

THE CHURCH OF GOD

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**LESSON NO. 1**

*Provided By:*

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# CHURCH OF GOD

## BIBLE

### CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

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#### LESSON NO. 1

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### WHY STUDY THE BIBLE IN THE SPACE AGE?

**Why should we want to study the Bible? Is the Bible up to date in the space age? Exactly what IS the Bible, and how should we study it to really UNDERSTAND IT? This lesson gives you the ANSWERS from your Bible!**

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What are we? Were we put on earth for a purpose? If so, *what* is that purpose?

Why are so many lives empty, discontented, unhappy? How may life become happy, abundant, successful, prosperous and *filled* with interest?

What is the *real* cause of wars, and the *way* to world peace? What lies beyond death - is there really a way to eternal life?

Are these questions important? One might ask, could anything else be more important? If you wanted to know the answers to these basic questions of life, where would you go?

### THE FOUNDATION OF KNOWLEDGE

Stop and think! Would a Creator, having supreme intelligence, wisdom and love to think out, to plan, design, and bring about all creation - this earth, and all life upon it - have left human beings in ignorance of His purpose - the purpose of their being here - and the laws that would bring them the peace, happiness, joy and everything good that men have been striving to attain since the beginning?

God Almighty made His all-important truth accessible to mankind. He committed His treasure house of basic knowledge to writing. He revealed that knowledge in the Holy Bible - the very FOUNDATION of knowledge - His *instruction* book for mankind. Yet almost no one has ever found the answers so plainly written there!

The Bible is simply God's *divine revelation* of BASIC NEEDED KNOWLEDGE, which man is not capable of finding out for himself by any other means.

God equipped man with the powers and abilities to discover and use the laws of science. But absolutely no tools or instruments of science can ever tell you if there is life after death, the *purpose* of your being alive, *where* you are going, or the *way* to a happy, abundant and peaceful life here and now. Our scientists, our world leaders and our statesmen have *failed utterly* to tell us these answers, or to lead us into the universally desired peace with happiness and abundant living.

The Bible reveals all this - and *more*. This course shows you *where* to find that revealed knowledge in the FOUNDATION of knowledge!

## A LIVING BOOK

But why do most people think the study of the Bible would be a dull, uninteresting, irksome task - to be done, if at all, only as a duty out of fear of a harsh God?

Simply because people have not known God, or what He is like - and because they have *never really begun to understand the Bible!*

In this study we shall come to really see that God is LOVE (I John 4:8, 16), not a harsh, stern God; that God wants every one of us to be happy, and to enjoy an *interesting* life to the very full - every second of it! and we shall, once we begin to understand the Bible, come to find it the most fascinating, the most interesting, as well as the most profitable and enjoyable study of our lives.

## WHERE TO BEGIN?

One natural and proper starting place to begin our study of the Bible would be at the very beginning - with God as Creator - at the very first chapter of Genesis and compare the Bible account of creation with the modern theory of evolution; to study the creation of man, the origin of Satan, the first sin, and to continue on from there through the Old Testament.

Another natural starting point is at the beginning of the New Testament. While the very first words of the entire Bible are "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1), the real beginning of the New Testament, in actual time sequence of events, is John 1:1: "In the beginning was the Word." So the account of the preexistence, the birth, and work of Jesus Christ - who is called "the Word" or Spokesman of God - also begins with the words, "In the beginning."

And there is still another natural starting point - the one we have adopted.

That is to begin with this very *present* age in which we live - this time of upset world conditions - this time when science and technology have produced the weapons that threaten the extinction of all life on this planet - this "time of the end" just before the end of this *age* and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ!

We feel the Bible will mean more to you if you fully understand its vital relation to your life today and its direct connection with current world events.

If you were to try to understand a map of the world, it would not mean much to you unless and until you could first put your finger on the precise spot on the map where *you* were at the moment. Only then could you clearly see and comprehend the rest of the world in relation to your own location on the map.

We feel you will understand the Bible better, and find it more interesting, if you view it all - its history and prophecy, its teachings and divine revelations - from the vantage point of your life *here and now*. The Bible will become clearer if you see how world events have led up to the very time and conditions in which you live, and what the *future* has in store for you and all mankind.

But before we begin this fascinating study, we need to know why *so few* really understand the Bible - and how *YOU can understand it*.

## WHY SUCH CONFUSION?

Why do we find such confusion - such disagreement as to what the Bible says? Why don't the hundreds of differing church denominations and sects agree on what their

acknowledged textbook says?

Why do so many individuals, capable of understanding almost any other books, say: "I just can't understand the Bible?"

Take a recognized textbook on biology. Show this book to 10 different biology professors from 10 different colleges and universities. Ask them what it says. They'll all give you basically the same answer. People seldom disagree as to what recognized textbooks say - except when it comes to the most important book of all - the Holy Bible!

But take the Bible to 10 different professors of theology, or ministers of religion, and you'll probably receive 10 *different* answers to just about any question you might ask about it.

Do you know WHY?

Here certainly is the enigma of the ages. The most important, yet the *least understood* book of all books is the world's BEST SELLER - the book owned by more people than any other. It is the one book that has lived in spite of every effort to stamp it out down through the ages.

The Bible is the only book that has foretold, *centuries in advance*, the chaotic conditions of our world - the only book that explains the *meaning* of confused world conditions - that opens before us to *understand, in advance*, the wonderful, peaceful, happy world tomorrow. It is the one book that foretold the rise and fall of *specific* nations and governments - that reveals the DESTINY of the world. No mere *humanly* inspired book could have revealed these amazing events. Such prophecies *must* have been *divinely* inspired.

Here is the book that, in spite of human misunderstanding, has *changed* more lives than all other books combined. And yet - it is the book that almost NOBODY knows!

### WHY MISUNDERSTOOD

The Bible is the most misunderstood book in history. The most twisted, distorted, misrepresented, maligned and lied about.

Why?

The answer is found in II Timothy 3:16-17. The Apostle Paul was inspired by God to write: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly (or thoroughly) furnished unto all good works."

So the Scriptures are profitable for the purpose of *reproving* and *correcting* us!

But how many people do you know who are even *willing* to be corrected when they are in error - to be REPROVED for the wrong things they do? People simply do not like to be reproofed and corrected. They love praise - they like flattery - but reproof and correction they surely hate!

Now do you see why it is so difficult for people to understand the Bible, and to agree on just what it says? The Bible is God's great spiritual mirror. It shows up *every* flaw in our thinking, reveals every spot on our characters. It pictures us as we really are - as God sees us, not as we like to think we are, or as we like to have other people look upon us.

"For the word of God," we read in Hebrews 4:12, "is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword" - it cuts deep, and it cuts both ways - "and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Yes, it opens up and exposes our innermost thoughts.

When little children do things that are wrong - that have been forbidden - do they usually admit it freely and frankly? Or do they usually deny it as long as possible, then

try to cover it up, excuse it, justify it, or place the blame on somebody else?

We are all only little children grown up. When our heavenly Father speaks to us, through His Holy Scriptures, and reproveth, rebukes, or corrects us, we usually do not like to *admit* our errors, our faults, our wrong ways.

And so men began, centuries ago, to *interpret* the Bible. As a result, the Word of God has become twisted, wrested, perverted, with almost every false and counterfeit meaning imaginable being read into it. Instead of teaching and expounding the *plain, simple, intended* meaning, we now have hundreds of HUMAN INTERPRETATIONS of the Bible!

Instead of acknowledging the truth, men seek to *justify* their own ways of PERVERTING the sacred and holy Word of God!

The Apostle Paul was inspired to write in II Timothy 4:1-4 that the time would come when men would not endure sound doctrine. People *have* turned away their ears from the truth and have turned to FABLES palmed off as the truth of God's Word. Isaiah prophesied that in these *latter* days men would demand: "prophesy (preach) not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits" (Isaiah 30:8-10).

We can clearly see why people do not understand the Bible. They are not yielded to the Eternal's will - they are filled with the fear of *men* instead of God. They tremble at the thought of what *people* say, instead of what the Word of the LIVING GOD has to say!

We read in Psalm 111:7-8, 10: "All His commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness... The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do His commandments..."

David had *understanding*. And David said, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105).

Today's generation is like that of Jesus' day, of which He said, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19).

Yes, the Bible is light - a lamp unto our feet - a light unto our path. But the world is surely in gross darkness.

### MEANING LOCKED UP UNTIL NOW

Bruce Barton wrote a book about the Bible titled *THE BOOK NOBODY KNOWS*. This title certainly has been true - *until recently!*

After revealing many prophecies to the prophet Daniel, God told him to "Seal the book, even to the time of the end: (when) many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (Daniel 12:4). In the time of the "end" all knowledge, as well as knowledge of the Scriptures, was to be *increased!*

The translation of the Bible renders "the time of the end" as "the crisis at the end." The whole world is now in a time of grave crisis and is rapidly approaching a condition of total chaos - we are *now* in the crisis period at the close of this age! God said that at *this time* "None of the wicked shall understand, but the *wise shall understand*" (Dan. 12:10, emphasis ours throughout the lessons).

Though printed copies of God's Word and a general knowledge of the Scriptures are widespread today, the world as a whole still does not understand the Bible. It is in *utter confusion* religiously, academically, politically and militarily. The world does not really know where it is headed, nor does it comprehend the lessons of the past. Never has mankind needed understanding of the knowledge of God more!

## SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING NEVER MORE NEEDED

Experts tell us that scientific and technical knowledge had *doubled* in the past decade - but so have world troubles! Obviously material knowledge and scientific and technological know-how have not brought man the ANSWERS to world problems. This knowledge has ONLY led to the proliferation of problems, and has led mankind to the brink of nuclear annihilation!

The late, former President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, recognized the fact that man may soon destroy himself. In his inaugural address he said: "In the swift rush of great events, we find ourselves groping to know the full sense and meaning of the times in which we live... How far have we come in man's long pilgrimage from darkness toward light? Are we nearing the light - a day of freedom and peace for all mankind? Or are the shadows of another night closing in upon us? ...Science seems ready to confer upon us, as its final gift, the power to erase human life from this planet."

But how may world disaster be averted? What is the solution to the arms race - to a nuclear "Armageddon?"

At the close of World War II, just following the surrender of the Japanese on board the battleship *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay, the late General Douglas MacArthur put his finger on the only possible solution. He said these fateful words: "Men since the beginning of time have sought peace. Various methods through the ages have been attempted to devise an international process to prevent or settle disputes between nations...Military alliances, balances of power, leagues of nations, all in turn failed, leaving the only path to be by way of the crucible of war. The utter destructiveness of war now blots out this alternative. *We have had our last chance.* If we will not devise some greater and more equitable system, Armageddon will be at the door. The problem basically is theological and involves a spiritual recrudescence and improvement of human character that will synchronize with our almost matchless advances in science, art literature, and all material and cultural developments of the past 2,000 years. It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh" (*reminiscences*, p. 459).

Notice these remarkable words carefully.

Although he was one of the greatest and most successful generals of modern times, MacArthur believed that our world has had its *last chance* to wage a major war and to end it short of the annihilation of mankind!

But he also saw the only *solution* to this world's ills to be a renewing of man's spirit - an improvement in human character!

Let's be honest. Let's face the facts. There is a *cause* for every effect! Because man has chosen to go his own way and has rejected God's revealed knowledge, mankind is *reaping the consequences!* Man's own ways are the CAUSE of the misery, wretchedness, and trouble filling the world today! Cut loose from God and the understanding of His Word, man's misguided scientific and technological genius has led him to the brink of *self-annihilation!*

The problem, therefore, basically is theological, as God plainly says in His Word: "My people are destroyed for lack of (true, spiritual) knowledge" (Hosea 4:6).

## ONLY ONE HOPE

People tend to delude themselves into thinking there is no special danger right now - that the world has always been as chaotic as it is today.

Of course, human nature has remained basically unchanged. The ways of carnal-

minded men have *always* ended in destruction and death (Prov. 14:12).

But, in prophesying of our day, the Apostle Paul said, "Evil men and seducers shall wax *worse and worse*" (II Timothy 3:13). This, coupled with the stark reality that never until now has human annihilation been possible, ought to **WAKE US UP!**

Jesus Christ, the greatest newscaster who ever lived, knew the ultimate result of the terrible state of affairs men would bring on themselves in this end time. He foretold: "*Except* those days should be shortened, there should NO FLESH BE SAVED (ALIVE - Moffatt)" (Matthew 24:22).

Yet, your Bible shows there *is* hope for mankind! God Almighty has promised to intervene in world affairs. He will *not* allow the scientific genius of man to destroy all life on this planet. He has promised to send Jesus Christ again - this time to SAVE us from ourselves and bring us peace at last!

### YOU CAN BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND

How, then, can you begin to really understand the Bible? Here is how you may begin this exciting adventure.

Study the Bible to find TRUTH. Be careful to "*prove* all things" (I Thess. 5:21). Then believe God - believe His Word as you would accept any other book in which you had confidence.

When the Apostle Paul came to Berea, the people found he was preaching something utterly *different* from what they had been taught and had believed. They did not know whether Paul was a false prophet, or a man sent from God. Notice what they did: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind (that is, without prejudice), *and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so*" (Acts 17:11).

So study your Bible without prejudice, but be careful to *prove* all things as the Bereans did - search the Scriptures *whether* those things be so! Read and study your Bible *daily* - check up for yourself and see what it really does teach. Don't just *assume* that what you have always heard and believed is the truth of God.

### IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

This course is not just a study of the lessons we send you. The lessons are intended to show you where to look in your Bible for the verses relating to the subject under study. Therefore, you should turn to *every* scripture reference given in answer to the questions we ask, and carefully *read* these passages. This way you will prove the truth for yourself *from your own Bible*. (This course is based on the *Authorized or King James Version* because it is the most widely used translation of the Bible today.)

Although not required, writing or typing out the scripture references will help you *remember* what you have learned, and make *reviewing* your lessons easier. If you decide to write out the verses, *do not send us your written answers*. We suggest that you keep them in a binder along with your lessons.

Many of our students set aside a certain time every day for their study. But the exact time of day and length of time you study will have to be determined by your own circumstances, and/or personal preference. However, we recommend that you spend *at least 30 minutes* a day studying the Bible with this course.

Now you're ready for this eye-opening lesson!

## WHAT IS THE "END of the WORLD?"

1. Was Jesus ever questioned about the "end of the world" and the sign that would point to His return? Matthew 24:1-3.

COMMENT: The New Testament, as originally inspired by God, was written in the Greek language. The Greek word translated "world" here in Matthew 24:3 is *aion*, meaning "age" - not the physical planet on which we live. And so the *revised standard version* translates the King James expression "end of the world" as "the close of the age."

Jesus, then, was questioned about the end of an "age" in man's history, rather than the total destruction of the terrestrial globe we call earth.

2. How long does the Bible tell us the earth will continue to exist? Ecclesiastes 1:4.

## A TIME of GREAT TROUBLE

Jesus proceeded to answer the second part of the disciples' question by giving them an outline of events to take place prior to His return to earth. We pick up the account in Matthew 24:21.

1. Did Jesus prophesy that a time of great trouble would occur on the earth just *before* His return? Matt. 24:21.

2. What did Jesus declare would happen if these days of tribulation were allowed to continue? Matt. 24:22.

Comment: The Moffatt translation renders this verse clearer as "not a soul would be saved alive." This verse, then, is not referring to spiritual salvation at all, but to being saved from *physical destruction* - from premature death!

3. Did Jesus prophesy that only the inhabitants of Jerusalem would be threatened by total destruction? Or did He plainly say that *no one* would be safe from the threat of annihilation? Same verse.

Comment: The *Revised Standard Version* says "no human being would be saved..."

4. Who will intervene in world affairs to *cut short* this time of trouble, and thus prevent the annihilation of all humanity? Mark 13:20.

Comment: These verses mean that just as *originally* planned, Jesus Christ will intervene at the very moment humanity would otherwise destroy itself. By His direct intervention, He will CUT SHORT the days of man's rule over man, which would otherwise lead to the destruction of all human life on earth!

## NO TIME LIKE IT!

1. Has there ever been a time of trouble such as will occur just before Christ's return? Matt. 24:21; Mark 13:19.

2. Were any of the Old Testament prophets inspired to foresee this same time of worldwide peril? Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 12:1.

Comment: Since each of the preceding three prophecies reveal that the future period of crisis will have *no equal*, they can only be referring to *one great climactic period of worldwide trouble!*



3. How did the prophet Joel symbolically describe the horrible events that will take place at the close of this age? Joel 2:1-5.

Comment: Joel's God-inspired prophecy pictures the very *same* time of trouble prophesied by Christ, Jeremiah and Daniel. This prophecy refers to events that will occur at the close of this age, for only in this age of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons has such widespread destruction been possible!

4. Could the symbols seen by the prophet John indicate the use of modern weaponry? Revelation 9:2-10, 16-19.

Comment: John described what he saw in a vision of end-time events God had miraculously revealed to him. It was a mysterious, frightening spectacle. The creatures he saw were obviously *symbolic* of weapons God knew man would be capable of inventing in the *end time*.

5. Let us momentarily consider a time, more than 4,300 years ago, when God intervened in human affairs to *postpone* what we see threatening the world today. Did human beings speak one language? Genesis 11:1. What did they decide to do? Verse 4. Was this for the purpose of keeping themselves united? Same verse. What did God do to frustrate their plans? Verses 5, 7-9. Why? Verse 6.

Comment: Verse 6 clearly indicates that God confused the language and scattered the people at Babel in order to *restrain* the misguided inventive genius of man! When human beings come to freely speak one another's languages, and share scientific and technological knowledge as they are doing today, then virtually *anything* man's mind can conceive of would be possible for him to achieve - even to exploring outer space and inventing weapons capable of destroying all life.

By confusing the language and scattering the people at Babel, God PREVENTED man from accomplishing long ago what he has done today. It was *not yet* within God's plan to allow man to advance that far that soon!

Could anything be clearer? Can you see that we are living in the time Jesus spoke of in Matthew 24? - the time when men would have at their disposal the *power to erase all life from this earth!*

### THE CAUSE OF WAR

God promises He will intervene in world affairs to prevent the annihilation of humanity, and to bring us world peace. And in order to ensure continued peace, He will also prevent future wars by *changing* that which causes war. Let's understand.

1. Does the Bible clearly show that war is a *result* of acting according to the inordinate lusts within man? James 4:1-2.

Comment: Unrestrained "human nature," with its pride, vanity, jealousy, lust and greed is plainly the CAUSE of war!

2. Does knowledge tend to *increase* pride? I Corinthians 8:1. Since we live in an age of mushrooming scientific knowledge that make it possible for a few men to possess tremendous power, will the inordinate lusts of men "in the last days" cause them to become better and better, or *worse and worse*? II Timothy 3:1-4, 13.

3. What is the end result of decisions and actions that *seem* right to great leaders and people in general? Proverbs 14:12.

Comment: This principle is so important that God inspired its repetition in Proverbs 16:25.

4. What deceives man into believing that actions which end in death will bring peace? Jer. 17:9. (Remember that in Scripture the heart is often spoken of *proverbially* as the center or seat of human thoughts and emotions.) Then can rulers be *deceived* by their own lusts into believing that their evil deeds are right and good for the world? Same verse.

Comment: The governments of this world promise peace. But men have only brought us more wars and have now led humanity to the brink of annihilation!

5. Do rulers even *know* the way to peace? Romans 3:17. What did God inspire Isaiah to write concerning man's real understanding of the way of peace? Isaiah 59:8.

6. What will happen to human plans for "peace?" Isa. 33:7-8. When ambassadors of peace weep bitterly because of great destruction, will God then intervene? Verse 10.

Comment: Throughout the Bible, war is pictured as the *result* of lust or covetousness. Lust is a basic characteristic of human nature. But can the heads of the governments of this world CHANGE human nature? Of course not! Nearly 6,000 years of human history have proved that man, left to himself, is *totally incapable* of bringing about this change. Throughout history, negotiations for peace have been accompanied and supported by the most vigorous *preparations for war!*

This story is no different today.

Can any human government, therefore, *permanently stop war*? Obviously not. When you look at it that way, the answer becomes clear: Only GOD can permanently stop all war, because only God has the *power* to CHANGE human nature!

But exactly how will God create and maintain world peace once Jesus Christ returns?

The only real and lasting solution to the problems of world peace has already been planned long ago. And the entire plan is revealed in your Bible.

### **WORLD GOVERNMENT TO BRING PEACE**

1. Does God intervene in world affairs without first revealing it to His prophets? Amos 3:7.

2. Thousands of years ago, did God reveal to His prophet Isaiah a time when He would establish His government here on earth? Isa. 2:1-3. Is it to be a literal *world-ruling* kingdom? Dan. 2:44; Psalm 67:4.

3. Will there be warfare then as there is now among nations? Isa. 2:4. Will people be taught the way to peace and productivity? Same verse.

Comment: The very One who created man is coming to establish the government of God on earth, and to teach man the way to peace - to guide his inventive genius entirely into *peaceful* channels.

4. Did Micah also foretell the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth? Micah 4:1-4.

Comment: An all-powerful, world-ruling government is indeed coming that will solve all global problems fairly and righteously for all peoples - a government ruled *not* by carnal men, but by the living, all-powerful creator of the universe!

5. Who did Isaiah prophesy would rule over the earth? Isa. 11:1-4. Is David the "stem," or son, of Jesse? Acts 13:22. Then is the "rod" or shoot plainly Jesus Christ? Verse 23. Is the "branch" growing out of Jesse's roots also referring to Christ? Jer. 23:5-6.

Comment: The prophecy in Isaiah 11 foretold, centuries in advance, that Jesus Christ would one day rule the earth!

6. Before Jesus was born as a human being, did an angel tell Mary, His mother, that His destiny was to take over an actual throne and rule on this earth? Luke 1:32-33.

7. Was Daniel inspired to foresee the time when the saints - true Christians - will be given rulership over the earth *with* Christ? Dan. 7:18, 21-22, 27.

### WHAT IS THE TRUE "GOSPEL?"

1. Was Jesus sent to this earth nearly 2,000 years ago to proclaim the words of the Father? John 12:49; 14:24. What message was included? Mark 1:14; Matt. 9:35.

Did Jesus say one must believe that "gospel?" Mark 1:15; 16; 15-16.

Comment: The word *gospel* means good news, or glad tidings. Jesus went about preaching the good news of the coming *Kingdom of God!* The gospel of Jesus Christ is simply the very same gospel He preached. Jesus' gospel is *not* primarily a message about Himself personally, or about "receiving Jesus." It is not primarily a message about the events in His life and of His becoming the Savior of the world - although it most certainly does *include* all that.

The message Jesus preached is the *good news* that God will restore peace on earth by establishing His divine Kingdom over all nations. Christ, through the power of God, will at His Second Coming seize control of all human governments and rule by God's law. Jesus' gospel also includes how we may receive the gift of eternal life and become members of that eternal, ruling Kingdom!

2. Did Jesus send forth His apostles and true ministers to preach that *same* gospel (including *all* His teachings) to the world? Luke 9:1-2; Matt. 28:19-20. Was His gospel of the coming Kingdom of God to be preached in all the world *just before* the "end" and His Second Coming? Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10.

3. What gospel did Philip preach? Acts 8:12. And Paul? Acts 19:8; 14:22. Did he preach the same gospel among the Gentiles at Ephesus? Acts 20:25. What gospel did he preach to both Jews and Gentiles at Rome? Acts 28:23, 28-31.

4. Did some false ministers in Paul's day try to *pervert* the gospel of Christ? Galatians 1:6-7. What condemnation does he pronounce on any who would try to preach any other "gospel?" Verse 8. Was it really a *double curse*? Verse 9.

Comment: Your Bible shows there is only ONE TRUE GOSPEL! We hear many "gospels" about Christ today, but how many do you hear preaching he "gospel of Christ" - the gospel He *preached* - the "gospel of the Kingdom of God?"

### GOD'S 7,000-YEAR PLAN

God has set aside a period of 7,000 years to fulfill His plan for mankind. And God's little-understood plan for man began nearly 6,000 years ago. The *pattern* for this plan is

revealed in the first two chapters of Genesis. It is the seven-day week.

1. Is a thousand years as a "day" to God, and vice versa? II Peter 3:8.

2. In Hebrew 4:4, 11, the seventh day of the week is pictured as a *type* of the peaceful "rest" on earth, which will follow Christ's return. Is the time of Christ's rule over the earth, which will follow this present age of human *misrule* and senseless warfare, specifically called a thousand years? Rev. 20:4.

Comment: Since the last "day" of God's plan is 1,000 years, then it logically follows that the preceding six "days" would amount to 6,000 years - a total of 7,000 years.

3. When the disciples asked Jesus if He would restore the government of God in their day, what was His reply? Acts 1:6-7.

Comment: The apostles did not fully understand the general time frame of God's plan while Christ was yet with them, and for many years thereafter. At first, they thought the rule of God would be established in their day. But before they died, they understood Christ would return at a much later date. Peter said: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise (of coming again)...but is longsuffering" (II Peter 3:9). God is patient. He has refrained from intervening in world affairs for nearly 6,000 years.

Why?

Because God has allotted mankind 6,000 years in which to *learn* that the ways of man bring nothing but SUFFERING and DEATH!

Many Bibles contain tentative chronological dates showing that Adam may have been created in the year 4004 B.C. And nearly another 2,000 years have elapsed since Christ's birth - totaling just about 6,000 years of human civilization to date.

How awe-inspiring and significant that in OUR PRESENT AGE - in the very time that the world is threatened with the extinction of all life - 6,000 years have *almost elapsed*. How exciting that Jesus Himself said that when we would see all the events He foretold taking place, He would come again - this time to rescue humanity from annihilation, to set up the Kingdom of God, and to bring us lasting peace!

You have seen *in your Bible* a brief summation - a "thumbnail sketch" - of God's solution to this world's problems. You have begun to understand the *urgent necessity* for Christ's promised return. In Lesson 2, you will learn more about Jesus Christ's spectacular intervention in world affairs as revealed in the amazing, detailed prophecies of your Bible.

**If you want to receive the next lesson, send your name and address to the address on the cover requesting Lesson No. 2.**

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-Tom Justus  
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