

STORACLES OF PROPHECY

The Millennial Man

Daniel 2:1-49

The Story . . .

The vast kingdom of Babylon was opulent and prosperous, yet Nebuchadnezzar the king stirred in his royal bed. How long would this golden era last, he wondered, and what would become of his powerful empire when he was gone?

With these disturbing questions in mind, the mighty monarch drifted off to sleep. That night, a vivid image of a towering multi-mineral man flashed into his mind with a panorama of color unlike anything he had ever experienced.

Throwing aside his embroidered covers, the king jumped out of bed and shouted to his bodyguards: "Call all the magicians and astrologers to come at once. I must know the meaning of this dream!"

The king's wise men were roused and herded into the presence of the bewildered sovereign. "And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream." Daniel 2:3. One of the phony prophets smugly responded, "Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation." But as often happens with dreams, the details had already grown cloudy in Nebuchadnezzar's mind. These men had claimed divine insight, but the king was beginning to doubt their

abilities. This would be the perfect test. "Tell me the dream and the interpretation, and you will be rewarded," the king told his counselors, "otherwise I will cut you in pieces and turn your homes into dumps!"

The magicians and astrologers had no choice but to admit that they were powerless to explain the king's dream without first hearing it. Furious with these imposters, the king commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be gathered for execution. However, the Lord still had one person in Babylon who could explain the dream of the colossal Millennial Man.



AMAZING FACTS

The Study

Fill in the blanks after reading each Bible text.

1. Why did God give the Babylonian king this dream?

Daniel 2:28 *But there is a God in heaven that revealeth _____, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the _____ days.*

NOTE: In this dream of the multi-mineral image, God outlined for all future millennia the rise and fall of the empires that would have a direct influence on His people.

2. When the king's counselors failed to reveal and interpret the dream, what was Nebuchadnezzar's command?

Daniel 2:12 *The king ... commanded to _____ all the wise men of Babylon.*

NOTE: The astrologers and magicians of Babylon claimed to have supernatural power, but when they could not reveal the dream to the king, they were shown to be impotent imposters. If the king had recalled the dream, they would have simply manufactured a bogus interpretation. In his rage, Nebuchadnezzar commanded all the wise men to be slain—even those who were not present. Among those absent from the first meeting with the king was a God-fearing captive named Daniel, who had just been trained for the king's service.

3. When Daniel learned about the death decree, what did he ask of the king and what did he tell his friends?

A. Daniel 2:16 *Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him _____, and that he would shew the king the _____.*

B. Daniel 2:17, 18 *Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing _____ to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this _____.*

NOTE: Daniel requested a little time from Nebuchadnezzar and promised that he would reveal the dream and its meaning. The king, who was still desperate to know the significance of his vision, granted Daniel's request. Then he and his friends appealed to the only Source who could reveal the king's dream. They prayed to the God of heaven.

4. When the Lord revealed the dream to Daniel, to whom did he give praise and credit?

Daniel 2:23, 28 *I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou _____ of my fathers. ... There is a _____ in heaven that _____ secrets.*

NOTE: The rise and fall of empires may appear as if happening by the will of men, but Daniel's prayer of praise clearly reveals the essence of divine intervention. Nothing happens that God is not already aware of and has not allowed. Sometimes we may not understand what is happening in our world today or why, but it is comforting to know that God is still sovereign. Only Daniel could reveal the dream to the king, yet he clearly gives the credit to the One who revealed the dream to him—the God of heaven.

5. What two objects did Daniel say the king saw in his dream?

A. Daniel 2:31 *Thou, O king, sawest, and behold, a _____.*

B. Daniel 2:34 *Thou sawest ... that a _____ was cut out without hands.*

NOTE: The first thing the king saw was a great image made of the following mineral elements:

1. The head was of **gold**.
2. The breast and arms were of **silver**.
3. The belly and thighs were of **brass**.
4. The legs were of **iron**.
5. The feet of **iron and clay**.

Next, the king saw a stone that had been cut without hands. At this point, King Nebuchadnezzar was no doubt sitting spellbound on the edge of his throne. Daniel had related the dream precisely as God had given it to him. Now the king eagerly waited, wondering what the dream meant. Daniel proceeded to explain the interpretation as the Lord had revealed it to him, and we would do well to take it just as He gave it. The only safe way to interpret the Bible and prophecy is to allow the Bible to explain itself.

6. What does the head of gold represent?

Daniel 2:38 *Thou art this _____ of gold.*

NOTE: The king was regarded as the head of the state. This is why Nebuchadnezzar represented Babylon, the empire that began the prophecy. Neo-Babylon ruled the world from 612-539 B.C. as one of the mightiest empires of antiquity—one that could aptly be described as the head of gold. Notice that the prophecy begins with Daniel's time.

7. Would the Babylonian kingdom last forever?

Daniel 2:39 *After thee shall arise _____ kingdom inferior to thee.*

NOTE: Babylon's supremacy would not last forever. Succeeding kingdoms, inferior to Babylon, would rule in their turn. Just as silver is inferior to gold, so the kingdom that followed Babylon enjoyed diminished glory. Led by Cyrus in 539 B.C., the Medo-Persian empire conquered Babylon and reduced it to ruins. The Medes and Persians were the ruling world power from 539-331 B.C. During their reign, all taxes had to be paid in silver.

8.What metal would represent the kingdom that followed Medo-Persia?

Daniel 2:39 Another third kingdom of _____ ... shall bear rule over all the earth.

NOTE: The brass kingdom of Greece came into power when Alexander the Great conquered the Medes and Persians at the battle of Arbela in 331 B.C., and Greece remained in power until about 168 B.C. Greek soldiers were called “brazen coated” because their armor was all bronze. Notice how each succeeding mineral depicted in the image is less valuable, yet more enduring than the one before it.

9.What metal represents the fourth kingdom?

Daniel 2:40 The fourth kingdom shall be strong as _____.

NOTE: The iron monarchy of Rome conquered the Greeks in 168 B.C. and enjoyed world supremacy until Rome was captured by the Ostrogoths in A.D. 476. Rome is the kingdom that dominated the world when Jesus Christ was born. Notice how Daniel foretold a thousand years of world history with unerring accuracy. The rise and fall of these four world empires—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome—are clearly foretold in the Bible and proved by the history books.

10.What would happen after the fall of the Roman Empire?

Daniel 2:41, 42 The kingdom shall be _____. ... As the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.

NOTE: When the Roman Empire began to crumble in A.D. 476, it was not overtaken by another world power. Instead, barbarian tribes conquered the Roman Empire and divided it—just as Daniel prophesied. Ten of these tribes evolved into modern Europe. They were the Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Franks, Vandals, Alemannians, Sueves, Anglo-Saxons, Heruls, Lombards, and Burgundians. Seven of them still exist today in Europe. For example, the Anglo-Saxons became the English, the Franks became the French, the Alemannians became the Germans, and the Lombards became the Italians.

11. Would these 10 kingdoms ever succeed in uniting?

Daniel 2:43 They shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall _____ one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

NOTE: Through marriage, alliances, and treaties, men have vainly attempted to reunite the European continent. All throughout history, leaders such as Charlemagne, Napoleon, Kaiser Wilhelm, Mussolini, and Hitler have fought to build a new European empire; but these words of Scripture have stopped every single would-be world ruler. Revelation 13 tells us there will be another attempt to establish a universal religion, but Daniel’s prophecy clearly states that the world will remain politically divided for the rest of Earth’s history.

12. Who will set up the final kingdom?

Daniel 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the _____ of _____ set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed.

NOTE: The next great universal kingdom will be the kingdom of heaven, which is described in Matthew 25:31-34.

13. What does the stone do to the other world kingdoms?

Daniel 2:34, 35 A stone was cut out without hands, which _____ the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and _____ them to pieces. ... And the stone that smote the image became a great _____, and filled the whole earth.

NOTE: The stone that was cut without human hands represents God’s kingdom. It will not be a conglomeration of earthly kingdoms, but a total replacement (Revelation 21:1). The Scriptures declare that when Jesus Christ returns to earth, He will completely consume all the kingdoms of earth and establish an everlasting kingdom (Daniel 2:44). What exciting news! Jesus Christ is coming again! All history is moving toward this climactic conclusion, when the Son of God shall return in majesty to bring in the kingdom of everlasting righteousness. King Nebuchadnezzar may have thought that he had defeated the true God when he besieged Jerusalem and plundered the temple (Daniel 1:1, 2), but he was shown very quickly that God is ruler over all. Human events are under His control, and ultimately He will win the conflict. Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the 10 divisions of the Roman Empire may have sought to usurp divine authority and destroy the people of God, but all earthly kingdoms will eventually be crushed by the coming of Christ. Thank God, He will win the great controversy!

14. After hearing Daniel’s clear interpretation of the dream, what did Nebuchadnezzar say about the Lord?

Daniel 2:47 The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a _____ of _____, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets.

NOTE: Having seen that God has complete control of world events, even Nebuchadnezzar readily acknowledged that the God Daniel served was above all the heathen gods of Babylon. How quickly the picture had changed! Daniel and his friends, because of their faithfulness to God, were elevated from their initial captivity in Babylon to positions of prominent leadership for the kingdom (Daniel 2:48, 49). God always honors those who honor Him (1 Samuel 2:30).

Your Response

Recognizing that God is in full control of earthly events, are you willing to let Him have full control of your life?

ANSWER: _____

Supplement

This section provides additional information for further study.

Gold = Babylon

The head of gold represented Babylon, which was the ruling world power from 612-539 B.C.

Silver = Medo-Persia

The chest of silver represented Medo-Persia, the ruling world empire from 539-331 B.C.

Bronze = Greece

The thighs of bronze represented Greece, the dominant world ruler from 331-168 B.C.

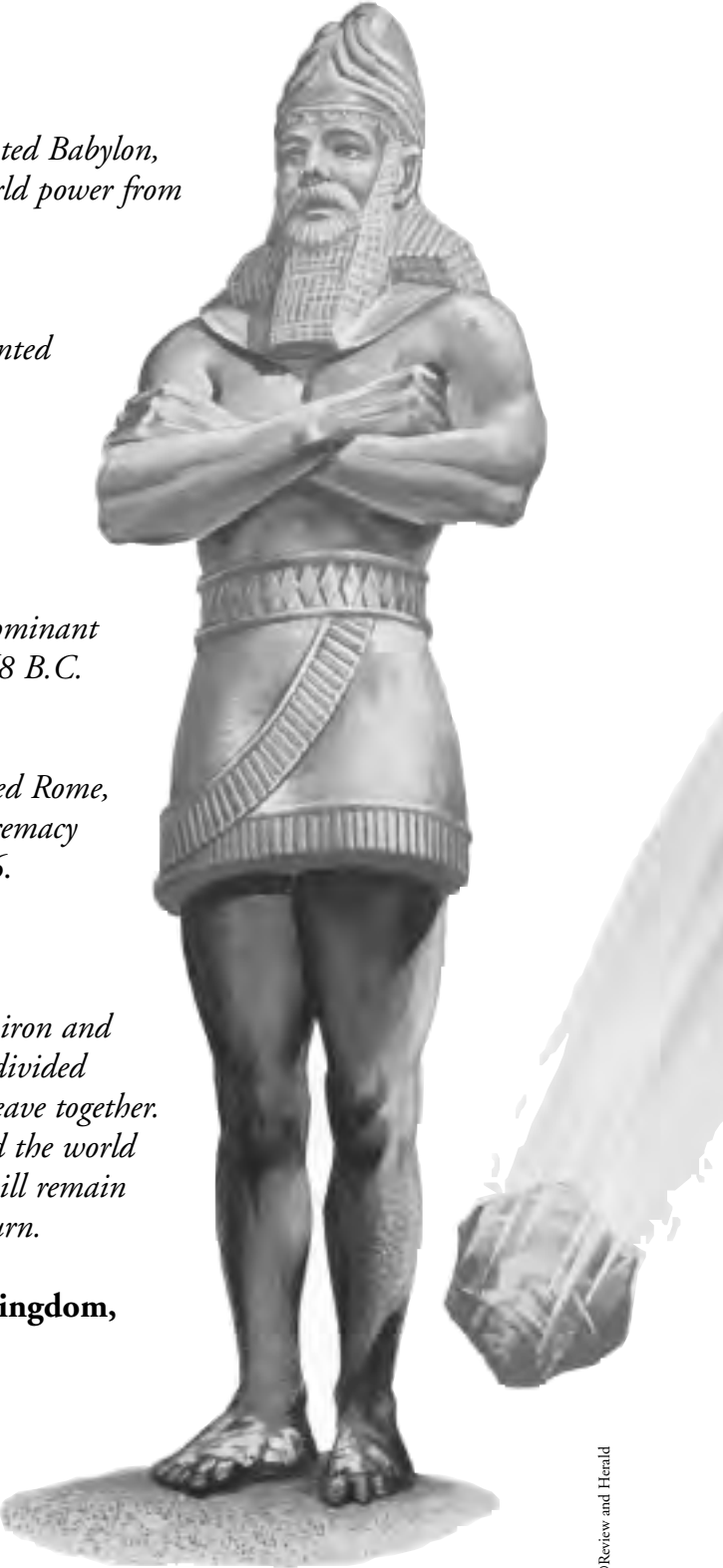
Iron = Rome

The legs of iron represented Rome, which enjoyed world supremacy from 168 B.C.-A.D. 476.

Iron and Clay = the Divided Empire

The feet that were partly iron and partly clay represented a divided empire that would not cleave together. No single power has ruled the world since A.D. 476, and it will remain divided until Christ’s return.

Stone = Christ’s Eternal Kingdom, His Word, and His Law



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STORACLES OF PROPHECY

Back to Jerusalem

The Story . . .

Luke 24:13-35

The disciples of Jesus were completely devastated. All of their hopes and dreams for the new kingdom of God had been nailed to a cross the previous Friday. Reeling with grief and confusion, Cleopas and his companion slowly made the seven-mile trip from Jerusalem down to their home in the little town of Emmaus. As the sun was setting that Sunday afternoon and they trod their way down the bumpy road, a stranger drew near to journey with them. Little did they know that this new traveling companion was the resurrected Lord Himself.

Paying little heed to their fellow pilgrim, the two dejected disciples rehearsed the staggering events of the weekend, feeling more despondent with every step. As Jesus silently listened, He desperately longed to reveal Himself to His downcast friends. But the Lord deliberately shielded His true identity because they needed now, more than ever, to understand the Scriptures. If Christ had allowed these two faithful followers to recognize who He was, they would have been far too excited to listen to the important truths He had to share.

Even after three and a half years of listening to His teaching and preaching, they still did not comprehend the nature

of His mission. He had plainly told them, "The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him, and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him." Mark 9:31, 32.

Jesus gently interrupted their sad conversation, and for the next two hours He gave them the keys for understanding all Scripture and prophecy.



AMAZING FACTS

The Study

Fill in the blanks after reading each Bible text.

1. How much of the Scriptures are we commanded to believe?

Luke 24:25 Believe _____ that the prophets have spoken.
2 Timothy 3:16 All _____ is given by inspiration of God.

NOTE: The complete oracles (sacred truth) of God are contained in the writings of the Old and New Testaments. The keys to understanding the prophecies of Revelation are found primarily in the stories of the Old Testament. For example, of the 404 verses found in the book of Revelation, 278 of them are echoes from other stories and prophecies in the Old Testament.

2. Whom did Jesus say the Scriptures and prophecies reveal?

Luke 24:27 Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning _____.
John 5:39 Search the Scriptures; for ... they are they which testify of _____.
Revelation 1:1 The Revelation of _____, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass.

NOTE: The central figure in all of Scripture and prophecy is Jesus. This captivating series will cover many themes of prophecy, but keep in mind that the primary focus of Daniel and Revelation is Jesus Christ and His kingdom.

3. What is another name used in the Bible for Jesus?

John 1:1 In the beginning was the _____, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
John 1:14 And the _____ was made flesh, and dwelt among us.

4. What kind of people did God use to write the Bible?

2 Peter 1:21 _____ men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

5. Eternal life comes from knowing Jesus (John 17:3). How was Jesus known to His disciples?

Luke 24:35 He was known of them in _____ of _____.

NOTE: In the Bible, bread is a symbol of the Word of God. Jesus said, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Matthew 4:4. As we read, digest, and follow the Scriptures, we will find strength, joy, peace, and everlasting life.

6. How important should Bible study be to the Christian?

Job 23:12 I have esteemed the words of his mouth _____ than my necessary _____.
Psalms 119:105 Thy word is a _____ unto my feet, and a _____ unto my path.

NOTE: The devil hates the Bible and will do almost anything to prevent people from reading it. He knows that its prophecies expose his plans to deceive the human race. So don't be surprised if Satan attempts to distract you from this series of lessons or tries to get you preoccupied with other things. God will make a way for those who seek to know the truth to find it.

7. Who helps us understand the Bible?

John 16:13 When he, the _____ of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.
John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the _____, ... shall teach you all things.
1 Corinthians 2:13 We speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost _____.

8. What must I do to be certain the Holy Spirit is guiding my Bible study?

Luke 11:9 And I say unto you, _____, and it shall be given you.
Luke 11:13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that _____?
John 7:17 If any man will do _____, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.

NOTE: Part of the work of the Holy Spirit is to help us understand the truth of the Scriptures. This is why we should always ask the Holy Spirit to guide us before we open God's book. I can be certain the Holy Spirit is guiding my Bible study if (1) I ask Him to guide me, and (2) I am willing to accept and follow truth as He reveals it to me.

9. How does prayerful study of the Word help us?

Psalms 119:11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might _____ against thee.
Jeremiah 33:3 Call unto me, and I will _____ thee, and shew thee great and _____, which thou knowest not.
Romans 15:4 Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our _____, that we ... might have _____.
James 1:5 If any of you lack _____, let him ask of God ... and it shall be given him.

10. What method of Bible study do the Scriptures recommend?

Isaiah 28:10 *For _____ must be upon precept, ... _____ upon line, ... here a little, and there a little.*

1 Corinthians 2:13 *But which the Holy Ghost teacheth; _____ spiritual things with spiritual.*

2 Peter 1:20 *No prophecy of the scripture is of any _____ interpretation.*

NOTE: We must lay aside our own ideas and study the Bible by reading everything in the Scriptures on any given subject (“here a little, and there a little”) and by comparing all the verses for input. We should let the Bible speak for itself. When this is done, the truth always comes through clearly. This is how Jesus convinced the two disciples on the road to Emmaus that He was indeed the Messiah (Luke 24:27).

11. What will studying the Scriptures do for us?

2 Timothy 3:15 *Thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee _____ unto _____ through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

NOTE: The Scriptures help us understand God’s great plan of salvation—the most important information ever given to mortals.

12. According to Jesus, where do we find the truth?

John 14:6 *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the _____, and the life.*

John 17:17 *Thy _____ is truth.*

NOTE: We find the truth in God’s Word—the Bible. Truth is a scarce commodity in today’s world, and all the people of earth suffer as a result. The truth about everything that really matters is found in Scripture. Studying and following its counsel sets people free (John 8:32) and brings them happy, abundant living (John 15:11).

13. What warnings regarding Bible study are given in the Scriptures?

2 Timothy 2:15 *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, ... rightly _____ the word of truth.*

2 Peter 3:16 *In all his epistles ... are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable _____, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own _____.*

NOTE: “Rightly dividing the word of truth” means to interpret it correctly and truthfully. There is great danger in twisting Scripture to make it say what we want it to say. What I say about the Bible matters little. What counts is what Scripture says about itself.

14. How should we test all religious teachings and doctrines?

Acts 17:11 *They received the word with all readiness of mind, and _____ the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.*

Isaiah 8:20 *To the _____ and to the _____: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no _____ in them.*

NOTE: All religious teachings should be checked by the Bible. If any teaching does not clearly agree with the Scriptures, it is false and should be abandoned.

15. What happened when Jesus explained the Scriptures to His two discouraged disciples on the road to Emmaus?

Luke 24:32 *Did not our _____ within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?*

16. After these two disciples knew that Jesus was alive and heard Him explain the prophecies, what did they do?

Luke 24:33 *They rose up the same hour, and _____ to Jerusalem, and _____ the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them.*

NOTE: One of the first reactions these disciples had after hearing Jesus explain the Scriptures was a burning desire to share the good news with others. We hope it is also your desire to invite your friends to join you in this dynamic series of Bible studies.

Your Response

Do you wish to fully understand and follow the Scriptures?
ANSWER: _____

Supplement

Following is a list of key terms that often have symbolic meanings in Bible prophecy. Each symbol is in bold type and is followed by its corresponding literal meaning.

- Angel** = Messenger
Daniel 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19, 26; Hebrews 1:14
- Babylon** = Religious apostasy/confusion
Genesis 10:8-10; 11:6-9; Revelation 18:2, 3; 17:1-5
- Beast** = Kingdom/government/political power
Daniel 7:17, 23
- Bread** = Word of God
John 6:35, 51, 52, 63

- Day** = Literal year
Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34
- Dragon** = Satan or his agency
Isaiah 27:1; 30:6; Psalm 74:13, 14; Revelation 12:7-9; Ezekiel 29:3; Jeremiah 51:34
- Forehead** = Mind
Romans 7:25; Ezekiel 3:8, 9
- Hand** = Work
Ecclesiastes 9:10
- Harlot** = Apostate church/religion
Isaiah 1:21-27; Jeremiah 3:1-3, 6-9
- Heads** = Major powers/rulers/governments
Revelation 17:3, 9, 10
- Horn** = King or kingdom
Daniel 7:24; 8:5, 21, 22; Zechariah 1:18, 19; Revelation 17:12
- Lamb** = Jesus/sacrifice
John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7
- Lamp** = Word of God
Psalm 119:105
- Lion** = Jesus Christ
Revelation 5:4-9
- Mark** = Sign or seal of approval or disapproval
Ezekiel 9:4; Romans 4:11; Revelation 13:17; 14:9-11; 7:2, 3
- Mountains** = Political or religio-political powers
Isaiah 2:2, 3; Jeremiah 17:3; 31:23; 51:24, 25; Ezekiel 17:22, 23; Daniel 2:35, 44, 45
- Oil** = Holy Spirit
Zechariah 4:2-6; Revelation 4:5
- Red** = Sin/corruption
Isaiah 1:18; Nahum 2:3; Revelation 17:1-4
- Rock** = Jesus/truth
1 Corinthians 10:4; Isaiah 8:13, 14; Romans 9:33; Matthew 7:24
- Seal** = Sign or mark of approval or disapproval
Romans 4:11; Revelation 7:2, 3
- Serpent** = Satan
Revelation 12:9; 20:2
- Stars** = Angels/messengers
Revelation 1:16, 20; 12:4, 7-9; Job 38:7
- Sun** = Jesus/the gospel
Psalm 84:11; Malachi 4:2; Matthew 17:2; John 8:12; 9:5
- Sword** = Word of God
Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12
- Thief** = Suddenness of Jesus’ coming
1 Thessalonians 5:2-4; 2 Peter 3:10
- Time** = Literal year
Daniel 4:16, 23, 25, 32; 7:25; Daniel 11:13 margin
- Waters** = Inhabited area/people, nations
Revelation 17:15
- White Robes** = Victory/righteousness
Revelation 19:8; 3:5; 7:14
- Winds** = Strife/commotion/“winds of war”
Jeremiah 25:31-33; 49:36, 37; 4:11-13; Zechariah 7:14
- Woman, Pure** = True church
Jeremiah 6:2; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-27
- Woman, Corrupt** = Apostate church
Ezekiel 16:15-58; 23:2-21; Hosea 2:5; 3:1; Revelation 14:4

STORACLES OF PROPHECY

The Coming King

2 Kings 11:1-21

The Story . . .

Athaliah, the ruthless queen of Judah, was even more wicked than her mother Jezebel. When her son Ahaziah died, she quickly seized control of the kingdom by executing all of her grandsons who might reign in her place. "But Jehosheba, ... sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and ... they hid him ... from Athaliah, so that he was not slain. And he was with her hid in the house of the Lord six years. And Athaliah did reign over the land." 2 Kings 11:2, 3.

For six years only a handful of trusted people knew that the royal child was living and hidden in the temple of God. Jehoiada, the high priest, loved and trained young Joash as his own son. For six years Jehoiada planned and prayed for the best moment to present this rightful heir to the people. Finally the old priest secretly summoned trusted captains in the army and showed them that the youngest son of Ahaziah was still alive. They decided to wait until Friday evening, when all of the faithful people would come to the temple for Sabbath worship, to present the young king to them. With hundreds of armed soldiers on every side, Jehoiada brought the heir of David's throne before the crowd and introduced him. At first the people were astonished, but when they saw the royal crown placed upon his head, "they clapped their

hands, and said, God save the king." 2 Kings 11:12.

Now when wicked Athaliah heard the noise of trumpets and all the people rejoicing, she came running into the temple only to discover that her reign of terror was through. That day she and her followers were slain, and Joash was given the kingdom.

The Bible tells us that another son of David will soon emerge from the heavenly temple amidst the blowing of trumpets to receive His rightful kingdom and to destroy the wicked.



AMAZING FACTS

The Study

Fill in the blanks after reading each Bible text.

1. Who is this king who will soon emerge from the temple in heaven?

Revelation 14:14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the _____ of _____, having on his head a golden crown.

2. Will Jesus come quietly when He returns?

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a _____, with the voice of the archangel, and with the _____ of God.

Jeremiah 25:30 The Lord shall _____ from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; he shall give a _____.

Psalms 50:3 Our God shall come, and shall not keep _____: ... and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.

NOTE: "Tempestuous" means "turbulent and stormy." The second coming of Jesus will clearly be noisy beyond description. There will be nothing secret about it!

3. What other physical evidence will accompany Jesus' return?

Revelation 16:18 And there was a great _____, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

4. Who will see Jesus when He returns?

Matthew 24:30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall _____ the _____ of the earth mourn, and they shall _____ the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Revelation 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and _____ shall see him.

NOTE: This is too clear to misunderstand. Every person alive, wicked or righteous, will see Jesus return to earth. A secret gathering, or "rapture," of God's people is not described in the Bible.

5. Who will be with Jesus when He returns in the clouds?

Matthew 25:31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the _____ with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.

NOTE: The brightness of the Lord's return will, by comparison, make the brightness of a hydrogen bomb pale into insignificance. At Jesus' tomb, the brightness of one angel caused all the Roman guards to fall to the ground as dead men (Matthew 28:2-4). The brightness of all heaven's angels will make Jesus' second coming too bright for anyone to miss. Added to this will be the fantastic

glory of Jesus and the Father (Luke 9:26). Jesus' second coming will be like lightning flashing from one horizon to the other (Matthew 24:27).

6. What will the brightness of Jesus' coming do to the living wicked?

2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8 When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In _____ taking vengeance on them that know not God.

2 Thessalonians 2:8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall _____ with the brightness of his coming.

7. What will happen to the righteous who are dead at Jesus' coming?

1 Thessalonians 4:16 The dead in Christ shall _____ first.

8. At this point, what will happen to the living and resurrected saints?

1 Corinthians 15:52, 53 The dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be _____. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

NOTE: No one except God has immortality now (1 Timothy 6:15, 16). But it will be given as a free gift to the righteous at Jesus' second coming. Their bodies also will be changed into heavenly, incorruptible bodies, like that of Jesus (Philippians 3:20, 21).

9. After being changed, what will happen to the righteous?

1 Thessalonians 4:17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be _____ together with them [the resurrected saints] in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.

NOTE: God's saints will meet the Lord in the air. Jesus does not touch the earth at His second coming, so He will not appear on the earth, as many believe. His second coming will be a sky appearance, not an earth appearance.

10. What solemn warning does Jesus give about His second coming?

Matthew 24:5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall _____.

Matthew 24:24, 26 For there shall arise _____, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and _____; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. ... If they shall say unto you, Behold, ... he is in the secret chambers; _____ it _____.

NOTE: Satan will impersonate Christ's second coming by appearing upon the earth as a glorious being, and he will deceive billions. Jesus has warned us that He will not touch the earth at all at His second coming, but rather will remain in the air. The dazzling deceptions of Satan will be so convincing that most people will be deceived.

11. What will prevent the righteous from being deceived?

Isaiah 8:20 *To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to _____, it is because there is no light in them.*

NOTE: God’s people will not be deceived, because they will know from a study of God’s Word just how Jesus will come (Acts 17:11). Any appearing that is not in agreement with Scripture is a counterfeit and must be rejected. Jesus forewarned us.
Matthew 24:25 *Behold, I have told you before.*

12. Would it be safe to go see a false Christ?

Matthew 24:26 *Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; _____ forth.*

13. What can we know about the time of Jesus’ return?

Matthew 24:36 *But of that day and hour knoweth _____, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*

Matthew 24:33 *When ye shall see all these things, know that it is _____, even at the doors.*

NOTE: Only God knows the exact time of the second coming. All date setting is out of harmony with the Bible. But Jesus made it clear that when we see the signs of His coming fulfilled (Matthew 24:4-51; Luke 21:8-33; and 2 Timothy 3:1-8), we can know that His coming is very near—even at the doors.

14. What will the angels do at Jesus’ second coming?

Matthew 24:31 *His angels ... shall _____ together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

NOTE: Your guardian angel (Matthew 18:10) will probably be the first to greet you at Jesus’ return. What a blessed thought! No wonder the Bible calls the second coming the “blessed hope” (Titus 2:13)!

15. Since we are living just before Jesus’ second coming, how should we relate to this solemn, glorious event?

Matthew 24:44 *Therefore _____ ye also _____: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.*

16. How will people be rewarded at Jesus’ second coming?

Revelation 22:12 *Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man _____ as his _____ shall be.*

NOTE: People will be saved by grace but rewarded based on their conduct, not on their profession (Matthew 7:21-23).

17. What will the wicked say when Jesus returns?

Revelation 6:15-17 *And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man ... said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne ... :*

For the great day of his wrath is come; and _____ be able to _____?

NOTE: During this horrendous final earthquake, the wicked—petrified with fear—will prefer for the rocks and mountains to fall on them rather than to face King Jesus unprepared.

18. What will the righteous say when Jesus appears?

Isaiah 25:9 *Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and _____ will _____ us: ... we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.*

19. What is the prime purpose of Jesus’ second coming?

John 14:3 *I will come again, and _____ unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

NOTE: Jesus’ most thrilling purpose in returning to earth is to take His children to the glorious home He has prepared for them. No more tears, woes, heartaches, or illness forever. But rather, joy and peace unspeakable forever.

Your Response

Jesus is coming in the clouds very soon. Will you plan now to be ready to meet Him?

ANSWER: _____

Supplement

This section provides additional information for further study.

The Secret Rapture Theory

The secret rapture theory is based on eight premises that have been so widely embraced that most people accept them as fact without pausing to investigate. However, our only safety is to search the Scriptures daily to determine whether those things are so (Acts 17:11). The eight points of the secret rapture theory are as follows:

1. The rapture is silent.
2. The rapture is invisible.
3. The rapture leaves the wicked alive.
4. God removes the righteous to protect them from the tribulation.
5. Christ’s second coming will be in two stages: (1) the secret rapture, and (2) the actual coming, which will be glorious.
6. These two stages of the second coming will be seven years apart.
7. The rapture will take place before the revelation of the Antichrist, who then will bring about the tribulation.
8. The wicked will at this point have a second chance to be converted and to serve Christ.

To examine these points fully is beyond the scope of this limited supplement, but we will briefly cover each point here. Points one and two were covered in this lesson, but they are mentioned again for emphasis. Prepare for some surprises!

1. The rapture is not silent, but rather is extremely noisy. The Scriptures say Jesus will descend “with a SHOUT, with the VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL, and with the TRUMP OF GOD.” 1 Thessalonians 4:16, emphasis added. David says, “Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: ... it shall be very tempestuous [violent, whirling] round about him.” Psalm 50:3. And Jeremiah says, “The Lord shall roar from on high, ... he shall mightily roar ...; he shall give a shout. ... A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth.” Jeremiah 25:30, 31. Nothing about it is quiet! Christ will come with a noise heard around the world. Mark this well. If you are living when Jesus returns, you will hear Him come. Your ears will ring with catastrophic noise.

2. The rapture is not invisible; it will be seen by all. All of the angels will come with Jesus (Matthew 25:31). One lone angel appeared at Jesus’ resurrection, and his brightness was so overpowering that the entire Roman guard fell to the ground as dead men (Matthew 28:2-4). Consider the staggering brightness of all the angels of heaven! Added to the glory of the angels will be Jesus’ own glory (Matthew 25:31) and the glory of His Father (Matthew 16:27). The brightness will be overwhelming. Jesus added, “For as the lightning cometh out of the east, shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” Matthew 24:27. Secret? By no stretch of the imagination. In fact, the Bible forever settled this by saying, “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him.” Revelation 1:7. Rest assured, if you are living at Jesus’ second coming, you will see Him come!

3. The rapture does not leave the wicked alive. They are slain at the Lord’s coming (Isaiah 11:4; Malachi 4:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:8).

4. God does not remove the righteous from the tribulation, but rather protects them through it (Psalm 91:5-12).

5. Christ’s second coming will not be in two stages—one secret and the other seen by all. There is only one second coming, and it will be seen by every living person on earth. There is no Scripture to support a two-phase second coming.

6. The secret rapture teachers claim that there is a seven-year period between the two second comings of Christ. This is not scriptural.

7. Antichrist does not appear three and one-half years after the second coming of Jesus. He has been active for centuries (1 John 4:3) and is doing his nefarious work even now.

8. The wicked will not have a second opportunity to be saved after the second coming. All sinners will be destroyed at the second coming. There is no second opportunity for anyone after Jesus’ second coming.

STORACLES OF PROPHECY

The Rebellious Prince

2 Samuel 13:1-18, 33

The Story . . .

Absalom was the most handsome, cunning, and ambitious of David's sons. The Bible says, "But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him." 2 Samuel 14:25.

But this determined young prince wanted more than just the admiration of the people for his stunning appearance. He wanted the power of his father's throne. He wanted to be

king of Israel—at any price. First Absalom killed his older brother, Amnon, after Amnon mistreated his sister Tamar. Amnon was David's firstborn son and in line to follow David as king. Then, after Absalom wormed his way back into his father's favor, he began to sow subtle seeds of doubt throughout the kingdom about David's leadership, judgments, and laws until he "stole the hearts of the men of Israel." 2 Samuel 15:6.

Finally, his sinister plan erupted into a full-blown rebellion as Absalom tried to assassinate his own father and kidnap the kingdom. David and his followers were forced to flee from

Jerusalem. But after a severe battle a few days later, David was once again secure on his throne, and handsome Prince Absalom was slain.

A sad story indeed, but this was not the first such royal family feud. In another great kingdom long ago, very similar events led to the most tragic rebellion of all time.

The kingdom was called—heaven!



AMAZING FACTS

The Study

Fill in the blanks after reading each Bible text.

1. What was the name of the rebellious prince in heaven, and why did he rebel?

Isaiah 14:12 *How art thou fallen from heaven, O _____, son of the morning!*

Isaiah 14:13, 14 *For thou hast said in thine _____, ... I will be like the _____.*

Ezekiel 28:17 *Thine heart was lifted up because of thy _____, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy _____.*

NOTE: Lucifer was the most powerful and beautiful of God's creatures. He was the highest of the angels and most likely led the heavenly choir. But he allowed his beauty to fill him with pride. (See supplement entitled "Satan Symbolized by the Kings of Tyre and Babylon.")

2. Did God make a devil when He created Lucifer?

Ezekiel 28:15 *Thou wast _____ in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till _____ was found in thee.*

NOTE: God made a perfect angel who, of his own free will, chose to be a devil. It may be hard to imagine, but if we knew Lucifer before his fall, we would have loved him. We don't know exactly how long, but Lucifer may have joyfully served God for eons before he began to cherish seeds of pride and resentment in his heart. The Lord could have made all of His creatures like robots, but a robot cannot love. True love must be willing to take risks. This is why parents decide to have children, knowing that at some time they may choose to disobey. God allowed Lucifer to carry out his rebellion for several reasons. First, to forever settle any question of whether or not God makes His creatures with freedom of choice. Second, if God had destroyed Lucifer as soon as he began spreading doubts about God's love and government, the other intelligent creatures would have forever had lingering questions. They might have thought, "Perhaps Lucifer was right." Therefore, Lucifer was allowed to demonstrate the horrible results of sin. Finally, God does not want His creatures to obey Him merely because He will punish them if they don't. He wants us to obey from principles of love rather than from fear.

3. What finally happened?

Revelation 12:7 *And there was _____ in _____: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the _____ fought and his angels.*

NOTE: Eventually Lucifer and the angels who sided with him were expelled from heaven.

4. What powerful beings work under the devil's command?

Revelation 12:4 *And his tail drew the _____ part of*

the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.

Revelation 12:9 *He was cast out into the earth, and his _____ were cast out with him.*

NOTE: Satan is so cunning that he was able to deceive one-third of the angels of heaven into following him in his rebellion against God. Now called "devils" and "demons," these fallen angels carry out Satan's plans. In our story of Absalom, we notice that he likewise did very little of his own dirty work. Absalom ordered his servants to execute his wishes.

2 Samuel 13:28 *Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, ... then kill him, fear not; have not I commanded you?*

2 Samuel 14:30 *Therefore he said unto his servants, See, Joab's field is near mine, ... go and set it on fire.*

5. What methods does Satan use in his work?

A. Revelation 12:9 *Satan, which _____ the whole world.*

B. Mark 1:13 *And he was there in the wilderness forty days, _____ of Satan.*

C. Revelation 16:14 *For they are the spirits of devils, working _____.*

D. Revelation 12:10 *For the _____ of our brethren is cast down, which _____ them before our God day and night.*

E. John 8:44 *He was a _____ from the beginning. ... For he is a _____, and the father of it.*

NOTE: In one respect, Satan has an advantage over God in the battle between good and evil. God uses only truth, but Satan can use truth or lies in any combination, to best serve his purposes. (See supplement entitled "Expect the Unexpected.")

6. When is the devil most dangerous?

2 Corinthians 11:14, 15 *And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an _____ of _____.*

NOTE: Just as the devil did, Absalom pretended to love the people and displayed an interest in their welfare in order to deceive them.

2 Samuel 15:5, 6 *And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.*

Satan is most dangerous when he poses as a spiritual being working inside the church. (See supplement entitled "A Brilliant Angel.")

7. Does Satan know the Bible?

Matthew 4:5, 6 *Then the devil ... saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is _____, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee.*

NOTE: The devil is an expert at quoting and misquoting the Bible for the purpose of deceiving people. That is why it is essential that God’s people know the Scriptures for themselves to avoid being misled.

8. Whom on earth does the devil hate most?

Revelation 12:17 *And the dragon was wroth with the _____, and went to make war with the _____ of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

9. What two deadly animals does the Bible use to portray Satan?

1 Peter 5:8 *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring _____, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.*

Revelation 12:9 *And the great dragon was cast out, that old _____, called the Devil, and Satan.*

NOTE: Both lions and snakes use stealth and diversion to capture their prey. Like the devil, they spring suddenly upon their victims and are ruthless and indifferent to suffering.

10. What is the only way we can resist Satan?

James 4:7, 8 _____ yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. _____ to God, and he will draw nigh to you.

NOTE: The best ways to draw near to God are through prayer and seeking to know Him through His Word.

11. How did Jesus fight the assaults of the devil?

Matthew 4:10 *Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for _____.*

Ephesians 6:17 *The sword of the Spirit, which is the _____ of _____.*

Hebrews 4:12 *For the _____ of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword.*

NOTE: Our only safety from Satan’s clever deceptions is in storing God’s Word in our minds to keep us from sin. The same tools Jesus used to fight the devil are needed and available to us today.

Psalms 119:11 *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*
Ephesians 6:11 *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

12. How will the final fate of Satan resemble that of Absalom?

2 Samuel 18:17 *And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great _____ in the wood.*

Isaiah 14:15 *Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the _____.*

13. Will Satan ever reappear to tempt God’s people?

Ezekiel 28:19 Never shalt thou be _____.

Nahum 1:9 *Affliction shall not rise up the _____.*

14. How does God feel about the destruction of the wicked?

Ezekiel 33:11 *Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no _____ in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked _____ from his way and _____: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?*

15. How did David respond when he learned that his rebellious son Absalom had been slain?

2 Samuel 18:33 *And the king was much _____, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had _____, _____, _____, O Absalom, my son, my son!*

Your Response

This touching picture displays how our heavenly Father feels about His lost children. Not only was He willing to die in our place; He went one step further—He gave His greatest gift, His Son! God is not willing that any should perish. He is desperate for you to be saved. This is why Jesus died in your place. Most of the world has joined Satan in rebellion against the heavenly Father. Will you choose now to love and serve Him?

ANSWER: _____

Supplement

This section provides additional information for further study.

Satan Symbolized by the Kings of Tyre and Babylon

In Isaiah 14:4-15, the Bible uses the king of Babylon as a symbol of Satan, and in Ezekiel 28:11-19, Satan is symbolized by the king of Tyre. In both cases we know that the symbolism goes beyond earthly kings

because God’s description of the being could not apply to any mortal man. Notice the ways Lucifer (now called Satan) is described in these passages of Scripture:

- fell from heaven (Isaiah 14:12)
- was full of wisdom and perfect in beauty (Ezekiel 28:12)
- had been in Eden (verse 13)
- every precious stone was his covering (verse 13)
- was the anointed cherub that covereth (verse 14)
- was upon the holy mountain of God (verse 14)
- was perfect in his ways (verse 15)

Since the kings of Babylon and Tyre exhibited the same policies and suffered the same complete destruction as will Satan’s kingdom, God used them to represent Satan himself. Virtually all Bible authorities are in agreement on the symbolism. Incidentally, the Bible records many other references to Lucifer (see Luke 4:5, 6; 10:18; John 8:44; 2 Peter 2:4; 1 John 3:8; Jude 6; Revelation 12:7-9), but without Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14, we would not have the complete history.

Expect the Unexpected

Many people expect Satan to openly appear as God’s enemy in the end time, but this is not so. Satan is indeed God’s bitterest enemy, but his approach will be to feign righteousness (Matthew 24:24). He can appear as a glorious, angelic being (2 Corinthians 11:13-15) and will seek the worship of people (Revelation 13:12). Scripture is clear that his godly front will be so convincing that “all the world” will wonder after the beast (Revelation 13:3). Talk about a tragedy! Satan will be so effective in posing as Christ that virtually the entire world will follow him, thinking all the time that they are following Jesus. Will you be deceived? Not if you heed the Bible warnings presented in this series.

A Brilliant Angel

Satan is delighted when people portray him as an ugly, red, bat-winged creature that is part-man and part-beast, having split hooves and a long, pointed tail, or carrying a pitchfork and stoking the fires of hell. Nothing could be further from the truth. Such concepts come from Greek mythology. No such nonsense can be found in Scripture. The Bible describes Satan as a brilliant, highly attractive angel with an uncanny ability to communicate. He is also well acquainted with Scripture (Matthew 4:5, 6). The devil is a self-proclaimed enemy of God whose aim is to defame His character and capture His kingdom. Satan also despises you and your loved ones and has plans to destroy you. This series will help you understand his plans and learn how to thwart them. Just place your life in the protective care of your mighty Saviour, and pray earnestly for His guidance.



STORACLES OF PROPHECY

The Supreme Sacrifice

Genesis 22:1-19

The Story . . .

The sky was still dark when the old patriarch clearly heard God speak. "Abraham, ... Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Genesis 22:1, 2.

Abraham began to tremble when he considered the staggering consequences of this command. God had promised that through Isaac he would father a mighty nation. All of Abraham's hopes and dreams were set upon this miracle son given to him and Sarah in their old age. He didn't understand why God was asking him to do this strange act, but he had learned to trust and obey his heavenly Father—even when perplexed.

So Abraham gently awakened young Isaac and two trusted servants, and the small company began the three-day trip to Moriah. As they neared the mountain of sacrifice, Abraham instructed his servants to wait for him and Isaac to return. Then he placed the wood on his son's back, and together they started up the mountain.

Sensing that something was wrong, Isaac said, "Father, we have what we need to start a fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham replied, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a

burnt offering."

When they reached the top, Abraham tearfully explained the reason for their mission. Willingly Isaac submitted to God's command. After the last embrace, the father tenderly bound his son and laid him upon the rock altar. Abraham raised the knife, but suddenly he was stopped by an angel and directed to sacrifice instead a wild ram that was trapped by its horns in a nearby thornbush.

This moving story was not the only time a father had to make a painful decision to sacrifice his beloved son.

The Study

Fill in the blanks after reading each Bible text.

1. Whom did the animal that was sacrificed in Isaac's place represent?

John 1:29 The next day John seeth _____ coming unto him, and saith, Behold the _____ of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

2. Why was it necessary for Jesus to die?

Romans 3:23 For _____ have sinned.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is _____.

Hebrews 9:22 Without shedding of _____ is no remission [forgiveness].

1 Corinthians 15:3 Christ died for _____.

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the _____ for the _____.

NOTE: The Bible is priceless because it tells how sin entered the world and how it will be removed. God cannot tolerate the ugly malignancy of sin. The penalty for sin is death. And worse, when Adam and Eve sinned, this disease of death passed to the entire human race. God's law and the penalty for breaking it could not be changed, so all people were doomed. But God could not stand to be separated from His creatures. So, in an act of incredible love, He chose to send His Son into the world to die in your place and mine. Our sins and our death penalty were placed upon Him, and we were set free.

3. What is this great plan of salvation called?

Revelation 14:6 Having the everlasting _____ to preach unto them that dwell on the earth.

NOTE: God's plan of salvation is called the "gospel," which means "good news." And it is indeed the most fabulous news ever delivered to people. Our death penalty was assumed by Jesus, and our guilt was removed.

4. Why did God make such a fantastic sacrifice for us?

John 3:16 For God so _____ the world, that he _____ his only begotten Son.

NOTE: The strongest earthly tie is the love of a parent for a child. When God the Father was willing to allow His Son, Jesus, to suffer and die in our place, He demonstrated in the most powerful language how fervently He loves each of us.

5. What must I do to benefit from Jesus' sacrificial death?

Acts 16:31 _____ on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.

John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the _____ of _____.

NOTE: Jesus' offer of salvation is a gift (Romans 6:23). My part is to believe it is true and to receive the gift by faith.

6. How, then, am I forgiven and cleansed?

Acts 3:19 _____ ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.

1 John 1:9 If we _____ our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to _____ us from all unrighteousness.

NOTE: Confession is the verbal side of repentance. True repentance includes a sorrow for—and turning away from—sin (Proverbs 28:13).

7. What is this wonderful conversion experience called?

John 3:7 Ye must be _____.

NOTE: This glorious experience is referred to as a new birth because, as of that moment, we have no past. Instead, we begin a fresh new life, as does a newborn infant. It's the fantastic experience of beginning life anew without one blot of guilt on our records.

8. Who enters the heart of each born-again Christian?

John 14:17 Even the _____ of truth; ... ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

NOTE: Jesus Himself actually dwells in a Christian through His Holy Spirit.

9. When Jesus lives in my heart through the Holy Spirit, what will I do?

Philippians 2:13 Both to will and to _____ of his good pleasure.

NOTE: I will want to do His will, and He gives me the power to actually perform it.

10. Why should I be confident that my new-birth experience will be successful?

Philippians 1:6 He which hath _____ a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

NOTE: I am confident because Jesus promises to accomplish it for me by His great power. Salvation rests upon His ability, not mine.

11. Why do some people fail in their Christian experience?

Isaiah 53:6 *We have turned every one to his _____.*
2 Peter 3:2 *Be mindful of ... the commandment of us the apostles of the _____ and Saviour.*

NOTE: People often fail in Christian living because they accept Jesus as Saviour but not as Lord, or “ruler,” of their lives. Most of us want to have our own way and to run our own lives. When we accept Jesus as Lord, we turn over the running of our lives to Him. We keep our hands off the steering wheel of our lives and ask Him to direct us. (See supplement entitled “Once Saved, Always Saved?”)

12. How can I know that Jesus accepts me and that I am His child?

Titus 1:2 *God, that cannot lie, _____.*
Matthew 7:7 *Ask, and it _____ be given you.*

NOTE: We know that Jesus receives us when we ask Him, because He cannot tell a lie. He has promised to receive us, and He does receive us—not because we feel different, but because He promised.

13. How will true conversion change a life?

- A. John 13:35** *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have _____ one to another.*
- B. 2 Corinthians 5:17** *If any man be in Christ, he is a _____ creature.*
- C. 1 John 3:22** *We keep his commandments, and _____ those things that are pleasing in his sight.*
- D. Romans 12:2** *Be not conformed to this _____: but be ye _____ by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, _____ of God.*
- E. Acts 1:8** *Ye shall be _____ unto me.*
- F. Ephesians 6:18** *_____ always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.*

14. What wonderful promises come with Christian life?

- A. Philippians 4:13** *I can do _____ through Christ which strengtheneth me.*
- B. Philippians 4:19** *God shall supply all your _____.*
- C. Mark 10:27** *With God all things are _____.*
- D. John 15:11** *That your _____ might be full.*
- E. John 10:10** *That they might have life ... more _____.*
- F. Hebrews 13:5** *I will _____ thee, nor forsake thee.*
- G. Hebrews 13:6** *I will _____ what man shall do unto me.*

H. **John 14:27** *My _____ I give unto you.*

NOTE: God gives His people the following eight precious promises:

- We can accomplish anything through Jesus.
- All our needs will be supplied.
- Nothing will be impossible for us.
- Our joy will be full.
- We will have more abundant living.
- God will never leave or forsake us.
- We need never fear what men may do to us.
- The Lord will give us His perfect peace.

Praise the Lord! How could anything be better than that?

Your Response

Will you decide now to accept Jesus’ plan to save you, or to renew that decision?

ANSWER: _____

Supplement

This section provides additional information for further study

Once Saved, Always Saved?

Can a person be lost once he has accepted Christ as his Saviour? Only in God’s Word can we find an answer to this question. The Bible speaks for itself: “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works. ... For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” Hebrews 10:23, 24, 26.

Nowhere does the Bible teach that our responsibility ends when we become a Christian. God’s Word is clear: “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.” 2 Peter 2:20-22.

Christianity is more than one single decision. Jesus said that our salvation is based on the condition that we continue to abide in Him (John 15:4). And the apostle Paul said, “I die daily.” 1 Corinthians 15:31. This means that he chose on a daily basis to deny himself and

follow Jesus. The Lord Himself said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” Luke 9:23.

The Bible does not teach that we can turn our backs on truth and still be saved. Ezekiel 18:24 says: “But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.” Paul also reminds us, “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” 1 Corinthians 10:12.

Some people think they can “talk the talk” without “walking the walk.” But Jesus said: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” Matthew 7:21-23.

Paul depicted the constant struggle of the true Christian when he said: “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. ... But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” 1 Corinthians 9:24, 25, 27.

To believe that once we are saved we cannot be lost is to believe that God takes away our greatest freedom—the freedom of choice. On the other hand, God does want us to have assurance that He will finish the work He has begun in our lives. “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” Philippians 1:6.

We can be confident that if we continue to follow, He will continue to lead and will never let go of the hand placed willingly in His. “He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” Matthew 24:13.



STORACLES OF PROPHECY

The Law of the King

Daniel 6:1-28

The Story . . .

After Darius, king of the Medes and Persians, had conquered Babylon, he executed all Babylonian government officials, except one. That fortunate man was Daniel, a servant of the true God. Seventy years earlier, he had been carried from Judah to Babylon as a captive and made to serve in the palace as an advisor to the Babylonian kings. Daniel became known throughout the kingdom for having “an excellent spirit.” Daniel 5:12; 6:3.



AMAZING FACTS

Not only did King Darius spare Daniel, but he “thought to set him over the whole realm.” Daniel 6:3. When the Medo-Persian officials learned that the king was going to promote an old Hebrew captive to rule over them, they were jealous and outraged. So they plotted to entice Darius to sign a law that for the next 30 days, anyone who petitioned any god or man except the king would be thrown into the lions’ den (Daniel 6:7). Apparently these men knew that Daniel was unswerving in his prayer life and firmly committed to obeying the law of his God, which forbids worship of any other gods (Exodus 20:3).

Just as they expected, the officials caught Daniel praying to God from his open window. When King Darius discovered that he had been tricked and that his old friend was headed for the lions’ pit, he tried every possible angle to deliver Daniel from the foolish law he had signed. But the law could not be changed. Daniel went to the lions’ den, and God rewarded his faithfulness by sending an angel to shut the lions’ mouths (Daniel 6:22).

Prophecy tells us that in the last days, God’s people will have to make a similar decision regarding which king and which law they will obey.

The Study

Fill in the blanks after reading each Bible text.

1. Can God’s moral law be amended or repealed?

Luke 16:17 *And it is easier for heaven and earth to _____, than one tittle of the law to fail.*

Psalms 89:34 *My covenant will I _____ break, nor _____ the thing that is gone out of my lips.*

Psalms 111:7, 8 *All his commandments are sure. They stand fast _____ and ever.*

Malachi 3:6 *For I am the Lord, I _____ not.*

NOTE: Under no circumstances can God’s Ten Commandment law ever be amended or repealed. It is as permanent as God Himself. Three times in the Bible, earthly kings (Herod, Ahasuerus, and Darius) made laws they later wanted to change but could not. If the laws of weak, vacillating kings were unchangeable, how could anyone think that the eternal law of God—written in stone by His finger—could be altered? Look at this comparison between God and His law.

GOD IS:

Luke 18:19GOOD	Romans 7:12
Isaiah 5:16HOLY	Romans 7:12
Deuteronomy 32:4JUST	Romans 7:12
Matthew 5:48PERFECT	Psalms 19:7
1 John 4:8LOVE	Romans 13:10
Exodus 9:27RIGHTEOUS	Psalms 19:9
Deuteronomy 32:4TRUTH	Psalms 119:142, 151
1 John 3:3PURE	Psalms 19:8
John 4:24SPIRITUAL	Romans 7:14
Malachi 3:6UNCHANGABLE	Matthew 5:18
Genesis 21:33ETERNAL	Psalms 111:7, 8

God’s law cannot be changed, because it is a transcript of His character. The glorious words in Scripture that describe God also describe His law. God’s law is His character in writing. It is no more possible to change God’s law than to change God Himself.

2. According to the Bible, what is sin?

1 John 3:4 *Sin is the _____ of the law.*

Romans 3:20 *By the _____ is the knowledge of sin.*

NOTE: The devil hates the law because it makes us aware that we need a Saviour from sin. Romans 4:15 states: “For where no law is, there is no transgression.” The law cannot save anyone, but it shows us God’s perfection and our imperfection.

3. To what law does 1 John 3:4 refer?

Romans 7:7 *I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had _____ lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*

NOTE: It is God’s Ten Commandment law that says, “Thou shalt not covet.” So breaking God’s Ten Commandment law, which He wrote with His own finger

(Exodus 31:18; 32:16), is sin. Every sin that any person could ever commit is condemned by at least one of the Ten Commandments. This is why God’s law is called “broad” (Psalm 119:96) and “perfect” (Psalm 19:7). It covers the “whole duty of man.” Ecclesiastes 12:13. When we are aware of our sin, we look for a Saviour. So the devil especially hates the law, because it sends us looking for Jesus to save and forgive.

4. Did Jesus keep the Ten Commandments?

John 15:10 *I have _____ my Father’s commandments.*

NOTE: Jesus did indeed keep the Ten Commandments as an example for us (1 Peter 2:21).

5. How many people have sinned?

Romans 3:23 *For _____ have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*

6. What is the punishment for living a life of sin?

Romans 6:23 *The wages of sin is _____.*

NOTE: If God’s law could be changed, it would not have been necessary for Jesus to die on the cross. The fact that Jesus paid the penalty for sin and died is proof that the law is unchangeable.

7. Some say the Ten Commandments are not binding for New Testament Christians. What does Jesus say about this?

Matthew 19:17 *If thou wilt enter into life, _____ the commandments.*

John 14:15 *If ye love me, _____ my commandments.*

Revelation 22:14 *Blessed are they that _____ his commandments.*

Revelation 14:12 *Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the _____ of God.*

NOTE: The New Testament plainly teaches that God’s people will keep His commandments. All of us know that the world is in big trouble today because so many no longer feel it is important to obey God’s law. The Bible speaks of our day by saying, “It is time for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law.” Psalm 119:126.

8. How is it possible to keep the commandments?

Romans 8:3, 4 *God sending his own Son ... condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled _____.*

Philippians 1:6 *He which hath begun a good work _____ will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*

Philippians 4:13 *I can do all things through _____ which strengtheneth me.*

NOTE: When a person is born again, Jesus Christ, through His Holy Spirit, moves into that person's life and miraculously makes obedience possible.

9.What is the old covenant, and why did it fail?

Deuteronomy 4:13 *And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even _____; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.*
Hebrews 8:8 *For finding _____ with _____, he saith, ... I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.*

10. Upon which law is the new covenant based?

Hebrews 8:10 *For this is the covenant that I will make ... saith the Lord; I will put _____ into their mind, and write them in their _____.*

NOTE: The two covenants were agreements between God and His people. The old covenant failed because it was based upon the faulty promises and works of the people.
Exodus 24:7 *All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.*
The new covenant succeeds because it is God's law written in the heart and is based upon Jesus' promises and His miracle-working power.
Hebrews 8:10 *I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.*
A person's entire nature is changed, so he finds doing God's will a pleasure. Notice that the new covenant is based on the same law, but it is written in a different place (the heart) and based on better promises (God's).

11. Doesn't living under grace, by faith, make keeping God's law non-essential?

Romans 6:15 *What then? Shall we sin [break God's law], because we are not under the law, but under grace? _____.*
Romans 3:31 *Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we _____ the _____.*

NOTE: Those who have been forgiven by Jesus for breaking His law are doubly duty-bound to obey His law. And sensing His blessed forgiveness, they are more desirous than others to happily follow Jesus.

12. Are people saved by keeping the law?

Ephesians 2:8, 9 *For by _____ are ye saved through _____; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

NOTE: No one is saved by keeping God's law. All are saved by the miracle-working grace of God. But those who are saved, or transformed, by the grace of Jesus will want to obey His law as an expression of their love and thanksgiving to Him.
John 14:15 *If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

13. What motivates a person to obey God's law?

Romans 13:10 *Therefore _____ is the fulfilling of the law.*
Matthew 22:37-39 *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy _____, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*
1 John 5:3 *This is the _____ of God, that we keep his commandments.*

NOTE: Love is the magnificent motivator. The first four commandments have to do with my duty to God. When I love Him, obeying those commands is a pleasure. The last six commandments embrace my duty to people. If I truly love people, I will not want to do anything that would hurt them.

14. Can I be a true Christian without keeping His commandments?

1 John 2:3, 4 *And hereby we do know that we know him, if we _____ his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a _____, and the truth is not in him.*

15. Are some Old Testament laws no longer binding upon Christians?

Ephesians 2:15 *Having abolished ... the law of commandments contained in _____.*

NOTE: Yes, the ordinances that regulated the priesthood and the sacrificial system have been abolished because they prefigured Christ (Colossians 2:13-17). He fulfilled them as the true Lamb of God.

16. Whom does the devil especially hate?

Revelation 12:17 *And the dragon [devil] was wroth with the _____ [the church], and went to make war with the remnant of her seed [faithful during the end time], which keep the _____ of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

NOTE: Satan hates and is infuriated with God's end-time church, which obeys Jesus' commands and teaches people that there is divine power to change a sinner into a saint.

17. What are some of the glorious rewards of keeping God's law?

John 15:11 *These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your _____ might be _____.*
Proverbs 29:18 *He that keepeth the law, _____ is he.*
Psalms 119:165 *Great _____ have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.*

NOTE: Happiness, joy, peace, and more abundant living come to those who obey God's law. No wonder David said that God's commands are more desirable than gold (Psalms 19:10).

Your Response

Do you desire to have a loving relationship with Jesus that will lead you to be one of His joyful, obedient children?
ANSWER: _____

Supplement

This section provides additional information for further study.

Parallels Between Bible Characters and Jesus

Many of the Bible heroes are types and patterns of Jesus. Moses, Joseph, David, and Solomon were all people who, at some point in their lives, foreshadowed the life and ministry of Christ. The similarities between their experiences were intended to help the world recognize Jesus as the Son of God.
Daniel's experience with the law and the lions is one example of such a spiritual parallel. Notice the following similarities:

- The leaders in Medo-Persia wanted to remove Daniel from his high position because they were jealous of his close relationship with the king. Daniel 6:3 says, "The king thought to set him over the whole realm." Likewise, the leaders in Jerusalem wanted to get rid of Jesus because they were jealous of His close relationship with the King of the universe (John 5:18-20).
- The Medo-Persian officials followed Daniel around in an attempt to catch him doing or saying something wrong (Daniel 6:4). The religious leaders of Jesus' day sent spies to follow Jesus, hoping to catch Him doing or saying something wrong (Luke 20:19, 20).
- Daniel's enemies could find no fault with him, so they created a trap to accomplish their purposes (Daniel 6:5-9). Likewise, the chief priests and scribes conspired with Judas Iscariot to make a trap for Jesus (Luke 22:2-6). However, Pilate declared that he found no fault in Jesus (John 19:4).
- After Daniel was thrown into the lions' den, a stone was placed over the entrance and sealed with the government seal (Daniel 6:16, 17). Jesus also was placed in a tomb that had a large stone at the door and was sealed by the government (Matthew 27:58-60, 65, 66).
- Both Daniel and Jesus were innocent and emerged alive from their earthen prisons (Daniel 6:23; Mark 16:5, 6).

See if you can find other parallels between the lives of Bible characters and the life of Jesus!

STORACLES OF PROPHECY

Bricks Without Straw

Exodus 4:29-5:19

The Story . . .

Before Moses approached the king of Egypt to seek freedom for the children of Israel, he and his brother, Aaron, met with the oppressed leaders of Israel. During this meeting, Moses and Aaron encouraged the people to consecrate themselves to the Lord and told them God was about to deliver them from slavery with a mighty hand.

The Israelites had been laboring seven days a week to maintain their heavy workload for the Egyptians. But after this

meeting with Moses, they apparently decided to begin resting again every seventh day. This is why the furious Pharaoh later said to Moses and Aaron: “Ye make them rest from their burdens.” Exodus 5:5. (The Hebrew word for “rest” used here is “shabbath.” It means “to cause to keep sabbath.”)

The angry king knew that he must do something drastic to hold this nation of slaves under his control, so he decided to drown them with work and crowd both God and worship from their thoughts. He said, “You shall no longer give the people straw to make brick as before. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. And you shall lay on them the quota of bricks which they made

before. You shall not diminish it.” Exodus 5:7, 8, NKJV.*

As in the days of Moses, God is about to do great things for His people. Soon they will be delivered from the slavery of sin and journey to the heavenly Canaan. And once again, God is now trying to turn the minds of His people toward the importance of the Sabbath rest.

* The Holy Bible, New King James Version, (c) 1979, 1980, 1982, by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission.



AMAZING FACTS

The Study

Fill in the blanks after reading each Bible text.

1. Did God make the Sabbath rest only for Israelites?

Mark 2:27 And he said unto them, The sabbath was _____ for _____, and not man for the sabbath.

NOTE: When Jesus says that the Sabbath was made for man, the word “man” means all “mankind”—for all people, for all time, in every place.

2. When did God establish the Sabbath?

Genesis 2:1, 3 Thus the heavens and the earth were _____, and all the host of them. ... And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

NOTE: The Sabbath was established at the close of Creation week.

3. What day of the week is the Sabbath?

Genesis 2:2, 3 And on the _____ God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the _____ from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the _____, and sanctified it.

NOTE: Three times in Genesis chapter 2, God tells us that He made the Sabbath from the seventh day of Creation week. He also “sanctified” it, which means “to set aside for a holy use.” God made the Sabbath as a 24-hour period of time, because time is what it takes to develop a true love relationship with Jesus. The devil, like Pharaoh of Egypt, wants to keep us so busy working that we don’t think about God. Knowing how overly busy end-time people would be, God set aside 24 special hours weekly to spend with His people, getting acquainted. He has made that weekly appointment with you. Don’t fail to meet Him!

4. How has God demonstrated the importance of His holy Sabbath?

Exodus 20:8-11 Remember the sabbath day, to _____ it holy. ... The Lord _____ the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

NOTE: Exodus 20:8-11 is the fourth commandment of God’s law. By making the Sabbath one of His Ten Commandments, He demonstrated its extreme importance. Verse 10 calls it “the sabbath of the Lord thy God.” Only the fourth commandment begins with the word “remember,” indicating God knew that people would forget. Breaking God’s Ten Commandment law is sin (1 John 3:4). But Jesus died to save His people from their sins, or law-breaking (Matthew 1:21).

5. Of what two precious things does God say the Sabbath is a sign?

Exodus 31:17 It [the Sabbath] is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever: for in six days the _____ heaven and earth.

Ezekiel 20:12 I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that _____ them.

NOTE: God says the Sabbath is a sign, or mark, of His power as Creator and Redeemer. In Revelation 14:6-14, God gives three important messages that are to be proclaimed to “them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” Verse 6. The first message is found in verse 7: “Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” This appeal for a return to true worship is drawn right from the fourth commandment: “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day.” Exodus 20:11.

6. Which day did Jesus keep holy?

Luke 4:16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as _____ was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

NOTE: Jesus is our example (1 Peter 2:21) in everything, including Sabbathkeeping, which was His custom. A “custom” is a regular habit. Christians are to walk as He walked (1 John 2:6).

7. What was Paul’s custom regarding the Sabbath?

Acts 17:2 And Paul, as _____ was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scripture.

Acts 18:4 And he reasoned in the synagogue _____, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

NOTE: It was also Paul’s custom to keep the seventh-day Sabbath.

8. Did the apostles also meet with the Gentiles on the Sabbath?

Acts 13:42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the _____ besought that these words might be preached to them the next _____.

NOTE: On another occasion, the disciples met on the Sabbath with a group of Gentile women by the riverside, because the city had no synagogue (Acts 16:13).

9. Did Jesus intend for His people to keep the Sabbath after He died for their sins?

Matthew 24:20 *But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the _____ day.*

NOTE: Jesus was here predicting the fall of Jerusalem, which He knew would take place in A.D. 70 (about 40 years later). But He suggested they pray that they would not have to flee from the invading army on the Sabbath. It is clear that Jesus expected His people to be keeping the Sabbath holy long after His death.

10. Does the Bible teach that God’s end-time people would also keep His seventh-day Sabbath holy?

Revelation 12:17 *And the dragon [devil] was wroth with the woman [church], and went to make war with the remnant [remainder] of her seed [children], which _____ the _____ of God.*

Revelation 14:12 *Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that _____ the _____ of God.*

Revelation 22:14 *Blessed are they that _____ his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may _____ in through the gates into the city.*

NOTE: The above Scriptures obviously refer to God’s end-time church, and each passage states plainly that God’s end-time church keeps His commandments—which, of course, include the fourth commandment, the Sabbath.

11. Will all of the saved in heaven keep the Sabbath?

Isaiah 66:22, 23 *For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that ... from one sabbath to another, shall _____ come to worship before me, saith the Lord.*

NOTE: The Bible says that all the redeemed of all ages will keep God’s Sabbath together in heaven and in the new earth.

12. Can we be certain that the present seventh day of the week (Saturday) is the same Sabbath day that Jesus kept holy?

Luke 23:54-24:1 *And that day was the preparation [Friday], and the sabbath drew on. ... And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and _____ the _____ day according to the commandment. Now upon the _____ of the week, ... they came unto the sepulchre.*

NOTE: Jesus was crucified on Friday (preparation), the day before the Sabbath (Mark 15:42). Jesus rested in the tomb on the Sabbath of the commandment (Luke 23:56), then rose on the first day—the day after the Sabbath (Mark 16:1-6). Christians around the world still celebrate that day as Easter Sunday. The Bible clearly shows that the Sabbath was the day after Friday and the day before Sunday. It’s easy to locate that day of the week on any calendar. (See supplements entitled “What the Dictionary Says” and “Hasn’t the Calendar Been Changed?”)

13. Does God allow anyone to change His holy day?

Proverbs 30:5, 6 *Every word of God is pure: ... _____ thou _____ unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.*

NOTE: Just before God gave the Ten Commandments, as described in Deuteronomy chapter 5, He solemnly warned that no one should “add unto” or “diminish ought from” them (Deuteronomy 4:2). Rather, they were to be kept precisely as He gave them. God blessed His Sabbath (Exodus 20:11), and when He blesses something, it is blessed forever (1 Chronicles 17:27). God says, “My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.” Psalm 89:34. Misguided men admit that they changed God’s holy Sabbath to Sunday. But God will not accept men’s teachings when He gave the Bible as our guide.

14. When does the Sabbath begin and end?

Leviticus 23:32 *From _____ unto _____, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.*
Mark 1:32 *And at even, when the _____ did _____.*

NOTE: The Sabbath hours begin at sundown Friday and close at sundown Saturday.

15. What day is the Lord’s day of Revelation 1:10?

Exodus 20:10 *But the seventh day is the sabbath of the _____ thy God.*
Isaiah 58:13 *If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on _____.*
Mark 2:28 *Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the _____.*

NOTE: In both the Old and New Testaments, God calls the Sabbath the Lord’s day. He also commands that people be warned against committing the sin of trampling God’s Sabbath (Isaiah 58:1, 13). God declares that His holy Sabbath is for all people (Isaiah 56:2-7). The Bible never refers to Sunday as the Lord’s day. It is simply one of the six working days of the week (Ezekiel 46:1). That’s all it has ever been.

16. What blessing is promised by the Sabbath commandment?

Matthew 11:28 *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you _____.*

Exodus 33:14 *My _____ shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.*
Hebrews 4:5 *If they shall enter into _____.*

NOTE: Each one of the Ten Commandments has a spiritual meaning. Some legalistic Christians focus on the letter of the law and neglect the spirit of the law. Jesus wants us to have both to maintain balance (Matthew 5:21, 22, 27, 28). The Bible often uses the term “rest” to refer to salvation. Hebrews 4:1, 4, 9, 10 says that those who have truly been led to the “rest” of conversion and who abide in Christ will keep the seventh-day Sabbath as a symbol of the Christian rest.

Your Response

Because Jesus has given the Sabbath as a sign of His power to create and sanctify, would you like to begin receiving the blessings of this holy day by keeping it in His honor?
ANSWER: _____

Supplement

This section provides additional information for further study.

What the Dictionary Says

Look up the following entries in almost any dictionary, and notice what you’ll find:
Saturday (noun) The seventh and last day of the week.
seventh-day (adjective) Of the seventh day (Saturday).
Sunday (noun) The first day of the week.
First day (noun) Sunday.

Hasn’t the Calendar Been Changed?

The calendar was changed once in October 1582, but it did not alter the weekly cycle. Ten dates were omitted from the calendar following October 4, 1582. What would have been Friday, October 5, became Friday, October 15. The diagram below will help you to visualize the change. You will see that it did not change the order of the days of the week.

OCTOBER 1582						
Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
	1	2	3	4	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

STORACLES OF PROPHECY

The Glorious Kingdom

1 Kings 3:5-15; 10:1-29

The Story . . .

After Solomon was established as the new king of Israel, the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Ask what I shall give thee.” 1 Kings 3:5. The young king could have requested money, fame, or long life, but he didn’t. Instead, he asked for wisdom to justly govern God’s people. In answer to that humble and heartfelt prayer, the Lord gave Solomon tremendous wisdom and perception—surpassing every other human. On top of that, God also blessed him with fame, riches, and long life.

During Solomon’s reign, Israel enjoyed unparalleled peace and prosperity. Precious metals were so abundant in Jerusalem during his time that silver was considered as common as stones (1 Kings 10:27). In addition to the magnificent temple of marble and gold that Solomon built for God, he also constructed a lavish palace and courtyard plus entire cities to house his chariots and horsemen. Splendid flowering gardens with rare trees graced every town. Monarchs, nobles, and royalty came from around the world to visit and bring gifts. They longed to hear the profound wisdom that God had put in Solomon’s heart (1 Kings 10:24).

Among the many regal visitors was a rich and beautiful queen from the far-away land of Sheba. She wanted to see firsthand if the reports about Israel’s king were true. The Queen of Sheba tested Solomon with many hard questions and was stunned by his brilliant answers. Everywhere she looked, her senses were dazzled. But even Israel at its zenith was as nothing compared to the glorious kingdom God has prepared for you.



AMAZING FACTS

The Study

Fill in the blanks after reading each Bible text.

1. What did Jesus promise His people?

John 14:2 *In my Father’s house are many _____: ... I go to prepare a _____ for you.*

2. What do we know about this place Jesus is preparing?

Isaiah 65:17 *For, behold, I create _____ heavens and a new earth.*

Hebrews 11:16 *For he hath prepared for them a _____.*

Matthew 5:5 *Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the _____.*

Isaiah 65:21 *And they shall build _____, and inhabit them.*

NOTE: Talk about amazing! God has prepared for His people new heavens, a new earth, and a new holy city. The righteous will inherit a glorious mansion in the city built by Jesus (John 14:2), plus a fabulous country home on the new earth that they will build themselves (Isaiah 65:21).

3. What more do we know about the holy city?

Revelation 21:16 *And the city lieth _____, ... and he measured the city with the reed, _____ furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.*

Revelation 21:2 *And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of _____.*

Revelation 21:10, 12 *The holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, ... had a wall great and high, and had _____ gates.*

Revelation 21:18 *And the building of the _____ of it was of _____.*

Revelation 21:21 *The street of the city was pure _____.*

NOTE: The holy city is square, and the distance around it is 12,000 furlongs, or 1,500 miles (a furlong is one-eighth of a mile). It comes down from heaven to the new earth and will land where the Mount of Olives now stands (Zechariah 14:4). Each of its 12 gates are made of a single pearl (Revelation 21:21), and the city’s jasper walls are 144 cubits (Revelation 21:17) or 216 feet wide (a cubit is 18 inches).

4. What does the Bible say about the city’s water and food supply?

Revelation 22:1 *He shewed me a pure _____ of water of life.*

Revelation 22:2 *On either side of the river, was there the tree of _____, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

NOTE: An inexhaustible, pure river of water flows out of the throne of God, and the tree of life yields a different fruit crop each month. This fabulous fruit and its leaves provide the antidote of death and perpetuate eternal life. In addition, God’s saints will raise their own food at their country homes (Isaiah 65:21). The diet of God’s people will be what it was before sin entered the world—fruits, grains, and nuts (Genesis 1:29, 31). The taste will be indescribably delicious, and the nutritional value will be perfect.

5. How will living in heaven be different from living here on earth?

A. Isaiah 35:5 *The eyes of the _____ shall be opened.*

B. Isaiah 35:5 *The ears of the _____ shall be unstopped.*

C. Isaiah 35:6 *Then shall the lame man _____ as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb _____.*

D. Isaiah 65:25 *They [the beasts] shall not _____ nor destroy.*

E. Isaiah 11:6 *The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, ... and a _____ shall lead them.*

F. Isaiah 35:1 *The desert shall ... _____ as the rose.*

G. Isaiah 33:24 *The inhabitant shall not say, I am _____.*

H. Revelation 21:4 *There shall be no more _____, neither sorrow, nor crying.*

6. What kind of bodies will the saints have?

Philippians 3:20, 21 *The Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his _____ body.*

7. Is Jesus’ body real, or is He a spirit?

Luke 24:39 *Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a _____ flesh and bones, as ye see me have.*

NOTE: Jesus’ body after His resurrection was real, with flesh and bones that you could touch and feel. The disciples at first thought He was a spirit when He appeared suddenly to them, but after they felt Him and watched Him eat (Luke 24:40-43), they knew that He was real. Forty days later, Jesus led them out to Bethany and ascended to heaven (Luke 24:50, 51). The angels who appeared to the disciples said to them, “This same Jesus [of flesh and bones] ... shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” Acts 1:11. Since His incarnation, Jesus is forever linked with the human race, as well as being divine.

8. What other encouraging promise is found?

Acts 3:20, 21 *And he shall send Jesus Christ, ... Whom the heaven must receive until the times of _____ of all things.*

NOTE: Praise God, every glorious good thing that was lost by the entrance of sin will be restored in God’s new kingdom. All people will genuinely love, trust, and support each other. As a result, there will be no more violence (Isaiah

60:18), and no more betrayal, abuse, disloyalty, dishonesty, backbiting, insecurity, depression, danger, disappointment, or heartache. It will be joyful, happy, contented, abundant living for eternity.

9. Will sad or painful memories from this life trouble people in heaven?

Isaiah 65:17 *The former shall _____ be remembered, nor come into mind.*

NOTE: The words “come into mind” are better translated “move upon the heart.” The Lord is here promising that the sorrows of earth will not bring sorrow to His saints in heaven.

10. Will people from earth recognize each other in God’s new kingdom?

1 Corinthians 13:12 *Then shall I _____ even as also I am known.*

NOTE: We will indeed recognize each other by our appearance, walk, mannerisms, speech, etc. Our abilities to discern each other will be improved in heaven. Heaven will be an utterly fantastic family reunion.

11. What other thrilling promises does God give us regarding His coming kingdom?

- A. Isaiah 35:10** *The ransomed of the Lord shall ... come to Zion with songs and everlasting _____.*
- B. Psalm 16:11** *There are _____ for evermore.*
- C. Zechariah 8:5** *The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls _____ in the streets thereof.*
- D. Isaiah 40:31** *They shall run, and not be _____; and they shall walk, and not _____.*
- E. Isaiah 40:31** *They shall mount up with _____ as eagles.*

NOTE: The saints will be able to fly like angels at speeds faster than light. Since they inherit all things (Revelation 21:7), they may visit other worlds, taking only moments to get there. According to Scripture, God has made other worlds that are unfallen (Job 1:6; Hebrews 1:2; 11:3).

12. Can we adequately describe God’s new kingdom with words?

1 Corinthians 2:9 *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the _____ of _____, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

NOTE: You and I in our present state are not able even to imagine the wonderful things God has prepared for His children. No words, thoughts, or even dreams can truly picture the fantastic joys and bliss of heaven. No matter what we may suffer on earth, being in heaven will outweigh all of earth’s trials (Romans 8:18).

13. What is the highest reward of God’s new kingdom?

Revelation 21:3 *God himself shall be _____ them.*

NOTE: Believe it, and stand in awe! God will actually live in the new earth with His people. Nothing can compare to this for sheer delight and glory.

14. What will exclude people from God’s heavenly kingdom?

Revelation 21:27 *There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that _____.*
Revelation 21:7 *He that _____ shall inherit all things.*

NOTE: Sin defiles and cannot be allowed into heaven, else rebellion might start all over again. (See Supplement entitled “The Kingdom of God.”)

15. What can I do about sin?

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to _____ from all unrighteousness.*

NOTE: If I ask Jesus to forgive my sins, He forgives me and cleanses me from sin and makes me His child.

16. What did Jesus say is the formula for success in this life and the next?

Matthew 6:33 *But seek ye first the _____ of _____, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

NOTE: This is exactly what King Solomon did when God asked, “What do you want?” His first thought was for God’s kingdom and His righteousness. In return, the blessings of a glorious kingdom followed. This will happen for us too when we seek first God’s kingdom.

Your Response

Recognizing that God is in full control of earthly events, are you willing to let Him have full control of your life?

ANSWER: _____

Supplement

This section provides additional information for further study.

The Kingdom of God

The Bible is a record of two kingdoms in constant conflict—the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. Jesus made the kingdom of God central in His preaching. There are over 100 references to the kingdom of God in the New Testament alone, and many are contained in Jesus’ parables. From His teachings we learn that God’s divine kingdom is divided into two different categories—the spiritual and the literal.

Citizens of the spiritual kingdom of heaven have God ruling and reigning in their hearts. Before conversion, the throne in our hearts is occupied by Satan, sin, and self. But after we accept the forgiveness and power of Jesus, that bondage is broken. This is why Paul says, “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. ... For sin shall not have dominion over you.” Romans 6:12, 14. “But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.” Luke 11:20.

As soon as a person accepts Christ, he instantly becomes a citizen of God’s spiritual kingdom. This is why both Jesus and John the Baptist began their ministries by urging people to repent, “for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matthew 3:2; 4:17. “At hand” means available or accessible now. This is why Jesus said, “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.” Luke 17:20, 21. As soon as a person is baptized, he leaves Satan’s kingdom of darkness and joins God’s kingdom of light.

Every true follower of Christ is an ambassador to this world from God’s spiritual kingdom. Ambassadors from other countries often speak a different language, wear different clothes, eat different food, use different currency, and have different customs. In the same way, as Christian ambassadors we should be very careful to rightly represent our Lord’s kingdom by the way we eat, talk, dress, and spend our time and money.

Someday God’s people will inherit the literal, physical kingdom of God that is discussed in this lesson. It is this kingdom we are longing for when we pray in the Lord’s prayer, “Thy kingdom come.” Matthew 6:10. God’s literal kingdom will be fully and finally established after the post-millennium judgment and battle described in Revelation 20.



STORACLES OF PROPHECY

The Witch of Endor

1 Samuel 28:3-25

The Story . . .

King Saul was at his wit's end and trembling with fear. The entire Philistine army had gathered to attack Israel's smaller and weaker troops. Saul moaned, "If only Samuel were here, he would tell me what to do." But the great prophet of Israel had died a few years earlier.

The aged monarch tried desperately to find some advice or guidance from other prophets or priests, but the Lord would not speak to him. As a young man, Saul had been close to God.

But after ascending the throne, he became cruel and rebelled against God's Word. Once he even had a whole village of priests murdered. King Saul had persistently refused to listen to the Lord, and now in his distress, God would not answer him.

"Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her." 1 Samuel 28:7. God had clearly commanded His people never to consult a witch or medium (Leviticus 19:31; 20:27), but Saul now had little regard for God's implicit instruction.

Upon finding a woman in Endor who claimed to consult with the dead, the king disguised himself and went to

see her. He said to the medium, "Bring me up Samuel." The witch went through her spells and enchantments until an apparition claiming to be Samuel the prophet appeared and gave the king an utterly hopeless message. It predicted that Saul and his three sons would die in battle the next day.

The following day Saul's sons were slain by the Philistines, and afterward the wounded and discouraged king fell on his sword and took his own life (1 Samuel 31:2-4). Who spoke to Saul through the witch—a resurrected prophet of God, or a devil in disguise?



AMAZING FACTS

The Study

Fill in the blanks after reading each Bible text.

1. Was the form that Saul saw actually Samuel the prophet?

1 Kings 22:22 *And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a _____ in the mouth of all his prophets.*

Revelation 16:14 *For they are the _____ of _____, working miracles.*

2. Do the dead come back to converse with or to haunt the living?

Job 14:21 *His sons come to honour, and he _____ it _____; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.*

Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10 *The dead _____ any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their _____, and their _____, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun [in this life]. ... For there is no work, nor device, nor _____, nor wisdom, in the grave.*

NOTE: No! The Bible is clear. A dead person does nothing and knows nothing about what is happening on earth.

Psalms 115:17 *The dead praise not the Lord.*

Psalms 6:5 *In death there is no remembrance of thee.*

Job 7:10 *He shall return no more to his house.*

Isaiah 38:18 *Death can not celebrate thee.*

Psalms 146:4 *His thoughts perish.*

3. According to the book of Revelation, who has the keys of death?

Revelation 1:18 *I am _____ that _____, and was _____; and, behold, I am alive for evermore ...; and have the keys of hell and of death.*

NOTE: The Bible is clear. Only Jesus has the keys of death. We should go to His Word for answers to our questions about death.

4. How did God make man in the beginning?

Genesis 2:7 *And the Lord God formed man of the _____ of the ground, and _____ into his nostrils the breath of _____; and man became a living soul.*

NOTE: Two things happened at Creation: (1) God formed man from the dust, or earth, and (2) He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Thus man became a living soul.

5. What happens at death?

Ecclesiastes 12:7 *Then shall the _____ return to the earth as it was: and the _____ shall return unto God who gave it.*

NOTE: What takes place at death is the opposite from what happened during Creation. The body returns to dust and the spirit, or breath, returns to God who gave it. The Bible clearly teaches that the "spirit" that returns to God is simply the breath of life, which God breathed into man in the beginning (James 2:26, margin; Job 27:3, margin; Job 33:4). Psalm 104:29, 30 states: "Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy spirit [breath], they are created."

6. Where do the dead go when they die?

Job 21:32 *Yet shall he be brought to the _____, and shall remain in the tomb.*

John 5:28, 29 *All that are _____ the _____ shall hear his voice, And shall come forth.*

NOTE: The dead, both righteous and unrighteous, are in their graves and will hear Jesus' voice calling them forth from the grave to reward or punishment.

7. The Bible makes it plain that King David is saved. Is he in heaven now?

Acts 2:29 *Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both _____ and _____, and his sepulchre [tomb] is with us unto this day.*

Acts 2:34 *For David is _____ into the heavens.*

NOTE: No! The apostle Peter plainly stated that David is dead and buried—not alive in heaven. Furthermore, Hebrews 11:32-40 makes it clear that all the faithful of the ages have not yet been rewarded, but rather, will all be rewarded together (verses 39, 40).

8. But isn't it true that the soul is immortal and that only the body dies?

Ezekiel 18:4 *The _____ that sinneth, it shall _____.*

Job 4:17 *Shall _____ man be more just than God?*

1 Timothy 6:15, 16 *The King of kings, and _____ of lords; Who _____ hath immortality.*

NOTE: We are souls, and souls do die. Man is mortal. Only God is immortal. The widely believed teaching of the undying, immortal soul is not found in the Bible. The teaching is man-made.

9. When will the righteous be given immortality?

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 *We shall all be _____, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last _____: for*

*the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be _____
incorruptible, ... and this mortal must put on immortality.*

1 Thessalonians 4:16 *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the _____ in Christ shall _____ first.*

NOTE: Yes, the righteous will be given immortality at the resurrection. The wicked never receive it.

10. How does the Bible repeatedly refer to death?

John 11:11, 14 *Our friend Lazarus _____; ... Lazarus is dead.*

Matthew 27:52 *And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which _____ arose.*

2 Samuel 7:12 *Thou shalt _____ with thy fathers.*

1 Thessalonians 4:14 *Them also which _____ in Jesus will God bring with him.*

NOTE: The Bible often refers to death as sleep. Death is a state of total unconsciousness, during which 15 minutes or a thousand years seem the same. The dead simply “sleep” in their graves until the resurrection, when all will be raised by Jesus. The teaching that the spirits of the dead are heavenly angels, or some righteous ghostlike entity that can be contacted, is without scriptural foundation.

11. Since wizards, witches, and psychics cannot contact the dead, whom are they contacting?

Revelation 16:14 *They are the spirits of devils, working _____.*

NOTE: Heaven’s angels are called “ministering spirits” (Hebrews 1:14) who help people on earth. The angels who were cast out of heaven with Satan (Revelation 12:7-9) are also spirits—evil spirits who deceive people by working miracles (Revelation 16:13, 14). They use “all power and signs and lying wonders” (2 Thessalonians 2:9), and can even make “fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men” (Revelation 13:13). When psychics claim to be contacting spirits of the dead, they are really in touch with Satan’s fallen angels (Isaiah 8:19, 20).

12. Why does Satan want us to believe that the spirits of the dead are really alive?

Matthew 24:24, 25 *For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew _____ and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall _____ the very _____. Behold, I have told you before.*

NOTE: Satan’s first lie to mankind was “Ye shall not surely die.” Genesis 3:4. He wants people to believe that the spirits of the dead are alive so his angels can pose as saints, prophets, and righteous leaders who have died and so that he can pose as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). Thus, he can deceive people by the millions. Utilizing these evil spirits is called “spiritism.” It is based on a two-part belief: (1) the dead are alive, and (2) they can contact you, or you can

contact them. This is one of Satan’s most damaging teachings. Yet almost the whole world believes it today. The witch of Endor did not call up Samuel. Rather, she saw an evil angel who posed as Samuel.

13. How effective will Satan’s use of these evil spirits be in the last days?

Revelation 18:23 *By thy sorceries were _____ nations _____.*

Revelation 18:2 *Babylon the great is fallen, ... and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of _____ foul _____.*

Revelation 12:9 *That old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the _____ world.*

NOTE: By Satan’s miracles (sorceries) through his evil angels, he will deceive virtually the entire world.

14. How does God regard these miracles by evil angels?

Leviticus 20:27 *A man also or woman ... that is a _____, shall surely be put to _____.*

1 Timothy 4:1 *Some shall _____ from the _____, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.*

Ephesians 5:11 *Have no fellowship with the _____ works of _____.*

Galatians 5:19-21 *The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolotry, _____, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envying, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like.*

Revelation 21:8 *Sorcerers ... shall have their part in the _____ which burneth with _____ and brimstone: which is the second death.*

NOTE: In Moses’ day, God commanded that all psychics be put to death. Today He insists that sorcery is a work of the flesh, for which people will be destroyed. He warns that when you dabble with psychics you leave the faith, and He tells us that all sorcerers will die the second death in the lake of fire.

15. What glorious power does God offer His people?

Philippians 3:10 *That I may know him, and the power of his _____.*

NOTE: Jesus offers us the same power to live right that raised Him from the dead. Fantastic! How can we fail with such incredible power given us—and that with no cost to us? Jesus, because He loves us, solemnly warns us away from the power and miracles of evil angels and offers to work the divine miracles needed to prepare us for His kingdom (Philippians 1:6).

Your Response

Recognizing that God is in full control of earthly events, are you willing to let Him have full control of your life?

ANSWER: _____

Supplement

This section provides additional information for further study.

The Thief on the Cross

Did Jesus promise the thief on the cross immediate access to heaven when He said, “To day shalt thou be with me in paradise”? The meaning of Christ’s statement in Luke 23:43 is determined by a scriptural answer to one very important question: Did Jesus Himself go to heaven on that day?

Not according to Scripture. On the day of the resurrection, when He met Mary at the garden tomb, His words were: “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father.” John 20:17. Jesus could not have gone to paradise on Friday if He hadn’t yet ascended to the Father by Sunday!

Why then did Jesus say, “To day shalt thou be with me in paradise”? The apparent problem vanishes when you consider that the original Greek manuscripts had no punctuation. The commas and periods were introduced into the text of Scripture by translators, who inserted them where they thought they should be. And believe it or not, a single comma can change the meaning of an entire sentence! The Lord’s statement in Luke 23:43 should read: “Verily I say unto thee today, Thou shalt be with me in paradise.” This is what Jesus was really saying. Today, when all seems lost; today, when I do not look like a Lord or King, and after even My disciples have fled; today, although My hands are nailed to a cross, I can still save you!

Someday that thief, along with all others who have accepted Christ, will claim the promise of the resurrection and be with Jesus in paradise.

What Do the Words “Spirit” and “Breath” Mean in the Bible?

Job 27:3 points out that a person’s “spirit” and “breath” are the same. Job further states that this spirit, or breath, is in his nostrils. Please remember that God placed the “breath” in Adam’s nostrils at Creation (Genesis 2:7). So the spirit that returns to God when a person dies is the breath of life—not a disembodied soul. Never in the Bible is a disembodied soul said to return to God at death.

Where Does the “Soul” Go When a Person Dies?

At Creation, two things combine to make a soul—body and breath. Until these two things combine, a soul does not exist. At death, these two components separate. The body returns to dust, and the breath returns to God. The soul goes nowhere; it simply ceases to exist.



STORACLES OF PROPHECY

Cities of Ash

Genesis 19:1-29

The Story . . .

Abraham knew that his nephew was making a big mistake when Lot chose to move his family to Sodom. The cities of the lower Jordan valley were beautiful and lush, but they were also very corrupt. “The men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly,” Genesis 13:13. Finally, God decided to destroy these sinful cities for their abominations, but first He sent two angels to Sodom to rescue Lot and his family.

Before entering Sodom, these angels took on the appearance of

two wayfaring men. Lot saw the two handsome strangers when they first entered the gates, and knowing that the streets of that wicked city were far from safe at night, he urged them to find refuge in his home. But wicked men were watching, and that evening they gathered about Lot’s door and insisted that he bring out his guests so they might abuse them. Lot tried in vain to reason with the perverse mob gathered at his door. Their demonic obsession only intensified, and soon the crowd began to threaten Lot as well! At this point, the angels could no longer conceal their true identity. They pulled Lot inside the house to safety and struck the maddened mob at the door with blindness.

Early the next morning, the angels told

Lot and his family, “Escape for your life! Do not look behind you. ... Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed.” Genesis 19:17, NKJV.* “Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven.” Genesis 19:24. Only Lot and his two unmarried daughters were spared, for his wife looked back to Sodom with longing and was turned into a pillar of salt. God’s Word tells us that in the last days, world conditions will resemble that of Sodom—and so will the punishment!

* The Holy Bible, New King James Version, © 1979, 1980, 1982, by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission.



AMAZING FACTS

The Study

Fill in the blanks after reading each Bible text.

1. What two cities are given as an example for the destruction of the wicked?

2 Peter 2:6 And turning the cities of _____ and _____ into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly.

NOTE: God destroyed those two cities with eternal fire—the same kind of fire that will destroy the wicked in hell.

2. When will the wicked be destroyed in hellfire?

2 Peter 2:9 The Lord knoweth how to ... reserve the unjust unto the day of _____ to be punished.

John 12:48 The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the _____.

Matthew 13:40-42 So shall it be in the _____ of this _____. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather ... them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire.

NOTE: In the above texts, the Bible clearly states that the wicked will be cast into the fire in the day of judgment at the end of the world—not when they die. This obviously means that no one is in hell now. It is only fair that no one should be punished until his case has been decided in the judgment. People are rewarded or punished at the second coming, and not before (Revelation 22:12).

3. If the wicked who have died are not in hell yet, where are they?

John 5:28, 29 The hour is coming, in the which all that are _____ the _____ shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; ... they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Job 21:30, 32 The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction. ... Yet shall he be brought to the _____, and shall remain in the _____.

NOTE: The Bible assures us that the wicked who have died are reserved in the grave until the resurrection at the end of the world. They will hear Jesus’ voice calling them and will come forth from the grave, not from hellfire.

4. What is the reward, or punishment, of sin?

Romans 6:23 The wages of sin is _____; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

NOTE: The punishment for sin is not everlasting life in hellfire, but the exact opposite—death. We all die the first death (Hebrews 9:27), but the Bible says that

the death the wicked will die in hell is the second death (Revelation 21:8). From the first death, all are raised for punishment or reward; but there is no resurrection from the second death. It is final. In addition, if the punishment for sin is everlasting torment in hellfire, then Jesus did not pay the penalty.

5. What are the only two choices for all men?

John 3:16 That whosoever believeth in him should not _____, but have _____.

NOTE: The concepts of limbo and purgatory are not found in Scripture. The Bible teaches only two choices—eternal life or eternal death (Deuteronomy 30:15).

6. What will happen to the wicked in hellfire?

Psalm 37:10, 20 For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be. ... But the wicked shall _____, ... into smoke shall they _____ away.

Malachi 4:1, 3 The day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; ... and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall _____ them _____. ... And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet.

NOTE: The wicked in hell will go up in smoke. Only ashes will remain.

7. Where will hellfire be located?

Revelation 20:9 They went up on the breadth of the _____, and compassed the camp of the saints about, ... and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

2 Peter 3:10 The elements shall melt with fervent heat, the _____ also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

NOTE: Hellfire will be here on earth, because it will be the earth on fire.

8. Will the devil be in charge of hellfire?

Revelation 20:10 And the devil that deceived them _____ into the lake of fire and brimstone.

NOTE: No! Far from being in charge of hellfire, the devil will be cast into the fire. It will finally turn him to “ashes upon the earth,” and God says of Satan, “Never shalt thou be any more.” Ezekiel 28:18, 19.

9. Will the fires of hell ever go out?

Isaiah 47:14 There shall _____ be a _____ to warm at, nor fire to sit before it.

NOTE: After sin, sinners, and everything on earth is destroyed, the fire will go out. It will not burn throughout the ages. An eternal hell of torment would make it impossible to ever get rid of sin. God’s plan is to isolate sin and destroy it, not perpetuate it. Revelation 21:5 says, “Behold, I make all things new.”

10.Are both soul and body destroyed in hell?

Matthew 10:28 *Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both _____ and _____ in hell.*

NOTE: Many believe that the soul never dies, but twice God says, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” Ezekiel 18:4, 20. So according to Scripture, the wicked will be destroyed in hellfire—both soul and body.

11. For whom will hellfire be kindled?

Matthew 25:41 *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the _____ and his angels.*

NOTE: The purpose of the fire is to destroy Satan, his evil angels, and sin. If I refuse to turn loose of the plague of sin, I will have to be destroyed with it, because if sin is not destroyed, it would again contaminate the universe.

12. How does the Bible refer to God’s destruction of the wicked?

Isaiah 28:21 *The Lord ... shall be wroth ... that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his _____.*

NOTE: God can’t stand the thought of destroying those He loves. “The Lord is not ... willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” 2 Peter 3:9. He is constantly saying to them, “Turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?” Ezekiel 33:11. Destroying people is so foreign to God’s ways that hellfire is called His “strange act.” God leaves nothing out in His desire to save people. Before they are destroyed, every wicked person will admit that God has been fair (Romans 14:11).

13. Doesn’t the Bible phrase “unquenchable fire” indicate that the fire never goes out?

Matthew 3:12 *He will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will _____ the chaff with unquenchable fire.*

NOTE: No! Unquenchable fire cannot be put out. However, when it has burned everything up, it goes out. For example, Jeremiah 17:27 warns that if God’s people were not faithful, He would kindle a fire in Jerusalem that “shall not be quenched.” And the Scriptures declare that this prophecy has already been fulfilled. “They burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire. ... To fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah.” 2 Chronicles 36:19, 21. That fire could not be put out until it had consumed everything; then it went out. It is not burning today, even though the Bible calls it “unquenchable.”

14. Doesn’t the phrase “everlasting fire” mean “unending”?

Jude 7 *Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, ... are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of _____.*

NOTE: We must let the Bible explain itself. We can see in this verse that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed with everlasting fire as an example of hell, but those cities are not still burning. They were turned into ashes (2 Peter 2:6), which is what eternal fire does. It is eternal in its consequences. (See supplement entitled “The Rich Man and Lazarus.”)

15. When Revelation 20:10 states that the wicked will be tormented “for ever and ever,” doesn’t that indicate endless time?

Jonah 2:6 *The earth with her bars was about me _____.*

NOTE: No. Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights (Jonah 1:17), yet he said “for ever.” I’m sure that it felt like forever! The Greek word translated “for ever” in Revelation 20:10 is “aion,” from which we get our word “eon.” It often represents an unspecified period of time, limited or unlimited. The words “for ever” are used 56 times in the Bible referring to something already ended. In one instance, “for ever” describes the life of a faithful slave (Exodus 21:6), and in another place “for ever” means 10 generations (Deuteronomy 23:3). With man, “for ever” often means “as long as he liveth” (1 Samuel 1:22, 28).

16. After sin and sinners are destroyed, what will Jesus do for His people?

2 Peter 3:13 *Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a _____, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*
Revelation 21:4 *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying.*
_____ shall there be any more _____: for the former things are passed away.

NOTE: On the ashes of this purified world, God will create new heavens and a new earth. He promises joy, peace, and indescribable happiness for all living creatures throughout eternity.

17. Will the sin problem ever rise again?

Nahum 1:9 *Affliction shall not _____ up the second time.*

NOTE: No! The promise is specific. Sin will never rise again.
Isaiah 65:17 *For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.*

18. What penetrating question does Job ask?

Job 4:17 *Shall mortal man be more _____ than God?*

NOTE: If your son became a hardened murderer, would you feel that he should be punished? You probably would. But would you want him to burn alive in a fire, in terrible agony, for even one day? Of course not. You could not stand that. Neither could the loving Lord stand to see His children so tortured. That would

be worse than the very worst of all war atrocities. Is God like that? No indeed! An eternal hell of torment would be unbearable for God and diametrically against His character of love and justice.

Your Response

More than anything, Jesus wants you to dwell in His glorious new kingdom. He longs for you to occupy the mansion He has prepared for you. Will you decide now to accept His offer?
ANSWER:_____

Supplement

This section provides additional information for further study.

The Rich Man and Lazarus

Many have used the parable of the rich man and Lazarus to try to prove that people go right to heaven or to hell at death. This was never Jesus’ intention in employing this story. The word Jesus used for “hell” was “Hades,” a place of torment in Greek mythology. All of the Jews listening to this discourse would have understood that Jesus was using a well-known myth to illustrate a point. If we take a closer look at Luke 16:19-31, we will quickly see that this parable is filled with symbols that Jesus never intended for us to take literally.

For example, do all the saved go to Abraham’s bosom? No.
Will the people in heaven and in hell talk to each other? No.
Would a drop of water cool the tongue of a person burning in hell? No.
Does Abraham decide who is saved and who is lost? No.

In the same way, this parable cannot be used to teach that people who die before the last judgment day at the end of the world will go right to heaven or to hell when they die. John 12:48 declares, “The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”

So what does this parable mean? The rich man was a symbol of the Jewish nation, feasting on the Scriptures, while the beggar at the gate—the Gentiles—were starving for the Word. Jesus concluded the parable with the observation that “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” Luke 16:31. Indeed, Jesus did later raise a man named Lazarus from the dead, and most of the Jewish leaders still did not believe (John 12:9-11).



STORACLES OF PROPHECY

A River of Life

2 Kings 5:1-14

The Story . . .

Naaman was a brave, rich, and famous commander for the armies of Syria who contracted leprosy, the most dreaded disease of Bible times. Leprosy meant isolation from loved ones and a slow, wretched death. A Hebrew slave girl who worked in Naaman's house said that if her master would only go to the prophet Elisha in Israel, he would heal Naaman of his leprosy.

Willing to grasp at any thread of hope, Naaman made the long trip to Israel. With him was a small band of personal bodyguards and a king's ransom to pay for this miracle of healing. When Naaman finally stood before the humble house of the prophet, Elisha would not come out. Instead, he sent his servant with these simple instructions: "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." 2 Kings 5:10.

The prophet's command to wash implied that Naaman was dirty! Being told to wash seven times—and in a muddy river, no less—was too much for the proud Syrian general. In a rage, Naaman spun his horse around and began riding home. But in order to reach

Damascus, Naaman had to ride by the Jordan River. As he passed by, Naaman's servants urged him to try the prophet's advice. So he stopped his horse, slid down, and laid aside the armor that covered the awful evidence of his leprosy. Naaman slowly stepped down into the waters of the Jordan. Six times he plunged under the water with no results, but when he came up the seventh time, the leprosy was gone! His skin was as pure and healthy as a baby's.

Just as Naaman experienced restoration, you too can have a healing new-birth experience!



AMAZING FACTS

The Study

Fill in the blanks after reading each Bible text.

1. What New Testament prophet used the Jordan River for baptizing, or cleansing?

Matthew 3:1, 5, 6 In those days came _____ the _____, preaching in the wilderness of Judea. ... Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, And were _____ of him in Jordan.

NOTE: The Gospel stories begin and end with the subject of baptism. Obviously this is a very important teaching to Jesus (Matthew 28:18, 19).

2. What glorious Bible ceremony symbolizes a "washing" from the leprosy of sin?

Acts 22:16 Arise, and be _____, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

NOTE: The Bible ordinance of baptism symbolizes the washing away of sin from a person's life, as well as the new birth.

3. According to the Bible, how many different kinds of baptism are acceptable?

Ephesians 4:5 One Lord, one faith, _____.

NOTE: At least 15 different ceremonies are called baptism today, but according to the Bible, there is only one true baptism.

4. What does the word "baptize" mean?

Colossians 2:12 _____ with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

NOTE: The Greek word "baptizo" means "submerge," "plunge under," or "immerse." A person has not been baptized unless he has been completely submerged, or buried, in water. This word "baptizo" is always used in the Bible in reference to the sacred ordinance of baptism. The Greek words for "sprinkling" or "pouring" are never used.

5. Jesus is our example. How was He baptized?

Mark 1:9, 10 Jesus came ... and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming _____ of the water, he saw the heavens opened.

NOTE: John baptized Jesus by immersion in the same river where Naaman was cleansed from leprosy. Note that they were "in" Jordan (not on the riverbank) and that Jesus came "up out" of the water. This is why John was baptizing in "Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there." John 3:23. Christians are to follow the example of Jesus (1 Peter 2:21), who was baptized by immersion "to fulfil all righteousness." Matthew 3:15.

6. How did Philip baptize the treasurer of Ethiopia?

Acts 8:38, 39 They went _____ both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come _____ of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip.

7. What other truths are symbolized by baptism?

Romans 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was _____ from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

NOTE: Baptism symbolizes Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. There is first death to sin, then burial of the old life of sin in the water, and finally resurrection from the water to a new life. Baptism by immersion fits the symbolism perfectly. The life of sin dies, then there is brief suspension of breath while the person being baptized is leaned backward into the water until the body is fully covered, or buried, in the water. Then the person is raised up out of the water, taking a fresh breath as a newborn baby, to live an entirely new life, symbolizing the resurrection. No other form of baptism fits this Bible symbolism. Some say they keep Sunday holy in honor of the resurrection, but this practice is never mentioned in the Bible.

8. How important is baptism?

Mark 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be _____; but he that believeth not shall be damned [lost].

John 3:5 Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he _____ enter into the kingdom of God.

NOTE: Baptism is clearly mandated by Scripture as essential. However, when baptism is impossible, as it was for the thief on the cross, Jesus gives that person credit for His baptism (Matthew 3:15).

9. What blessed ceremony can be compared to baptism?

Galatians 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have _____ Christ.

NOTE: Baptism is like the marriage ceremony. The Bible says, "For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name." Isaiah 54:5. As a woman takes her husband's name in marriage, so Christians take the name of Christ—thereafter to be called Christians. Both ceremonies must be based on love and commitment if they are to be meaningful. Baptism is as essential to the Christian life as a wedding is to a marriage.

10. What command did Jesus give to His people just before His ascension?

Matthew 28:19 *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, _____ them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

NOTE: Peter followed this command when on the day of Pentecost he told the penitent people, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ.” Acts 2:38.

11. What biblical qualifications must precede baptism?

- A. *Understand Jesus’ teachings (Matthew 28:19, 20).*
- B. *Believe all of Jesus’ teachings (Mark 16:16).*
- C. *Repent of past sins (Acts 2:38).*
- D. *Believe with all your heart (Acts 8:37).*
- E. *Agree to turn from sin (Luke 3:7, 8; Romans 6:5, 6).*
- F. *Accept Christ as your personal Saviour and experience the new birth (2 Corinthians 5:17; John 3:3, 5).*

NOTE: Since an infant cannot comply with any of the above steps, obviously it is not scriptural to baptize a child until he is old enough to comprehend the gospel.

12. Where did all of the counterfeit forms of baptism originate?

Mark 7:8 *For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the _____ of men.*

NOTE: Baptism by immersion was the only form of baptism practiced during Bible times and for centuries after the cross. But then, misguided men introduced other forms of baptism for the sake of convenience. Thus, God’s sacred ordinance of baptism was distorted and its rich symbolic meaning obscured.

13. What does the Bible say about those who put the teachings of men before the truth of God?

Matthew 15:9 *But in _____ they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of _____.*
Galatians 1:8 *But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be _____.*

14. But doesn’t the baptism of the Holy Spirit replace baptism by immersion?

Acts 2:38 *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and _____ every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the _____.*

NOTE: No! Notice that while Peter was preaching (Acts 10:44-48), the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening, many of whom had not been baptized. But even though they had already received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Peter insisted that they be baptized in water as well.

15. Is rebaptism ever proper?

Acts 19:2-5 *They said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they _____ this, they were _____ in the name of the Lord Jesus.*

NOTE: One day when Paul was preaching in Ephesus, he found 12 men who had been baptized by John the Baptist, but who had never heard of the Holy Spirit. So upon receiving this substantial new light, they were rebaptized. Likewise, if a person has completely lost his Christian experience, he should be rebaptized upon returning to the Lord. Rebaptism is also appropriate if a person was not baptized in the biblical method.

16. Is baptism connected with joining a church?

Acts 2:41 *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were _____ unto them about three thousand souls.*
Acts 2:47 *Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the _____ daily such as should be saved.*
Colossians 3:15 *Ye are called in one _____.*
Colossians 1:18 *He is the head of the body, the _____.*
1 Corinthians 12:13 *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into _____ body.*

NOTE: The Scriptures are unequivocal. All of God’s people are called into one body, which is the church, and we enter it by baptism. After birth, a baby must be placed in a family for nurturing, protection, and growth.

17. If I refuse baptism, whose counsel am I refusing?

Luke 7:30 *But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the _____ of _____ against themselves, being not baptized of him.*

18. When Jesus was baptized, what did His Father say?

Mark 1:9, 11 *And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. ... And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am _____.*

NOTE: When any of God’s children repent of their sins and are baptized, He is well pleased.

Your Response

Would you like to begin preparing for the sacred rite of baptism so God can say of you, “Thou art my beloved son [or daughter], in whom I am well pleased”?

ANSWER: _____

If you would like to know more about baptism, contact the pastor or group leader who is presenting these studies and express your desire.

Supplement

This section provides additional information for further study.

The Model Baptism

Jesus was not baptized because He needed cleansing from sin, for He was sinless (1 Peter 2:22). This is why John the Baptist was so perplexed when Jesus came to the Jordan River, asking to be baptized by him. John said, “I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?” Matthew 3:14.

So why was Jesus baptized? There are three main reasons. First, He was baptized in behalf of those who cannot be baptized themselves. Sometimes when people accept the Lord in prison or in a hospital, circumstances do not allow them to be baptized. Jesus gives them credit for His baptism. The thief on the cross was one example (Luke 23:43). Second, Jesus was baptized as an example, that we should follow in His steps (1 Peter 2:21). And third, Jesus was baptized so we can, by studying His experience, know what to expect by faith.

To illustrate, let’s take the following verses word by word and see what we can expect from our baptism. Matthew 3:16 and 17 reads: “And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

- “*The heavens were opened*” = We receive access to God.
- “*He saw*” = Our spiritual eyes are now opened, giving us new understanding and perception.
- “*The Spirit of God*” = We recognize His leading.
- “*Descending like a dove*” = Peace gently enters our hearts.
- “*A voice from heaven*” = We will begin to hear that still, small voice.
- “*My beloved son*” = We are adopted into His royal family and become citizens of a different country.
- “*I am well pleased*” = God gives us complete acceptance and forgiveness.

STORACLES OF PROPHECY

Resting the Land

2 Chronicles 36:11-21

The Story . . .

Our world was first created with a perfect balance in nature. Man, animals, and plants lived in total harmony. But with the entrance of sin, everything changed. Man started eating animals, and animals began eating each other. Thorns and thistles sprouted everywhere. The scourge of sin depleted even the soil. God told Cain, “When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength.” Genesis 4:12.

This is one reason the Lord commanded the children of Israel to rest the farmlands every seventh year (Exodus 23:10, 11). It would give the ground a chance to recover its vitality and provide a volunteer crop for the poor to eat. But most of God’s people ignored this law or simply refused to obey it. Then came a day of awful judgment. Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king, came to Judah and executed those who had rebelled against him. Others were carried off to the golden city of Babylon. Meanwhile, the land of Israel lay quietly in ruins, until it had “enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath.” 2 Chronicles 36:21. At the end of 70 years, the survivors returned to Canaan to replant the promised land and to rebuild Jerusalem.

AMAZING FACTS

For 6,000 years now, Jesus has been sowing the seed of the gospel. The Bible tells us that “one day is with the Lord as a thousand years.” 2 Peter 3:8. Soon King Jesus will come to harvest the world. Some will be slain by the brightness of His coming, and the rest will be carried off to His golden kingdom. Then this tired old planet will keep a 1,000-year Sabbath!

The Study

Fill in the blanks after reading each Bible text.

1. What events mark the beginning of the 1,000 years?

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the _____ himself shall _____ from heaven with a shout, ... and the dead in Christ shall _____ first.

Revelation 20:4, 5 And they lived and reigned with Christ a _____ years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the _____ resurrection.

NOTE: The one thousand years of Revelation 20 is often called the millennium. The word “millennium” is simply a Latin composite of two words: “milli,” meaning “one thousand,” and “annum,” meaning “years.” The second coming of Jesus and the resurrection of the righteous mark the beginning of the 1,000 years. The saints of all ages (described as “blessed and holy” in verse 6) will be raised in this first resurrection.

2. What else will happen at the first resurrection?

1 Corinthians 15:51, 52 We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be _____, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised.

Philippians 3:21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his _____ body.

2 Thessalonians 2:8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord ... shall _____ with the brightness of his coming.

Revelation 16:18, 20, 21 And there was a great _____, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. ... And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great _____ out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent [about 75 pounds].

Revelation 20:1, 2 An angel ... laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and _____ him a thousand years.

NOTE: See the 1,000-year chart on page 6 for a summary of the events that will take place as the 1,000 years begin.

3. Who will be raised in the second resurrection, and when will it take place?

John 5:28, 29 All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done _____, unto the resurrection of _____.

Revelation 20:5 But the rest of the dead [the wicked] lived not again until the thousand years were _____.

NOTE: The wicked are raised in the second general resurrection at the close of the 1,000 years.

4. What is the condition of the earth during the 1,000 years?

Isaiah 24:1 Behold, the Lord maketh the earth _____, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down.

Jeremiah 4:23-26 I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and _____; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled. ... There was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. ... The fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the _____ thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by his fierce anger.

Jeremiah 25:33 And the _____ of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor _____.

NOTE: The earth will be totally devastated by the earthquake and hailstorm that strike at Jesus’ second coming. It will be left in complete darkness. Dead people will lie strewn across the earth’s surface, with no one mourning, because none will be left alive. The righteous will all be in heaven, and the wicked will all be dead. (See supplement on “The Bottomless Pit.”)

5. Where will the saints be during the 1,000 years, and what will they be doing?

John 14:3 I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that _____ I _____, there ye may be also.

Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and _____ was given unto them: ... and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

1 Corinthians 6:2, 3 Do ye not know that the _____ shall judge the world? ... Know ye not that we shall judge angels?

NOTE: During the 1,000 years the saints will be in heaven, participating in the judgment. They will not decide who is saved or lost, because God will already have that determined. They will simply confirm the judgments of God. “For thy judgments are made manifest.” Revelation 15:4. The fairness of God’s punishment for the lost will be affirmed, as well as the rewards for the righteous (Revelation 22:11, 12). This phase of the judgment is for the benefit of the saints. For example, suppose you get to heaven and discover that your beloved pastor is not there—yet some infamous criminal is there! You would probably need an explanation. The angels will guide us through the record books to settle any doubts. At the end of this phase of the judgment, all will be totally convinced of God’s justice, love, and His impartial dealings with all. They will declare, “For true and righteous are his judgments.” Revelation 19:2. (See supplement entitled “The 1,000-Year Chart.”)

6. What will happen at the close of the 1,000 years?

Zechariah 14:1, 4, 5, 9 Behold the day of the Lord cometh, ... And his feet shall stand in that day upon the _____ of _____, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the

mount of Olives shall _____ in the midst thereof. ... And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee. ... And the Lord shall be king over all the earth.

Revelation 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming _____ from God out of _____, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

NOTE: At the close of the 1,000 years, the New Jerusalem with the saints inside will descend from heaven and land on what is now the Mount of Olives. The Lord will flatten the hill to make a great plain for the city's landing site.

7. What will happen next to free Satan from his prison?

Revelation 20:5, 7 But the rest of the _____ lived not again until the thousand years were finished. ... And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be _____ out of his prison.

NOTE: After the wicked are resurrected, Satan will once again be free to deceive and manipulate them.

8. What will Satan do when the wicked are raised?

Revelation 20:8, 9 And shall go out to _____ the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and _____ the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city.

NOTE: Satan will deceive people into believing that he was unjustly deposed from heaven and that together they can capture the city and take control. Realizing they are shut out of the holy city, the wicked will organize an attack to conquer the New Jerusalem.

9. At this crucial moment, what will stop everything?

Revelation 20:11, 12 And I saw a great _____, and him that sat on it, ... and the dead were _____ out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

NOTE: God's throne will suddenly appear in the heavens above the city, and the final phase of the judgment begins. The assault on the city of God is thus brought to an instant halt. The books will be opened, and every person's life will be made to pass before him. Everything will be open for the wicked and righteous to see (Luke 12:2, 3).

10. What will happen after the wicked are judged?

Romans 14:11 As I live, saith the Lord, _____ knee shall _____ to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

Philippians 2:10, 11 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And

that every tongue should _____ that _____ Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Revelation 19:1, 2 I heard a great voice of much people in heaven saying, ... true and _____ are his _____.

NOTE: The wicked will all freely admit that God has been fair and just and that He tried desperately to save them, but they openly chose to reject Him and to live a selfish life of sin. After this universal admission, the sin controversy will be forever settled and it will be safe to destroy sinners.

11. What will happen next?

Revelation 20:9 _____ came down from God out of heaven, and _____ them.

Revelation 20:15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the _____ of fire.

NOTE: God's fire will then fall upon the wicked and form a vast lake of fire all around the city of God. This fire will eventually turn them all to ashes (Malachi 4:3). The devil will have no control over this fire, which is called hell. Instead, he and his angels will also be punished in the fire and then turned into ashes (Revelation 20:10; Ezekiel 28:18). There is no resurrection from this fire, which is called the second death (Revelation 20:14).

12. After the fire goes out, what will God do for His people?

Isaiah 65:17 For, behold, I _____ new heavens and a new earth.

2 Peter 3:13 We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth _____.

NOTE: At the end of the 70 years of Babylonian captivity, the children of Israel returned to the promised land and rebuilt the city. After the millennium, the saints will witness Jesus create a new heavens (atmosphere) and a perfect new earth, where sin will never again rear its ugly head (Nahum 1:9). The paradise that Adam and Eve lost by sin will be restored in all of its Edenic glory. Peace, joy, love, and perfect happiness will rest upon God's people forever!

13. Where will God and the righteous finally live?

Revelation 21:3 Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will _____ with _____.

Matthew 5:5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the _____.

NOTE: Both God the Father and God the Son will live with their saints on the new earth. Just think of it—having God for a neighbor!

Your Response

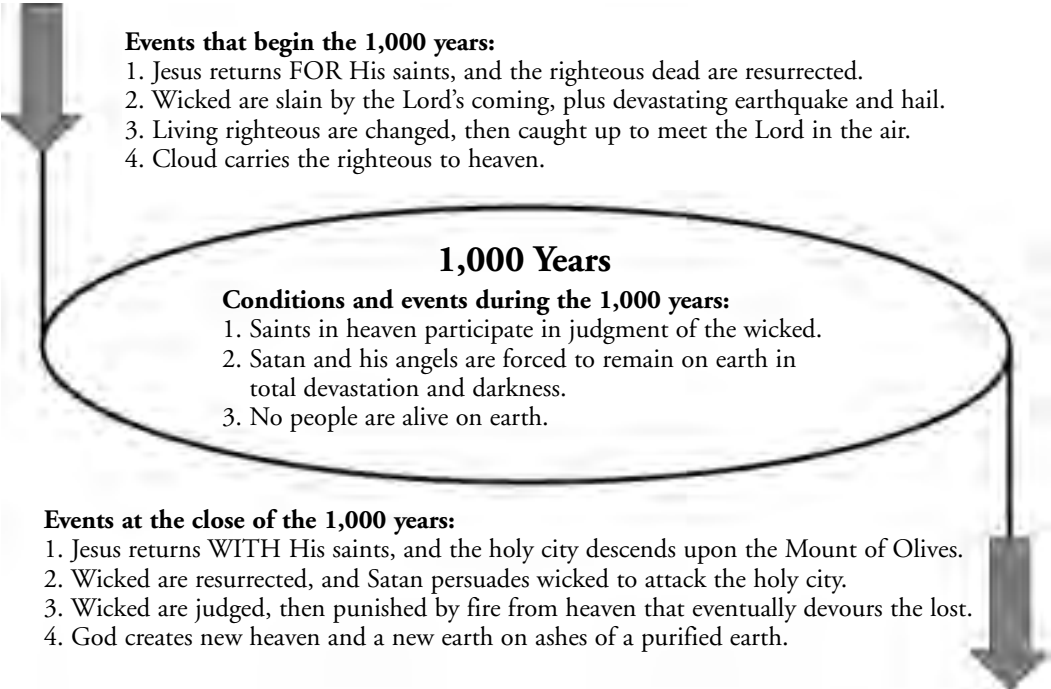
Jesus says, "I go to prepare a place for you." John 14:2. He has a mansion for you in the holy city. Will you now accept His offer of life eternal so He may give you the new birth and prepare you for His kingdom?

ANSWER: _____

Supplement

This section provides additional information for further study.

The 1,000-Year Chart



The Bottomless Pit

The term "bottomless pit" from Revelation 20:1 is often misunderstood. It is translated from the Greek word "abusos," the root of the English word "abyss." In the Greek Old Testament, this word is used to refer to the formless, dark earth as it was before Creation. "And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep." Genesis 1:1, 2. The word "abusos" is used again in Luke 8:31 to illustrate a condition where demons have no one to possess or manipulate.

During the 1,000 years, the devil is chained by circumstances, "that he should deceive the nations no more." Revelation 20:3. A literal chain could never chain a spiritual being. Only one thing would prevent him from tempting people, and that is if there were no people alive! When Jesus comes, the wicked are all slain and the righteous taken to heaven, so Satan and his angels are confined to this planet with no one to tempt. For 1,000 years they will roam and behold the fruit of their rebellion. No more galling chain of circumstances has ever been forged. It is in this manner that Satan and his angels are bound. "And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited." Isaiah 24:22.

STORACLES OF PROPHECY

Bowing to Babylon

Daniel 3:1-30

The Story . . .

King Nebuchadnezzar gave the signal, and as the music from a thousand instruments began to swell, the curtain fell, exposing a dazzling, 90-foot image of gold glimmering in the sunlight. Then, according to King's command, all the officials who had gathered on the plain of Dura fell prostrate to the ground in devout worship. All bowed down except three young Hebrew men, who were servants of a greater King.

Nebuchadnezzar was beaming with pride and satisfaction—until it was reported that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had refused to bow and worship his image. Astonished that anyone would dare to disobey, Nebuchadnezzar assumed these young advisers must have misunderstood his decree. So he offered them one more chance to bow down—but they refused! Now the king's expression turned to rage. He ordered his soldiers to heat the nearby furnace seven times hotter than normal. As fuel was piled onto the fire, the three men were firmly tied with ropes. The resulting heat was so intense that it killed the soldiers who threw them into the blazing inferno.

As the king peered into the roaring furnace, his mouth suddenly fell open.

With a trembling voice he asked, "Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" His counselors agreed that they had. Then the king said, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." Daniel 3:25.

God delivered those brave young men in the fiery furnace because they stood up for His truth. In the last days, God's people will have to face a similar test.



AMAZING FACTS

The Study

Fill in the blanks after reading each Bible text.

1. How does our story in Daniel 3 relate to Revelation?

Revelation 13:15 *As many as would not _____ the _____ of the beast should be killed.*

NOTE: In the last days, God's people will be forced once again to worship contrary to conscience or be slain. They will have to choose between obeying the law of God or the laws of man.

2. What are the three angels' messages of Revelation 14?

Revelation 14:7 *Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his _____ is _____: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.*

Revelation 14:8 *And there followed another angel, saying, _____ is _____, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.*

Revelation 14:9, 10 *If any man _____ the _____ and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God.*

NOTE: The Bible tells us in Revelation 14:6-14 that in the last days, this awesome three-point message of hope and warning will go to the entire world to prepare people for Jesus' return. One of these messages warns against worshipping the beast and receiving its mark. In this lesson, we will identify the beast. In Lesson 14, we will identify the mark. Eternal life itself may be at stake, so pray earnestly for God's guidance and understanding as you study.

3. What does a beast represent in Bible prophecies?

Daniel 7:17 *These great _____, which are four, are four _____.*

Daniel 7:23 *The fourth beast shall be the fourth _____ upon earth.*

Daniel 8:21 *And the rough goat is the _____ of Grecia.*

NOTE: In Bible prophecy, a beast represents a government, kingdom, or political power. God uses beasts to symbolize governments, as we do today—an eagle (the United States of America), a bear (Russia), etc. In the Bible, "beast" is not a disrespectful term. It does not suggest beastly characteristics. The beast that has the mark is pictured in Revelation 13:1-10, 15-18. Please take time to read these verses before proceeding to Question 4.

4. How does the Bible identify the beast?

Revelation 13:1 *And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a _____ rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.*

NOTE: In Revelation 13:1-10, 15-18, God gives 10 clues to help us identify the beast. He gives us a long list of characteristics so that we can be absolutely certain of the beast's identity.

- Point 1 - Rises up out of the sea (verse 1)
- Point 2 - Receives its power, seat, and authority from the dragon (verse 2)
- Point 3 - Becomes a worldwide power (verses 3, 7)
- Point 4 - Is guilty of blasphemy (verses 1, 5, 6)
- Point 5 - Rules for 42 prophetic months (verse 5)
- Point 6 - Receives a deadly wound that heals (verse 3)
- Point 7 - Is a religious power that receives worship (verses 4, 8)
- Point 8 - Persecutes God's saints (verse 7)
- Point 9 - Has the mysterious number 666 (verse 18)
- Point 10 - Is led by one supreme man (verse 18)

Only one power fits all 10 of these identifying marks—the papacy. But in order to be certain, we will carefully consider them one at a time, beginning with Question 5.

5. This beast arises from the sea. What does the sea, or water, symbolize?

Revelation 17:15 *The _____ which thou sawest ... are _____, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.*

NOTE: In prophecy, water represents great multitudes of people, or heavily populated areas. Prophecy predicted that the beast would arise from amid the established nations of the then-known world. The papacy arose in western Europe, so it fits Point 1. But what about the other nine identifying points?

6. Who gives the beast its power and position?

Revelation 13:2 *And the _____ gave him his _____, and his _____, and great authority.*

NOTE: The beast—which has a mark that we must avoid—obtained its power, authority, and capital city from the dragon. According to Revelation 12:3-5, the dragon is the power that sought to destroy the child Jesus at the time of His birth. It was Satan who inspired Herod, a king for the pagan Roman Empire, to slay all the male babies in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:13, 16). To whom did pagan Rome give her authority and capital city? History is clear that pagan Rome turned over its power and capital city to the church of Rome. The following historical quote is typical: "The Roman church ... pushed itself into the place of the Roman World-Empire, of which it is the actual continuation. ... The Pope, who calls himself 'King' and 'Pontifex Maximus,' is Caesar's successor."¹ So Point 2 fits the papacy, as well.

¹Adolph Harnack, *What Is Christianity?* (New York: Putnam, second edition, revised, 1901), p. 270.

7. How far-reaching is the influence of the beast?

Revelation 13:3 *And _____ the _____ wondered after the beast.*

NOTE: No one would question that during the Middle Ages, the papacy was indeed a worldwide power. In fact, the word "catholic" means "universal." We can see that Point 3 also fits the papacy.

8.What comes out of the mouth of the beast?

Revelation 13:6 *And he opened his mouth in _____ against God, to _____ his name.*

NOTE: The Bible defines blasphemy as man claiming to forgive sins (Luke 5:21) and claiming to be God (John 10:33). The papacy boldly claims the power to forgive sins. Notice the following section from a Catholic catechism: “Does the Priest truly forgive the sins, or does he only declare that they are remitted? The Priest does really and truly forgive the sins in virtue of the power given to him by Christ.”¹ The papacy also claims that the pope is equal with God. Pope Leo XIII said, “We [the popes] hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty.”² Here is another startling statement about the pope: “Thou art another God on earth.”³ So Point 4 also fits the papacy.

¹Joseph Deharbe, S.J., *A Complete Catechism of the Catholic Religion* (New York: Schwartz, Kirwin & Fauss, 1924), p. 279.
²Christopher Marcellus, *Oration in the Fifth Lateran Council*, Session IV (1512), manuscript SC, Vol. 32, col. 761 (Latin).
³Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter “The Reunion of Christendom,” dated June 20, 1894, trans. in *The Great Encyclical letters of Pope Leo XIII* (New York: Benziger, 1903), p. 304.

9.How long would this first beast rule?

Revelation 13:5 *And power was given unto him to continue _____ and _____ months.*

NOTE: Remember that in prophecy, one prophetic day equals one literal year (Ezekiel 4:6). This time period is repeatedly referred to in prophecy as three and a half years, 42 months, or 1,260 days. Based on the 30-day calendar used by the Jews, all three time periods total the same 1,260 prophetic days, or 1,260 literal years. The worldwide power of papal Rome became official in A.D. 538, when Emperor Justinian’s decree making the papacy supreme was no longer opposed. The papacy was dealt what appeared to be a death blow in 1798 when the pope was captured by Napoleon’s general, Alexander Berthier. You will notice that the time period between A.D. 538 and 1798 is precisely 1,260 years. Point 5 also fits the papacy.

10.What happened to the beast after the 42 months?

Revelation 13:3 *And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly _____ was _____: and all the world wondered after the beast.*

NOTE: As already mentioned, the papacy received what appeared to be a deadly wound in 1798 when General Berthier took the pope captive to France, where he died in exile.¹ Half of Europe thought that this event signaled the end of the papacy, but God had said that the wound would be healed and that the papacy’s power and influence would be restored until the entire world would follow her leading. Malachi Martin, consummate Vatican insider, reveals the following in his book *The Keys of This Blood*: “The pope is the best-known person of the 20th century (p. 123), has formed personal relationships with the leaders of 91 countries (p. 490), and is prepared for worldwide rule now” (p. 143).² Even a novice would recognize that today the papacy is, in many ways, the most influential power on earth. And with each trip the pope makes, his power and influence grow. Multiplied millions worldwide look to the papacy as

the only hope for world unity, peace, and decency—precisely as God predicted. The papacy clearly fits Point 6.

¹Joseph Rickaby, “The Modern Papacy,” *Lectures on the History of Religion*, (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1910), Vol. 3, Lecture 24, p. 1.
²Malachi Martin, *The Keys of This Blood* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990).

11. Is the beast a religious power?

Revelation 13:15 *And cause that as many as would not _____ the image of the beast should be killed.*

NOTE: It is obvious that this entity would be involved in spiritual matters. The words “worship” or “worshiped” are used five times in Revelation 13 in reference to this power. Surely no one doubts that the papacy fits Point 7.

12. What does the beast do to the saints?

Revelation 13:7 *And it was given unto him to make _____ with the saints, and to _____ them.*

NOTE: It is common knowledge that the papacy did persecute and destroy conscientious Christians, especially during the Middle Ages, the peak period of its control. Many historians say that more than 50 million people died for their faith during this period of great tribulation. Apparently the church felt it was doing God a favor by stamping out “heresy.” The pope has asked that the church be forgiven for its atrocities, but the fact remains that it did persecute and destroy. The papacy fits Point 8 also.

13. What is the mysterious number that identifies the beast?

Revelation 13:18 *His number is _____ hundred threescore and _____.*

NOTE: In Revelation 13:18, God says to count the number of the beast’s name and that it is the number of a man. When we think of the papacy, the man we naturally think of is the pope. What is his name? One of the pope’s official titles is “Vicar of the Son of God,” which is “Vicarious Filii Dei” in Latin (the official language of the church). Newspaper articles, when referring to the pope as “Vicar of Christ,” will often enclose the words in quotation marks to show that they are a translation of his title, or name. The book of Revelation is saying that the Roman numeral value of the letters of his name will equal 666. Let’s see whether or not Point 9 fits the papacy:

V	5	F	0	D	500	TOTALS
I	1	I	1	E	00	112
C	100	L	50	I	1	53
A	0	I	1		501	501
R	0	I	1			666
I	1		53			
U	5					
S	0					
	112					

There should be no doubt remaining. We have shown that all 10 characteristics portrayed in Revelation 13:1-8, 15-18 fit the papacy. And this power has a specific mark that we dare not receive.

Now please note that there are many godly, loving Roman Catholic Christians whom God counts as His children. There have also been many gracious and courageous popes who loved God. This lesson is not an attack upon our Catholic friends. It is an attack upon the devil, who lures churches away from scriptural truth. However, God Himself has told us that this institution has a mark we dare not receive. Sincere Protestants, Catholics, Jews, and non-Christians will all be eager to discover what this mark is so they can avoid receiving it. Let’s thank God that in His Word He has exposed Satan’s ugly plans to destroy us all.

In our next lesson, we will clearly identify the “mark” of the beast. If you receive the mark of the beast, you will be lost. Many will discover that avoiding the mark will involve a tremendous struggle. But God can give us the faith of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who were willing to face death in order to honor God.

Your Response

Are you willing to follow Jesus wherever He leads, even though you may lose your friends?
ANSWER: _____

STORACLES OF PROPHECY

The Mark of Cain

Genesis 4:1-15

The Story . . .

Adam and Eve's first two sons differed vastly in their personalities and behavior. Cain longed to farm and build, while Abel loved to roam the hills and meadows with his flocks.

After sin entered this new world because of Adam and Eve's disobedience, God established a sacrificial system and explained that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness for sin (Hebrews 9:22). He told them that these

sacrifices pointed forward to the time when Jesus would become a man and die as the Lamb of God for the sins of the world. Abel faithfully brought a young lamb as a sacrifice for his sins, but Cain thought it was unnecessary to obey God's command so precisely. He considered the sacrificial system to be messy and reasoned that as long as he brought an offering and worshiped God, the details wouldn't matter. So he brought an offering of his own works—some produce from the field. Cain watched with jealous anger as fire came down from heaven and consumed Abel's sacrifice but left his own offering untouched. The Lord lovingly urged Cain to humble himself and obey, but Cain

stubbornly persisted in his rebellion. Abel also tried to gently reason with his older brother, but Cain flew into a rage. By the time he regained his senses, Abel's bloody body lay still at his feet. God pronounced a curse upon Cain, and when Cain complained about his sentence, the Lord placed a mark upon him lest future generations take revenge for this first homicide.

The book of Revelation tells us that, in the last days, there will again be a battle between Christians regarding how and when to worship. Soon everyone will be identified either by the seal of God or the mark of the beast.



AMAZING FACTS

The Study

Fill in the blanks after reading each Bible text.

1. Who will be protected through the seven last plagues?

Revelation 7:3 *Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have _____ the servants of our God in their _____.*

NOTE: Those who receive God's seal in their foreheads will be protected during the plagues (Psalm 91:7-11).

2. What is this "seal" the righteous have in their foreheads?

Isaiah 8:16 *Bind up the testimony; seal the _____ among my disciples.*

NOTE: God's seal is found in His law. A seal is what makes a document official, and it normally contains three characteristics: Name, Office, and Territory. An example would be "Cyrus king of Persia" in Ezra 1:1.

3. Which of the Ten Commandments contains all the elements of a seal?

Exodus 20:11 *For in six days the _____ heaven and earth, the sea, and _____ that in them is.*

NOTE: The fourth commandment is the only one that contains all three elements of a seal: (1) "The Lord"—His name, (2) "made"—His office as Creator, (3) "heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is"—His territory.

4. What has God given as a special sign of His power?

Ezekiel 20:12 *I gave them my sabbaths, to be a _____ between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them.*

Ezekiel 20:20 *Hallow my _____; and they shall be a _____ between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God.*

Exodus 31:13 *Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a _____ between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.*

NOTE: God clearly states that He gave the Sabbath as a sign of His power to create and sanctify. It is His seal, or mark of authority. The words "seal," "sign," "mark," and "token" are used interchangeably throughout the Bible (compare Genesis 17:11 with Romans 4:11 and Revelation 7:3 with Ezekiel 9:4).

5. What does the second beast of Revelation 13 force all to receive?

Revelation 13:16 *And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a _____ in their right hand, or in their _____.*

6. What is the mark of the beast?

NOTE: We identified the first beast of Revelation 13 in Lesson 13. What is its mark of power and authority? The best way to discover its mark of authority is to ask the papacy directly. Notice the following section from a Catholic catechism:

"Q. Which is the Sabbath day?

"A. Saturday is the Sabbath day.

"Q. Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

"A. We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday."¹

Here is another statement from a catechism:

"Q. Have you any other way of proving that the Church has power to institute festivals of precept?

"A. Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her—she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority."²

So the papacy is saying that its mark of power and authority is making Sunday a holy day—a change that virtually the entire Christian world accepts. (See supplement entitled "What Important Question Does the Papacy Ask Protestants?")

¹Peter Geiermann, *The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1957 edition), p. 50.

²Stephen Keenan, *A Doctrinal Catechism* (New York: P.J. Kenedy & Sons, third American edition, revised, n.d.), p. 174.

7. Is either the mark of the beast or the seal of God visible?

Hebrews 10:16 *Saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their _____, and in their _____ will I write them.*

Ecclesiastes 9:10 *Whatsoever thy _____ findeth to do, do it with thy might.*

Exodus 13:9 *And it shall be for a _____ unto thee upon thine hand, and for a _____ between thine eyes, that the Lord's law may be in thy mouth.*

Isaiah 59:6, 7 *Their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their _____. ... Their _____ are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths.*

NOTE: Neither the mark of the beast nor the seal of God is outwardly visible. The forehead represents the mind, and the hand is a symbol of work. "On the hand" and "between the eyes" are consistent symbols in Scripture for a person's thoughts and actions (Exodus 13:16; Deuteronomy 6:8; 11:18). A person will receive the mark of the beast in his forehead by choosing to believe that Sunday is a holy day in spite of Bible truth. A person will be marked in the right hand by working on God's Sabbath or by outwardly keeping Sunday laws for convenient reasons—such as a job, family, etc. Although the sign is invisible to men, God will know who has which mark (2 Timothy 2:19). In a sense, each

person will mark himself. If I respect and regard God’s holy Sabbath, He will mark me as His own. If I regard the beast’s false Sabbath, He will mark me as belonging to the beast.

8.How does Jesus determine if we are His servants?

Romans 6:16 *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye _____.*
John 14:15 *If ye love me, _____ my commandments.*

9.Does anyone have the mark of the beast now?

Revelation 13:17 *No man might _____ or _____, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*

NOTE: No person has the mark now. When it becomes a forced issue, only those who have received the mark of the beast will be able to buy or sell. At that time, people who keep God’s holy Sabbath will do so at the risk of their lives (Revelation 13:15), and those who choose to profane His holy day and officially cast their votes by placing the laws of men above the law of God will be marked as belonging to Antichrist. All who are loyal to Jesus and His holy day will receive Jesus’ glorious seal, thus making them His forever. Those who try to remain neutral will be counted for Antichrist (Matthew 12:30).

10.What two things does the Antichrist power attempt to change?

Daniel 7:25 *He shall ... think to change _____ and _____.*

NOTE: Daniel 7 reveals an Old Testament description of the Antichrist power. It clearly predicts that the beast would attempt to change both God’s laws and times. The papacy has tried to change God’s laws by: (1) omitting the second commandment against veneration of images, (2) shortening the fourth commandment from 94 words to just eight in order to avoid mentioning which day is the Sabbath, and (3) dividing the tenth commandment into two commandments. The papacy attempted to change God’s times by: (1) teaching people to recognize the first day of the week as the Sabbath instead of the seventh day, and (2) adopting the pagan Roman practice of beginning each day at midnight instead of sundown. God’s timing for the Sabbath is from sundown Friday night to sundown Saturday night (Leviticus 23:32). No mortal should ever dare to tamper with God’s sacred law or times (Matthew 5:18).

11.What was God’s criticism of His ancient priests, or pastors?

Malachi 2:8, 9 *Ye have caused many to stumble at the _____. ... Ye have not kept my ways, but have been _____ in the law.*
Hosea 4:6 *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast _____ the _____ of thy God, I will also forget thy children.*

NOTE: God is still hurt when His pastors are partial to eight or nine commandments and cause many to stumble over His command to keep the Sabbath holy. Virtually all churches admit in their official writings that there is no Scripture support for Sunday sacredness. Tragically, both Protestantism and Catholicism stand guilty before the judgment bar of God for throwing out the Bible Sabbath! God Himself gave the Sabbath as a sign, or mark, of His power to create and His power to sanctify and save (Exodus 31:17; Ezekiel 20:12). Dare any man tamper with this sacred sign, which represents the great God of heaven and all that He stands for?

12.How did God’s ancient leaders regard the great things of His law?

Hosea 8:12 *I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a _____ thing.*

NOTE: Times have not changed. God has placed the Sabbath, His great sign, in the middle of His law and begins that commandment with the word “remember.” Yet many people today feel that keeping His seventh-day Sabbath is a strange thing.

13.What specific, solemn rebuke did God give to religious leaders regarding His holy Sabbath?

Ezekiel 22:8 *Thou hast _____ mine holy things, and hast profaned my sabbaths.*
Ezekiel 22:26 *Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put _____ between the holy and profane ... and have _____ their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.*

NOTE: God pointedly rebukes religious leaders who say that the Sabbath doesn’t matter and who claim “Thus saith the Lord” when it is not true.

14.What specific sin does God command His leaders to denounce?

Isaiah 58:1, 13, 14 *Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and _____ my people their transgression. ... If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy _____ on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a _____, the holy of the Lord honourable; ... Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord.*

NOTE: God charges spiritual leaders to call Sabbath-breaking a sin and to insist that His people keep His Sabbath day holy. As with the disciples of old, our only safety is in obeying God rather than men (Acts 5:29).

15.When you decide to accept Jesus and fully follow Him, what happens?

Matthew 11:29 *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find _____ unto your _____.*

NOTE: Glorious rest and peace enter your heart at conversion. The Sabbath, which means “rest,” is a symbol of the rest and peace that comes from the new birth (Hebrews 4:1-10). Those who are truly born again will keep the Sabbath as a blessed sign of that rest (notice verses 4, 9, 10). There is no joy like the joy that comes to a converted person who keeps God’s Sabbath holy.

Your Response

Before you can say “no” to the mark of the beast, you must say “yes” to the seal of God. Jesus is waiting at the door of your heart for an answer. Will you decide now to move under His glorious Sabbath banner as evidence that you have accepted Him as your Creator and Saviour?
ANSWER:_____

Supplement

This section provides additional information for further study.

What Important Question Does the Papacy Ask Protestants?

Protestants have repeatedly asked the papacy, “How could you dare to change God’s law?” But the question posed to Protestants by the Catholic Church is even more penetrating. Here it is officially: “You will tell me that Saturday was the Jewish Sabbath, but that the Christian Sabbath has been changed to Sunday. Changed! but by whom? Who has authority to change an express commandment of Almighty God? When God has spoken and said, Thou shalt keep holy the seventh day, who shall dare to say, Nay, thou mayest work and do all manner of worldly business on the seventh day; but thou shalt keep holy the first day in its stead? This is a most important question, which I know not how you can answer. You are a Protestant, and you profess to go by the Bible and the Bible only; and yet in so important a matter as the observance of one day in seven as a holy day, you go against the plain letter of the Bible, and put another day in the place of that day which the Bible has commanded. The command to keep holy the seventh day is one of the ten commandments; you believe that the other nine are still binding; who gave you authority to tamper with the fourth? If you are consistent with your own principles, if you really follow the Bible and the Bible only, you ought to be able to produce some portion of the New Testament in which this fourth commandment is expressly altered.”¹

¹Library of Christian Doctrine: *Why Don't You Keep Holy the Sabbath-Day?* (London: Burns and Oates, Ltd.), pp. 3, 4.

STORACLES OF PROPHECY

A Heavenly Model

Exodus 24:1-25:9

The Story . . .

Never before had the Lord manifested such mighty signs and wonders as when He delivered the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt. Plague after plague fell upon the Pharaoh's kingdom until he was forced to release his captives. Then the Lord parted the Red Sea and led the young nation to freedom, while drowning their pursuing enemies behind them.

After entering the wilderness, God surprised many of His

people by leading them south—in the opposite direction of the Promised Land. The Lord knew that before they would be prepared to receive their inheritance, they must be organized and taught to trust Him. As they journeyed to Mount Sinai, God supplied their every need. When they became hungry, God fed them with bread from heaven. When they became thirsty, the Lord brought water cascading from a boulder. When suddenly attacked from behind by an enemy, they were given a miraculous victory.

Finally, the Israelites camped at the base of the holy mountain. There God did something He has not done before or since. He spoke—in the hearing of a

whole nation—His covenant, the Ten Commandments. After the Lord audibly spoke His law, He called Moses up Mount Sinai to receive a transcript written in stone. But God also gave him something else. While on the mountain with the Lord for 40 days and 40 nights, Moses received detailed instructions to build a beautiful, portable temple for God. It would be a small model of His actual dwelling place in heaven. This unique structure was to serve as a three-dimensional object lesson to the whole world of God's plan to save us from sin.



AMAZING FACTS

The Study

Fill in the blanks after reading each Bible text.

1. What did God ask Moses to build, and why?

Exodus 25:8 And let them make me a _____; that I may _____ among them.

2. What did God expect His people to learn from the sanctuary and its services?

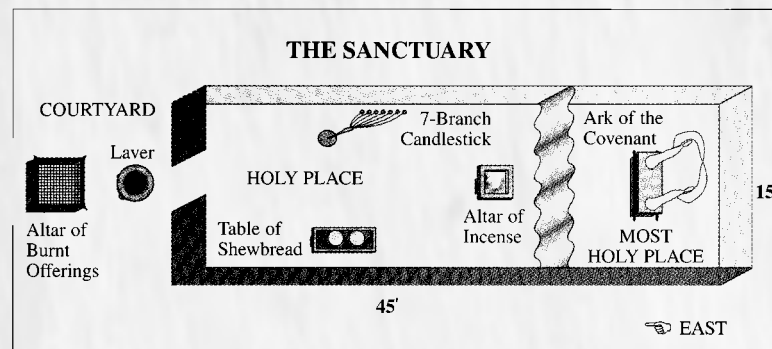
Psalms 77:13 Thy _____, O God, is in the sanctuary.

NOTE: God's way, or plan, of salvation was revealed in the earthly sanctuary. Everything in the sanctuary, or connected with its services, was a symbol of something Jesus would do in saving us. We cannot fully comprehend the plan of salvation until we understand the sanctuary and its services. It was a huge, 3-D object lesson explaining the process of salvation.

3. Where did Moses obtain the blueprints for the sanctuary?

Exodus 25:40 And look that thou make them after their _____, which was shewed thee in the _____.

NOTE: The sanctuary blueprints, with full specifications for its construction, were given to Moses by God on Mount Sinai (Hebrews 8:5). This was to be a microcosm of God's genuine sanctuary in heaven.



The first sanctuary, or tabernacle, was an elegant, tent-type structure (15 feet by 45 feet, based on an 18-inch cubit). There the supernatural presence of God dwelt and special services were conducted. The walls were made of upright acacia wood boards set in silver sockets and overlaid with gold (Exodus 26:15-19, 29). The roof was made of four layers of coverings—linen, goats' hair, rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins (verses 1, 7, 14). It had two rooms: the holy place (15 feet by 30 feet), and the most holy place (15 feet by 15 feet). Refer often to the above diagram as you review this lesson.

4. What furniture was in the courtyard?

A. Exodus 29:18 And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the _____: it is a _____ offering unto the Lord.

B. Exodus 30:18 Thou shalt also make a _____ of brass, ... and thou shalt put water therein.

NOTE: The altar of burnt offerings (Exodus 27:1-8) is where animals were sacrificed. It was located in the courtyard just outside the entrance of the sanctuary. This altar represented the cross of Christ. The sacrificial animal represented Jesus, the ultimate sacrifice (John 1:29). The laver (Exodus 30:17-21; 38:8) was a large wash basin of brass located between the entrance of the sanctuary and the altar of burnt offerings. There priests washed their hands and feet before entering the sanctuary or offering a sacrifice. The water represented baptism, cleansing from sin, and the new birth.

5. What three items of furniture were in the holy place?

A. Numbers 4:7 And upon the _____ of _____ they shall spread a cloth of blue, ... and the continual bread shall be thereon.

B. Numbers 8:2 When thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light over against the _____.

C. Exodus 30:1 And thou shalt make an _____ to burn _____ upon: of shittim wood shalt thou make it.

NOTE: The table of showbread (Exodus 25:23-30) represented Jesus, the living bread (John 6:51). The seven-branch candlestick (Exodus 25:31-40) represented Jesus, the light of the world (John 9:5; 1:9). The lamps of oil symbolized the Holy Spirit (Zechariah 4:1-6; Revelation 4:5). The altar of incense (Exodus 30:1-8) represented the prayers of God's people (Hebrews 5:7).

6. What special article was in the most holy place?

Exodus 26:34 And thou shalt put the mercy seat upon the _____ of the testimony in the most holy place.

NOTE: The only object in the most holy place (Exodus 25:10-22) was the ark of the testimony, a chest of acacia wood overlaid with gold. Atop the chest were two angels made of solid gold. The cover of the ark was called the mercy seat (Exodus 25:17-22), where God's presence dwelt. This spot symbolized God's throne in heaven, which is likewise located between two angels (Psalm 80:1; Isaiah 6:1, 2).

7. What was inside the ark?

Exodus 25:21 And thou shalt put the mercy seat above the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the _____ that I shall give thee.

Deuteronomy 10:4, 5 And he [God] wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten _____. ... And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables _____ the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the Lord commanded me.

NOTE: God wrote His covenant with His own finger on two tables of stone, and they were placed inside the ark. The mercy seat was above them, which signified that as long as God's people confessed and forsook their sins (Proverbs 28:13), mercy would be extended to them through the blood that was sprinkled on the mercy seat by the priest (Leviticus 16:15, 16). That blood represented the blood shed by Jesus to bring all people forgiveness and cleansing (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:22).

8.Why did animals need to be sacrificed in the Old Testament sanctuary services?

Hebrews 9:22 *Without shedding of _____ is no remission [forgiveness].*
Matthew 26:28 *For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the _____ of _____.*

NOTE: Sacrificing animals was necessary to help people understand that without the blood of Jesus shed on the cross, there could be no forgiveness of sin. The shocking truth is that the punishment for sin is death. Since all of us have sinned, we should all die—and we would have died, except that Jesus gave His perfect life by dying in our behalf to pay for our sins. The sinner brought his own sacrificial animal and slew it with his own hand (Leviticus 1:4, 5). It was bloody and shocking, impressing people with the solemn truth that sin caused Jesus’ death. Thus, they looked forward to the cross for salvation, while we look back to the cross for salvation. There is no other source of salvation.

9.When animals were sacrificed for sin, what happened to the sin?

Leviticus 1:4, 5 *And he shall put his _____ upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make _____ for him. And he shall kill the bullock before the Lord.*

NOTE: When the sinner placed his hands on the head of the animal and confessed his sins, the sins were symbolically transferred from the sinner to it. Thus, the animal became guilty and had to pay the death penalty. This represented Jesus bearing our sins.

10.When a sacrificial animal was offered for the entire congregation, what happened to the sin?

Leviticus 4:17 *The priest shall dip his finger in some of the blood, and _____ it seven times before the Lord, even before the _____.*

NOTE: The priest sprinkled some of the blood before the veil inside the sanctuary, thus symbolically transferring the sin from the people to the sanctuary. When Jesus ascended to heaven after His death, He offered His blood (as did the high priest of old) to show that our sins are forgiven when confessed in Jesus’ name (1 John 1:9).

11. What two sanctuary symbols does Jesus fulfill for us?

1 Corinthians 5:7 *Christ our _____ is sacrificed for us.*
Hebrews 4:14 *We have a great _____, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God.*

NOTE: Jesus serves as the sacrifice for our sins and as our heavenly high priest, thus accomplishing two miraculous things for us. The first is a complete life change called the new birth, with all the sins of the past forgiven (John 3:3-6; Romans 3:25). The second is power to live right in the present and future (Titus 2:14; Philippians 2:13). These two things make a person righteous, which means a right relationship exists between that person and God. There is

no way for a person to become righteous by works (his own efforts), because righteousness comes from grace that only Jesus can supply (Acts 4:12). This is righteousness by faith, which is the only true form of righteousness.

12. What six wonderful promises does the Bible give us about the righteousness offered us by Jesus?

- A. *He will cover our past sins and count us guiltless (Isaiah 44:22; 1 John 1:9).*
- B. *Jesus promises to restore us to God’s image (Romans 8:29).*
- C. *Jesus gives us the desire and power to do God’s will. (Philippians 2:13).*
- D. *Jesus will help us to do only the things that please God (Hebrews 13:20, 21; 1 John 3:22).*
- E. *He removes our death sentence by giving us credit for His sinless life and atoning death (2 Corinthians 5:21).*
- F. *Jesus assumes responsibility for helping to keep us faithful until He returns (Philippians 1:6; Jude 24).*

NOTE: Jesus is ready to fulfill all of these glorious promises in your life. Are you ready? Kneel down now and ask Him to take control of your life. He will not fail you.

13. Does a person have any role to play in becoming righteous?

Matthew 7:21 *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that _____ the _____ of my Father which is in heaven.*

NOTE: Yes, our role is to turn our hearts and will over to Jesus and permit Him to rule. We must trust Him with full control of our lives. Many believe that Jesus will take all who merely profess His name to heaven, regardless of their conduct. But this deadly belief is not true (Matthew 7:14).

14. What happened on the day of atonement?

Leviticus 16:30 *For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to _____ you, that ye may be clean from all your _____ before the Lord.*

NOTE: The day of atonement was a solemn day of judgment that took place in Israel once each year (Leviticus 23:27). Every sin had to be confessed and forsaken. Those who refused were on that very day cut off forever from the camp of Israel (verse 29). On that day, two goats were selected. One was the Lord’s goat and the other was the scapegoat, which represented Satan (Leviticus 16:7, 8). The Lord’s goat was slain and offered for the sins of the people (verse 9). Its blood was taken into the most holy place and sprinkled upon and before the mercy seat (verse 14). Only on this special judgment day did the high priest enter the most holy place. The sprinkled blood (representing Jesus’ sacrifice) was accepted by God, and the confessed sins of the people were transferred from the sanctuary to the high priest. He then transferred these confessed sins to the scapegoat, which was led into the wilderness and abandoned (verses 16, 20, 22). In this manner, the sanctuary was symbolically cleansed from the sins of the people, which had been transferred there by the sprinkled blood all throughout the previous year.

15. Did the old day of atonement foreshadow a cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary?

Hebrews 9:23 *It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the _____ things themselves with _____ sacrifices than these.*

NOTE: Yes! That day’s services pointed to the blotting out of sin by Jesus, our high priest in the heavenly sanctuary. He is there to mediate for His people and stands ready to blot out the sins of all who will exercise faith in His shed blood. The ancient day of atonement, like modern Israel’s Yom Kippur, foreshadowed the final atonement to be made for planet Earth. The final atonement leads to the final judgment, which will forever settle the sin question in the life of every individual. Our next lesson shows how God set the date for the heavenly judgment to begin. Exciting!

Your Response

Are you willing to place your life fully in Jesus’ hands so He can work the miracles needed to make you righteous?
ANSWER:_____

STORACLES OF PROPHECY

Cleansing the Temple

John 2:13-17

The Story . . .

Jesus was visibly grieved as He entered the temple courtyard and surveyed the turmoil. On every hand He saw pens filled with sacrifice animals and heard salesmen shouting and bargaining with visiting pilgrims for the highest price. The cooing of doves, bleating of sheep, and lowing of oxen mingled together with the odors of a barnyard to form a concert of chaos.

This bedlam was never God's plan. When Solomon built the first temple in Jerusalem, there was such respect for God's

house that not even the sound of a hammer could be heard during its construction. All the stones and boards were precut elsewhere, then brought to the temple site and quietly assembled (1 Kings 6:7).

Jesus found a handful of cords used for restraining the sheep and tied them into a small whip. Then the Son of God called out in trumpet-like tones: "Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise." John 2:16. "It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." Matthew 21:13. Moving from one booth to another, He then released the animals and overturned the moneychangers' tables.

Sensing they were in the presence of Omnipotence, the terrified merchants fled from the temple courtyard without looking back. Jesus wanted more than anything for people to have a clear concept of His heavenly Father's love and purity. This is why it broke His heart to see the holy temple turned into a flea market.

Many years earlier, the prophet Daniel had foretold of another time when the temple would be defiled, God's truth would be distorted, and His people oppressed. And once again, the Lord would come to cleanse His sanctuary.



AMAZING FACTS

The Study

Fill in the blanks after reading each Bible text.

1. Daniel had an amazing vision in which he saw a ram with two horns (Daniel 8:1-4). Whom does this ram represent?

Daniel 8:20 *The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of _____ and _____.*

2. Next Daniel saw a goat with a great horn between his eyes. What does this mean?

Daniel 8:21, 22 *The rough goat is the king of _____: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the _____ king. Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, _____ kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation.*

NOTE: The male goat represents Greece and the big horn is a symbol of its first ruler, Alexander the Great. The four horns represent the four generals who took over parts of the empire when Alexander died.

3. Then a little horn sprouts up from out of one of the four. What power did this "little horn" represent?

Acts 18:2 *Claudius [Caesar] had commanded all Jews to depart from _____.*

NOTE: The "little horn" that persecuted God's people, trampled holy things, and stood up against Jesus represented Rome—both pagan and papal. Rome is the only power that followed Grecia and became exceedingly great.

4. Daniel was told that this little horn would defile the sanctuary. How long until it would be cleansed?

Daniel 8:14 *Unto _____ thousand and _____ hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.*

NOTE: This 2,300-day period is the longest time prophecy in the Bible, but the starting point is not given until the next chapter—in Daniel 9:25.

5. How did Daniel respond when he saw the little-horn power persecute God's people and obscure the truth?

Daniel 8:27 *And I Daniel fainted, and was _____ certain days; ... and I was astonished at the vision, but none _____ it.*

NOTE: Daniel was so deeply grieved by what was to come upon God's people that he fainted and was sick for some time. But initially neither Daniel nor his friends understood the 2,300-day section of the vision.

6. In the next chapter, the angel explains the prophecy in greater detail. How long was the time period not previously described in the vision?

Daniel 9:24 _____ are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, ... to seal up the vision and prophecy.

NOTE: Several years after Daniel's vision about the 2,300 days, an angel of heaven flew quickly to his side to help him understand it. The angel also expanded the vision to include 70 prophetic weeks that were "determined upon," or allotted to, the Jews and the city of Jerusalem. God was giving His chosen nation another chance—a 490-year opportunity to accomplish its purpose of presenting the Messiah to the world (Daniel 9:23, 24).

7. What was the starting point for 2,300-day and 70-week time prophecies?

Daniel 9:25 *Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to _____ and to build _____ unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks.*

NOTE: The angel told Daniel to begin counting the 2,300-day and 70-week prophecies from the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. God's people were in captivity in the Persian empire at this time. The decree was made in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes, who began to reign in 464 B.C. (Ezra 7:7). Artaxerxes' decree in 457 B.C. was the only one that specified restoring and rebuilding Jerusalem.

8. The angel said that if you count 69 weeks from 457 B.C., you will come to Messiah the Prince. Did this happen?

Acts 10:37, 38 *That word, I say, ye know ... after the baptism which John preached; How God _____ Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power.*

NOTE: Yes, it did. Here is a fantastic miracle. Hundreds of years before Jesus was anointed with the Holy Ghost, the event was foretold in prophecy! "Messiah" is the Hebrew word for "anointed," and the word "Christ" is the Greek equivalent. Luke 3:21, 22 says this special anointing by the Holy Ghost took place at His baptism. Now here's the key. In Bible prophecy, one prophetic day equals one literal year (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6; Luke 13:32). Adding 69 weeks, or 483 prophetic days (69 x 7 = 483), to 457 B.C. brings us to the year A.D. 27.

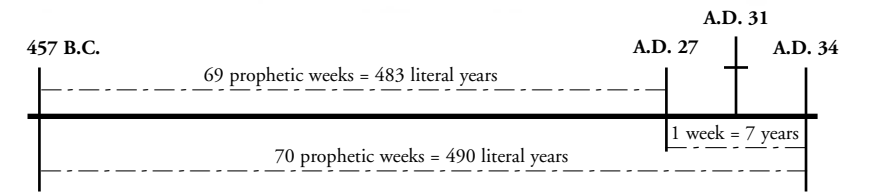
483 years
+ 457 beginning date
A.D. 26
+ 1 year for 1B.C.-A.D. 1 (there was no zero year)
A.D. 27

Jesus began His ministry as the Messiah after His baptism in A.D. 27, exactly 483 years after the decree given in 457 B.C. This is why Jesus began preaching, after His baptism, that "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand." Mark 1:15. He was speaking of the time prophecy in Daniel 9:25.

9.What was to take place next in the prophecy?

Daniel 9:26, 27 *After threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be _____, but not for himself... And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the _____ of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.*

NOTE: The prophecy next predicted that Jesus would be “cut off,” or crucified, in the middle of the last week of the 70-week prophecy. Counting three and one-half years from His anointing in the fall of A.D. 27 would take us to the spring of A.D. 31, which is precisely when Jesus was crucified. At the time He died, the temple veil was torn into two sections from top to bottom (Matthew 27:50, 51), indicating that Jesus had caused the sacrificial system to cease by His death as the Lamb of God. Please review the time line below:



10. Jesus told His disciples to preach first to which group of people?

Matthew 10:5, 6 *Go not into the way of the Gentiles, ... But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of _____.*

NOTE: Jesus insisted that His disciples preach first to the Jews, because they still had three and a half years remaining of their 490-year opportunity to accept and proclaim the Messiah. The prophecy in Daniel 9:27 said that Jesus would confirm the covenant, or the great plan of salvation, with many for one prophetic week (seven literal years). But Jesus was crucified in the midst of that final week allotted to His chosen nation, so how could He confirm the covenant with them after His death? The answer is found in Hebrews 2:3: “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.” Jesus’ disciples preached to the Jews for that final three and a half years, until the nation officially rejected the gospel message in A.D. 34 when Stephen, a righteous deacon, was publicly stoned. (See supplement entitled “The Floating Week.”)

11. What warning did Jesus give to His chosen people?

Matthew 21:43 *The kingdom of God shall be _____ from you, and given to a _____ bringing forth the fruits thereof.*

NOTE: Jesus had made it very clear that the special status of the Jewish nation would be revoked if the people persisted in rejecting the Messiah.

12. So what is the other “nation” spoken of by Jesus in Matthew 21:43, which would become His chosen people?

Galatians 3:29 *And if ye be _____, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and _____ according to the promise.*

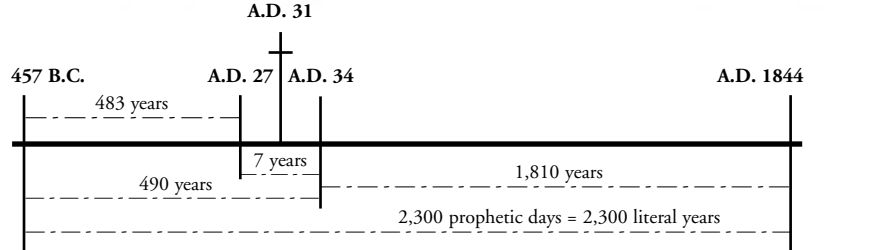
Romans 2:28, 29 *For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; ... But he is a _____, which is one _____.*

NOTE: As of A.D. 34 with the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:58, 59), the literal Jewish nation was no longer God’s only chosen nation. Because they consistently resisted God’s plan for them, the nation of Israel is no longer the central focus of end-time prophecy. Now all who accept Jesus are His chosen people, and the promises God made to literal Israel now also apply to spiritual Israel (Romans 9:6-8).

13. According to the angel who spoke with Daniel, what would happen at the end of the 2,300 years?

Daniel 8:14 *And he said unto me, Unto two thousand three hundred days; then shall the _____ be _____.*

NOTE: In A.D. 34, there remained 1,810 years of the 2,300-day prophecy. (Note dates in diagram below.) Adding 1,810 years to A.D. 34 brings us to the autumn of 1844. The angel said that at that time, the heavenly sanctuary would be cleansed. (The earthly sanctuary was destroyed in A.D. 70.) Jesus, our high priest in heaven (Hebrews 4:14-16; 8:1-5), began removing the records of sin from the heavenly sanctuary (Revelation 20:12; Acts 3:19-21) in 1844. This first phase of the judgment is called the pre-advent judgment because it takes place before Jesus’ second coming.



14. Whose cases are being considered in the pre-advent judgment?

1 Peter 4:17 *Judgment must begin at the _____ of _____.*

NOTE: This first phase of judgment considers only those who claim to be God’s children.

15. What will be examined in this first phase of judgment?

- A. Revelation 20:12** *The dead were judged out of those things which were written in the _____.*
- B. Ecclesiastes 12:14** *For God shall bring every _____ into judgment, with every _____ thing.*
- C. James 2:12** *They ... shall be judged by the _____ of _____.*

NOTE: The evidence in the judgment comes from books kept in heaven, which contain all the details of a person’s life. (See also Psalm 56:8.) The Ten Commandments, God’s law, is His standard in the judgment (Revelation 22:14).

16. Is God my accuser in the judgment?

Revelation 12:9, 10 *That old serpent, called the _____ ... was cast out into the earth. ... The accuser of our brethren is cast down, which _____ them before our God day and night.*

NOTE: No! Satan is your only accuser. Unfortunately, some Christians think Jesus is trying to convince the Father to spare us during the judgment, but Jesus said, “The Father himself loveth you.” John 16:27.

17. Must I stand alone in the pre-advent judgment?

- A. Jesus is our advocate** (1 John 2:1).
- B. Jesus is our judge** (John 5:22).
- C. Jesus is our faithful and true witness** (Revelation 3:14).

NOTE: Thankfully, no. In the judgment, Jesus is the Christian’s attorney, judge, and witness. If you live for Jesus, you can’t lose (Romans 8:1; Colossians 1:12-14)!

Your Response

If Jesus is your attorney in the judgment, He promises to win your case. Will you turn your life over to Him today?

ANSWER: _____

Supplement

This section provides additional information for further study.

The Floating Week

Some Bible students detach the last week (or seven literal years) of the 490-year prophecy given in Daniel and apply it to Antichrist’s work at the end of time and a seven-year tribulation. There is no Bible support for this practice.

- Let’s review a few facts:
- A. The 490-year prophecy is a continuous time period, as were the 70 years of exile for God’s people mentioned in Daniel 9:2.
 - B. The starting point for the last seven years of the prophecy was Jesus’ baptism (A.D. 27). This is why He began to preach, “The time is fulfilled.” Mark 1:15.
 - C. At the moment of His death on the cross, in the spring of A.D. 31, Jesus cried out, “It is finished.” The Saviour here clearly referred to the predictions of His death made in Daniel chapter 9. They are as follows:
 - 1. “Messiah” would be “cut off,” or crucified (verse 26).
 - 2. He would “cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease” by dying for all as the true Lamb of God (verse 27; 1 Corinthians 5:7; 15:3).
 - 3. He would “make reconciliation for iniquity” (verse 24).

His coming as the foretold Messiah, right on time, proved all dates of the entire 490- and 2,300-year prophecy to be flawless and complete.

STORACLES OF PROPHECY

A Tale of Two Women

1 Kings 3:16-28

The Story . . .

A hush fell over the royal judgment hall, and all eyes were fixed on King Solomon. His servants wondered how the young monarch would resolve this perplexing case.

Two single mothers were sharing a room, and each gave birth to a baby boy at about the same time. During the night, one of the mothers had accidentally turned over and smothered her son. When she awoke early and saw her child was cold and still, the distraught woman took her roommate's sleeping

baby to herself and laid her dead baby in its place. Later the other mother awoke, saw the dead baby, and began to wail with grief. But after examining the infant, she quickly realized that it was not her child. Across the room, she could see her roommate tightly clutching her baby.

Now both women stood before the king, tugging for possession of the living infant. "This child is mine!" one shouted.

"No, the dead baby was yours!" the other countered.

How would the king determine which was the true mother? Solomon interrupted their debate and told a guard to take a sword and divide the living infant in two. At first the soldier thought the king was jesting, but Solomon began

to glare at the guard's hesitation. Slowly he drew his sharp, gleaming sword and made his way toward the woman holding the baby. Suddenly the true mother threw herself at the king's feet and pleaded, "Let her have the child, but please do not slay it!" But the other woman said, "Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it." Now Solomon knew without a doubt who was the true mother.

In prophecy, a woman is a symbol of a church (Jeremiah 6:2). With so many churches in the last days, how can we distinguish the true, last-day church that has the living Son from the counterfeits? Like Solomon, we must use the sword of God's Word (Hebrews 4:12)!

The Study

Fill in the blanks after reading each Bible text.

1. How does Revelation picture God's true church?

Revelation 12:1, 2, 5 *A _____ clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with _____ cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. ... And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a _____ of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.*

NOTE: In Bible prophecy, God's church is symbolized by a pure woman (Jeremiah 6:2). In Revelation 12, this woman is clothed with the sun, moon, and stars—the natural light of God's creation. Jesus told the church, "Ye are the light of the world." Matthew 5:14. The sun represents the light of Jesus (Psalm 84:11; Malachi 4:2). The moon under her feet represents the types and shadows of the Old Testament sacrificial system. As the moon reflects the light of the sun, so the sacrificial system was helpful because it reflected the light of the Messiah to come (Colossians 2:16, 17; Hebrews 10:1). The 12 stars above her head symbolize the leadership of the church—12 tribes in the Old Testament and 12 apostles in the New Testament. The one who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron is Jesus (Psalm 2:7-9; Revelation 19:13-16).

2. Who is the "great red dragon," and what does he try to do?

Revelation 12:9 *And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the _____, and _____.*

Revelation 12:4 *The dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to _____ her child as soon as it was born.*

NOTE: The dragon is Satan, who at the time of Jesus' birth was working through the pagan Roman Empire. Satan influenced Herod, a ruler under Rome, to try to murder baby Jesus by killing all the infants in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:16).

3. What happens after Satan fails to destroy Jesus?

Revelation 12:5 *And her child was _____ unto God, and to his throne.*

NOTE: After His resurrection, Jesus ascended up to heaven and to God's throne (Acts 1:9-11), where He was beyond the reach of Satan.

4. After Jesus was caught up to heaven, what did Satan do to the church?

Revelation 12:13 *When the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he _____ the woman which brought forth the man child.*

NOTE: When Satan could no longer vent his hatred on Jesus, he decided to hurt Jesus by turning his fury against the church.

5. Where did the woman go during this terrifying period of persecution? How long did it last?

Revelation 12:6 *And the woman fled into the _____, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.*

NOTE: The woman (God's church) fled into the wilderness (the remote places of earth) to hide from her enemies. It is a well-known historical fact that during the Dark Ages, God's people fled to the caves and solitary places of earth, including the shores of America, to seek religious freedom and protection from papal persecution. The 1,260 days (also described in the Bible as 42 months or as three and a half years) refers to the terrible 1,260-year period of persecution during which millions died for their faith. During this time period, God's church was alive but was not identifiable as an official, visible organization. (See the supplement entitled "Years of Persecution.")

6. What are two other identifying marks of God's true church?

Revelation 12:17 *And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the _____ of God, and have the _____ of Jesus Christ.*

NOTE: God's remnant church, into which He is calling all His people, will keep God's Ten Commandments (including the Sabbath). It will also have the testimony of Jesus, which is the spirit, or gift, of prophecy (Revelation 19:10). God calls His end-time church "the remnant," because it is identical in doctrine and characteristics to the apostolic church. A "remnant" is the last remaining portion of a bolt of cloth. It is exactly like the first piece from the same bolt.

7. How did Jesus say that we demonstrate our love for Him?

John 14:15 *If ye love me, _____ my commandments.*

1 John 5:3 *For this is the love of God, that we keep his _____.*

NOTE: In our opening story, Solomon was able to identify the true mother by her genuine display of love. In the same way, God's true church will be recognized by its sacrificial love and its willingness to obey His commandments.

8. What three angelic messages will God's end-time church be preaching?

A. Revelation 14:7 *Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his _____ is come: and _____ him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.*

B. Revelation 14:8 *And there followed another angel, saying, _____ is _____, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.*

C. Revelation 14:9, 10 *And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the _____ and his image, and receive his _____ in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God.*



AMAZING FACTS

NOTE: These three angelic statements represent the three urgent messages that God’s church will preach before Jesus returns.

9.To whom will God’s church preach these messages?

Revelation 14:6 *Having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to _____, and kindred, and tongue, and people.*

NOTE: God’s end-time church will preach this great three-point message to every nation on earth.

10.What specifications has God given in His Word to help us positively identify His end-time church?

- A. *It will appear and do its visible work after it emerges from the wilderness in 1798 (Revelation 12:6, 13-17).*
- B. *It will teach the same truths the apostles taught, and all of its teachings will agree with the Bible (Revelation 12:17).*
- C. *It will keep the Ten Commandments, including the Bible Sabbath (Revelation 12:17).*
- D. *It will have the spirit of prophecy (Revelation 12:17; 19:10).*
- E. *It will proclaim God’s three end-time messages with a loud voice (Revelation 14:6-14).*
- F. *It will be a worldwide movement (Revelation 14:6).*
- G. *It will teach the everlasting gospel, which is salvation through Jesus Christ alone (Revelation 14:6).*

NOTE: Many lovely Christians are members of churches that do not meet the above seven specifications. However, no such church can be God’s remnant into which He is calling all His sincere children, because His end-time church must meet all seven specifications.

11.Jesus gives you these seven prophetic identification points and then says, “Go and find My church.” What does He promise regarding your search?

Luke 11:9 *Seek, and ye shall _____.*

12.How many church organizations in the world will fit these seven points?

Ephesians 4:5 *One Lord, _____, one baptism.*

NOTE: Only one church in the entire world fits all of these specifications—the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which is bringing you these seminar messages. It is right now preaching the great three angels’ messages of Revelation 14:6-12 all over the world. Millions are responding.

13.Many denominations call themselves Christian. Does that make them God’s true church?

Isaiah 4:1 *And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own _____ and wear our own _____: only let us be called by thy _____, to take away our reproach.*

NOTE: Bread is a symbol of the Word of God (John 6:35, 51, 52, 63), and apparel is a symbol of righteousness (Revelation 19:8). The seven women in this prophecy have their own bread (concept of truth) and want to keep their own clothing (righteousness). They do not want the spotless robes of Christ’s righteousness. All they want is to take the name of Jesus, probably because the Bible says, “There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Acts 4:12.

14.Once a person discovers God’s true end-time church, is it necessary to become a member?

Acts 2:47 *And the Lord _____ to the _____ daily such as should be saved.*

NOTE: Yes, membership in God’s end-time church is imperative. Notice how clearly God answers this question about membership:

- We are all called into one body (Colossians 3:15).
- That body is the church (Colossians 1:18).
- We enter that body by baptism (1 Corinthians 12:13).

It is just as imperative to enter God’s church today as it was to enter the ark in Noah’s day. The Lord says, “Come thou and all thy house into the ark.” Genesis 7:1.

15.How many ways of escape were there in Noah’s day?

Hebrews 11:7 *By faith Noah ... prepared an _____ to the saving of his house.*

NOTE: Jesus says that the time just before His second coming will be like Noah’s day (Luke 17:26). There will be only one way of escape, just as there was only one ark in Noah’s day.

16.Since there are many faithful Christians in other churches and since God has only one true remnant, what will happen to these sincere Christians?

John 10:16 *And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must _____, and they shall _____ my voice; and there shall be _____ fold, and one shepherd.*

Revelation 18:2, 4 *Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen. ... _____ of her, my _____, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*

NOTE: Jesus will call all of His faithful, honest followers to come out of Babylon. They will hear His voice, respond, and enter His one true, end-time church.

Your Response

Jesus is calling you today to enter the safety of His great end-time church. You are very precious to Him. Will you respond now to His call?

ANSWER: _____

Supplement

This section provides additional information for further study.

Years of Persecution

The 1,260 years of tribulation is repeatedly mentioned in the Bible, because historically it was the worst ever to face God’s people (Matthew 24:21). It is referred to as 1,260 days, 42 months, and three and one-half times, or years (Revelation 12:6, 14; 13:5; Daniel 7:25). Using the Jewish calendar, which had 360 days in a year, all three add up to the same amount of time—1,260 years. One prophetic day equals one literal year (Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34).

History clearly shows that the papacy was the power which persecuted for 1,260 years. The period began in A.D. 538, when papal power became supreme in Christendom according to the decree of Roman Emperor Justinian. In it, he acknowledged the bishop of Rome as the head of all churches. This letter became a part of Justinian’s Code, the fundamental law of the empire. The period ended in 1798 when Napoleon’s general, Alexander Berthier, took the pope captive. At least 50 million Christians died for their faith during this period of persecution.

Three Crucial Points

Three facts of utmost importance to God’s people are established in Revelation 12:10-12. These facts are:

- 1. Jesus defeated Satan, the accuser of the brethren, at the cross.
- 2. All of us can overcome him through the blood of Jesus and by sharing our testimonies.
- 3. The devil is infuriated because he knows that his time is short. We cannot expect him to behave like a gentleman. He is our bitterest enemy.

The message is that Jesus, who has defeated Satan, offers His matchless power to us as a free gift. With Jesus’ power in our lives, we cannot fail. Satan’s fury need not affect us. He is a defeated foe. He was defeated in the war in heaven and cast out. He was defeated by Jesus at the cross and lost his dominion. He will be defeated legally in his case in the judgment, and he will again be defeated when he attacks God’s holy city. Finally, he will suffer the defeat of being blotted from the face of the earth in the lake of fire. And, most wonderful of all, Jesus promises that he will be defeated in his bitter fight to destroy you and me. What a tremendous message of hope from Jesus!



STORACLES OF PROPHECY

Windows of Heaven

The Story . . .

Genesis 27:1-28

Jacob had never felt so destitute and alone—and it was all because he had been devious and greedy. First Jacob had bribed Esau, his elder twin, into selling his birthright. Then, with his mother's help, he tricked his blind father, Isaac, into giving him the paternal blessing that rightfully belonged to Esau.

Now Jacob was fleeing from home, partly to escape the murderous threats of his offended brother. He bowed his head

and cried when he thought of how all his grasping plans had backfired. Alone in the wilderness, with only a stone for a pillow and a stick for protection, Jacob tried to rest. He wondered if he would ever see his parents again—and if God would forgive him. Exhausted, Jacob drifted off to sleep. Soon he found himself bathed in the brilliant glow of a vivid dream. He saw a blazing light streaming from the open heavens, with a beautiful stairway spanning from the glory above to the earth below. There were countless shimmering angels traveling up and down this ladder.

Then Jacob heard the Lord speak from heaven and promise to bless him in his journey. The Lord also confirmed

with Jacob the same covenant He had made with Abraham and Isaac. When he awoke, Jacob fell on his knees and made a vow to abandon his greedy ways. He promised, "Of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." Genesis 28:22.

God accepted this vow and opened the windows of heaven so that when Jacob returned home 20 years later, he had become a very prosperous and generous man.



©Review and Herald



The Study

Fill in the blanks after reading each Bible text.

1. Where did Jacob learn the concept of returning a tenth to God?

Genesis 14:18, 20 And Melchizedek ... was the priest of the most high God. ... And he [Abraham] gave him _____ of all.

NOTE: Tithe is one-tenth of a person's income. In fact, the word "tithe" simply means "a tenth." Jacob's grandfather, Abraham, set an example many years earlier by giving a tithe to God's priest, Melchizedek.

2. What portion of our income belongs to God?

Leviticus 27:30 All the _____ ... is the _____.
it is holy unto the Lord.

NOTE: Technically, 100 percent of all we have belongs to God.

Psalms 24:1 The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

But God asks us to acknowledge that we believe it all belongs to Him by returning a tithe, or 10 percent of our increase.

3. What does God do with our tithe?

Numbers 18:21, 24 I have given the children of Levi all the _____ in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve. ... The _____ of the children of Israel, ... I have given to the Levites to inherit.

1 Corinthians 9:13, 14 Do ye not know that they which _____ about holy things _____ of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which _____ the gospel should live of the gospel.

NOTE: In the Old Testament, God directed that the tithe be used to support the Levites, who were His ministers. In 1 Corinthians 9:13, God says that just as the priests of old were paid from the tithe of the temple, so gospel ministers today should be paid from tithe given through the church.

4. Is the tithing system part of Moses' old law, which ended at the cross?

Genesis 28:20, 22 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, ... of all that thou shalt give me I will surely _____ the tenth unto thee.

NOTE: No! Both Abraham and Jacob gave a tenth of their income to God long before Moses' law was given. Because it pre-dated Sinai, we know that it was not part of the ceremonial law that ended at the cross. The law of tithing is God's plan for support of the ministry, and it remains in effect today.

5. But didn't Jesus condemn the tithing plan?

Matthew 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay _____ of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these _____ ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

NOTE: No. Jesus saw that the miserly Pharisees were counting out individual leaves and tiny seeds for tithe instead of taking it to the temple by the bushel. Therefore He rebuked them for being so exact in tithe while failing in judgment, mercy, and faith. He did not condemn them for tithing, but for ignoring the other great principles of Christianity. That is why Jesus said, "These ought ye to have done [speaking of tithing], and not to leave the other undone."

6. What amazing promise does God make about tithing?

Malachi 3:10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, ... and _____ me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not _____ you the windows of _____, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

NOTE: God is saying: "If you are doubtful, try tithing as an experiment. Test Me, and see if I won't return to you a blessing too vast for you to receive." Hundreds of thousands of tithepayers will tell you that it is true. You cannot outgive God!

7. God tells His people to bring all of the tithe into the storehouse. What does that mean?

Nehemiah 13:12 Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the _____.

NOTE: The storehouse is the treasury of God's church. (The Bible margin equates "treasuries" with "storehouses.") In Malachi 3:10, God refers to the storehouse as "mine house," which means His church, or temple. Other texts that refer to the storehouse as the temple, or temple treasury, are 1 Chronicles 9:26 (see margin); 2 Chronicles 31:11, 12 (see margin); and Nehemiah 10:37, 38. So it is obvious that the storehouse is God's church treasury.

8. When we tithe, who really receives our money?

Hebrews 7:8 And here men that die receive tithes; but there _____ [Jesus] receiveth them.

Colossians 3:23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the _____, and not unto men.

NOTE: We need to always remember that we are not returning our tithe to people, but to God. It belongs to Him. We need not worry about how the tithe is used if we give it to God. He is big enough to take care of His own money and to properly handle anyone who may be irresponsible in managing His funds.

9. In addition to my tithe, which belongs to God, what else does He ask of His people?

Psalm 96:8 *Bring an _____, and come into his courts.*
Malachi 3:8 *Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and _____.*

NOTE: The Lord asks us to give freewill offerings as an expression of our love for Him and our thanksgiving for His blessings.

10. How much should we give as offerings?

2 Corinthians 9:7 *Every man according as he purposeth in his _____, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.*

NOTE: The Bible does not set a specific amount. Each person decides how much to give for freewill offerings, as God impresses.

11. What test did Adam and Eve fail that we must pass if we expect to inherit God’s kingdom?

Genesis 3:3 *But of the fruit of the _____ which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall _____ eat of it, neither shall ye _____ it, lest ye die.*

NOTE: God told Adam and Eve they could eat the fruit of all the trees of the garden except one—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They were not to eat of that tree or even touch it, else they would die. God did not put an electric fence around the tree. Rather, He kept it where they could reach out and take the fruit. And they did, because they did not trust God. Today, God gives us all the same test. He says, “You can keep all the money that comes to you, except one tenth. That money is Mine. Don’t take it.” However, He leaves it where we can reach out and take it, if we so desire. But when we do, we repeat the sin of Adam and Eve. God did not need the fruit of the special tree. It was a test of their loyalty. Neither does He need our tithe. He owns everything! It is a test of our love, loyalty, and trust.

12. What commandment are we breaking when we refuse to return tithes and offerings to God?

Malachi 3:8 *Will a man _____ God? Yet ye have _____ me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.*
Exodus 20:15 *Thou shalt not _____.*

NOTE: God says those who are knowingly unfaithful in tithes and offerings are robbers. It is bad enough when men steal from one another, but it is a terrifying thought that people would dare to steal from God! It is also hard to believe that people would stoop so low as to steal money that God has designated for spreading the gospel to the lost.

13. What does God say will happen to those who knowingly rob Him of tithe and offerings?

Malachi 3:9 *Ye are cursed with a _____: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.*
1 Corinthians 6:10 *Nor _____, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.*

NOTE: Those who are not faithful in tithes and offerings are cursed, and unless they change, they will be shut out of God’s kingdom as thieves.

14. Why is covetousness so dangerous?

Luke 12:34 *For where your _____ is, there will your heart be also.*

NOTE: Covetousness is lethal because our hearts follow our investments. If my focus is on accumulating more and more money, my heart becomes covetous, grasping, and proud. But if my focus is on advancing God’s work, my heart becomes caring, loving, liberal, and humble. Our hearts inevitably follow our treasure. We must never forget that it was Judas’ greed and love for money that led him to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver (Matthew 26:14-16).

15. How do you suppose Jesus feels when we rob Him of tithes and offerings?

Hebrews 3:10 *Wherefore I was _____ with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart.*

NOTE: Jesus probably feels much as a parent would whose child steals money from his wallet. Losing the money is not the big thing. Rather, it is the child’s lack of integrity, love, and trust that is deeply disappointing. Surely none of us want to grieve the heart of our Saviour.

16. What other Bible principles does God share in regard to giving?

- A. 2 Corinthians 8:5** *They ... first gave their own _____ to the Lord.*
- B. Proverbs 3:9** *Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the _____ of all thine increase.*
- C. Proverbs 11:24, 25** *There is that scattereth, and yet _____; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The _____ soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.*
- D. Acts 20:35** *It is more _____ to _____ than to receive.*
- E. Luke 12:21** *He that layeth up treasure for _____ ... is not _____ toward God.*
- F. Luke 6:38** *Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and _____, shall men give into your bosom.*

G. 1 Corinthians 16:2 *Let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath _____ him.*

H. Deuteronomy 16:17 *Every man shall give as he is able, _____ to the _____ of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee.*

NOTE: Nine-tenths of my income with God’s blessing will go much further than ten-tenths without it. Incidentally, when God opens the windows of heaven, His blessings are not always financial. They may include such things as good health, peace of mind, answered prayers, protection, a close-knit and loving family, physical strength, ability to make wise decisions, a closer walk with Jesus, success in soul-winning, an old car kept running, etc. If we truly love Jesus, giving sacrificially for His work will never be a burden. Rather, it is a blessing—a glorious privilege that we will perform with great joy and satisfaction.

17. What did the ladder that Jacob saw in his dream represent?

John 1:51 *Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the _____ of _____.*

NOTE: Jacob saw a ladder that bridged heaven with earth, which symbolized the Son of man. In Malachi 3:10, God says that if we bring all the tithes into the storehouse, He will open for us the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing we can barely receive! Jesus is that blessing.

18. What is the greatest gift we can give to Jesus?

Proverbs 23:26 *My son, give me _____, and let thine eyes observe my ways.*
Mark 7:6 *This people honoureth me with their lips, but their _____ is far from me.*

NOTE: When Jesus has our hearts, He has everything else too.

Your Response

When we are faithful in tithes and offerings, Jesus becomes our partner in everything we attempt in life. Are you willing to invite Him to be your partner by returning tithes and giving offerings?

ANSWER: _____



STORACLES OF PROPHECY

The Daughter's Dance

Mark 6:17-29

The Story . . .

King Herod's wife, Herodias, hated John the Baptist. The desert-dwelling prophet had dared to call her an adulteress for leaving her husband Philip to marry his evil but wealthier brother. Now the wicked queen determined to use her influence over Herod to get even with John. First, she persuaded him to have John imprisoned. Then she asked to have John executed, but Herod refused. He knew that John was a true prophet and feared political backlash from the people.

Finally, Herodias developed a fool-proof scheme. She threw a party for Herod's birthday and invited all his friends and the nobles from his realm, then she arranged for her beautiful daughter Salome to dance in a seductive, captivating style. Herodias hoped that after Herod had a few glasses of wine, he would ask Salome what reward she wanted for her enchanting dance.

Her sinister plan worked. After Salome's dance, Herod made a pompous oath: "Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom." Mark 6:23. As the inebriated guests were applauding the king's generosity, the girl stood ready with her

reply. Then she shocked everyone by asking for the head of John the Baptist on a platter! Herod was stunned by the gruesome request, but all of his shocked friends were watching for his response. Afraid that he would appear weak if he refused, the proud king reluctantly gave the order. That very day the mighty prophet John was beheaded alone in prison.

This was not the first time that a mother and daughter team used the government to persecute God's people.



AMAZING FACTS

The Study

Fill in the blanks after reading each Bible text.

1. What other mother and daughter team persecuted God's people in the Old Testament?

1 Kings 18:13 _____ *slew the prophets of the Lord.*

2 Kings 11:1 *And when* _____ *... saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal.*

NOTE: In the Old Testament, Jezebel and her daughter Athaliah were known for violently controlling the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and for forcing pagan worship on God's people.

2. What is the second angel's message in Revelation 14?

Revelation 14:8 *And there followed another angel, saying,*
_____ *is* _____, *is fallen, that great city, because*
she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

NOTE: Revelation 14 contains an urgent three-point message that must reach the entire world before Jesus' second coming. In this lesson we will look at the second point of that message. God's indictment of Babylon is given because she has made all nations drunk with her intoxicating wine. This lesson will address some very straight, and perhaps disturbing, messages to both Catholic and Protestant believers. Remember that the second angel's message is from Jesus, the One we all love. Open your heart to His truth, for His only aim is to save and to bless you.

3. How does God symbolize Babylon in Revelation 17?

Revelation 17:18 *And the* _____ *which thou sawest is that*
great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

NOTE: In Bible prophecy, a woman symbolizes a church. A pure woman represents God's true church as described in Revelation 12. An unfaithful woman represents a church that has departed from the Scriptures. We can be certain who this fallen woman is, because Revelation 17:18 says she was ruling when Revelation was written. History tells us it was pagan Rome (Luke 2:1) that eventually turned over its authority, capital city, and power to papal Rome.

4. What other evidence from Revelation 17 proves that Babylon refers to papal Rome?

- A. *She is guilty of blasphemy (verse 3).*
- B. *She is dressed in purple and scarlet (verse 4).*
- C. *She is called the Mother (verse 5).*
- D. *She has harlot daughters who also are fallen (verse 5).*
- E. *She persecuted and martyred the saints (verse 6).*
- F. *She sits upon "seven mountains" (verse 9).*
- G. *She ruled over the "kings of the earth" (verse 18).*

NOTE: Papal Rome fits every description. Its headquarters is in Rome—"the city of seven hills." Scarlet is the color of cardinals' robes, and the pope often wears the royal color of purple at important functions. The Roman Catholic Church freely admits that during the Middle Ages, she persecuted the saints and ruled over the kings of the earth. (For evidence that the papacy is guilty of blasphemy, review Lesson 13.) God's symbolism fits perfectly—a fallen mother church whose fallen daughters protested and thus began to be called Protestants. Notice this quote from Father James A. O'Brien: "That observance [of Sunday instead of Saturday] remains as a reminder of the Mother Church from which the non-Catholic sects broke away."¹

¹*The Faith of Millions* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1974), p. 401.

5. How do the beasts of Revelation 13 and 17 compare?

Revelation 13:1 *And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven* _____ *and ten*
_____, *... and upon his heads the name of*
_____.

Revelation 17:3 *I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of* _____, *having seven*
_____ *and ten* _____.

NOTE: The beast of Revelation 13:1-10 and the beast of Revelation 17 are obviously the same. Both symbolize this Roman power. Revelation 17 points out the church-state coalition, with the church (the fallen woman) riding and controlling the state (the beast). Revelation 13 also portrays two beasts involved in forcing others to worship. The first beast is the same power as the "mother of harlots" described in Revelation 17. This lesson will soon reveal the identity of the second beast.

6. What is the meaning and origin of the word "Babylon"?

Genesis 11:4, 6, 7, 9 *Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven. ... And the Lord said, ... let us go down, and there*
_____ *[confuse] their language, that they may not understand*
one another's speech. ... Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the
Lord did there _____ *the language of all the earth.*

NOTE: The terms "Babel" and "Babylon" both mean "confusion." The name originated at the Tower of Babel, built by defiant pagans after the Flood. They hoped to build it so high that no future floodwaters could cover it. But the Lord confused their languages, which created such chaos that the project was abandoned. Babylon later arose to be an idolatrous world kingdom that persecuted God's people. In the book of Revelation, the term "Babylon" signifies a counterfeit religious kingdom that is an enemy of God's spiritual Israel.

7. How does God describe Babylon in urging His people to leave?

Revelation 18:2-4 *And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying,*
Babylon the great is _____, *is fallen, and is become the*
habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit. ...
_____ *of her, my people, that ye be*
not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

NOTE: God says that Babylon has fallen and has become the home of devils and evil spirits. He warns that her sins are so offensive that Babylon must be destroyed. God’s people must come out quickly, or else be destroyed with Babylon’s plagues.

8.Jesus repeatedly indicts Babylon for making the world drunk with her wine. What is this wine?

Revelation 17:4 *Having a golden cup in her hand full of* _____.

NOTE: Her wine cup is full of intoxicating lies (Proverbs 12:22), or false teachings that make people spiritually drunk. Here is a partial list of her beguiling lies:

- A. The Ten Commandments are not binding (see Lesson 6).
- B. Sunday sacredness (see Lesson 14).
- C. Secret rapture (see Lesson 3).
- D. Immortality of the soul (see Lesson 9).
- E. An eternal torment in hell (see Lesson 10).
- F. Confessing your sins to a priest (see Lesson 13).
- G. Counterfeit baptisms (see Lesson 11).
- H. A confusion of tongues (see Lesson 23).

The sad truth is that once Babylon’s messages are accepted, a person becomes spiritually drunk and virtually unable to understand what the Bible really says, because these false doctrines dull a person’s ability to comprehend the truth.

9.What power will support the beast in the end time?

Revelation 13:11, 12 *I beheld _____ coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.*

NOTE: Brace yourself! This second beast of Revelation 13 symbolizes the United States of America. Consider the evidence:

- A. *The time it arose.*
God described this power as rising up about the same time the first beast goes into captivity and receives its deadly wound (Revelation 13:10, 11). The United States of America arose about the time the papacy’s power was broken at the end of the 1,260 years, which was in 1798. America declared its independence in 1776, voted the Constitution in 1787, adopted the Bill of Rights in 1791, and was clearly recognized as a world power in 1798.

- B. *It arose from the earth.*
As we’ve studied before, the waters from which most kingdoms (beasts) arose represent a densely populated area (Revelation 17:15). The earth represents the opposite. The United States fits this point perfectly because it was established on a sparsely populated continent.

- C. *It had two horns like a lamb.*
In prophecy, a lamb represents Jesus and a horn represents power. The two great horns represent Protestant principles upon which America was founded—civil and religious liberty. The founding fathers fled from Europe to escape religious and political persecution. They established a society based on the principles of civil and religious freedom—“government without a king and religion without a Pope.”

10. According to the prophecy, what drastic change will take place in America?

Revelation 13:11 *And he _____ as a _____.*

NOTE: Speaking as a dragon means that the United States, under the influence of Satan, will reverse its original Protestant principles of the separation of church and state. It will pass religious laws forcing people to worship contrary to conscience or else be punished with economic sanctions (verses 16, 17) and finally death (verse 15).

11. What three powers will unite against God’s people in the end time?

Revelation 16:13 *And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the _____, and out of the mouth of the _____, and out of the mouth of the _____.*

NOTE: The dragon is Satan (Revelation 12:9), working through pagan religions. The beast of Revelation 13:1-10 is the papacy. The false prophet in Revelation 16 is apostate Protestantism in America, which is the same power as the beast of Revelation 13:11-17 that has two horns like a lamb but will later speak as a dragon. This is the power that does “great wonders” and “deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast.” Revelation 13:13, 14. (Compare with the description of the false prophet given in Revelation 19:20.)

12. Will these diverse organizations ever effectively unite?

Revelation 16:14 *For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the _____ of the earth and of the _____ world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.*

NOTE: Yes, God says they will unite. Notice that they are united in their work of spreading deception and building a confederacy against God’s people. The “battle of that great day of God Almighty” is the same event as the dragon making war with the woman’s offspring (Revelation 12:17).

13. What effective methods will this end-time coalition utilize?

Revelation 16:14 *For they are the spirits of devils, working _____.*
Revelation 13:13, 14 *And he doeth great _____, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And _____ them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do.*

NOTE: This end-time coalition will work mighty miracles by the spirits of devils, and almost the entire world will be convinced (Revelation 13:3) and deceived. Revelation 18:23 says, “By thy sorceries were all nations deceived.”

14. What will prevent God’s end-time people from being deceived?

Isaiah 8:20 *To the _____ and to the _____: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*

NOTE: God’s people will need to test everything by the Bible. They will not be deceived, because they will test the miracles and teachings to determine whether they come from spirits of devils or from the Lord.

Your Response

Today God is calling His people out of Babylon into the safety of His remnant church. He says that those who remain in Babylon will partake of her sins and receive her plagues. In Noah’s day, only eight people entered the ark God had provided for their salvation. All others perished. Today He provides His remnant church as an ark of safety, and millions are entering. Jesus is inviting you to “Come thou and all thy house into the ark.” Genesis 7:1. Will you say “Yes” to His invitation today?

ANSWER:_____

Supplement

This section provides additional information for further study.

How Powerful Are the USA and Rome?

Revelation chapter 13 points out that in the end-time, the papacy and the United States will team up to influence the entire world to worship the beast. Are these entities powerful enough to accomplish this?

The papacy is by far the strongest religio-political power in the world. Nearly every leading country has an official ambassador or state representative at the Vatican. The pope is revered and welcomed by virtually all countries. Former U.S.S.R. leader Mikhail Gorbachev said, “Everything which took place in Eastern Europe in recent years would have been impossible without the Pope’s efforts and the enormous role, including the political role, which he played in the world arena.”¹ The pope has made more than 50 world trips to achieve his goal of unifying the religious world under the papacy’s leadership by the end of this century.

America is now looked upon as the number one military power and center of influence. “[America is] the planet’s sole remaining superpower.”²

“America’s power will now determine all major global events.”³ Bible prophecy predicts with clarity that the United States of America and the papacy will join hands, and world events clearly show that the coalition is being formed.

¹*Toronto Star*, March 9, 1992, p. A-1.

²“The UN Obsession,” *Time*, May 9, 1994, p. 86.

³Jim Hoaglad, “Of Heroes ...,” *The Washington Post*, August 21, 1991, p. A-23.



STORACLES OF PROPHECY

Ten Times Wiser

Daniel 1:1-21

The Story . . .

When King Nebuchadnezzar besieged the city of Jerusalem, thousands of Jews were taken away captive to Babylon. The king instructed his servant, Ashpenaz, to select gifted young men from among the Jewish captives who would come to the palace for three years to learn the language and wisdom of Babylon so they could serve the king.

Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaël, and Azariah caught the attention of Ashpenaz and were taken to the king's palace. But there was a problem. The menu of rich meat and wine appointed for the young men contained many items forbidden by God's Word.

Without wanting to appear ungrateful, Daniel asked if he and his three friends could be given a vegetarian diet to eat and water to drink. At first the king's servant resisted their request. "You can't stay healthy by eating like that!" he exclaimed. "You'd get sick, and then the king would have my head." But Daniel gently persisted, suggesting a trial period of 10 days, after which their visible health could be compared with the young men who ate from the royal cafeteria.

This plan was agreed upon, and for 10 days the four young Hebrews drank

water and ate a simple vegetarian diet. At the end of the trial period, Daniel and his three friends "appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat." Daniel 1:15.

Three years later, these four young men were tested by King Nebuchadnezzar, and it was declared they were 10 times brighter than all the wise men in Babylon. The Bible tells us that Daniel lived to be approximately 100 years old. What helped give Daniel and his friends such profound wisdom, health, and long life?



AMAZING FACTS

The Study

Fill in the blanks after reading each Bible text.

1. What was the original diet that God designed for humans?

Genesis 1:29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing _____, ... and every tree, in the which is the _____ of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

NOTE: The word "meat" here simply means "food."

2. After Adam and Eve sinned, what supplemental food did God add to their diet?

Genesis 3:18 Thou shalt eat the _____ of the field.

NOTE: The original diet for the human race was a vegetarian diet of fruits, grains, and nuts. God added vegetables to Adam and Eve's diet after they sinned and could no longer eat from the tree of life.

3. Is God concerned with our physical health?

Matthew 4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and _____ all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

3 John 2 Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest _____ and be in _____, even as thy soul prospereth.

NOTE: The Bible teaches that our physical health is extremely important to God. Jesus spent as much time healing as He did teaching. There are several Bible principles we can follow to improve our health and lengthen our lives.

4. God promised the children of Israel that if they would serve and obey Him, He would remove all sickness from them. Did He keep His promise?

Psalms 105:37 He brought them forth ... and there was _____ one _____ person among their tribes.

NOTE: Just imagine! When God's people came into the promised land, there was not one sick or feeble person in the whole nation.

5. Why is our health so important to God?

1 Corinthians 6:19, 20 Your body is the _____ of the Holy Ghost. ... Therefore glorify God in your _____.

Romans 12:1 Present your _____ a living sacrifice, _____, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

NOTE: God wants our bodies to be His holy dwelling place. Therefore we must choose to make them a wholesome place for His residence.

6. What is a good Bible rule for healthful living?

1 Corinthians 10:31 Whether therefore ye _____, or _____, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

NOTE: We should strive to live so that all of our habits—even our eating and drinking—will glorify God.

7. Should Christians use alcoholic beverages?

Proverbs 20:1 Wine is a mocker, _____ is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

NOTE: Alcoholic beverages are clearly forbidden by Scripture. The word "wine" in the Bible can mean either fermented or unfermented grape juice. The same is true of the word "cider" today. Proverbs 23:29-32 gives the Bible description of fermented wine, and God says that we should not even look at it! The only wine Christians should use is "new wine," which is unfermented, sweet grape juice. **Isaiah 65:8** New wine is found in the cluster.

8. What will God do to those who defile their bodies?

1 Corinthians 3:16, 17 Ye are the temple of God. ... If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God _____.

Exodus 20:13 Thou shalt not _____.

NOTE: Any substance or unhealthful practice that damages the body or shortens one's life must be laid aside. Suicide by degrees is still suicide. This, of course, includes harmful drugs (such as tobacco in all of its forms) and the many drinks that contain a popular yet highly detrimental drug called caffeine. God says that He will destroy people who knowingly wreak havoc upon their body temples.

9. What mammals does God permit humans to eat?

Leviticus 11:3 Whatsoever parteth the _____, and is clovenfooted, and cheweth the _____.

NOTE: To make things simple for us, God has placed all living creatures into one of two categories: clean and unclean. He permits us to eat those that are clean but has declared the unclean creatures to be unfit for food. All mammals that are clean have two characteristics. They must: (1) have cloven hooves, and (2) chew the cud. For example, a pig has cloven hooves but does not chew its cud, so it is unclean.

10. What types of fish and seafood are clean?

Leviticus 11:9 These shall ye eat of all that are in the waters: whatsoever hath _____ and _____ ... them shall ye eat.

NOTE: Most fish are clean for food. However, eels, sharks, and catfish are among the exceptions. All creatures in the water that do not have both fins and

scales are unclean and should not be eaten. Examples include shellfish, turtles, frogs, shrimp, oysters, etc.

11. Which birds are unclean?

Leviticus 11:15, 16 *Every raven after his kind; And the _____, and the night _____, and the cuckow, and the hawk after his kind.*

NOTE: The list in Leviticus 11 indicates that birds of prey, carrion, and fish eaters are unclean. However, all the foraging birds such as quail, chickens, and turkeys are clean.

12. Are the laws about clean and unclean animals part of Moses’ ceremonial law, which ended at the cross?

Genesis 7:1, 2 *Come thou and all thy house into the ark. ... Of every _____ beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, ... and of beasts that are _____ by two.*

NOTE: No, God’s categories of clean and unclean beasts have existed since Creation. Noah was told to take clean beasts into the ark by sevens and unclean by twos. This was long before Moses’ law.

13. Does God say that eating unclean food is a serious offense?

Isaiah 66:15, 17 *For, behold, the Lord will _____ with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury. ... They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves ... eating _____ flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be _____ together, saith the Lord.*

NOTE: Yes! The Bible is too plain and clear to misunderstand. At His second coming, the Lord will destroy those who know what His Word requires, yet eat swine’s flesh (pork) and other unclean foods.

14. What is a good basic health rule for Christians?

1 Corinthians 9:25 *Every man that striveth for the mastery is _____ in all things.*

NOTE: Temperance means completely avoiding things that are harmful and using moderation in the things that are good.

15. Are the Bible health principles still practical today?

- A.** *Quarantine procedures control contagious disease (Leviticus 13:46).*
- B.** *Human-body waste should be buried (Deuteronomy 23:12, 13).*
- C.** *Washing the body and clothing controls germs (Leviticus 17:15, 16).*
- D.** *Moral living prevents sexual diseases (Leviticus 18; Proverbs 5:1-12; Colossians 3:5, 6).*
- E.** *Animal fat should not be eaten (Leviticus 3:17; 7:22-24).*

- F.** *Hatred and bitterness is detrimental to one’s health (Leviticus 19:17, 18; Proverbs 15:17; Hebrews 12:14, 15).*
- G.** *Overeating is harmful (Proverbs 23:2).*
- H.** *Our bodies need proper rest (Psalm 127:2; Mark 6:31).*
- I.** *Importance of work (Exodus 20:9, 10; 2 Thessalonians 3:10).*
- J.** *A positive attitude is good medicine (Proverbs 17:22; 1 Timothy 6:6).*
- K.** *Parents’ habits affect children (Deuteronomy 12:25; Exodus 20:5).*

NOTE: The health laws God gave to His people thousands of years ago were scientifically far ahead of their time. Only in recent years have we recognized how truly great are the benefits they offer!

16. Will people in heaven kill and eat animals?

Isaiah 65:25 *They shall _____ hurt nor _____ in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord.*
Revelation 21:4 *There shall be _____ more _____.*

NOTE: All that Adam and Eve lost when sin entered will be restored in God’s new kingdom, including the original vegetarian diet. There will be no slaughtering or devouring of animals in the new earth.

17. How can I make diet and health changes that will please the Lord?

Ezekiel 11:18-20 *They shall _____ all the detestable things thereof. ... And I will give them one heart, and I will put a _____ spirit within you; ... That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them.*

NOTE: When we decide to obey God’s health laws, He puts a new spirit within us that will give us the power needed to live healthfully (John 1:12).

Your Response

God honored Daniel and his friends for keeping His health laws, which are a very important part of Christian living. Are you willing to follow the health principles in God’s Word and to present your body a holy temple where His Spirit may reside?
ANSWER: _____

Supplement

This section provides additional information for further study.

Understanding Peter’s Vision

Many have tried to use Peter’s vision of the great sheet (Acts 10:9-28) to

justify eating unclean animals. They say it proves that Jesus taught His disciples it was acceptable to eat any living creature.

However, each time the sheet came down and Peter was asked to kill and eat the unclean animals, he responded, “Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.” Acts 10:14. Notice that even after three and a half years of listening to Jesus’ teaching, Peter had not received the slightest hint or impression that eating unclean food was permissible. It is also interesting to note that in his vision, Peter never took anything to eat from the sheet.

Peter’s vision of the sheet was never intended to sanctify the eating of unclean animals. Peter himself explains the meaning of the vision in verse 28: “God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” Again in verse 34, Peter summarized the point of the vision when he said, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.”

God’s message to Peter had to do with cleansing people, not animals. This vision was given to impress the Jewish disciples that they should not call the Gentiles unclean, and that the gospel was to be freely proclaimed to all peoples of the world.

Does Prayer Purify Food?

The warning in 1 Timothy 4:1-5 against a latter-day apostasy involves a number of heresies—following devils, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from certain foods. Perhaps the greatest misunderstanding has arisen over verse 4, where it is stated that “every creature of God is good.” This verse means that every created thing has been made for a purpose. But some suppose it means that every animal is fit to be eaten if it is earnestly prayed over and blessed by the prayer of thanksgiving. This would mean that praying over a buzzard, cockroach, mole, or bat would make it good for food. Such an interpretation would be absurd and dangerous. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” Galatians 6:7.

To prevent us from drawing any wrong conclusions, Paul hastened to add: “For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.” Verse 5. So the Word of God must first approve it, and then the prayer of thanksgiving will sanctify it to be eaten.

It is helpful to note that the word “meats” in the original language is not limited to flesh foods. The Greek word “broma” simply means “food.” We can know that Paul’s discussion does not involve biblically unclean animals, because the meats that some had forbidden were foods “which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.” Verse 3.

It is easy to find in the Scriptures a description of the food God created to be received with thanksgiving (Genesis 1:29; 3:18; Leviticus 11:1-22). This passage was written to those who “believe and know the truth.” God’s Word is the truth. Only those who “believe and know” His Word will be led to those things that are “sanctified” and created to “be received with thanksgiving.” Those who “sanctify themselves” while continuing to eat unclean meats will be destroyed at Christ’s second coming (Isaiah 66:15-17).



STORACLES OF PROPHECY

Voice in the Wilderness

Matthew 3:1-12

The Story . . .

Jesus said, "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." Matthew 11:11. What do we know about this solitary man whom Jesus called the greatest of the prophets?

When John began preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, people came from miles around to hear this powerful, fearless, and humble messenger. In glaring contrast to the religious leaders of the day, his life was marked with holiness and

simplicity. While the priests wore luxurious clothing, John wore a modest garment of camel hair with a leather belt. While they were feasting, John was fasting or eating locusts (carob pods) and wild honey. He refused to drink any wine or strong drink, that he might be filled with the Spirit of God (Luke 1:15). Rather than ornate synagogues, John chose the rivers and rocky valleys as his cathedral for preaching. Soon people were asking, "Could this man be Elijah?"

John did dress like the Old Testament prophet, but he was not Elijah reincarnated. The angel Gabriel had explained to John's parents before his birth that he would go "in the spirit and power of Elias [the Greek word for "Elijah"] ... to

make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Luke 1:17.

The key to John's ministry was that he would have the same power of the Holy Spirit as did Elijah to cause a revival among God's people. His special work was to preach repentance for sin and prepare people for Jesus' first coming.

The Bible says there will be an entire army of Elijahs and John the Baptists in the last days to do a similar work in preparing the world for Jesus' second coming. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." Malachi 4:5. (See also Joel 2:28-31.)

The Study

Fill in the blanks after reading each Bible text.

1. What was one secret of John's Spirit-filled life?

Luke 3:16 John answered, ... I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am _____ to unloose.

John 3:30 He must increase, but I must _____.

NOTE: The Spirit-filled life of John the Baptist was marked by unusual humility. There was a direct connection between John's powerful ministry and the complete surrender he had made to the Lord. It was John's highest joy to point others to Jesus rather than to himself. All he did was designed to bring glory to God's name.

2. Did John the Baptist read the Scriptures?

John 1:23 He said, I am the _____ of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the _____ Esaias [the Greek word for "Isaiah"].

NOTE: Yes! John quoted from the Old Testament as evidence that he had a solid grasp of the Scriptures. The Bible also tells us that John taught his disciples to fast and to pray often (Matthew 9:14). This is another testimony of his deep love for the Lord. In the same way, through our personal devotions and Bible study, we can come to know and love God and to receive of His Spirit.

3. Was John the Baptist willing to witness for Jesus?

John 1:29 The next day _____ seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, _____ the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

NOTE: By nature, John was a solitary soul (Luke 1:80). Yet he was willing to risk ridicule and even to lay his life on the line in order to point people to Jesus as Saviour of the world. In the same way, those who truly love the Lord today will be willing to set aside fear and convenience to witness for Jesus.

4. Was the straight preaching of John popular among the political and religious leaders?

Luke 7:30 The Pharisees and lawyers _____ the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

Luke 3:19, 20 But Herod the tetrarch, being _____ by him ... for all the evils which Herod had done, ... shut up John in _____.

NOTE: John boldly spoke out against the popular sins of the day that were indulged even by the religious leaders. God's last-day message of repentance and holiness will also be unpopular among most of the respected political and church leaders, but it will be biblical.

5. Does the Bible discourage the wearing of jewelry and fancy clothing?

1 Timothy 2:9 In like manner also, that women [and, of course, men] adorn themselves in _____ apparel, ... not with broided hair, or _____, or pearls or costly array.

1 Peter 3:3 Whose adorning let it _____ be that _____ adorning of plaiting the hair, and of _____ of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, ... even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

Isaiah 3:18-21 In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling _____ about their feet, ... The chains, and the _____, and the mufflers [veils], The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets [perfume boxes], and the _____, The _____, and nose jewels.

NOTE: Yes! John the Baptist wore simple, modest clothing—a good pattern for Christians to follow. The popular, sexually suggestive fads and fashions of today encourage a great deal of temptation and debt. God does not intend for us to dress in burlap; however, unduly expensive, flamboyant, or ostentatious clothing should not be part of a Christian's wardrobe. Although the wearing of jewelry is widely accepted in the world, it has a negative image in the Scriptures. You may not recognize all of the items mentioned in Isaiah 3:18-23, but people in other parts of the world do. Many of these pagan ornaments are now appearing in Western culture, as well.

6. Was there a connection between John's Spirit-filled life and his simple diet?

Luke 1:15 For he ... shall drink neither _____ nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the _____.

NOTE: Christians should completely abstain from all fermented beverages in order to keep their minds clear and to hear God's Spirit (Proverbs 23:31, 32; Habakkuk 2:15; 1 Peter 5:8).

7. Why is God concerned about what we eat and drink?

Judges 13:7 Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any _____: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death.

1 Corinthians 6:19 Know ye not that your _____ is the _____ of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God?

NOTE: There is a direct connection between what we eat or drink and our mental clarity, ability to resist temptation, and capacity to distinguish between right and wrong. Everything a Christian does—including what he eats and drinks—should be done to God's glory (1 Corinthians 10:31).



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AMAZING FACTS

8.What does the Bible say about worldly behavior?

James 4:4 *Whosoever therefore will be a _____ of the world is the _____ of God.*
2 Corinthians 6:17 *Come out from among them, and be ye _____, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.*
1 John 2:15 *If any man love the _____, the love of the Father is _____ in him.*
Romans 12:2 *Be not conformed to this _____: but be ye transformed by the _____ of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

NOTE: The Lord has called His people today to live exemplary lives as they help others prepare for Jesus’ second coming.

9.What should a Christian choose to think about?

Philippians 4:8 *Whatsoever things are _____, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are _____, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any _____, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*
Psalms 101:3 *I will set _____ wicked thing before mine _____.*

NOTE: John the Baptist commanded the people to abstain from all violence (Luke 3:14). For us, this would include watching violence as a form of entertainment. Jesus taught that sins of sex and violence originate in the thoughts and attitudes (Matthew 5:22, 28). Therefore, a Christian should avoid any TV programs, videos, or reading material that would encourage impure thoughts.

10.What type of music will a true Christian enjoy?

Psalms 40:3 *He hath put a _____ in my mouth, even praise unto our God.*
1 Samuel 16:23 *And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an _____, and played with his hand: so Saul was _____, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.*

NOTE: It is obvious that a great majority of the popular music in the world does not help us spiritually. Instead, it destroys our desire for heavenly things and often strengthens the lower nature. However, music can be a tremendous power for good. When King Saul was tormented by an evil spirit, the soothing music from David’s harp refreshed him and drove away the evil influence.

11. Is dancing good recreation for a Christian?

1 John 2:6 *He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to _____, even as _____ walked.*

Titus 2:12 *Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and _____ lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and _____, in this present world.*

NOTE: Most of the popular contemporary dancing is associated with worldly music and has a very strong sexual emphasis. In almost any situation we should ask, “What would Jesus do?” I think we all agree that our Saviour would not abandon His reason to swing body and limb to the beat of some syncopated rhythm.

12. Will a Christian play the lottery or gamble?

1 Timothy 6:10 *For the _____ of _____ is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many _____.*
2 Thessalonians 3:10 *This we commanded you, that if any would not _____, neither should he eat.*
Proverbs 28:20 *He that maketh _____ to be _____ shall not be innocent.*

NOTE: Gambling can be just as addictive as many drugs. Some have squandered entire family savings at casinos or on state lottery tickets. Most “get rich quick” schemes are associated with undue risk, unfair prices, and questionable ethics.

13. What should be the aim of God’s people today?

1 John 3:22 *We _____ his commandments, and do those things that are _____ in his sight.*
Ecclesiastes 12:13 *Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole _____ of man.*

NOTE: A person cannot live any way he wishes and finally be saved in God’s kingdom. This is one reason Jesus came to earth—to give us an example of holy living (1 Peter 2:21).

14. What makes it easy to obey God in the matters of lifestyle discussed in this lesson?

John 14:15 *If ye _____ me, keep my commandments.*
1 John 5:3 *For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his _____ are not _____.*
Psalms 40:8 *I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy _____ is within my _____.*

15. Why is the Christian life such a high calling?

1 Peter 2:9 *But ye are a _____ generation, a royal priesthood, an _____ nation, a peculiar people; that ye should _____ forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

NOTE: As ambassadors for Jesus, Christians do indeed have a high calling! John the Baptist helped prepare people for Jesus’ first coming, and God has called His people today to live holy lives as they help others prepare for Jesus’ second coming.

Your Response

Are you willing to be a unique “voice in the wilderness” and witness through a godly lifestyle to prepare others for Jesus’ second coming?
ANSWER: _____

Supplement

This section provides additional information for further study.

Ambassadors for Christ

When a person becomes a Christian, he or she is enlisted as an ambassador from a better kingdom. The Bible says, “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ.” 2 Corinthians 5:20.
The dictionary defines an ambassador as “a diplomatic official of the highest rank appointed and accredited as representative in residence by one government or sovereign to another, usually for a limited length of time.”
Ambassadors are just as important in the spiritual realm as they are in the political realm. Citizens of the kingdom of heaven are not like the citizens of this world. We have been sent into the world to demonstrate who Jesus is and what He is like. Through the Holy Spirit, we become His representatives—to reflect His image in everything from the way we talk and work to the way we eat and dress. In other words, when we become part of God’s spiritual kingdom, we should be living demonstrations of the government we represent. In 2 Corinthians 3:18, the Scriptures say that “we all ... are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”
We, the Church, are the hands and feet, the eyes and mouth, and yes, even the ears of Jesus in the world today. We are the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22, 23; 5:29, 30; Colossians 1:18). Before He ascended to heaven, Jesus told us, “As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.” John 20:21.

Every facet of our lives should be a reflection of the life and person of Jesus. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 5:16.

STORACLES OF PROPHECY

Proving the Prophets

1 Kings 22:1-40

The Story . . .

Ahab, the wicked king of Israel, wanted to recapture the town of Ramoth-gilead from the Syrians. But he needed help, so he asked good King Jehoshaphat of Judah to join his campaign against their common enemy. Jehoshaphat said he was willing to join forces with Ahab, but that they should first seek God's counsel.

Ahab had forsaken the Lord years earlier to worship the pagan god Baal, so he called in 400 hired prophets to come

before the two monarchs. With dramatic display, these false prophets said, "Go and fight the Syrians, and you will be victorious!" But King Jehoshaphat requested to hear from a true prophet of the Lord. Ahab said that there was one prophet of Jehovah left whose name was Micaiah, but he added, "I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." Verse 8.

At Jehoshaphat's insistence, Ahab reluctantly sent a servant to fetch Micaiah. The brave prophet came and made a very unpopular prediction. He told Ahab that he would die in the battle with Syria. Now Ahab faced a tough decision. Should he believe 400 prophets who say nice things, or one

lone prophet of the Lord?

Stubborn King Ahab persuaded Jehoshaphat to disregard the warnings of the prophet Micaiah and join him in the war. He thought he could outsmart the Lord by dressing in full armor and avoiding the front lines of battle. But Ahab learned too late that you can never escape the Word of God. During the battle, a stray arrow flying through the air struck Ahab in the joints of his armor, and he bled to death in his chariot.

Jesus warned that there will be many false prophets in the last days (Matthew 24:11). That is why we must know how to distinguish the true from the counterfeit. It may be a matter of life or death!



AMAZING FACTS

The Study

Fill in the blanks after reading each Bible text.

1. To whom does the Lord reveal His final plans?

Amos 3:7 Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the _____.

2. Will there be both true and false prophets in the last days?

Matthew 24:11 And many _____ prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

Acts 2:17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of _____ Spirit upon all flesh: and your _____ and your _____ shall prophesy.

NOTE: Yes, there will be both true and false prophets in the end time. The Scriptures also teach that prophets can be either men or women.

3. What types of false prophets are specifically condemned in the Bible?

- A. "One ... that useth divination [fortune teller]." Deuteronomy 18:10.
- B. "An observer of times [astrologer]." Deuteronomy 18:10.
- C. "An enchanter [magician]." Deuteronomy 18:10.
- D. "A witch [female psychic]." Deuteronomy 18:10.
- E. "A charmer [person who casts spells or charms]." Deuteronomy 18:11.
- F. "A consuler with familiar spirits [spirit medium]." Deuteronomy 18:11.
- G. "A wizard [male psychic]." Deuteronomy 18:11.
- H. "A necromancer [person who claims to consult with the dead]." Deuteronomy 18:11.

NOTE: Deuteronomy 18:9-12 says that all who do these things are an "abomination" to the Lord. For this reason, Christians should have nothing to do with them.

4. Will God's end-time church have the gift of prophecy?

Revelation 12:17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the _____ of _____ Christ.

Revelation 19:10 I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the _____ of _____.

NOTE: As we learned in Lesson 17, God's end-time remnant church has "the testimony of Jesus," which is "the spirit of prophecy." By comparing Revelation 19:10 and 22:9, we see that the angel defines John's "brethren" that have the spirit of prophecy as "the prophets" and "them which keep the sayings of this book." In 1 Corinthians 1:5-8, Paul writes that the church will have "the testimony of

Christ" and will "come behind in no gift" until Jesus' second coming. So God's last-day church will indeed still have the gift of prophecy.

5. In what ways does God speak to a true prophet?

Numbers 12:6, 8 If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a _____, and will speak unto him in a _____. ... With him will I speak _____ to mouth.

Zechariah 4:1 And the _____ that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep.

NOTE: The Lord speaks to His prophets by visions, in dreams, face to face, and through angels. Crystal balls, palm readings, tea leaf deciphering, star gazing, and claiming to talk with the dead are not God's methods of communicating with a prophet.

6. Are miracles definite evidence of a true prophet?

Revelation 16:14 For they are the spirits of _____, working _____, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world.

NOTE: No, miracles are not proof that someone is a true prophet. They prove only one thing—supernatural power. But supernatural power may come either from God or from Satan. That is why the Lord tells us: "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." 1 John 4:1.

7. What is the most important test of a prophet?

Isaiah 8:20 To the _____ and to the _____: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

NOTE: The "law and the testimony" was an Old Testament expression for "Bible." In other words, a message from someone who claims to have a prophetic utterance from God must be compared with the Bible. We must test the prophet by the Bible, and not the Bible by the prophet. Any true prophet of God will always agree 100 percent with Scripture. This is the true test.

8. What is the second test of a prophet?

1 John 4:2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that _____ is come in the flesh is of God.

NOTE: A prophet of God must acknowledge and teach the truth about Jesus Christ—that He was God in human form. True prophets must also exalt Jesus, not themselves. Most false prophets seek to draw attention away from God's Word and to their own ideas.

9.What is the third test of a prophet?

Matthew 7:16 Ye shall know them by their _____.

NOTE: This does not mean that the prophet will be perfect. God’s prophets have always had faults. However, there must be consistency between what true prophets teach and the lives they live.

10.What is the fourth test of a prophet?

Jeremiah 28:9 When the word of the prophet shall _____ to _____, then shall the prophet be known, that the Lord hath truly sent him.

NOTE: A true prophet will not make false predictions. If a prophet is of God, the things he or she says will come to pass. However, accuracy alone does not automatically qualify a person as a true prophet. Deuteronomy 13:1-3 warns that false prophets can give signs that will come to pass and then use their influence to lead people to follow other gods. A true prophet must lead people to worship God according to the Bible.

11.What three things does Paul command regarding prophecy?

1 Thessalonians 5:20, 21 Despise _____ prophesyings. _____ all things; _____ fast that which is good.

NOTE: Paul says that we are not to despise, or reject, the gift of prophecy. Rather, we must test a prophet’s messages by Scripture and follow what is good and true.

12.Whose counsel do we reject whenever we reject the words of a true prophet?

Luke 7:28-30 There is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: ... And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God. ... But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the _____ of _____ against themselves.

NOTE: When we reject the words of a true prophet, we reject the counsel of God. A solemn thought! The Bible tells us to listen to God’s prophets and promises that all who follow the counsel of a true prophet will prosper. 2 Chronicles 20:20 Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.

Your Response

Since God still speaks through prophets, and since a true prophet’s words are the personal “testimony of Jesus” to you, are you willing to test modern prophets by the Bible and follow the counsel of those who agree with Scripture? ANSWER: _____

Supplement

This section provides additional information for further study.

Modern-Day Prophet

In December of 1844, a group of young Methodist ladies were kneeling in prayer in Portland, Maine, when Ellen Harmon—a 17-year-old girl in frail health—received her first vision. As Ellen (who became Ellen White after her marriage to a young minister named James White) related what God had revealed to her, she continued to receive visions and dreams for about 70 years—until her death in 1915.

As was true for the biblical prophets, certain supernatural physical phenomena accompanied Ellen White during her visions. Like the prophet Daniel, she did not breathe while in vision and often initially lost physical strength (Daniel 10:8, 17). Some of her visions lasted as long as four hours, but she did not breathe the entire time. Doctors who examined her while she was in vision attested to this fact.

At other times, she was also given supernatural strength (Daniel 10: 18, 19). Though Ellen weighed only 95 pounds, witnesses saw her hold a 17-pound family Bible in her outstretched hand for 30 minutes while in vision. These and other physical phenomena indicate that there is something supernatural about the experience of a prophet. However, they do not tell us whether the prophet is from God or from Satan. When faced with a supernatural claim to the prophetic gift, Christians must test the claim by the Bible to see if it is true.

Applying the Four Biblical Tests

Let’s look together to see whether or not the life and ministry of Ellen White meet the four biblical tests of a true prophet.

First Test—Harmony with Scriptures

Read any one of Ellen White’s books, and you will discover that it consistently leads you to the Bible and is in total agreement with Scripture. However, she did not regard her writings as an addition to Scripture. Their purpose was to call the attention of God’s people to the Bible and bring them back to the Bible as the only source of truth. Notice Ellen White’s emphatic declaration that the Bible is the only rule of faith: “In our time there is a wide departure from their doctrines and precepts, and there is need of a return to the great Protestant principle—the Bible, and the Bible only, as the rule of faith and duty.”¹

She also wrote: “The written testimonies are not to give new light, but to impress vividly upon the heart the truths of inspiration already revealed. Man’s duty to God and to his fellow man has been distinctly specified in God’s Word; yet but few of you are obedient to the light given. Additional truth is not brought out; but God has through the *Testimonies* simplified the great truths already given and in His own chosen way brought them before the people to awaken and impress the mind with them, that all may be left without excuse.”²

Although Ellen White emphatically stressed that her writings were never to be considered part of the Bible, they are nonetheless inspired. Many of God’s greatest prophets—such as Elijah, Elisha, and John the Baptist—were inspired,

yet they did not write any books of the Bible. Ellen White’s writings may be described as a lesser light leading to the greater light, the Bible. They act as an inspired commentary on Scripture, but the Bible is still the supreme authority.

Second Test—Teach the Truth About Jesus

Ellen White’s books—such as *The Desire of Ages*, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, *Steps to Christ*, and *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*—all testify to her fulfillment of this test. She says nothing of herself in these volumes, but constantly points others to Jesus.

Third Test—A Godly Life

The press, commenting on the death of Ellen White, said: “The life of Mrs. White is an example worthy of emulation by all. ... She was a humble, devout disciple of Christ, and ever went about doing good. ... She was honored and respected by all who appreciate noble womanhood consecrated to unselfish labor for the uplifting and betterment of mankind. Her death marks the calling of another noted leader of religious thought and one whose almost ninety years were full to overflowing with good deeds, kind words, and earnest prayers for all mankind.”³

Fourth Test—Accurate Prophecies

The few prophecies of the future made by Ellen White can be easily validated. The following prediction reads like this morning’s newspaper, but was written before most modern means of travel were invented. “Disasters by rail will become more and more frequent; confusion, collision, and death without a moment’s warning will occur on the great lines of travel.”⁴

Ellen White lived during a time when doctors advocated smoking to benefit the lungs. Varying medical opinions existed, but no real scientific proof was available. Nutrition was an unknown science. Yet in this setting, Ellen White wrote volumes in the field of health and nutrition. Dr. Clive McCay, former professor of nutrition at Cornell University, said: “In spite of the fact that the works of Mrs. White were written long before the advent of modern scientific nutrition, no better overall guide is available today.”⁵

The Bible predicted that in the last days the prophetic gift would appear. Evidence declares that Ellen White met every Bible specification for a true prophet. We would encourage you to obtain and read some of her writings and follow the biblical injunction to “despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” 1 Thessalonians 5:20, 21.

¹*The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1950), p. 204, 205.
²*Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1949), Vol. 2, p. 605.
³*Star* (St. Helena, California), July 23, 1915.
⁴*Messages to Young People* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1930), p. 90 (reprinted from article in *The Signs of the Times*, April 21, 1890).
⁵Clive M. McCay, “A Nutritional Authority Discusses Mrs. E.G. White,” *Review and Herald*, February 26, 1959, p. 10.

STORACLES OF PROPHECY

A Jar of Oil

2 Kings 4:1-7

The Story . . .

Elisha could see that the young widow was desperate. She threw herself at the old prophet's feet and sobbed, "The creditor is coming to take my two sons to be his slaves!" The woman's husband had died unexpectedly and left her with a huge debt. In Bible times, a lender had a right to repossess property and even take children as payment if a family could not pay the bills (Job 24:9).

"What do you have in the house?" Elisha asked the distraught mother.

"I have nothing in the house but a jar of oil," she replied. Little by little she had handed over all the furniture and valuables in her home to the cruel creditor until nothing remained but her two boys and this little jar of oil. Olive oil was considered a most basic essential. It was used for lighting, heating, cooking, and healing.

Elisha told the widow and her boys to go and borrow as many empty vessels as possible from their neighbors. They should bring them home, shut the door, and then pour the oil from her little jar into the empty containers. They did as Elisha instructed, and a wonderful miracle occurred. The oil in the little jar continued

to flow out until all the vessels in the house were filled!

"What shall we do now?" the young mother asked the prophet.

"Sell the oil, pay your debt, and then you and your sons can live on the surplus," he said. This woman and her boys left Elisha's presence rejoicing and free because of the miracle of the oil.

The Lord wants to free you from a ruthless creditor named Satan. This miracle will happen when He fills your cup to overflowing with His special oil!



AMAZING FACTS

The Study

Fill in the blanks after reading each Bible text.

1. In the Bible, what is symbolized by a vessel and oil?

- A. Acts 9:15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for _____ is a chosen _____ unto me.
- B. 1 Samuel 16:13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the _____ of the Lord came upon David.

NOTE: The Bible teaches that God is the potter and we are the clay vessels (Jeremiah 18:1-6; Romans 9:20, 21). Everyone is created with a purpose. Oil is used throughout the Bible as a symbol of God's Spirit. Pure olive oil was used to keep the lamp burning bright in the Hebrew temple as an illustration of how His Holy Spirit illuminates our minds. It is God's desire to fill all of His people with His Spirit (Joel 2:28).

2. Is the Holy Spirit an impersonal force, or is He God?

Acts 5:3, 4 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the _____? ... thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

Ephesians 4:30 And _____ not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

NOTE: The apostle Peter declared that lying to the Holy Spirit is lying to God. Furthermore, Jesus told us to baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19, 20), thus indicating that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead, placed in full equality with the Father and the Son. The Bible also states that we can grieve the Spirit, which means that He has emotions. He is not simply an impersonal force. In Scripture the Holy Spirit is referred to as Comforter, Holy Ghost, Holy Spirit, Spirit of truth, Spirit of the Lord, the seven Spirits of God, and simply the Spirit. All of these titles denote personality.

3. What is the primary work of the Holy Spirit?

John 16:13 When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will _____ you into all truth ... and he will _____ you things to come.

John 14:26 He shall _____ you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

NOTE: Jesus promised to be with us always, and it is through the person of the Holy Spirit that He is with us and in us (John 14:17).

4. What is the one sin that cannot be forgiven?

Matthew 12:32 But whosoever speaketh _____ the Holy Ghost, it shall _____ be forgiven.

NOTE: Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is not a single offence, but a progressive resistance to truth that results in a final rejection of God's will (Hebrews 10:26, 27). The conscience is seared when a person repeatedly opposes and neglects the impressions of the Holy Spirit until he no longer hears His voice. Therefore, a person who has a haunting fear that he has committed the "unpardonable sin" very likely has not.

5. What are some of the gifts of the Spirit a person might receive?

1 Corinthians 12:8-10 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of _____; to another the word of _____ ...; To another _____ ...; to another the gifts of _____ by the same Spirit; To another the working of _____; to another _____; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of _____; to another the interpretation of tongues.

NOTE: When the Holy Spirit comes into our lives, He brings different gifts. Not everyone receives the same gifts (1 Corinthians 12:29-31). Scripture often emphasizes the importance of being filled with the Spirit. Jesus taught in John 3:5 that "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Sadly, the Holy Spirit and His work is often misunderstood. Some people are taught that the Holy Spirit is an impersonal force; others deny His influence in people's daily affairs; and still others are taught that everyone who is filled with the Holy Spirit must speak in tongues.

6. Which spiritual gift became a subject of controversy in the Corinthian church?

1 Corinthians 14:1, 2 Desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. For he that speaketh in an unknown _____ speaketh not unto men, but unto God.

NOTE: As in the days of the early Christian church, the gift of tongues has again become a subject of confusion and controversy. Therefore we have dedicated a large portion of this lesson to explaining what the Bible teaches about this spiritual gift.

7. How did Jesus promise to help His disciples preach the gospel to all the world?

Mark 16:17 They shall speak with new _____.

NOTE: In the Bible, the word "tongue" simply means "language." Jesus' disciples were bright men, but most were uneducated. In order to help them take the gospel to the world, Jesus promised to give them a supernatural gift to speak foreign languages they had not formerly studied or known.

8. What happened when the disciples received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit?

Acts 2:1, 4 And when the day of _____ was fully come,

... they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other _____, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

NOTE: Pentecost was a Jewish holy day that was celebrated 50 days after Passover. Devoted Jews from all over the world came to Jerusalem to worship. Through His Spirit, God gave the gift of tongues at this time to empower the disciples to share the gospel with these people in their native languages. Those who believed then carried the good news back to their respective countries.

9.What did these foreign Jews experience when the Holy Spirit was poured out?

Acts 2:11 We do _____ them speak in our _____ the wonderful works of God.

NOTE: It is sometimes suggested that the gift of tongues is a “heavenly language” understood only by God or by those with the gift of interpretation. The Bible clearly shows that both the disciples and those listening understood what was being preached—the wonderful works of God.” There are only three examples of speaking in tongues given in Scripture. We have looked at the first; now let’s examine the last two for a clearer picture of this gift.

10.What happened when Peter preached to Cornelius and his household?

Acts 10:44, 46 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. ... For they heard them speak with tongues, and _____ God.

NOTE: Cornelius was of the Italian band (Acts 10:1), while Peter was a Jew and spoke Aramaic. History also tells us that the servants in a Roman home could be from anywhere in the world. Consequently, there were language barriers at this meeting. However, when the Holy Ghost fell on Cornelius and the members of his household, the men who accompanied Peter could understand them speaking in languages other than their native tongues. They heard them “magnify God” in these languages. When later reporting this experience to church leaders in Jerusalem, Peter said, “The Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.” Acts 11:15, emphasis added. Cornelius and his household received the same gift of tongues as did the disciples on the day of Pentecost. They spoke languages that could be understood.

11.What happened when Paul preached to 12 Ephesian disciples?

Acts 19:6 The Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and _____.

NOTE: Paul, who was the most educated and widely traveled of the apostles, spoke many languages (1 Corinthians 14:18). When the Holy Spirit came upon these 12 men of Ephesus, Paul and Luke could understand them prophesying in languages they had not previously known.

12.What does the Bible say about speaking in a tongue that is not understood?

1 Corinthians 14:9 Except ye utter by the tongue words _____ to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken?
1 Corinthians 14:19 I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might _____ others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.

NOTE: Paul repeatedly explains that the purpose for a tongue (language) is to communicate or to teach truth. A Greek word for “unknown” is not found in any original Bible manuscripts, but was supplied by translators to indicate that the language was foreign to the majority present. The church at Corinth was a melting pot of many different nationalities, and sometimes the services became confusing when members would pray, testify, or preach in languages unknown to the others present. This is why Paul commanded them to keep silent, if speaking in a tongue unknown to the majority, unless someone was there to interpret (1 Corinthians 14:28). The lesson for us is that we should not speak or pray in a tongue that others present cannot understand.

13.What was one of the main characteristics of ancient Babylon?

Genesis 11:7, 9 Let us go down, and there _____ their language, that they may _____ understand one another’s speech. ... Therefore is the name of it called _____.

NOTE: The tower of Babel is the place where the languages of the world were first confounded. The Hebrew word for both Babel and Babylon is “babel,” meaning “confusion.” In Revelation 18, God calls His people out of spiritual Babylon. One of the characteristics of spiritual Babylon is a confusion of tongues.

14.Does the Spirit fill those who deliberately break God’s commandments?

John 14:15-17 If ye love me, keep my _____. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, ... Even the Spirit of _____.
Acts 5:32 The Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that _____ him.

NOTE: The tremendous power of the Holy Spirit cannot dwell in those who refuse to obey God’s commandments.

15. Paul emphasized that we should desire which spiritual gift?

1 Corinthians 14:4, 5 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. ... Greater is he that _____ than he that speaketh with tongues.
1 Corinthians 14:12 Forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the _____ of the _____.

NOTE: In spite of the fact that Paul attached greater importance to the gift of prophecy than to the gift of tongues, some are now teaching that every person who is filled with the Holy Spirit will speak in tongues. Out of more than 25 Bible examples of God filling His people with the Spirit, only three times is the gift of tongues connected with it. Of the 14 New Testament books written by the apostle Paul, he mentions tongues in only one—1 Corinthians. Of the 27 books in the New Testament, only three make any reference at all to speaking in tongues.

16.What is the main reason why God fills people with His Spirit?

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive _____, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be _____ unto me.
Acts 4:31 They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the _____ of God with _____.

NOTE: God fills us with His Spirit to give us power for witnessing!

17. Is it possible to tell whether or not a person has been filled with the Holy Spirit?

Matthew 7:20 Wherefore by their _____ ye shall know them.

NOTE: We determine that a person has received the baptism of the Holy Spirit not by the gifts of the Spirit, but by the fruits of the Spirit, which are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (Galatians 5:22, 23).

18.How can I receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Luke 11:13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that _____ him?

NOTE: Just as Jesus had the Spirit without measure, we may ask God to fill our vessels to overflowing, but we must first be willing to empty ourselves by surrendering our hearts.

Your Response

Jesus is waiting and yearning to pour the precious oil of the Holy Spirit into your life. Would you like to ask Him now to take possession of your mind and heart?
ANSWER: _____

STORACLES OF PROPHECY

Above the Crowd?

Matthew 26:31-75

The Story . . .

Peter loved Jesus, but he also loved the approval of the crowd. During the last supper when Jesus warned the apostles that they would all forsake Him, Peter jumped to his feet and brashly vowed that even if all others would be offended, he would never forsake Him. Jesus replied, “This night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.” Verse 34.

Peter meant well, but he did not recognize the pride in his own heart. Later that night when the mob came to arrest Jesus

and all were watching, Peter pulled out a sword to defend His Master. But just a few hours later at His trial, as Peter was being mocked by the enemies of Jesus, he denied three times that he even knew Him. Each time Peter became more bold, until he finally denied Him with swearing and cursing (Verse 74).

Then the rooster crowed. At that very moment, Jesus was in the judgment hall, being beaten by the guards. Peter saw Jesus turn and look at him with love and compassion, and it broke his heart. “And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.” Luke 22:61, 62.

From that day forward, Peter was a different man. He no longer lived to please the crowd, but was determined to please only God. After his conversion, when brought before the Jewish council and threatened with beating if he continued preaching about Jesus, Peter fearlessly answered, “We ought to obey God rather than men.” Acts 5:29. Peter forever proved his loyalty and love for Jesus when he chose to be crucified upside down by the Roman Emperor Nero rather than to deny his Lord again.



AMAZING FACTS

The Study

Fill in the blanks after reading each Bible text.

1. How does God determine whether or not we are on His side?

Matthew 7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall _____ into the kingdom of heaven; but he that _____ the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Romans 6:16 Know ye not, that to whom ye _____ yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye _____; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

NOTE: It is a simple principle that our loyalties are determined by whom we listen to. If we say we are servants of God but take our instructions from the devil or the world, we are deceiving ourselves.

2. When the commands of God and men conflict, whom did Peter say we should obey?

Acts 5:29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey _____ rather than men.

NOTE: After Peter was converted and fell in love with Jesus, he told the Jewish council that his first allegiance was to God. We have learned that in the last days, the laws of the beast and the world will conflict with the laws of God. We must choose now to obey the laws of God—regardless of the consequences.

3. How do we best demonstrate our love for God?

John 8:31 If ye continue in _____, then are ye my disciples indeed.

John 14:15 If ye love me, _____ my commandments.

1 John 2:4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his _____, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

NOTE: The best demonstration of a person's love for Jesus is to do His will, and the law of God is the most perfect expression of His will (Psalm 40:8).

4. According to Jesus, why did the hypocrites act religious?

Matthew 6:2 That they may have _____ of men.

Matthew 6:5 That they may be _____ of men.

NOTE: The Bible tells us that “man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.” 1 Samuel 16:7. A genuine Christian will be much more concerned about what God thinks of him than what the world thinks.

5. Is it generally safe to follow the crowd?

Exodus 23:2 Thou shalt _____ a multitude to do evil.

Matthew 7:13, 14 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to _____, and _____ there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

1 Peter 3:20 In the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein _____, that is, eight souls were _____ by water.

NOTE: History seems to indicate that the crowd almost always makes the wrong decisions. It was the crowd that wanted to stone Moses and go back to the slavery of Egypt (Numbers 14:4-10). It was the crowd that cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him.” Luke 23:21. And it will be the majority—not the minority—who receive the mark of the beast in the last days (Revelation 13:16).

6. How does Jesus feel when we put the traditions of men before the commandments of God?

Mark 7:7, 9 Howbeit in _____ do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. ... And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your _____ tradition.

7. Will true Christianity be popular in the last days?

Matthew 24:9 Ye shall be _____ of _____ nations for my name's sake.

2 Timothy 3:12 Yea, and all that will live _____ in Christ Jesus shall _____ persecution.

Revelation 12:17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make _____ with the _____ of her seed.

Revelation 13:15 And cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be _____.

NOTE: In the last days, Satan and his followers will wage an all-out war against God's genuine, Bible-believing children.

8. Is it possible to serve both God and the crowd?

Matthew 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will _____ the one, and _____ the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.

Matthew 12:30 He that is not with me is _____ me.

NOTE: In this battle between Christ and Satan, there is no neutral territory. It is impossible to ride the fence as a spectator. If we are not cooperating with Jesus, we are in fact helping the devil.

9. Is it safe to love a friend or family member more than Jesus?

Matthew 10:37 *He that loveth father or _____ more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter _____ than me is not worthy of me.*

Luke 14:26 *If any man come to me, and hate [love less dearly] not his father, and mother, and _____, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own _____ also, he cannot be my disciple.*

Matthew 12:50 *For whosoever shall do the _____ of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and _____.*

NOTE: Jesus indicates here that the best way to help reach and save our loved ones is to put Him first in our lives. It is always a tragic mistake to put our natural affections for family or friends before our first obligation to our Saviour and Creator.

10. Is it wise to put a prosperous career or earthly treasures before Jesus?

Matthew 16:26 *For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole _____, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his _____?*

Luke 12:15 *A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the _____ which he possesseth.*

NOTE: The belief that happiness and security come from a good job and nice things is a deadly deception. On the contrary, Jesus said, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” Mark 10:25.

11. Is it safe to continue disobeying God’s will after He has shown us the truth?

Hosea 4:6 *My people are _____ for lack of knowledge: because thou hast _____ knowledge, I will also reject thee. ... Seeing thou hast forgotten the _____ of thy God, I will also forget thy children.*

Hebrews 10:26 *For if we sin wilfully _____ that we have received the knowledge of the _____, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.*

12. What will happen to those who persist in rejecting the truth?

2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 *And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that _____; because they received not the _____ of the _____, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should _____ a lie: That they all might be damned who believed*

not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.
John 3:19 *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men _____ darkness rather than light, because their deeds were _____.*

NOTE: The Scriptures teach that Jesus is the truth (John 14:6). To accept or reject the truth in any degree is to accept or reject Jesus.

13. Will those who persecute God’s people in the last days believe they are doing the right thing?

John 16:2 *Yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will _____ that he doeth God _____.*

14. How did Peter describe those who have learned the truth but refuse to follow it?

2 Peter 2:21, 22 *For it had been better for them _____ to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to _____ the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her _____ in the mire.*

15. Does following Jesus involve some struggle and self denial?

Luke 9:23 *If any man will come after me, let him _____ himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*

16. Is it safe to procrastinate or postpone a decision to follow Jesus?

Hebrews 4:7 *To day if ye will _____ his voice, harden not your hearts.*

Hebrews 2:3 *How shall we escape, if we _____ so great salvation?*

2 Corinthians 6:2 *Behold, _____ is the accepted time; behold, now is the _____ of salvation.*

NOTE: The best time to listen to God’s voice is when you are hearing it, and the best time to do God’s will is when He is showing you His will. Satan’s favorite trap is to deceive people into thinking that they have plenty of time to make this decision. The devil knows that the convicting voice of God’s Spirit will grow quiet if ignored. Untold millions will be lost who were sincerely planning to follow Jesus someday in the future, but “someday” never came.

17. What benefits come as a result of accepting and following the truth?

Psalms 119:165 *Great _____ have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.*

John 8:32 *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you _____.*

1 Peter 1:22 *Seeing ye have _____ your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit.*

NOTE: Tremendous peace, security, and freedom come into the hearts and lives of those who receive and obey the truth.

18. What question did Jesus ask Peter three times?

John 21:17 *He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, _____ thou me?*

NOTE: This is the most important question when it comes to a full and complete surrender to the will of God. Do you love Him?

Your Response

The truth will never be popular in this sinful world, and the crowd will almost always take the easy road. But Jesus has shown His incredible love for you by giving His life to pay the price for all your sins. The Lord has a great plan for your life. This is why He has revealed His truth to you. Will you now return that love by giving Him all your heart, by choosing to accept Him as your Lord, and by following where He leads?
ANSWER: _____

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