

The Intercontinental Church of God

Bible Correspondence Course

LESSONS 1 — 4

Lesson One

God

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT AND KEY ISSUES

God is the eternal, omnipresent, all-powerful, supreme Creator and Sustainer of the entire universe. God is one, composed of spirit and comprising a family revealed as presently consisting—of God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son. God is a loving, kind, merciful being who wants to share His magnificent existence by reproducing Himself through man.

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

The most fundamental need facing mankind is to recognize the existence of God and to understand His character, personality and master plan. Man will continue to flounder without real knowledge of the purpose of life until he gains an accurate and clear picture of his Creator.

The question of whether God's existence can be proved is one that has troubled mankind throughout millennia, stirring heated debate with arguments on both sides. Unfortunately, the form most of these debates have taken is for one person to try to forcibly "prove" God's existence to another by attempting to formulate arguments or logic so airtight as to exclude any other possibility. This approach does not work. No argument, no matter how carefully thought out or logically constructed, can absolutely "prove" God's existence to one who will grasp at virtually any other unlikely explanation or remote possibility. No person can make another person believe in God! The best we can do is present credible proof for those with open minds.

God's existence can be totally proved to oneself. One who has individually and personally experienced the biblical miracle of conversion, or who has received miraculous answers to his prayers, has truly and irrefutably proved God's existence to himself and cannot be shaken from

this proof by any argument, whether theological or philosophical, as long as he stays in contact with God.

God's existence is also powerfully demonstrated by the creation. The reality of the material universe, the existence and interdependence of life, and laws governing the universe require a Creator, a Life-Giver and a Sustainer. Thus David said: "The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament showeth His handiwork" (Ps. 19:1). Likewise, Paul records that "the invisible things of him [God] from [looking up at] the creation ... are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20).

The Bible reveals that the one God is a family composed of two members—the Father and the Son, Jesus Christ. John's gospel states that these two have dwelt together from eternity and that they share power, glory and majesty, although Christ is second in authority (John 1:1-14). From the biblical revelation we infer that God resembles man in certain aspects but is composed of spirit instead of flesh (Jn. 4:24), radiating spiritual energy and power. The few references to God's "appearance" emphasize His incredible brilliance (Rev. 1:14-16; Dan. 7:9-10).

God is the total embodiment of love; He is the originator of law and the giver of every good and perfect gift. His many titles and names (Creator, Counselor, Healer, Self-Existent One, Father, Almighty, etc.) reveal His special qualities of character and personality. Yet it is God's mercy and compassion that are paramount in giving full hope and confidence to fallible human beings who are sinners all.

Perhaps the most outstanding single characteristic of God is His total, unselfish love. This one quality is so much a part of God's entire makeup that He is in actuality its total personification and hence "is love" (I Jn. 4:8). God has demonstrated His love for us in many ways: through the sacrifice of His Son (Jn. 3:16), by forgiving our sins,

by strengthening our will and determination in the face of trials, and in countless other ways. But perhaps the single greatest expression of God's love is that He has devised a plan to share Himself by reproducing Himself through man.

This master plan is indeed the greatest imaginable truth and the very reason why the entire universe was created. All human beings from all times shall have a full opportunity to become members of God's family. Mankind has been created in God's image (Gen. 1:26) and put on earth to reject evil and thereby to build character so that each human being can be spiritually born into God's kingdom and family. Thus God's family of two revealed persons shall grow to billions, and God's greatness shall be multiplied by as many times as the incredible number of sons God shall add to His family.

The God of the Bible is both cosmic and personal. He is the Creator of the universe and at the same time is concerned for each human being. He sustains galaxies and controls the full scope of human history at the same time as He focuses His intense concern on each man, woman and child who seeks Him. God is involved with the whole of mankind: in the rise and fall of governments, in the sweep of generations, in the ultimate direction of human society. Yet this same being is intimately involved in the personal lives of human beings of every social stratum, race and intellect. God is merciful to sinners; He is compassionate and deeply desires that we attain the greatest possible happiness and success.

I Thess. 5:9 asserts "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 8:19 states that the entire creation "waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." God intends for all mankind to succeed at sonship. For now, God rules the spiritual and material universe from His throne in heaven, although His mind and Spirit reach everywhere. Beside Him sits His Son, Jesus Christ, and the two of them, surrounded and aided by myriads of angels of differing ranks and authority, direct the working out of their master plan. Eventually, God's throne will be moved to the "new earth" of Revelation 21 from where He and His billions of sons will rule His Kingdom and the unfathomable vastness of the infinite universe for all eternity.

SUMMARY

READ THESE SCRIPTURES IN YOUR OWN BIBLE.

The physical Creation proves that a great designer God has made this universe including all mankind. Read Romans 1:20.

We are made in the physical image of the Creator God. Read Gen 1:26.

The entire universe waits for the sons of God to be born into His spiritual family. Read Romans 8:19.

God wants all of mankind to eventually succeed. Read I Thess. 5:9.

QUESTIONS

1. How many members of the God Family are revealed in the Bible? 1, 2 or 3?
2. Jesus Christ is God. True or False?
3. Is the word "trinity" found anywhere in the Bible? Yes or No?
4. God's number one purpose is to _____ [do what?]
5. No person can make another person believe in God. True or False?
6. God's existence can be totally proved to _____ [whom?]
7. What major thing that is all around us can prove God's existence?
8. Creation requires a _____ [what?]
9. Laws require a _____ [what?]
10. David said in Ps 19:1, "The _____ declare the glory of God, and the _____ showeth His handiwork."
11. God is a _____ [what?]
12. God in form resembles _____ [what?]

13. God is a family presently composed of ___ members. [how many?]
14. According to 1 John 4:8 God is _____ [what?]
15. Mankind has been created in whose image? _____ .
16. Is God going to add to His family in the future? Yes or No?
17. Not everyone who has ever lived will have an opportunity to be in the Kingdom of God. True or False?
18. Which scripture shows that God has a plan for us and wants us to succeed? _____ .
19. Romans 8:19 states that the entire creation, "waiteth for the manifestation of the ___ of ___."
20. God is presently ruling from heaven. In the future He will rule the Universe from _____ [where?]

Lesson Two

Bible

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT AND KEY ISSUES

The Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God, the repository of His plan of salvation and the record of His participation in history. The Bible is God's revelation of knowledge that man cannot discover for himself. It is the foundation of knowledge and the guidebook to life. The Old and New Testament comprise God's written Word, which forms the basis of Christianity as taught by the Church and as practiced by the individual Christian.

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

The Bible is God's written revelation to mankind. It contains God's instructions to man and the record of God's interaction with mankind. The Bible provides the answers to mankind's fundamental questions of life. It is the revelation of an omniscient, omnipotent and loving God; it reveals who God is, and what His plan and purpose for human beings is.

The Bible exists to provide man with essential knowledge, which he could not learn apart from divine revelation. Thus, the Bible includes the fundamental principles of how man should live, how he should govern his own life to generate success and happiness, and how to work with his fellow man to achieve peace and harmony. But at its foundational core, the Bible provides the indispensable knowledge of how man may gain salvation

and eternal life, knowledge that he is incapable of discovering for himself (I Cor. 2:7-11). As the repository of this vital information, the Bible is God's basic handbook for mankind.

The Church of God believes the Bible to be divinely inspired (II Tim. 3:16), the revelation of the missing dimension in man's knowledge, by the Supreme Authority of the universe. The Church regards the Holy Bible as the receptacle of God's essential theological knowledge, basic, accurate, and complete in its original form. Whatever shortcomings therefore may be present in contemporary biblical manuscripts—because human instruments were writers and copyists, because some translators lacked knowledge of the original languages, or because of the complexities and vagaries implicit in the transmission of the various texts—all together have not substantially concealed the intent nor overshadowed the direct inspiration of the basic biblical message as we have it today.

Jesus' reference to "the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms" [or writings] gives credence to the Old Testament. The New Testament gives credibility to the Old Testament. The Old Testament was the written authority quoted by the New Testament writers. The Old Testament was the foundation of the theology taught in New Testament times. Much of the New Testament quotes or paraphrases the Old Testament. Read the following scriptures in your own Bible. (Matt 16:14, Luke 3:4, Luke 11:29, Luke 24:44, John 12:38, Acts 2:16, Acts 8:30, Acts 15:15-17, 21, Acts 24:14, Acts 26:22, Acts 28:23-25, Rom.1:2)

The New Testament rests on the foundation of

the Old Testament. The two parts of God's Word fit together. The New Testament expands and clarifies certain newer applications of the Old Testament (2 Tim 1:5, 2:15) such as circumcision of adult gentiles. See Acts 15.

Essential to the teaching of the Church is the fact that the Bible can be proved to be the written Word of God. Note some scientific proof in the book of Isaiah. Isaiah, thousands of years before modern telescopes knew that the world was round (Isa. 40:22). Job also knew that our earth was suspended on nothing (Job 26:7). It was thousands of years until science learned that the world was not flat and floating in outer space. Bible writers could not have known these facts apart from the inspiration of the Creator God. The Bible was clearly correct when mankind was wrong. Further, note the historical accuracy of Daniel 11 centuries ahead of the events. Commentaries are amazed at the accuracy and details revealed about the Greek Empire, 331-146 B.C., several centuries before the events. Daniel also predicted the coming united European Empire of the end time thousands of years in advance. This will be the last revival of the Holy Roman Empire.

The foremost proof that God's Word is precisely what it claims to be is that it works in one's life. The proof of obedience is the Bible's best stamp of divine authorship. Adherence to its principles, laws and concepts bring about success and happiness in one's own life, which is ultimately the most critical ratification of its divine inspiration. Only one who sincerely seeks to apply the biblical way to his own life will eventually learn that the practical instructions, timeless wisdom, spiritual depth and living laws come from a Supreme Being, and not merely from fallible, mortal men. Once a person has accepted the concept of the Bible containing the inspired Word of God, he is able, by appreciating the intricate yet harmonious interaction of all parts of the Bible, to conclude in faith that the whole Bible, all scripture, is precisely what it claims to be—"inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness" (II Tim. 3:16). The Christian will also conclude that even those parts of the Bible that are by their very nature unable to be "proven" yet in a mathematical or scientific or historical sense (e.g., as yet unfulfilled prophe-

cies) form part of the vehicle of its message, and are accurate in their proper context. We cannot discount the importance of faith.

The Church, of course, acknowledges that the Bible does not claim to be a textbook of comprehensive world history, science and technology, medicine or any other non-theological discipline. Nonetheless, the Bible is the Word of God, and as such, is the foundation of all knowledge, as well as being the storehouse of salvation.

Fulfilled prophecy is likewise an important aspect of God's Holy Word. Only God can predict and bring to pass events of the future (Isa. 41:21-24). Only the Creator God could predict the name and actions of Cyrus long before his birth (Isa. 45:1). Only He could tell the intricate and accurate events outlined in Daniel 11 or foretell in detail about the coming of His Son as Savior of the world. Many of the details of Christ's life and death were written by Old Testament prophets many centuries in advance. While faith plays a role in assessing the significance of already fulfilled prophecy in proving the Bible, there can be absolutely no doubt regarding as yet unfulfilled prophecy. When the complex sequence of events culminating in the triumphant return of Jesus Christ to earth occurs, there will be no question whatsoever that the God who foretold it all in biblical prophecy far ahead of time is the same being who inspired the entirety of the Bible.

The Bible alone claims absolute preeminence over all other books esteemed by mankind and challenges all mankind by its claims of purity (Ps. 12:6; Prov. 30:5), scope and completeness (Rev. 22:18-19). The challenges of the God of the Bible (Is. 41:21-23) are powerful and direct. Its prophecies for the future return of Jesus Christ and the establishment of the world-ruling Kingdom of God are straightforward and unmistakable.

The Bible is also great literature, with many literary forms and devices—poetry, prose, allegory, epic, parable, history, even humor. It is often open and frank, and yet at other times it is discreet and obscure. The Bible exposes the weaknesses of its heroes, but calls them the friends of God. It shows the glory and power of the Creator through His many miracles but it shows Him to be intimately concerned with the smallest details of human lives. It holds out the answers to the riddles of

life, yet hides enough of God's nature and the universe to tantalize us and draw us further along in a profound growth process.

The Bible not only shows the common heritage of human nature, but enables us to understand the process whereby we may overcome the destructive elements within us and attain our God-given potential. The Bible is many books yet one, a superlative example of *e pluribus unum* ("one composed of many"). This remarkable unity of design is one of the unique characteristics of the Bible. Another is its internal consistency in its diversity, combining to form a coherent composite.

The authors of the various biblical books came from differing backgrounds, lived in disparate environments and were diverse in their personalities, education and professions. They wrote in different styles, from different standpoints, to different audiences and at different times. Yet the continuing themes God inspired are the same. God used all their various and contrasting perspectives to shape and to emphasize the same basic truth. From Genesis to Revelation we read of the same God, the same massive plan being unfolded and developed, with each book augmenting, supporting and complementing that which has gone before. This unitary focus is due to the God who initiated, organized and inspired the entire Holy Scriptures. Although many different men played their part as they were moved by His Spirit (II Pet. 1:20), the Bible is in reality God's Word and not man's.

This is the only factor which could explain the uniqueness and remarkable coherence of the Bible. It is obvious. Dozens of writers spanning a period of over 1500 years from Moses to John, of such dissimilar traits and characteristics could never have achieved that unity as a result of human effort alone. Yet the unity is there, not as the product of numerous human minds, but of one mind—the mind of God—interacting with, and directing, the grand sweep of biblical authors in many unlikely forms, but always in such a way that their own personal emotions, feelings, personality and individual writing styles were employed. God inspired the message, but it was conveyed through language and vocabulary that was peculiar and natural to each man. The Bible is thus a human vehicle through which God has chosen to convey

His revelation to mankind.

Seldom can one biblical teaching be fully understood in isolation. There is an essential interdependence between nearly all biblical doctrines. Each must be understood in light of all the others. The reason for this is the inherent unity of the biblical focus and the coherent thread of its message. Proper biblical understanding must be achieved by visualizing and comprehending the full sweeping scope of its message that only the whole Bible can project.

One of the ways to begin to comprehend the unifying flow of the whole Bible is to follow its primary themes all the way through. Of all these, surely the most consistent, decisive and relevant, is Jesus Christ. He, in essence, is the focal point of the entire Bible. He is the personality around whom everything revolves. Jesus Christ was the creator of all things (Col. 1:16); the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the Rock of Israel as Messiah (Isa. 9:53) and Lawgiver (Isa. 33:22), and exemplified throughout the New Testament as Savior and King. He is the Redeemer of all mankind, the supreme Lawgiver and consummate Teacher. He was the firstborn from the dead and is the Captain of our salvation, our constant intercessor and merciful High Priest. Jesus Christ is now the active head of God's Church and is prophesied throughout the entire Bible to return to earth as King of kings and Lord of lords to set up the Kingdom of God for all eternity.

Perhaps one of the most basic statements of how God has revealed Himself to man is found in Hebrews 1:1-2: "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days He has spoken to us by a Son."

This passage evinces several important things about God's communication to man. First, God's message comes in many various forms. Second, that message is also mediated by human beings. This means that the divine Word comes to us in a human vehicle. Even Jesus Christ, the divine Son, was Himself in the flesh when He gave many of His teachings; furthermore, those teachings were not written down by Him but by His human followers.

God has deliberately hidden much of His important truth from mankind so that the full progression, and eventually resolution, of human his-

tory would proceed according to God's timetable. As a result it is not man's fault that he doesn't understand the Bible. Even the prophets of old didn't always grasp the meaning of their own biblical statements (e.g. Dan. 12:8); and they surely didn't comprehend the fullness of the mystery of the purpose of human life (Matt. 13:17; Eph.3:4-5). Jesus Himself spoke in parables so that the common people would not understand what He was saying (Matt. 13:10-11); He was teaching His disciples not the masses (v. 10-17), since God's plan did not yet call for the vast majority of people to be called and converted.

God must open a person's mind in order for him or her to understand the fullness of His truth. It is, of course, possible for human beings to learn many aspects of the Bible on their own, utilizing the mechanisms of intellect and the tools of scholarship. Yet God has so designed the Bible and the human mind that even with the most intense effort men cannot fully grasp the profound spiritual depth of the scriptures without the active involvement of the Spirit of God. We should pray and ask God to open our minds and hearts to His truth. The mind of man cannot understand the things of God—the mysteries of God—without the supernatural help from the Spirit of God (I Cor. 2:7-14). Since human language is always inadequate to break through the boundaries of spiritual reality and truth, a perceptive spiritual understanding of the Bible requires the direct intervention and action of the Holy Spirit "bearing witness with our spirit" (Rom. 8:16), thereby effecting a change in the mind of the individual. Only God can make this decision to open our minds through His Spirit. It makes no difference how vehemently a human being desires to understand the Bible, nor how hard he studies it. Though such study will produce much knowledge, this knowledge will remain physically oriented and bound, forever missing the vital key of spiritual enlightenment; Paul wrote, "So it depends not upon man's will or exertion, but upon God's mercy" (Rom. 9:16); so it is with true biblical understanding.

The biblical message is gained from the Bible as a whole, not from reading a verse or two in isolation or otherwise "proof-texting." What may seem to be a blanket statement in one passage can be greatly qualified elsewhere. The picture given

by one book may be somewhat altered in the light of the teachings in another. One must read and understand the full spectrum of biblical doctrine in general in order to properly understand almost any specific element in particular.

The various books of the Bible were not written in a vacuum. To achieve a deeper understanding of their teachings, one must strive to grow in the knowledge of the history and background of the Bible, and the cultures in which they arose.

Even though the Bible always stands at the foundation of Christian belief, the Church can still come to decisions under the guidance of the Holy Spirit which were not specified in the pages of the Bible itself. For example, just as Moses modified the statutes and judgments of Israel for use in an agrarian society. And just as Paul made decisions that he did not learn from the Lord (e.g. I Cor. 7:12), so the Church today must render judgments based on biblical laws and principles in order to keep itself relevant and vital in our modern age.

In summary, Christians should study the Bible diligently, respect it as the Word of God and seek its guidance through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. (John. 14:26; 16:13). In order to become like God, we must seek to understand the Bible, which is the clearest expression of the mind of God. This we can only hope to achieve through profound and regular Bible study, and through the internalized implementation of its precepts and values.

Thus, God's Word is a totally unique collection of writings absolutely profound in every sense, making commonly available to all mankind the words of life—the hope for today and the promise of tomorrow. It is man's responsibility and privilege to seek out the incredible depths and riches of God's mind as revealed in His Word.

SUMMARY

READ THESE SCRIPTURES IN YOUR OWN BIBLE.

The Bible is the inspired book of our maker.
Read 2 Tim 3:16-17 & 2 Pet 1:20-21.

To fully understand the Word of God, one needs the Holy Spirit. Read 1 Cor. 2:7-11

All scripture is given by the inspiration of God.
Read 2 Tim. 3:16

The words of God are pure words. Read Ps. 12:6 and Prov. 30:5

No prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation. Read 2 Peter 1:20

The historical accuracy of Daniel chapter 11 proves the inspiration of the Bible.

Job 26:7 and Isa. 40:22 prove scientifically the inspiration of the Bible. How could these men have known these scientific truths before telescopes? Read these verses.

The New Testament uses the Old Testament as authority sources in many verses. Read Matthew 24:15 & Acts 2:16.

It was Jesus Christ who created all things. Read Col. 1:1-16

Learn how it is God communicates with us. Read Heb. 1:1-2

The Spirit of God beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. Read Rom. 8:16.

QUESTIONS

1. The Bible is divinely inspired. True or False?
 2. The Bible consists of both the ___ Testament and the ___ Testament.
 3. The Bible contains the ___ of God [what?]
 4. The Bible is the handbook for the salvation process. Yes or No?
 5. The Bible contains information man could not find on his own. True or False?
 6. Jesus never mentioned the New Testament in His ministry. True or False?
 7. The New Testament gives credibility to the Old Testament. True or False?
 8. Can the Bible be proved to be the Word of God? Yes or No?
 9. The Bible is the foundation of all _____ [what?]
 10. The Bible records fulfilled prophecy. True or False?
 11. The Bible was written over a period of _____ years. [how many?]
 12. The focal point of the whole Bible is _____ [who or what?]
 13. The God of the Old Testament is actually _____ [whom?]
 14. According to Hebrews 1 God spoke to man by His prophets. Today He speaks to us by His _____. [what?]
 15. God must open one's mind in order for him to understand the fullness of His truth. True or False?
 16. To truly know and understand the truth of God, one needs the _____ . [what?]
 17. We cannot open our own minds. Only God can open the human mind to understand spiritual things. True or False?
 18. Proof-texting is a good method of studying and understanding the Bible. True or False?
 19. A Bible doctrine can easily be fully understood in isolation from the rest of the Bible? True or False?
 20. In order to become like God, we must seek to understand the Bible. We can only hope to achieve this through _____ and _____ Bible study. [what?]
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Lesson Three

Jesus Christ

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of God and the Son of man. He was the prophesied Messiah of the Old Testament and is described throughout the New Testament as being both fully human and fully divine. As second member of the God family, He has existed from eternity as the "Word." He divested Himself of His power and majesty and became a human being to die for the sins of all mankind as our loving and merciful Savior. He was then resurrected and ascended to heaven to become our High Priest and the head of all things to the Church. Jesus Christ shall return to establish the Kingdom of God on earth and rule as King of kings with His saints forever.

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone and foundation of Christianity, the focal point of both Old and New Testaments and of biblical prophecy. He is the one around whom God's plan of redemption and salvation revolves.

Christ as the "Word of God" (Jn. 1:1-14) has existed with the Father from eternity. John 1:1 states that ...the Word was with God, and the Word was God...(vs 3). All things were made by him...(vs 10). He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not (vs 14). And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. He and the Father together devised a plan to reproduce themselves and to expand their family by means of the human creation. This creation was accomplished by the one who became Christ through the agency and power of the Holy Spirit. "For by Him [Christ] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible" (Col. 1: 16). John adds that "all things were made by Him: and without Him was not any thing made that was made" (Jn. 1:3). Thus the "Word of God"—Christ—was also the Creator God, who fashioned the universe and breathed the breath of life into Adam.

The being who later became Jesus Christ was likewise the God of the Old Testament and hence the one who walked with Noah and talked with

Abraham and with Moses (John. 8:58; cf. Ex. 3:14). He was the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God who gave His law to Moses at Sinai. He was the one who led Israel with a cloud by day and protected them by a pillar of fire at night. He was Israel's Protector, their Guide and their "Rock" ("and that Rock was Christ" (I Cor. 10:4). He likewise was the God of David and was the one who dwelled in Solomon's temple. He spoke through Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and all the prophets and inspired the entirety of the Old Testament.

In order to fulfill the divine master plan of salvation, this great being divested Himself of all His power, might and majesty and took upon Himself "the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7). As envisioned, however darkly, by Abraham and Moses, and as prophesied by Isaiah and others, God's "Word" was now incarnate, the Son of God and the Son of man. As a human being, Jesus led a sinless, perfect life although He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). He overcame Satan's temptations and qualified to replace him as ruler of this world. He was our example who learned obedience through suffering; He became our Savior whose atoning death paid the death penalty for all the sins of mankind.

This great personal sacrifice of Christ's crucifixion is a perfect illustration of Jesus' love and mercy toward us. In Christ's own words the greatest love a man can have is to "lay down his life for his friends" (Jn. 15:13). And Jesus' sacrifice for us is even more powerfully poignant in that "while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8), "when we were [still] enemies" (verse 10) and not yet friends, Jesus laid down His life for us. Certainly the giving of His life on the stake for all humanity was the greatest example of the greatest love which can be shown.

Christ's resurrection from the dead was the focal point of universal history—an event of ultimate importance without equal in the unfolding of God's master plan. His burial for three days and three nights and His subsequent resurrection was the very sign and proof of His messiahship (Matt. 12:40). His resurrection proved that man could also be resurrected; it showed the viability of God's plan and was the means by which human beings

could eventually be resurrected to eternal life.

The death of Christ—the Creator of everything—was designed "from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8) and was able to pay the penalty for the sins of humanity because His life was worth far more than the sum total of all the lives of all human beings who have ever lived or ever will live. Upon repentance and baptism, we have the opportunity to take advantage of Christ's sacrifice to pay the penalty for our own personal sins, and through God's grace to receive the gift of eternal life—which Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection made possible.

Christ has now ascended and is exalted at the right hand of God the Father at the throne of heaven. He is once again actually God, all powerful and shining in the spirit realm like the sun (Rev. 1:13-16), yet with the same mercy and compassion He exemplified during His physical life. Jesus is the first fruits of salvation, the first mortal to be made immortal, and the first human being to become a member of the God family. He is the Christian's elder brother and the forerunner of our salvation, the consummate High Priest and Advocate, Intercessor and Mediator before God's throne of mercy.

Although Christ is under the Father in authority, it is through Christ that we learn of the Father. Christ is the "express image" of the Father (Heb. 1:3), and "he that hath seen [Christ] hath seen the Father" (Jn. 14:9). Thus we learn of the Father, of His plan, His ways, His character, His laws and His love, through His first begotten and His "firstborn" Son, Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ, today, is the living head of His Church, actively, intelligently and personally guiding and directing it through the Holy Spirit of God. He is simultaneously fully involved in the relentless sweep of mankind's historical events as He prepares to intervene in the end time of world history, returning to earth in full power and authority to take over the governments of this earth and to set up His divine Kingdom of God as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Christ, who began the creation, will also finish it. After the completion of His 1,000-year rule, Jesus Christ will turn everything over to His Father, and God Himself will join His billions of spirit-composed sons as the new heaven and new

earth are created (Rev. 21). God and His family will then rule the universe forever, and of "the increase of His government ... there shall be no end" (Isa. 9:7).

SUMMARY

READ THESE SCRIPTURES IN YOUR OWN BIBLE.

Christ is the Word of God. Read John 1:1-14
Christ created all things. Read Col. 1:16

Read about the Rock that was Christ. Read 1 Cor. 10:4

Jesus was without sin. Read Hebrews 4:14-16

Christ was also the God of the Old Testament. Please read Phil 2:5-8 and John 8:52-58.

Jesus died for us while we were yet sinners. Read Romans 5:8-10

Read of the proof of His messiahship. Matthew 12:40

Christ is the express image of the Father. Read Hebrews 1:3

If we have seen Christ, we have seen the Father. Read John 14:9

QUESTIONS

1. Jesus Christ is the Son of ____ and the Son of ____ [what or whom?]

2. Jesus Christ is the 2nd member of the God Family. True or False?

3. Is Jesus Christ the focal point of both the Old and New Testaments? Yes or No?

4. The focal point of biblical prophecy is _____ [whom?]

5. What verses of the Bible describe Christ as the "Word" or spokesman of the God Family?

6. John 1:1-14 makes it clear that Jesus is the God of the Old Testament. True or False?

7. Was Jesus Christ the one who created all things in heaven and earth? Yes or No?

8. He walked with Noah. He talked with Abraham. He gave the Law to Moses. He dwelled

in Solomon's Temple. Who was he?

[what?]

9. What verse tells that Christ was that Rock that led Israel out of Egypt?

17. His resurrection proved what about the future of man?

10. Jesus Christ retained all His godly power while He lived on earth as a human. True or False?

18. The death of Christ, according to Rev. 13:8 was designed from what time?

11. By living a sinless life Jesus qualified to replace _____ [whom?] as the ruler of this earth?

19. The sacrifice of Jesus made possible the Salvation Process. We can take advantage of this opportunity with _____ and _____ [what two actions?]

12. By living a sinless life, Jesus Christ became our _____. [what?]

20. With His resurrection, Jesus is now the first of the _____ [what?]

13. The greatest love a man can have is to _____. [what?]

21. We learn of God the Father through Jesus Christ. True or False?

14. Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. True or False?

22. According to Heb 1:3 Christ is the _____ of the Father [what?]

15. The greatest focal point of the universal history of mankind is what event? _____.

23. Jesus Christ now is the living head of the church. True or False?

16. The only sign and proof of Christ being the messiah is _____.

24. At the end of the 1,000-year rule by Christ, He will turn over everything to _____ [whom?]

Lesson Four

Holy Spirit

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT AND ISSUES

The Holy Spirit is the essence, power, mind and spiritual extension of God. God begets Christians as His sons through this Spirit. It strengthens a Christian spiritually, converts his mind and serves as an earnest or guarantee of eternal life.

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

The Holy Spirit is described in the Bible as "the Spirit of God," "the Spirit of the Lord," "the Spirit of Jesus Christ," "the Spirit of truth," and "comforter" or "advocate." It is the power of God, the mind of God and the extended means by which God accomplishes His work throughout the universe. As such, the Holy Spirit is not a separate entity, it has no independent existence as an individual entity or person within the Godhead.

It was through His Spirit that God created the earth (Gen. 1:2). It was through this Spirit that David received his moral strength (Psa. 51:10-13), and by it Elijah and Elisha—men with normal physical proclivities and weaknesses—were made into powerful prophets of God (II Kings 2:9, 15). Even though these men and others had access to God's Spirit, it is also clear that they were among the relative few who in the Old Testament era were blessed with the privilege of actually having the mind and power of God work with or dwell within them.

God uses His Spirit to accomplish all His work. Whether causing prophets to prophesy, kings to reign, craftsmen to create (Ex. 31:3), bodies to be moved (Ezek. 3:12, 14) or people to keep His laws (Ezek. 36:26-27), everything God does is through the power of His Spirit.

God is spirit (Jn. 4:24); both members of the godhead (*Elohim*), Father and Son, are literally composed of spirit; they are wholly made of spiri-

tual essence, in the same fashion as we are made of physical particles. Yet God the Father and Jesus Christ are separate beings: each maintains His own distinct identity and independent existence; and each, therefore, utilizes His own "Spirit," though both the Father's Spirit and Christ's Spirit are an integral part of the common Holy Spirit. God the Father was unknown in the Old Testament; Jesus Christ came to reveal Him in the New. God the Father was the one who begot Jesus Christ; He did so through His Spirit (Matthew 1:18), which is the same Spirit He begets spiritual children through today. Indeed, God the Father has retained to Himself the unique capacity to beget new spiritual beings.

Under the New Covenant the Spirit of the Father has been made available in a universal way, as was explained by Peter on the day of Pentecost when the Church began (Acts 2:17-18). Acts 2:1 states that ... "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come...." (14)... "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said...(16)... "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: (17)... "And it shall come to pass in the last days saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." Before His death, Christ promised His disciples that the Holy Spirit, which then worked with them should be given to them and should actually be in them (Jn. 14:17). This "Comforter" should teach the disciples all things and remind them of all that Christ had said to them (Jn. 14:26).

This same Spirit which was given to the disciples on the day of Pentecost is available to all whom God calls. Upon true repentance granted by God and upon true belief in Jesus Christ, one may be baptized and then receive God's Spirit through the laying-on-of-hands ceremony performed by God's ministers (Acts 2:38; 8:12-17). God further states that He gives His Holy Spirit only to those who obey Him (Acts 5:32). God's Holy Spirit is efficacious—it creates deep changes within the individual, actually converting or changing the type of mind that the person possesses. The Holy Spirit generates within Christians its very fruit, which "is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5:22-23). It encourages us through trials and empowers us to do the Work of God.

Once a person receives the precious gift of the Holy Spirit, he must use it in order to grow in the knowledge and grace of God. God's Spirit gives Christians the mind of Christ (I Cor. 2:16) to enable them to view life from a godly perspective instead of from a selfish one. It is this power that gives us the capacity to obey God. The deep mystery of the plan of God for mankind cannot be completely and totally understood without the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 2:7-10).

Of even greater significance is the fact that through this Spirit we are actually "begotten" as sons of God and become members of the body of Christ—the Church (I Cor. 12). I Corinthians 12:13 reads, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one spirit." The seed of this Holy Spirit, planted by God after baptism, grows and develops spiritually within us as we grow in obedience and submission to God's law. The Holy Spirit is dynamic: it flows from God to and through the Christian and is expressed in his attitudes and actions. The more we use God's Spirit the stronger our new spiritual life becomes. Finally, at the resurrection, this spiritual part of us becomes the totality of our composition and essence and overtakes the physical, so "that mortality [our physical essence] might be swallowed up of [spiritual] life" (II Cor. 5:4).

God's Word reveals that the Holy Spirit is an "earnest"—a formal pledge or assurance—of eternal life which God has implanted within us making us sons. As long as this Spirit is living within us, we are actually sons of God and brothers of Christ. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. 8:9). "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). Indeed, the presence of the Holy Spirit is the best criterion to define the true Christian: it is his only real ratification, for one cannot be a true Christian without it. As long as we nurture the Holy Spirit, and continue to renew it daily within us (II Cor. 4:16) through prayer and diligent study of God's Word, then this earnest of God's Spirit is the absolute guarantee that we will be resurrected to spiritual life at Christ's return (Eph. 1: 13-14).

SUMMARY

READ THESE SCRIPTURES IN YOUR OWN BIBLE.

The Holy Spirit first became available to large numbers of people on the Old Testament holy day FEAST OF FIRST FRUITS or Pentecost. Read Acts 2:17-18 and Lev 23:15-16. Pentecost means to count fifty.

David received moral strength by the power of the Holy Spirit. Read Ps. 51:10-13.

God can give craftsmen talent by His power. Read Ex. 31:3.

Christians keep the Law by the power of the Holy Spirit. Read Ezek. 36:26-27.

God is spirit. Read John 4:24.

Under the New Covenant, the Spirit of God is available in a universal way. Read Acts 2:17-18.

Jesus promised the disciples the Holy Spirit after His resurrection. Read John 14:17.

The Holy Spirit is called the Comforter in John 14. Read this chapter.

The Holy Spirit is imparted by the ceremony known as the Laying on of Hands. Read Acts 2:38 and 8:12-17. Read our doctrine on this subject here.

Read about the fruits of the spirit that are created within you by the Holy Spirit. Read Gal. 5:22-23.

By the Holy Spirit we develop the mind of Christ. Read 1 Cor. 2:16.

We cannot fully understand the plan of God or spiritual concepts without the Holy Spirit. Read 1 Cor. 2:7-14

Through the Holy Spirit in us, we are assured of eternal life. It is an earnest of eternal life. Read 1 Cor. 12 and Eph. 1.

The Bible says that without the Holy Spirit we are none of His. Read Rom. 8:9.

If we are led by the Spirit, we are the sons of God. Read Rom. 8:14.

We are renewed day-by-day by the Holy Spirit. Read 2 Cor. 4:16.

A convert to Christianity at baptism is begotten by the Holy Spirit. Read Acts 2:38 and Acts 8:12-17 and 2 Cor 5:4.

Questions

1. The Holy Spirit is a spirit being. True or False?

2. The trinity is a false, man-made doctrine. True or False?

3. God begets Christians as His sons through this Spirit. True or False?

4. For a called out Christian, the Holy Spirit _____ his mind. [does what?]

5. The Holy Spirit gives the Christian spiritual _____. [what?]

6. The Holy Spirit in a Christian acts as an _____ [what?] of eternal life.

7. God uses His Spirit to accomplish all His work. True or False?

8. In the New Testament, the word, "comforter" is referring to _____ [what?]

9. The Holy Spirit is not a _____ entity. [what?]

10. David received his moral strength by power of the Holy Spirit. True or False?

11. Not many in the Old Testament had access to the Holy Spirit. True or False?

12. Kings reign by power of the Holy Spirit and the will of God. True or False?

13. In the Bible we see craftsmen being given special talent to create beautiful works via the Holy Spirit. True or False?

14. Christians are able to keep the Law of God by their own power and will. True or False?

15. According to John 4:24 God is a _____. [what?]

16. Spirit beings, including Father and Son have bodies composed of spirit. True or False?

17. Father and Son each maintain their own distinct identity and independent existence. True or False?

18. God, the Father was unknown in the Old Testament. True or False?
19. Mary was made pregnant with Jesus by the Holy Spirit. True or False?
20. Jesus Christ can beget new spiritual beings by power of the Holy Spirit. True or False?
21. God begets spiritual children today by power of His Holy Spirit. True or False?
22. Under the New Covenant the Spirit of God is available in a universal way. True or False?
23. This (above statement) is first explained in what verses?
24. The Spirit of God in a Christian can guide them, teach them and remind them of the things of God. True or False?
25. Newly called Christians receive the Holy Spirit after repentance and baptism by the ceremony known as _____. [what?] –hint: Acts 2:38 and 8:12-17
26. According to Acts 5:32 to receive the Holy Spirit we must _____. [do what?]
27. Members of God's church do the Work of God by what power?
28. Godly principles (love, joy, peace, honesty, etc.) are created within a true Christian by the Holy Spirit. True or False?
29. Once a person has the Holy Spirit in them they must _____. [do what?]
30. You cannot understand the plan of God without the Holy Spirit. True or False?
31. A Christian by the power of the Holy Spirit can actually have the _____ [what?] of Christ. – hint: 1 Cor. 2:14-16
32. Just as a human father can beget children, God by power of the Holy Spirit can beget sons of God and become members of the body of Christ—the Church. In what scripture passage do we read this?
33. Only people of Jewish roots receive the Holy Spirit in these New Testament times. True or False?
34. Once a person is baptized and receives the Holy Spirit in them, it actually continues to flow into them from God. True or False?
35. The more we use [or invoke] the power of the Holy Spirit in us, the stronger we become spiritually. True or False?
36. When we receive the Holy Spirit, we enter the Salvation Process as sons of God. We remain His son, assured of eternal life as long as we _____. [what?]
37. Bible quote, "Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is ____ _ ____." [what?] – hint: Rom. 8:9.
38. Bible quote, "For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the ____ _ ____." –hint: Rom 8:14.
39. The best definition of a true Christian is _____. [what?]
40. We are renewed daily by the Holy Spirit through _____ and _____. [what 2 actions or habits?]

Lesson One – God – Answers

This table shows the correct answers to the questions for Lesson 1. The questions are generated from the doctrine on God.

1. How many members of the God Family are revealed in the Bible? (2)

2. Jesus Christ is God. (**True**)
3. Is the word "trinity" found anywhere in the Bible? (**No**)
4. God's number one purpose is to **reproduce Himself** .
5. No person can make another person believe in God. (**True**)
6. God's existence can be totally proved to **oneself** .
7. What major thing that is all around us can prove God's existence? (**The creation**)
8. Creation requires a **Creator** .
9. Laws require a **Lawgiver** .
10. David said in Ps 19:1, "The **heavens** declare the glory of God, and the **firmament** showeth his handiwork.
11. God is a **spirit** .
12. God in form resembles **man**.
13. God is a family presently composed of **2** members.
14. According to 1 John 4:8 God is **love** .
15. Mankind has been created in whose image? (**God's**)
16. Is God going to add to His family in the future? (**Yes**)
17. Not everyone who has ever lived will have an opportunity to be in the Kingdom of God. (**False**)
18. Which scripture shows that God has a plan for us and wants us to succeed? (**1 Thes. 5:9**)
19. Romans 8:19 states that the entire creation, "waiteth for the manifestation of the **sons of God**."
20. God is presently ruling from heaven. In the future He will rule the Universe from **earth** .

Lesson Two – Bible – Answers

This table shows the correct answers to the questions for Lesson 2. The questions are generated from the doctrine on Bible.

1. The Bible is divinely inspired. (**True**)
2. The Bible consists of both the **Old** Testament and the **New** Testament.
3. The Bible contains the **plan** of God.
4. The Bible is the handbook for the Salvation Process. (**Yes**)
5. The Bible contains information man could not find on his own. (**True**)
6. Jesus never mentioned the New Testament in His ministry. (**False**)
7. The New Testament gives credibility to the Old Testament. (**True**)
8. Can the Bible be proved to be the Word of God? (**Yes**)
9. The Bible is the foundation of all **knowledge** .
10. The Bible records fulfilled prophecy. (**True**)
11. The Bible was written over a period of **1,500** years.
12. The focal point of the whole Bible is **Jesus Christ**.
13. The God of the Old Testament is actually **Jesus Christ**.
14. According to Hebrews 1 God spoke to man by His prophets. Today He speaks to us by His **Son**.
15. God must open one's mind in order for him to understand the fullness of His truth. (**True**)
16. To truly know and understand the truth of God, one needs the **Holy Spirit** .
17. We cannot open our own minds. Only God can open the human mind to understand spiritual things. (**True**)
18. Proof-texting is a good method of studying and understanding the Bible. (**False**)
19. A Bible doctrine can easily be fully understood in isolation from the rest of the Bible? (**False**)
20. In order to become like God, we must seek to understand the Bible. We can only hope to achieve this through **profound** and **regular** Bible study.

Lesson Three – Jesus Christ – Answers

This table shows the correct answers to the questions for Lesson 3. The questions are generated from the doctrine on Jesus.

1. Jesus Christ is the Son of **God** and the **Son** of Man .
2. Jesus Christ is the 2nd member of the God Family. (**True**)
3. Is Jesus Christ the focal point of both the Old and New Testaments? (**Yes**)
4. The focal point of biblical prophecy is **Jesus Christ** .
5. What verses of the Bible describe Christ as the "Word" or spokesman of the God Family? (**John 1:1-14**)
6. John 1:1-14 makes it clear that Jesus is the God of the Old Testament. (**True**)
7. Was Jesus Christ the one who created all things in heaven and earth? (**Yes**)
8. He walked with Noah. He talked with Abraham. He gave the Law to Moses. He dwelled in Solomon's Temple. Who was he? (**Jesus Christ**)
9. What verse tells that Christ was that Rock that led Israel out of Egypt? (**1 Cor. 10:4**)
10. Jesus Christ retained all His Godly power while He lived on earth as a human. (**False**)
11. By living a sinless life Jesus qualified to replace **Satan** as the ruler of this earth.
12. By living a sinless life, Jesus Christ became our **example** .
13. The greatest love a man can have is to **lay down his life for his friends**.
14. Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. (**True**)
15. The greatest focal point of the universal history of mankind is what event? (**resurrection of Christ**)
16. The only sign and proof of Christ being the Messiah is **being in the grave 3 days & 3 nights, the sign of Jonah** .
17. His resurrection proved what about the future of man? (**that man could be resurrected.**)
18. The death of Christ, according to Rev. 13:8 was designed from what time? (**the foundation of the world**)
19. The sacrifice of Jesus made possible the Salvation Process. We can take advantage of this opportunity with **repentance** and **baptism** .
20. With His resurrection, Jesus is now the first of the **firstfruits** .
21. We learn of God the Father through Jesus Christ. (**True**)
22. According to Heb 1:3 Christ is the **express image** of the Father.
23. Jesus Christ now is the living head of the church. (**True**)
24. At the end of the 1,000-year rule by Christ, He will turn over everything to **God the Father** .

Lesson Four – Holy Spirit – Answers

This table shows the correct answers to the questions for Lesson 4. The questions are generated from the doctrine on the Holy Spirit.

1. The Holy Spirit is a spirit being. (**False**)
 2. The trinity is a false, man-made doctrine. (**True**)
 3. God begets Christians as His sons through this Spirit. (**True**)
 4. For a called out Christian, the Holy Spirit **converts** his mind.
 5. The Holy Spirit gives the Christian spiritual **strength** .
 6. The Holy Spirit in a Christian acts as an **earnest** of eternal life.
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7. God uses His Spirit to accomplish all His work. (**True**)
 8. In the New Testament, the word, "comforter" is referring to **The Holy Spirit**.
 9. The Holy Spirit is not a **separate** entity.
 10. David received his moral strength by power of the Holy Spirit. (**True**)
 11. Not many in the Old Testament had access to the Holy Spirit. (**True**)
 12. Kings reign by power of the Holy Spirit and the will of God. (**True**)
 13. In the Bible we see craftsmen being given special talent to create beautiful works via the Holy Spirit. (**True**)
 14. Christians are able to keep the Law of God by their own power and will. (**False**)
 15. According to John 4:24 God is a **spirit**.
 16. Spirit beings, including Father and Son have bodies composed of spirit. (**True**)
 17. Father and Son each maintain their own distinct identity and independent existence. (**True**)
 18. God, the Father was unknown in the Old Testament. (**True**)
 19. Mary was made pregnant with Jesus by the Holy Spirit. (**True**)
 20. Jesus Christ can beget new spiritual beings by power of the Holy Spirit. (**False**. God the Father retains this unique capacity.)
 21. God begets spiritual children today by power of His Holy Spirit. (**True**)
 22. Under the New Covenant the Spirit of God is available in a universal way. (**True**)
 23. This (above statement) is first explained in what verses? (**Acts 2:17-18**)
 24. The Spirit of God in a Christian can guide them, teach them and remind them of the things of God. (**True**)
 25. Newly called Christians receive the Holy Spirit after repentance and baptism by the ceremony known as **the laying on of hands**.
 26. According to Acts 5:32 to receive the Holy Spirit we must **obey God**.
 27. Members of God's church do the Work of God by what power? (**by the power of the Holy Spirit**)
 28. Godly principles (love, joy, peace, honesty, etc.) are created within a true Christian by the Holy Spirit. (**True**)
 29. Once a person has the Holy Spirit in them they must **use it**.
 30. You cannot understand the plan of God without the Holy Spirit. (**True**)
 31. A Christian by the power of the Holy Spirit can actually have the **mind of Christ**.
 32. Just as a human father can beget children, God by power of the Holy Spirit can beget sons of God and become members of the Body of Christ—the Church. In what scripture passage do we read this? (**1 Cor. 12**)
 33. Only people of Jewish roots receive the Holy Spirit in these New Testament times. (**False**. It is available to both Jew and Gentile—everyone)
 34. Once a person is baptized and receives the Holy Spirit in them, it actually continues to flow into them from God. (**True**)
 35. The more we use [or invoke] the power of the Holy Spirit in us, the stronger we become spiritually. (**True**)
 36. When we receive the Holy Spirit, we enter the Salvation Process as sons of God. We remain His son, assured of eternal life as long as we **retain God's Spirit in us**.
 37. Bible quote, "Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is **none of His**."
 38. Bible quote, "For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the **sons of God**."
 39. The best definition of a true Christian is **one who has the Holy Spirit**.
 40. We are renewed daily by the Holy Spirit through **prayer** and **diligent study**.
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