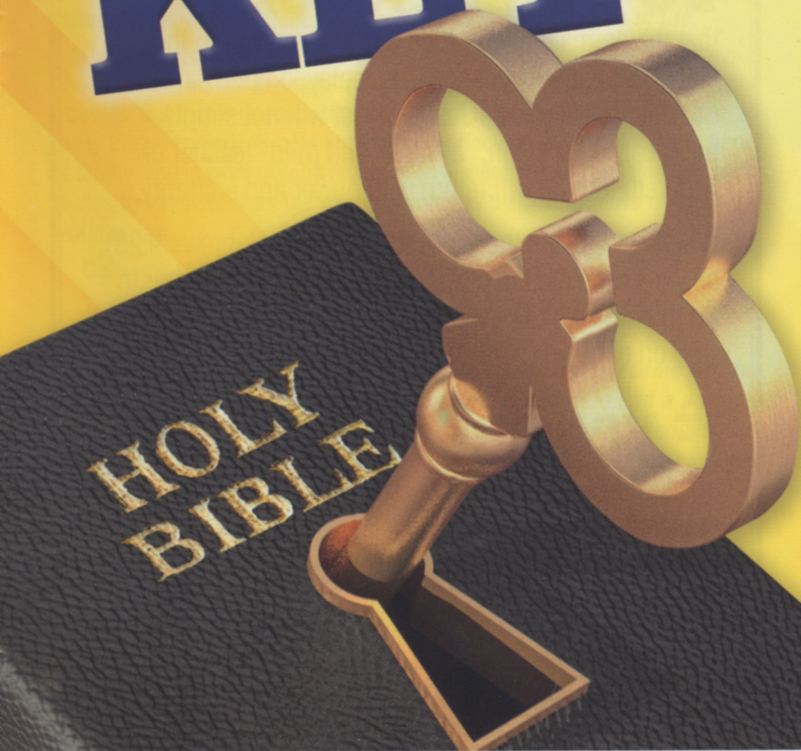


# THE KEY



TO UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

# DO YOU KNOW

The Bible outlines that God's purpose revolves around the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth.

# DO YOU REALISE

that the drama that unfolded 2,000 years ago in the city of Jerusalem, will soon be replayed upon earth. But this time the Lord Jesus Christ will not simply be a "carpenter's son," a "meek and mild" teacher of Nazareth, but he will return with power and authority.

When he appears the "second" time (cp. Hebrews 9:28), he will complete the purpose of his Heavenly Father to rid this world of its evil, and establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

# IF YOU ARE INTERESTED

in learning what the future holds; if you care about your personal destiny and how to change the course of your own life, read this booklet carefully and thoughtfully.

It has an important message for you.

## HERALD OF THE COMING AGE

A Christadelphian Publication

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# Key to Understanding the Bible

***Famine, wars, political unrest, social instability, ecological chaos, and personal discontentment — this is the picture of our world today. On the other hand, peace, true prosperity and plenty for all the teeming populations of the earth are fantasies. They remain mere hopes, mouthed with pious platitudes devoid of reality, whilst society grapples with greed, crime, immorality, violence and corruption in every sphere of life.***

Once it was possible to be detached from world problems, to “live a good life” and insulate oneself from society’s local and global influences and troubles. But that is no longer the case. Such is the extent of world problems today that every individual is in some way affected — in employment, home or family; and in what may be regarded as ‘essential services.’ Peace of mind eludes the individual as the media bombards them with news of the latest world crises.

Consequently, the question is asked, “**How will it all end?**”

The voice of the super-optimist is almost silent: no longer is he so confident that “they’ll sort it all out.”

***So vast are the world’s issues and problems, so awesome are the possibilities of nuclear war, that no one knows where to find a possible cure. Diplomats, financiers, statesmen, scientists, philanthropists, and revolutionaries are all without an adequate answer. They may suggest ideas, but none can effect the cure!***

Is there a valid answer? Where does the solution lie?

## **The Only Source of a Satisfactory Answer**

The Bible alone presents God’s answers to mankind’s problems. Seldom used, and little respected these days, the Bible not only foretold these very problems, but also revealed their solution.

The solution is in the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ’s return from heaven, which was the message of the angels 2000 years ago. For whilst the disciples “*looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why*

*stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven*" (Acts 1:10-11). It is this hope that is presented as the solution in the Bible.

The Bible is a library of sixty-six books presenting God's purpose with the earth and His plan of redemption for man. These books were written over a period of almost 1,600 years, by various writers under the inspiration of God. They were drawn from all ranks of society. Kings, statesmen, priests, scribes, shepherds, fishermen, scholars, all played a part in producing it, and yet, despite the great divergence of time and class among the writers, there is complete harmony in all that they teach and record. Each of the writers presents a different facet of the same message, *"the one great hope."*

The theme that unites all these books is termed *"the gospel."* An understanding of its teaching acts as a key, unlocking the secrets of God's purpose with the earth. Unfortunately, though many refer to the Gospel, few really understand its teaching. To most, the true teaching of the Bible is a closed book.

Yet eternal salvation is bound up in a correct understanding of the gospel (Romans 1:16), and therefore we urge that you closely and critically examine what is outlined in this booklet.

## **The Gospel Presents Good News**

The word "gospel" signifies *good news* or *glad tidings*. It is sometimes styled in Scripture the "gospel of God," because it is good news provided by God rather than the spurious messages of goodwill that are often spoken by men.

It is important to comprehend and understand the true message of the gospel. One writer, the Apostle Paul wrote: *"Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed"* (Galatians 1:8).

Since an inspired apostle was not free from such a curse if he preached an inaccurate gospel, certainly lesser men will not be exempted, should they do so. Unfortunately, a curse has rested upon Christendom because of this, and its history is a record of continuous discord, trouble and bloodshed. True peace it knows not.

## The Gospel Speaks of the Future

The gospel is a clear and simple statement of God's purpose with humanity. It was summarised by the Apostle Paul in seven words: "*God preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, **In thee shall all nations be blessed***" (Galatians 3:8).

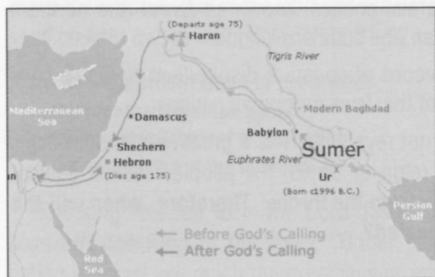
The gospel, therefore, is prophetic. It speaks of the future, for its promises have never yet been completely fulfilled. The Apostle Paul also taught that Jesus Christ came "*to confirm the promises made of God unto the fathers*" (Romans 15:8). The promises referred to, are those made to the fathers of the Jewish race: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. So the Apostle Peter taught: "*Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust*" (2Peter 1:4).

Paul taught that the gospel was comprehended in the promises God made to Abraham; Peter stated that they are the means to immortality. Therefore, to gain the true understanding of the Bible, we must consider and learn what is stated concerning Abraham.

## Abraham — Friend of God (James 2:23)

The biography of Abraham is compressed into twelve chapters of the Bible (Genesis 12-24), which can be read in about forty minutes. We encourage you to read this portion of the Bible, for the life of Abraham forms a pattern for all true believers (see Romans 4:23-24).

Abraham lived in Ur of the Chaldees (Genesis 11:28; Joshua 24:2), a city in the area known today as Iraq. In this place he first heard the call of God, and separated himself to travel north to Haran, in company with other members of his family. There he remained until God again called him, and gave him certain promises conditional upon him moving from Haran to the land that God would show him (modern Israel).



Genesis 12:1-3 outlines the promises that God made to Abraham. *“The Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed”* (Genesis 12:1-3).

This promise can be subdivided as follows:

- » **The National Promise** — God promised that Abraham will become a great nation;
- » **The Personal Promise** — his name will be great in all the earth and he will be a blessing;
- » **The Family Promise** — God will bless those who bless Abraham and curse those who curse him;
- » **The International Promise** — in him all families of the earth will be blessed.

The four aspects of the promise made to Abraham embrace every part of the Bible message. The last one is quoted by the Apostle Paul in Galatians 3:8 as epitomizing the gospel message.

## **The Fourfold Promise of Hope**

None of these promises have had their complete fulfilment, for they await the future setting up of the kingdom of God on earth which will occur after the return of the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven.

In light of this consider, the **National Promise**. Abraham’s descendants, the Jewish people, are not a *“great nation”* as yet, and never have been. The nation rose to prominence and glory during the reigns of David and Solomon, but that was only for a short period, and it ended with civil war which divided the twelve tribes into two separate, entities, known as **Israel** (the northern kingdom of ten tribes) and **Judah** (the southern kingdom of two tribes).

The history of Israel is a record of constant disobedient to God’s laws which ended in the scattering of the Jews among all nations.

Certainly, this history does not reveal them as a great nation, spiritually, at any time. Even during the reign of David, the people rebelled against him, and drove him temporarily from the throne! **Therefore, when will the promises to Abraham be vindicated?**

The answer is, in the future.

## The National Promise

Though God scattered Israel (see Deuteronomy 28:64-67), He will completely regather the nation (Deuteronomy 30:1-3; Jeremiah 31:10), and restore it to its ancient land (Ezekiel 39:25-29). The people will be educated in divine truth. They will mourn for their past blindness (Zechariah 12:9-10), have their sins forgiven (Micah 7:18-20), and will be established as the “first” (chiefest) of the nations (Micah 4:7-8).

All this will be done on the basis of the promise made to Abraham. The prophet Micah declared: *“Thou wilt perform the mercy to Abraham, which Thou hast sworn from the days of old”* (Micah 7:20). Through the Prophet Ezekiel, God added: *“I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for Mine holy name’s sake, which ye have profaned among the nations, whither ye went”* (Ezekiel 36:22).



The Jewish people have returned to their ancient homeland today, and the nation of Israel has come into existence once again, because of the promise made to Abraham so long ago. The nation of Israel is still to be disciplined and humbled, in order that the people might be elevated in

accordance with the purpose of God. God further declared: *“I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all”* (Ezekiel 37:21-22).

In this statement there is promised:

- » **the regathering of the people;**
- » **the re-establishment of the nation;**
- » **the restoration of the monarch.**

The king referred to is the Lord Jesus Christ, described as *“Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”* Under his firm and righteous rule, the nation of Israel will reach the greatness promised it through Abraham.

## The Personal Promise

Consider the personal promise made to Abraham. Is Abraham blessed today? Is his name great? Is he a blessing in the earth?

The answer is, No! Abraham is dead; his name is far from great in the opinion of mankind, most of whom know nothing about him.

How and when will the promise be fulfilled?

The answer is: by a resurrection from the dead to life eternal at Jesus Christ's coming. The Lord Jesus Christ told those Jews who rejected him 2,000 years ago, that they would be raised from the dead to witness Abraham and others entering the Kingdom of God. He stated: *"There shall be weeping when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, west, north and south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God"* (Luke 13:28-29).

At that time, Abraham will himself be blessed and become a blessing to others, as they will consider it an honour to be associated with him. Once again, we must look to the future for the fulfilment of the promise.

## The Family Promise

**The Family Promise** relates to those who embrace the promises to Abraham, and who follow his example. They will become his associates in the kingdom that the Lord Jesus Christ will set up on earth, and they shall inherit eternal life. *"They that are Christ's are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise"* (Galatians 3:29). They will form part of the great family of Jesus Christ, to be blessed in conjunction with Abraham. So this clause of the promise comprises an assurance to the family of Abraham. You can become a member of that spiritual family by belief in the Gospel, and baptism into Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:26-29).

**The International Promise** points to the time when Jesus Christ's righteous rule will be set up over all the earth, and mankind will rejoice in it. Then *"the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ"* who *"shall reign for ever and ever"* (Revelation 11:15). The law *"shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem,"* bringing all nations into a state of unity and peace before God (Isaiah 2:2-4). The administration



of the Lord Jesus Christ will solve the problems that afflict humanity today. The poor will be helped, the needy will be assisted, the tyrants will be removed from authority, and *"all nations"* will serve the LORD (Psalm 72:11, 17). No longer will there exist the need to maintain huge armies, great naval fleets, and vast air forces to protect the rights of individual nations, when one wise and righteous King reigns over a united world. The wealth of nations, previously spent on war, will be utilised for the benefits of humanity. The result will be the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham: *"In thee shall all nations be blessed."*

This, as the Apostle Paul showed, constitutes the gospel (Galatians 3:8), and will be fulfilled through Jesus Christ (verse 16), the seed of Abraham (Matthew 1:1). Thus the gospel comprises a key that will unlock the true meaning of any part of the Word of God.

## **"All This Land Will I Give Thee"**

The book of Genesis records a further development in the promises of God to Abraham. Abraham and his nephew Lot had been blessed with considerable herds. However their respective herdsman flocks came to a disagreement as they grazed in the hills of Canaan, called Bethel.

They decided to separate, and Abram (as Abraham was then called) unselfishly offered Lot first choice of the land. Lot saw the well-watered plain of Jordan to the south, with the prosperous cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and was attracted by the prospects of easy living. He left Abram, to go down to Sodom. He went *"down"* in more ways than one, leaving Abram to the hardship, of the rugged hills of the Land of Promise.

After Lot had separated with his herds, God made a further promise to Abram. He stated: *"Look northward, southward, eastward, and westward; For all the land that thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever... arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee"* (Genesis 13:14-17).

Notice that Abram and his seed are promised the land forever, and not merely for his lifetime. Obviously this promise has not been fulfilled, for otherwise Abraham would be alive today. Either Abraham and his seed must be resurrected from the grave and given life eternal to enjoy this promised inheritance, or the promises of God cannot be taken seriously.

So why do some teach that God's promised reward is in heaven?

Abraham was promised the land, and he died not having received it. For 2,000 years after his death, Stephen declared: *"He [God] removed him [Abraham] into this land [Israel] wherein ye [Jews] now dwell. And He gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on, yet He promised that He would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him"* (Acts 7:4-5).

How is Abraham to receive the land promised him? Only through his resurrection from the grave to life eternal at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:1-2; Acts 26:6-8).

## **God's Promise to David**

The promises made to Abraham were amplified and extended many years later to one of his descendants, David, the king of Israel. 2Samuel 7:10-16 records the promise which God made to David. The king was told by God: *"I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more"* (v. 10). *"The Lord will make thee an house. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for My name and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My Son... Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever"* (verses 12-16).

The Promise to David includes:

- » The re-establishment of Israel in the Land of Promise, never to be removed nor afflicted (v. 10).
- » The setting up of a king upon the throne of David for ever, who will be both Son of God and son of David (vv. 12-14).
- » The building of a "house" or great temple for God by this king (v. 13).
- » The development of a faithful "house" or family in the line of David (vv. 11-12).
- » This promised descendant would come after the death of David (v. 12), and through his perfect obedience would ensure his resurrection to life eternal, so that David might see these things established for ever "before him" (v. 16).

This promise follows in natural sequence from the promise to Abraham. Abraham was promised an **earthly** inheritance. David was promised a **throne and a kingdom**. Neither of these promises have been fulfilled. In fact,

David's throne has not existed for over two thousand years. Some important words were declared to Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, in Ezekiel 21:25-27, *"Thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more, until he come, whose right it is; and I will give it him."*

## Jesus Christ is David's Son

The Son promised to David, the one *"whose right it is,"* referred to by Ezekiel, is the Lord Jesus Christ. This is established beyond all doubt by the words the angel Gabriel uttered to Mary before the birth of her son: *"Thou shalt conceive, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end"* (Luke 1:31-33).

The fulfilment of these words requires the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth to raise Abraham, David and all like them, from the dead to life eternal; to restore Israel in its fulness; and to reign from Jerusalem as King.

## Jesus Christ's Coming will Transform the World

The return of the Lord Jesus Christ, personally and visibly to this earth, is a fundamental teaching of the Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments. The Prophet Isaiah foretold that the day would come when *"the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord"* (Isaiah 59:20), and that his return is linked with the destiny of the nation of Israel. David foretold in the Psalms, concerning God's purpose: *"Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea the set time is come... When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory"* (Psalm 102:13, 16).

After foretelling of the days in which we live, the prophet Daniel



said: *"In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand for ever"* (Daniel 2:44-45).

The picture is exactly the same in the New Testament. The angels reassured the disciples when the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven from the Mount of Olives after his resurrection, for *"While they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven"* (Acts 1:10-11).

This confirms the message of other Bible texts such as *"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day"* (2Thessalonians 1:7-10).

Obviously, believers in those times took comfort in the sure hope of the return of their Lord to establish a literal worldwide kingdom, and we can also take comfort in that same hope, knowing that the events in the world indicate the certainty of Jesus Christ's return in our days.

In order to establish a divine kingdom upon this earth, it will be necessary for the Lord to abolish all existing world governments. This is indicated in the prophecies concerning his work at his return. (Psalm 2; Micah 4:1-8; and Isaiah 2:1-4). No longer will the governments of this world rule with injustice, inhumanity, greed, ambition and corruption; for *"out of Zion [Jerusalem] shall go forth the law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem"* and *"he shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor... in his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth... he shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth... all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him"* (Psalm 72).

Not only will universal laws emanate from Jerusalem, but that city will also be the centre of universal worship. No longer will there be the confusion of religions and ideologies, but one worldwide faith will motivate every individual and move every heart in worship of the one, true God (Zechariah 14:16-19).

This is God's answer to six thousand years of man's misrule.

God alone has the answer, and He has decreed that He will act in His appointed time. He has indicated through the Bible, the signposts which herald the time of His intervention in men's affairs.

But, not only do the signs indicate that God's hand is about to move in the affairs of mankind, but it is imperative that He fulfil His promise to *"send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began"* (Acts 3:20-21).

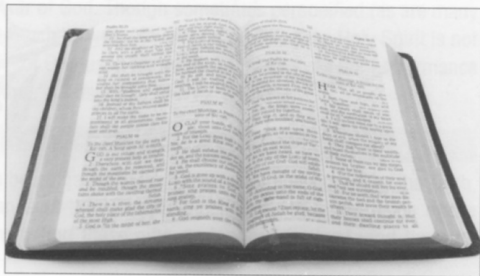
Jesus Christ is coming, to raise the dead who are responsible to judgment (1Corinthians 15:22-26), to reward the righteous (2Timothy 4:1, 7-8), and to reign on earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

## What Will Christ's Coming Mean to You?

World problems will soon reach a climax and Jesus Christ will return in fulfilment of the promises — as the promised Seed of Abraham and Son of David, to rule the world in righteousness from David's ancient throne.

But how will this affect you personally?

Belief in the one true gospel message and baptism into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ are essential for salvation: *"He [Jesus] said unto them [the disciples], Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned"* (Mark 16:15-16).



Note carefully the Bible's definition of the gospel: "...when they believed Philip [one of the disciples] preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptised, both men and women" (Acts 8:12).

God offers eternal life and an inheritance in His kingdom to those who believe and obey the gospel. An understanding of the Truth of God as revealed in His book, the Bible, baptism into the sin-covering name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and a life of dedication and obedience to the principles set down in His Word, and seen in the life of Jesus Christ, are essential prerequisites for salvation in the day of his appearing.

*"Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:26-29).*

**Take the opportunity to obtain further booklets helpful to the study of the Scriptures, and make sure of your salvation while you have time. Write to our address listed on the back cover to obtain our Bible Correspondence Course in or any other booklets listed on our website: [info@bibletruth.org.au](mailto:info@bibletruth.org.au)**



# **A Summary of the**

## **“One Faith” taught by the Apostles**

*“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one Faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Ephesians 4:4-6).*

### **THE BIBLE**

Old and New Testaments are both God's revelation to man, and are equally authoritative, wholly inspired and infallible. The New Testament supplements the Old, its teaching being based exclusively upon it (Luke 24:27; 1Thessalonians 2:13; 2Timothy 3:16; 2Peter 1:19-21).

### **THE GODHEAD**

God is one Being. He has revealed Himself as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ and of all who are related to him in faith (Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:29-32; 1Corinthians 8:5-6; Ephesians 4:6; 1Timothy 1:17; 2:5).

### **THE SPIRIT OF GOD**

The Spirit is the power of God by which He created all things, and by which they subsist (Genesis 1:1-2; Psalm 104:30; Acts 17:25-28). It is also used to describe the power of divine Truth (the Bible) upon the mind of a believer, for the revelation of the Truth came by inspiration of the Holy Spirit upon those selected to reveal it (Hebrews 1:1; John 6:63; Ephesians 6:17; 1John 5:6). Thus believers are exhorted “to be led of the Spirit,” which is the power and influence of the Truth believed (Galatians 5:16-18).

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The Holy Spirit is the Power of God. Though sometimes personified (as are many inanimate things in the Bible, such as wealth, wisdom, sin, etc.) the Holy Spirit is not a person, but the “one Spirit” of God used for special purposes, as the performance of “miracles, signs and wonders” (Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 22; 10:38).

### **THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT**

These were bestowed on believers in the first century for a testimony to the Truth, by the ‘laying on’ of the hands of the apostles (Acts 8:18). With the death of the apostles, the power of transmitting these gifts no longer remained, and the gifts ceased (1Corinthians 13:8).

## **THE SON OF GOD**

Jesus Christ is the "Son of God". He was begotten of the virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit Power of his Father (Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; Luke 1:31-35; Galatians 4:4). He was a man of our race, identical in nature with all mankind (1Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 2:14-17). He is the central figure in God's plan of redemption, being the Son promised in Eden (Genesis 3:15; Galatians 4:4), to Abraham, David and others, through whom the promises are to be realised, and the inhabitants of the earth blessed (cp. Genesis 22:17-18 with Galatians 3:8, 16; Psalm 89:34-37 with Acts 13:22-23. See also Galatians 3:14, 19, 26-28; Acts 4:12; Romans 15:8).

Jesus Christ is to return personally and visibly to the earth, at the end of Gentile times (Acts 1:11; 3:20-21; 2Timothy 4:1; Revelation 1:7). He will set up the kingdom of God (1Corinthians 15:25; Daniel 2:44; 7:13-14; Revelation 11:15).

Jesus Christ will be King of kings for he will have as his associated kings and priests, those who have been faithful in all preceding ages, and who will be clothed upon with immortality (Revelation 19:16; 5:9; 1Timothy 2:12; Revelation 20:4; Psalm 149:5-9).

## **THE NATURE OF MAN**

Man is a creature of the dust, energised by the breath of life (Genesis 2:7; 3:19; 7:21-22; 18:27; Psalm 103:14). Apart from the future resurrection at the return of Christ, he is without hope (1Corinthians 15:17-18; Ephesians 2:12).

## **THE SOUL OF MAN**

In its primary meaning, "soul" stands for the creature itself. It is rendered variously "life," "living," "man," "persons," "self," "body," and "beast." It can eat, live, die, corrupt and perish; it can be slain, strangled and destroyed (Genesis 2:7; Joshua 10:28; Job 7:15; Psalm 56:13; 78:50; 89:48; 116:8). Thus the soul of man is not, of itself, immortal (Isaiah 29:8; 53:12; Ezekiel 18:4, 20; Acts 3:23); it can apply to mortal, dying man.

## **DEATH**

In the death state man is entirely unconscious, and, apart from a resurrection, must inevitably perish (Ecclesiastes 3:16-21; 9:5-6; Isaiah 38:18; Psalm 6:5; 49:12, 14, 19-20; 146:3-4; 1Corinthians 15:13-18).

## **HELL**

"Hell" is the place of death. The word is the equivalent of the Hebrew word sheol, and the Greek word hades. Both signify "a hidden place," and are mostly rendered "grave" or "pit." The Revised Version Bible and marginal references show "grave"



and "hell" as the translation of sheol and hades. Both words should be consistently rendered as "grave" (cp. Psalm 9:17 with 31:17; Psalm 30:3; Acts 2:27, 30-32).

"Gehenna" is the name of a place outside Jerusalem where fires were kept burning to consume the rubbish from the city. The term symbolises the everlasting destruction (i.e., perishing in death) of the wicked (Mark 9:47-48).

## **THE CAUSE OF SIN**

The word "devil" comes from the Greek word *diabolos*, signifying "false accuser" or "slanderer." It is translated "slanderer" in 1Timothy 3:11, and "false accusers" in 2Timothy 3:3; Titus 2:3. Its general meaning is sin or lawlessness, whether manifested individually or politically. It is also applied to the unlawful lusts and tendencies of human nature which invariably lead to sin. It does not refer to a supernatural being (compare 1John 3:8 with James 4:1, and Hebrews 2:14 with 1Corinthians 15:56. Also see Romans 5:12, 21; 6:23).

"Satan" is a Hebrew word signifying "adversary," "enemy," or "accuser." It is sometimes applied to a good adversary (cp. 1Chronicles 21:1 with 2Samuel 24:1). It is used of an angel withstanding evil (see Numbers 22:22, 32, where the word is rendered "adversary" and "withstand"). The apostle Peter was a "Satan" when he opposed his Master (Matthew 16:23). Kings and powers have been adversaries, or "satans" (see 1Samuel 29:4; 2Samuel 19:22; 1Kings 11:14, 23, 25, where the word "adversary" is *satan* in Hebrew. See also 1Timothy 1:20).

## **THE PLAN OF REDEMPTION**

A law was given to the first man (Adam) whom God had created so that he would develop godly characteristics, and continuance of life was dependent upon obedience to it (Genesis 2:17; 3:1-3).

Mortality became the inheritance of mankind due to the transgression of God's law by Adam and Eve, so that mankind is now inherently death-doomed (Genesis 3:17-19; Romans 5:12, 18; 1Corinthians 15:21-22; Psalm 89:48; Job 4:17; Ecclesiastes 3:19-20; 9:5-6; Job 3:15-19; Isaiah 38:18-19; Psalm 6:5; Acts 13:36; 2:29).

Reconciliation and redemption were ordained by God in His mercy, to be manifested through a promised Son who would fatally bruise the "serpent" (figurative of the law of sin and death) in the head. Christ was therefore manifested to effect the abolition of the law of sin and death found in our nature (Genesis 3:14-16; Romans 7:24; Hebrews 2:14; Romans 8:1-4; 1Peter 1:19-20; 1John 3:5).

Abraham and David were assured that this promised Seed would be among their descendants, and were given "great and precious promises" which constitute the plan of God for the redemption of man. It is necessary to become related to them, otherwise we are without hope (2Peter 1:4; Genesis 12:3; 2Samuel 7:12-16; Romans 4:13; Ephesians 2:11-13; 4:18; Hebrews 11:10-13, 39-40).

## PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Belief is essential to salvation, for to become related to the promises of God we must understand them, and their relation to the Lord Jesus Christ, and obey the divine instructions (Romans 1:16; 1Corinthians 15:1-3; Acts 8:12).

Baptism must follow a knowledge of God's will and purpose. It is burial or immersion in water after believing the Gospel, and is necessary for the remission of sins, and relationship to Jesus Christ (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 8:12, 36-37; 10:6, 47; 22:16; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12).

Obedience to the commandments of our Lord must follow baptism (Matthew 28:20; John 14:15, 23; Romans 2:6-7; Philippians 2:12; 2Peter 1:3-11).

The resurrection of those who are responsible to God (and a knowledge of His Will brings responsibility – John 12:48) will take place at the return of Christ (Daniel 12:2; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15). Contrast Psalm 49:19-20; Isaiah 26:14; Jeremiah 51:39, 57 which teach that many shall not rise from the grave, being ignorant of the gospel (Ephesians 4:18). Those found approved will experience a change from mortality to immortality (John 6:39; 1Corinthians 15:50-53; Philippians 3:21; 2Corinthians 5:10; 2Timothy 4:8; Matthew 5:5; 25:31-34).

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD

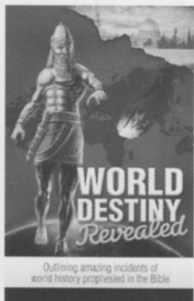
The gospel consists of the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ (Luke 9:2, 6; Acts 8:12; 19:8), and was preached to Abraham in the promises given him (Galatians 3:8).

The restoration of the throne of David is an element of this kingdom, and involves the complete re-establishment of Israel in the Land of Promise. Jerusalem will be the capital city of the world, and from it the laws will issue to govern all mankind (Isaiah 2:2-4; 11:12; 24:23; 51:3; Jeremiah 3:17; 31:10; Ezekiel 37:21-22; 39:25-29; Joel 3:17; Amos 9:11-15; Micah 4:6-8; Matthew 5:35; Luke 1:32-33).

The "millennium" relates to the thousand years' reign of peace that will follow the return of the Lord Jesus and the setting up of his kingdom (Revelation 20:6). The mission of Jesus Christ will be to subdue all enemies, the last being death itself. At the conclusion of the 1,000 years reign, there will be a further resurrection of all who have died during that period of relative peace, and those worthy will be given eternal life, whilst those unworthy will be consigned to "the second death." Death itself will thus be eliminated, and the kingdom shall be delivered to the Father who will then become "all in all" (Isaiah 25:6-8; 1Corinthians 15:24-28; Revelation 20:11-14).

So the plan of God that commences with the statement, "*In the beginning, God...*" (Genesis 1:1), ends with the final picture of glory: "*God all in all*" (1Corinthians 15:28).

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