no hope within
When every ray of light had fled, O glorious day
Raising my soul from out the dead, love found a way
Love found a way to redeem my soul
Love found a way that could make me whole
Love sent my Lord to the cross of shame
Love found a way - O praise His holy name.

- Avis B. Christiansen

Now the Bible says that the Lord Jesus came, died on the cross, and shed His precious blood to pay our sin debt. Peter said:

“Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree...” (I Peter 2:24)

Notice now as a result of Christ’s death for sinners, there is only one sin which will send a person to hell and that is the sin of unbelief or failure to believe in the Lord Jesus and trust in His atoning work. There’s no other means of atonement:

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

This means also, there is only one way to be saved and that is to believe in the Lord Jesus and receive Him as your personal Saviour. The question then is not what you’ve done wrong or how much wrong you’ve done, it is a question of what will you do with Jesus **Christ**. This same question confronted Pilate, the governor of Judaea (Matthew 27:22), and it confronts every other person as well.

Now some imagine to miss heaven is a matter of going out and committing some terrible act of sin such as murder or fornication, but the Bible says, if you have never received Jesus Christ you already stand condemned. Notice what John 3:18 and John 3:36 say:

“He that believeth on Him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on Him.”

This means to believe on the Lord Jesus is the way to have eternal life and failure to believe on Him will mean eternal death in a place called hell. Notice the Bible says:

“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” (I John 5:12)

“...for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.” (John 8:24)

Now the way to be saved and assured of heaven is to come to repentance as a sinner or have a change of heart and mind about your sinful condition and desire forgiveness that comes from receiving Christ. Luke 13:3 says:

“...but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

This is God’s stated will for all sinners. II Peter 3:9 says:

“The Lord... is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

“... but now commandeth all men every where to repent.” (Acts 17:30)

Then, there’s the matter of believing in the atoning work of Christ and receiving Him as your personal Saviour. Notice also that faith and repentance are inseparable. Until a person sees his sinful condition and has a change of heart, he will have nothing to do with the Lord Jesus. But for those who are convicted, have a change of heart and receive Christ, they will be saved and taken into God’s family as His children. John 1:12 says:

“But as many as received Him, to them gave He the power (meaning privilege) to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name.”

Now, if you have never come to repentance as a sinner and called upon the Lord Jesus in faith, I hope you will settle this most important matter right now. The Bible says:

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10:9,10)

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Romans 10:13)

If you want to go to heaven you’ve got to be saved and there’s only one Saviour and only one way to be saved. The Bible says:

“Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

I trust if you're not saved, you'll receive Christ right now. God bless you to believe this truth and be saved. Keep this in mind. As someone has well-said, "The main thing is to keep the main thing, the main thing." And the main thing you should be concerned about is being saved. You don't need a social group to gather with, or else you could simply join any one of the many clubs in your community, you need to be born again into God's family by faith in Jesus Christ and have your name written in the Lamb's book of life (Rev.20:15).

Assurance of Salvation

Most people who have come to the Lord have had some doubts about their salvation at one time or another. Sometimes doubts arise because a person is not dealt with Scripturally when he responds to an invitation to be saved. When this is the case there is no basis for a person to be assured of salvation (II Chron. 20:20; Isa. 7:9).

At other times doubts arise because a person has gotten out of fellowship and away from the Lord. Since certain things are characteristic of those who are unsaved and condemned, when a believer begins to live as an unsaved person he will naturally be convicted of his sins and filled with doubts (II Peter 1:5-10).

There are other times when people begin to doubt their salvation because the devil has filled their minds with doubts about what God has said. This was the tactic which the devil used on Eve in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1-5). This is apparently why John began to doubt when he was put in the prison house (Mat. 11:2,3).

To answer the question concerning one's assurance of salvation there is a Biblical test which a person can take and if he can answer these questions honestly and correctly, then he can know whether he is saved or not. So take the test and see how you score!

Question # 1 Do you have a desire to pray and to talk to God?

When a person gets saved the Holy Spirit comes and takes up residence in the believer and the Spirit will prompt him to pray (Rom. 8:15). This truth is illustrated when Saul was converted to Christ (Acts 9:11). You may not be the most eloquent person when you pray but if you have a desire to talk with God and call upon Him there's some good evidence that you're a saved person.

Question # 2 Are you living your life in obedience to what the Lord says?

When a person gets saved he will have a desire to please the Lord and he will obey what the Lord wants him to do (I Jn. 2:3-5; Rom. 8:14). When a person wants to keep the Lord's words and live a life of obedience he demonstrates that he is a born-again child of God. This evidence is what the Lord Jesus was talking about in Matt. 7:21; Luke 6:46).

Question # 3 Do you have a love for the Lord's people and want to be with them?

When a person gets saved he will have a love for the Lord's people and will want to gather together with them (I Jn. 3:14). This is what we see evidenced by others in the New Testament (Acts 2:44, I Cor. 11:18,20). When a person shows no love for the Lord's people

and doesn't want to be with them he demonstrates that he is unsaved (I Jn. 3:17; 2:19).

Question # 4 Can you understand the Scriptures when you read them?

The Bible tell us that the Scriptures are spiritually discerned or understood (I Cor. 2:14). When a person gets saved he will have the indwelling Spirit of God to give him understanding (Jn. 16:13-15; I Cor. 2:9-12). When people are unsaved they cannot understand God's Word because the Holy spirit does not indwell them and illuminate their minds concerning the Scriptures. This truth was evidenced in the lives of Nicodemus and the Ethiopian Eunuch before they were saved (Jn. 3:4; Acts 8:30,31,34). You may not comprehend everything you read in the Bible but if you can read God's Word and understand what God is saying then there's good evidence that you're saved.

Question # 5 Are you convicted by the Lord when you do wrong?

When a person is saved and he does wrong the Lord will convict his heart about his wrong-doing (I Jn. 3:16,19). This was certainly evidenced in David's life (Psa. 51:1-3).

Question # 6 Are you chastened by the Lord when you do wrong?

When a person is saved and he does wrong the Lord will chasten him in love to correct him (Heb. 12:6-8). If a person can continue to live a sinful life, without any conviction and without any chastening, then it is quite evident that he is not born of God and not saved (I Jn. 3:6-11).

Question # 7 Does the Holy Spirit bear witness with your own spirit?

When a person is saved the Holy Spirit will bear witness with the believer's spirit (Rom. 8:16). He does this by confirming the truth of God's Word to the believer as he reads God's Word. In other words, He testifies to the believer that what God says applies to him because he belongs to God. This confirming ministry is precious and thrilling to the believer's heart as he spends time with God in His Word. If you get a blessing out of reading God's Word as you are enlightened by the Holy Spirit to see what applies to believers then there's good evidence that you are saved.

Question # 8 Are you overcoming the world or being overcome by it?

When a person is saved he will be able to overcome the things which this world has to offer (I Jn. 5:4; 2:15,16). He will not put the cares, the riches, and the pleasures of this life before the things of God (Lk 8:14). This is what characterizes many who make professions of faith, but by their preferences and their priorities, they evidence that they are overcome by the world and what it has to offer. Notice how these things overcame certain ones (Lk. 14:15-24; Mk. 10:17-22; Lk. 12:16-20). If the things of God take priority in your life, and you are preferring the things of God over the things which this world offers, then there's good evidence that you are saved.

The question of assurance concerning one's salvation can be determined by his own truthful answers to the foregoing questions. There are many other Scriptures which give much assurance to those who have sincerely called upon the Lord in faith out of a repentant heart and have accepted Christ as their Saviour. Notice Jn. 5:24; 10:27-29; Phil. 1:6; I Jn. 5:10,11,13; Jude 24,25.

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