

FIRST  
PRINCIPLES

A STUDY OF THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES OF CHRIST

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ETERNAL JUDGMENT

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**BOOK SEVEN**

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# THE ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

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**Hebrews 6:1-2** *Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of **eternal judgment**.*

The lessons on the First Principles of the doctrine of Christ have covered repentance, faith, baptisms, laying on of hands and resurrection of the dead. We began by studying Vision, so it is appropriate that we conclude with a series that will enlarge our vision. We pray that God will impart revelation as we begin our final series: Eternal Judgment.

## INTRODUCTION

Eternal judgment is one of the foundational principles mentioned in Hebrews 6:1-2. Many Christians fail to mature because they have either no concept or a false concept of eternity. To avoid this, we must be diligent and obedient in establishing those eternal things which God wants in our lives, including eternal things.

## WHY THIS STUDY?

Secondly, we study eternal judgment to obtain the proper perspective on life. Our world system tends to trap us into the temporal, the immediate and the tyranny of the urgent, therefore we may become like the rich fool whom Jesus mentioned in Luke 12:16-21. He was entangled in temporary things – planting crops, building barns and building bigger barns. His limited perspective of life concentrated on getting more so he could “... eat, drink, and be merry. But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you... .’” We must study God’s eternal purpose so that our involvement will be with those things which have eternal value, not just temporary meaning. We may need to realign our priorities to avoid wasting our lives on those things which are not related to eternity (Hebrews 4:9). God wants to enlarge our vision so that we view everything from His perspective, the eternal perspective.

There are seven Hebrew words (Old Testament) and three Greek words (New Testament) which are translated “eternal” or “forever.” As seen in the following charts, these words are used over 1,000 times in the Bible. Obviously, the subject of eternity is an important one.

## BIBLICAL WORDS FOR ETERNITY

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### NEW TESTAMENT WORDS FOR ETERNITY OR FOREVER

<u>Word</u>	<u>Times Used</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Example</u>
AIDIOA	2	Continuous, Ever enduring	Romans 1:20
AIONIOS	70	Unending, Perpetual	Romans 16:26
AION	102	Endless time, Perpetual	Hebrews 13:8

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## OLD TESTAMENT WORDS FOR ETERNITY OR FOREVER

<u>Word</u>	<u>Times Used</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Example</u>
Netsach	34	Continually, Completeness	Psalm 16:11
Ad	48	Long-lasting	Psalm 45:6
Qedem	60	Ancient, Old	Deut. 33:27
Orec	93	Length (no limit)	Psalm 93:5
Tamid	103	Constant, Continual, Perpetual	Deut. 11:12
Dor	129	Dependability	Genesis 9:12
Olam	400	Eternity, Everlasting, Unending	Psalm 90:2

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### WHAT IS ETERNITY?

It is extremely difficult for time-bound creatures to understand eternity. However, since eternity does not exist outside of God, we can better conceive of it by looking at the eternalness of God. This is still no easy task, for how can finite creatures totally comprehend their infinite Creator? With the understanding that our view of God is limited, let us examine what the Word reveals about the eternalness of God.

God is boundless. There are no limits to His knowledge (Psalm 147:5), His power (Luke 1:37) or His presence (Jeremiah 23:24). There are no limits to any of God's attributes such as love, holiness, grace, justice, etc. God is only limited to what He limits Himself. God is not bound by space or time. His infinity in relation to space is called omnipresence:.. God is everywhere at the same time (Psalm 139:7-8). He does not have to leave point A to arrive at point B. He is at both (and all) places simultaneously. God is everywhere right now.

Likewise, God is infinite in relation to time. This is known as God's eternalness. God fills all time at the same time. He does not have to move in time from point C to point D; He experiences both (and all) times simultaneously. God beholds all time (past, present and future) right now. His presence and existence encompasses all of time. This is how He can answer prayer before we pray (Isaiah 65:24) and how He knows what has been, what is and what will be.

**Isaiah 46:9-10** *"Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure,' ... ."*

God exists apart from time, so we can equate the eternalness of God with timelessness. Before time began, God existed. Genesis 1:1 says, *"In the beginning God... ."* Before the beginning, God was. If we could travel backwards in time for a million years,. we would still be no closer to the beginning of God. This is because He had no beginning. Likewise, when we have been in heaven a million years, God will be no older. He is no older today than when He created the world. He is without beginning or end and cannot be measured by time. For God, time is not past or future; eternity is one big now!

We can see God's eternalness in His name as He revealed it to Moses: "*I AM...*" (Exodus 3:14). God is always "I AM," not "I was" or "I will be," but I AM. Jesus said, "... *Before Abraham was, I AM*" (John 8:58). He did not say, "Before Abraham was, I was." He is always I AM. Jesus also said, "*I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End... the First and the Last... .*" (Revelation 1:8, 11). He did not say, "I was the beginning" and "I will be the ending," but instead "I am both the beginning and the ending." He is both at the same time – right now!

God's view of time can be seen in the following passage.

**2 Peter 3:8** *But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*

To God, one day is the same length as one thousand years! How can this be? It is because God is outside of time. He experiences no passing of time, although He can and does act within the framework of time. God inhabits both today and a day 1,000 years away right now. Not only that, He inhabits everything in between. This should be a great comfort to us. When Peter wrote this verse, he was quoting Psalm 90, which is a prayer of Moses.

**Psalm 90:1-4** *LORD, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. You turn man to destruction, and say, "Return, O children of men." For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it is past, and like a watch in the night.*

The thought of God's eternalness was comforting to Moses and is also to us. No matter where we are, what the times are like, or what we are going through, "*The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms...*" (Deuteronomy 33:27). May we respond like Moses:

**Psalm 90:12** *So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.*

Living for eternity now results in a heart of wisdom.

We who are bound by both space and time find it difficult to relate to freedom from either. We even view eternity in terms of time. We say things like "eternity is unending time," or "eternity is time without beginning or end." Some consider eternity to be forever past and forever future. However, eternity has nothing to do with time. Eternity is actually a completely different dimension from time. Eternity is timelessness! It is perpetual, continuous existence without beginning, end or succession. We know this to be true because it is true of God. Eternity began when God began – never!

Eternity will end when God ends-never! However, God does not possess eternity; He is eternal! Eternity exists because God exists.

God is the uncreated Creator and every other thing owes its existence to Him. This is true of time. Since God created time, He cannot be bound, measured or controlled by time. Time is something God created for man.

## THE ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

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**Genesis 1:14** *Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and year... ."*

Not only did God create time, He also controls time.

**Acts 1:7** *And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority."*

There are two vivid examples of God controlling time in the Old Testament. Joshua 10:12-14 records how God made time stand still for one whole day. 2 Kings 20:9-11 reveals that God made time go backwards. Obviously, God not only created time, He also controls time (Daniel 2:21). He is eternal – totally timeless.

### ILLUSTRATIONS OF ETERNITY

To help us understand eternity, let us consider some illustrations of it. Keep in mind that the limited ideas of men cannot adequately explain God. However, they do help us better understand eternity.

C.S. Lewis once said, "If you picture time as a straight line along which we have to travel, then you must picture God as the whole page on which the line is drawn" (*Moody Monthly*, January 1986, "The Attributes of God"). God encompasses all of eternity, of which time is only a speck.

Some picture eternity as a circle. A circle is unending; it has no beginning or end. Of course, eternity would be a circle on which you start at one point and travel forever without getting any closer to where you started.

A popular analogy of the comparison of God's view of history versus man's view is the story of two boys watching a parade. One boy was watching through a knothole in a fence. All he saw was one thing pass by at a time. His brother was in the top of a tree from which he could see the whole parade: beginning, end and everything in between. The view through the knothole is like man's experience of history, one thing at a time. The view from the tree is like God's view; He sees it all at once! He knows what has gone by and He knows what is yet to come, but He sees it all now.

Another example of this eternal perspective is that of two men watching a movie. One man is caught up in the excitement and suspense of the movie, wondering about the outcome. The other man never seems to be surprised by what happens. The reason? The second man was the director of the movie. He had filmed every sequence and knew the end from the beginning. Such is God's view of time (Isaiah 46:10).

God alone is eternal. Everything about Him is eternal. His name is eternal (Psalm 135:13), His word is eternal (Isaiah 40:8), His purpose is eternal (Ephesians 3:11), His kingdom is eternal (Daniel 4:3), His judgment is eternal (Psalm 119:160) and His life is eternal (1 John 5:20).

Angels, man and all other created things are not eternal. Everything had a beginning except God, so He alone is eternal. However, angels, man and many other things are everlasting, which means, they had a beginning, but will never end. Eternalness is more than being everlasting and thus belongs to God alone. The amazing thing about this is that when we are born again we receive the life of God, which is eternal life (Romans 6:23). This eternal life is not something possessed apart from God. In fact, eternal life is Jesus. He is our life (John 14:6; 1 John 5:12). We will study eternal life in depth in a later lesson. We will also cover God's eternal kingdom, judgment, Word and worship. Since we studied God's eternal purpose in the Vision series, we will just briefly review it here.

We must realize that God does nothing without a purpose. He does not act haphazardly or without forethought. Since God's Word reveals God's purpose, we can have understanding concerning what God has done, is doing or will do. God's purpose is not hidden; He has revealed it to us in Christ (Ephesians 3:11).

**WHAT IS THE  
ETERNAL PURPOSE  
OF GOD?**

**Ephesians 1:9-12** ... *having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth – in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.*

The first chapter of Ephesians reveals three things concerning God's eternal purpose. First, God is a Father who desires children. However, God does not want just any kind of children. From the beginning God has declared his purpose to man. God said,... "*Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion...*" (Genesis 1:26). So we see secondly, that God's purpose has always been to bring man into His own image. God is conforming all believers into the image of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29).

God breathed the breath of life into Adam, he literally became a "speaking spirit." Adam contained the very likeness of God, and was able to fellowship with God. However, with the Fall man lost the most precious thing to him, the presence of God. Yet God had provided from the foundation of the world the perfect sacrifice – Jesus Christ (Revelation 13:8). Being conceived of the Holy Spirit, Jesus was the perfect seed of man bearing the image of God. God had given the promise of this seed when Adam fell and we find this theme of "the seed" throughout the Scriptures (Galatians 3:16).

Jesus was the promised seed who bruised (crushed) the serpent's head. When He commissioned the Church before ascending into heaven, He revealed our part in God's eternal purpose. As the body of Christ resident in the world, the Church is involved in bringing to completion all that God purposed from the beginning. We will then dwell with our Lord forever, ruling and reigning with Him.

**Revelation 21:1-4** *Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth... Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as*

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*a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."*

God desires children who are "... *holy and without blame before Him in love*" (Ephesians 1:4). We are being conformed to His image, not for our own glory, but to glorify Him in all things (Ephesians 1:6, 12). This is the third aspect of God's purpose: His Christ-like family lives to be "... *to the praise of His glory*" (Ephesians 1:12). We are not here to please ourselves, promote ourselves or glorify ourselves. We are here to manifest His glory, His wisdom (Ephesians 3:10-11) and His character (Romans 8:29). When we do these things for His glory, we are fulfilling His eternal purpose.

### **PERSPECTIVE**

We will turn our attention to the word "perspective" now. Perspective is the mental ability to view things in their true relations or relative importance. For our purpose, we will simply define perspective as your view of reality. We want to raise these questions: What is your view of reality? What is your view of eternal reality? How did you arrive at this view? Is your view biblical?

"Worldview" is a new word established to encompass these questions. Each of us has a worldview which is the culturally structured assumptions, values and commitments underlying our perspective of reality. As believers, we desire our worldview to be the same as the biblical revelation of reality. We want our worldview to be the same as God's view of reality.

Most of us grew up in a western culture which is dominated by naturalism and rationalism. Other cultures have their own historical reality problems: spiritualism, superstition, occultism or animism. When we become born again, our worldview is shaken to the core. Our mind needs renewing (Romans 12:2). Many of our basic assumptions must change to agree with the Word of God. As we mature in the Lord, the change continues. First Principles is a worldview-changing study of the Word of God. We must continually ask ourselves, "Does what I believe agree with the Word of God?" "In making decisions, do I have an eternal worldview?" "Do I make decisions based upon eternity or am I living for today?"

## RESPONSIVE READING

### Question 1: How do we know that God is eternal?

- a. We know God is eternal because He has no beginning or end.

**Hebrews 7:3** ... without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.

- b. We know God is eternal because of His revealed name.

**Exodus 3:14** And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

- c. We know God is eternal because He created time.

**Genesis 1:14** Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years...."

- d. We know God is eternal because He controls time.

**Daniel 2:21** And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding.

- e. We know God is eternal because He does not experience the passing of time.

**2 Peter 3:8** But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

### Question 2: What things of God are eternal?

God is eternal, so everything about Him is eternal.

- a. God's name is eternal.

**Psalms 135:13** Your name, O LORD, endures forever, Your fame, O LORD, throughout all generations.

- b. God's word is eternal.

**Isaiah 40:8** The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.

- c. God's purpose is eternal.

**Ephesians 3:11** ...according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord...

- d. God's judgments are eternal.

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**Psalm 119:160** *The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.*

- e. God's life is eternal.

**John 5:26** *For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself... .*

## **HOMEWORK**

1. What is the importance of having an understanding of eternity?
2. God's infinity in relation to time is called \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Please make a comparison between time and eternity.
4. Is there a difference between eternal and everlasting?
5. In one sentence describe the eternal purpose of God.
6. What has God spoken to you personally regarding His eternal purpose for you?



# THE ETERNAL JUDGMENT

**Psalm 145:10-13** *All Your works shall praise You, O LORD, and Your saints shall bless You. They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and talk of Your power, to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations.*

The kingdom of God is an eternal kingdom. It has no beginning, no ending and is ever present. God's kingdom is eternal because He is the eternal King (1 Timothy 1:17, Psalm 74:12). Since the King has always existed, so has His kingdom. The kingdom remains as long as the King reigns... forever (Exodus 15:18; Psalm 29:10, 45:6).

The English definition of "kingdom" is "a government ruled by a king; a realm; a domain." Both the Hebrew word "malkuyah" and the Greek word "basileia" for kingdom mean "royal power, dominion and rule over a territory subject to the king." A kingdom involves both a reign and a realm. A reign must have a realm in which to rule, and a realm needs a ruler. A kingdom involves both the authority and power to rule plus an area over which this authority is exercised. Before we take a closer look at the kingdom of God, we need to understand the sovereignty of God.

## WHAT IS A KINGDOM?

Since God created everything, He also has the right to rule everything. The Creator is greater than His creation. The Creator must be Lord over His creation (Job 38-41). We call this the sovereignty of God. To be sovereign is to be the supreme, independent ruler over all. God alone is sovereign for He alone has supreme authority over everything!

## THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

**Psalm 93:1-2** *The LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty; the LORD is clothed, He has girded Himself with strength. Surely the world is established, so that it cannot be moved. Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting.*

**1 Chronicles 29:11-13** *Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and You are exalted as head over all. Both riches and honor come from You, and You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; in Your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. Now therefore, our God, we thank You and praise Your glorious name.*

God's omnipotence includes His power to create. God's sovereignty is His power to rule. Since God is who He is, He does as He pleases (Psalm 115:3, 135:6). God moves unhindered toward the accomplishment of His eternal purpose. Nothing or no one can thwart Him (Isaiah 46:9-11). God is in control!

Since God is sovereign, over what does He rule? What is God's realm, or area of authority? The Bible reveals that God rules over the following: the wind (Psalm 135:7, Mark 4:39), rain (Deuteronomy 11:17), snow (Job 37:6), storms (Exodus

## WHAT IS THE REALM OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY?

## THE ETERNAL KINGDOM

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9:23-33) and lightning (Psalm 135:7). Obviously, God is in control of the elements (Psalm 147:15-18, Amos 4:7-10).

God also controls light and darkness (Exodus 10:21-23), stars (Matthew 2:9), animals (Genesis 2:19, 6:19-20; Exodus 8; Psalm 104; John 21:6), grass, herbs and trees (Psalm 104:14-17). Needless to say, God is in control of nature.

God's Word says that He controls the rich and the poor (1 Samuel 2:7-8), all rulers (Daniel 4:17, Romans 13:1-2), all kingdoms (2 Chronicles 20:6), the heathen (Psalm 47:8, 2 Chronicles 20:6), heaven and earth (Psalm 47:7, Genesis 14:19, Daniel 4:35, Acts 17:24), life and death (1 Samuel 2:6), angels (Psalm 103:20-22), Satan and demons (Isaiah 24:21-22, Revelation 20:1-10, 2 Samuel 24:1, 1 Chronicles 21:1).

In short, God rules over all (Psalm 103:19)!

### OUR RESPONSE TO GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

How then should we respond to our sovereign God? When Job was confronted with God's remarkable revelation of His greatness and power, he responded correctly.

**Job 42:1-6** *Then Job answered the LORD and said: "I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, 'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.' I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."*

In the light of God's awesome power and holiness, what can we do but repent? Seeing His power contrasted with our weakness, His holiness compared to our filthiness, we too must cry out like Isaiah... *"Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts"* (Isaiah 6:5). Like Daniel we must bow in holy awe, having no strength left in us (Daniel 10:5-9). This is not something we have to work up! When we see the King and ourselves in His light, we will gladly reverence, love, obey and submit to His sovereign rule. We will say as Jesus did, *"...not my will, but Yours..."* (Luke 22:42).

### THE UNVEILING OF GOD'S KINGDOM

We have seen that God's sovereignty is His absolute rule over all things. This is different than the kingdom of God. God's kingdom is His rule and reign over those who voluntarily submit to His lordship. God rules over all, but only those who are born again enter His kingdom. God's rule is His reign, and believers are the realm.

The kingdom of God has always existed. However, it has been expressed through different people in different ways. When God created Adam and Eve in His own image, He said to them,... *"Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every*

*living thing that moves on the earth*” (Genesis 1:28). Being created in God’s image, man had the ability to be fruitful, to multiply, to fill the earth, to subdue and to have dominion. The Hebrew words for “subdue” and “dominion” have the same root meaning: “to tread down under foot, to conquer, subjugate and rule.”

Man was created to have fellowship with God and to rule over His creation (Psalm 8:6). Of course, this was not absolute authority, but delegated authority. God was still in control, but He wanted man to work with Him in establishing His kingdom. So, He put Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden to “...*tend and keep it*” (Genesis 2:15). This meant they were to rule it and protect it. As they were faithful in little, God would have increased their realm of authority (Matthew 25:23).

However, Satan tempted Adam and Eve to sin and thus forfeit their authority to him. Satan became the “...*god of this age...*” (2 Corinthians 4:4). He did not take any of God’s authority, only man’s delegated authority. Man became enslaved to sin (John 8:34) and Satan (2 Timothy 2:26). Even so, God immediately set into motion His plan of redemption (Genesis 3:15). Through His seed, God would restore man to his place of fellowship with God and dominion in the earth. The whole fallen creation groans and travails as it waits for this “...*revealing of the sons of God*” (Romans 8:19).

God revealed His kingdom to Abraham, through whose seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 22:18). His seed became the children of Israel whom God chose to be “...*a kingdom of priests and a holy nation...*” (Exodus 19:5-6). Through His chosen people, God revealed His kingdom to the world. Israel, the expression of God’s kingdom, was vastly different from the surrounding nations. Israel was monotheistic, non-idolatrous and believed her God was in control of nature and history. The people of Israel believed they were the people of God ... and they were.

Originally, Israel was a theocracy. That meant God was in control and He ruled through His delegated authorities (such as Moses, Joshua, the priests and the judges). Later, the people wanted a king like the other countries had (1 Samuel 8:6-7). In doing this, they rejected the rule of God.

Saul became Israel’s first king. After him came David, from whom monarchy was established. Rather than God raising up leaders, the leadership was passed down from father to son. Gradually, Israel fell into idolatry; the land became divided and eventually was overthrown. Why? Israel had presumed that the kingdom of Israel was equal to the kingdom of God. The people began to live in sin and idolatry, thinking they would escape judgment because they were “God’s chosen people.” But where God’s rule and reign are not obeyed, His judgment comes. So God judged Israel. They went back and forth from captivity to repentance to captivity as the prophets spoke forth God’s judgment. God destroyed Israel as a nation for her sin. But in fulfillment of His prophetic Word, God re-established Israel as a nation in 1948.

Although God judged Israel, He promised to raise up David’s Tabernacle and a people who are called by His name (Amos 9:8-12). God always brings about His

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purposes; nothing can thwart His plans (Isaiah 46:9-11). God works “...all things according to the counsel of His will...” (Ephesians 1:11). So, God sent forth His promised Redeemer.

**Isaiah 9:6-7** *For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

### THE KING OF KINGS

After the last Old Testament prophet (Malachi) spoke forth the word of God, there were 400 silent years. During this time there were no prophecies, no men of God speaking forth His word, for God had rejected Israel. However, seemingly out of nowhere came... “*The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight ... And all flesh shall see the salvation of God’*” (Luke 3:4-6). John the Baptist was raised up by God to prepare the way for the King. He preached repentance and righteousness, and many people began to be spiritually stirred. After all these years, the word of God was finally coming forth again (Luke 3:2). Six months later, Jesus came forth preaching that the kingdom of God was at hand. The Jews took this to mean that the earthly Davidic kingdom would be set up again. They believed that God would intervene on their behalf. After all, they were His chosen people. They expected to be released from their captivity and have their fortunes restored.

**Zechariah 9:9-10** *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem; the battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.*

The Jews grasped the part about the King and His dominion, but not the part about Him being lowly. They expected a mighty, conquering king like David, not a suffering Servant (Isaiah 53). So they rejected the kingdom of God once again by rejecting the King. This resulted in the death of Jesus at the hands of men according to the predetermined plan of God. However, Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to the Father. He was then given dominion, glory and an everlasting kingdom over all (Daniel 7:13-14). Jesus destroyed the works of the devil (1 John 3:8) and gave believers authority over him and his demons (Luke 10:19). The Lord restored man to his place of dominion.

**Daniel 7:21-22, 27** *I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom...Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.*

## THE KINGDOM PREACHED BY JESUS

Jesus began His earthly ministry by declaring His kingdom. He also ended His ministry “...speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3). Jesus’ purpose was to “...preach the kingdom of God...” (Luke 4:43). His preaching was full of the phrase, “The kingdom of heaven is like...” (Matthew 13:24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47, 52). When Jesus sent forth His twelve disciples, He told them, “And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand’” (Matthew 10:7). Obviously, the kingdom of God is central to the teaching of Jesus. Therefore, we must have an understanding of what He meant by “the kingdom of God.”

The kingdom of God as preached by Jesus is vastly different from ordinary worldly kingdoms. As previously stated, it was also a different kingdom from that which the Jews expected. First of all, the kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom, not a worldly, political kingdom.

**Luke 17:20-21** *Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”*

The kingdom of God is not a place! It is not a certain nation. Rather, it is a state of being, a state of yieldedness to the King. The kingdom of God exists wherever people submit to God’s rule and authority. The realm of God’s reign is within us. Second, the kingdom of God is eternal, not temporal. Worldly kingdoms rise and fall, but the kingdom of God is “...not of this world...” (John 18:36). God’s kingdom never fails; it will last forever (Daniel 4:3).

**Psalms 145:13** *Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations.*

The third difference between the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of the world is that God’s kingdom is moral, not material. In other words, God’s kingdom has to do with “... righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14:17).

**1 Corinthians 15:50** *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.*

There are two kingdoms: the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light. Satan and his demons are “...the rulers of the darkness of this age...” (Ephesians 6:12). When we are born, we are in this worldly kingdom. However, when we are born again, we change kingdoms (John 3:3-5, Acts 26:18).

## ENTERING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

**Colossians 1:12-13** *...giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love... .*

We change kingdoms when we change kings! We do this by becoming “...as little children...” (Matthew 18:3-4), totally trusting in the Lord of lords and King of kings and not in ourselves.

## THE ETERNAL KINGDOM

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### KINGDOM LIVING

To Jesus, the kingdom of God was an ever-present reality (Matthew 12:28). Likewise, we must not view the kingdom as something off in the future; the kingdom of God is here, now! In fact, the kingdom of God has been defined as the visitation of the age to come upon this present evil age without changing this present evil age into the age to come (Hebrews 6:4-5). The Church is not the kingdom of God, just as Israel was not the kingdom of God. However, the Church is part of God's kingdom and the instrument through which God is expressing His kingdom on earth today. The kingdom of God is shown forth through the people of God. Therefore, we have specific kingdom responsibilities.

First, even though we are in God's kingdom, we must still seek "...*first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...*" (Matthew 6:33). Our first priority is to seek God's rule, reign and righteousness for our own lives. If we are not under His rule, we cannot reveal His kingdom to others.

Second, we must pray for God's kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10). God's kingdom is established in heaven, for His will is always done there. We are to pray for God's will to be done here as well.

Third, the church has been given the keys of the kingdom and the power of binding and loosing (Matthew 16:18-19). We must be aggressive in binding the "strong man," Satan.

**Matthew 12:28-29** *But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.*

We have the power in Jesus' name to bind the enemy and set the captives free. The early church went forth preaching the kingdom (Acts 8:12, 19:8, 20:25, 28:23). However, "...*the kingdom of God is not in word but in power*" (1 Corinthians 4:20). Therefore, when they preached, the word was always accompanied by signs following (Mark 16:15-18, Acts 8:7, 19:6). We too, are commissioned by Jesus to go forth preaching the kingdom, healing the sick, raising the dead and casting out demons. We who have freely received, must freely give (Matthew 10:7-8). As we do this, we will express God's eternal kingdom and fulfill His eternal purpose – bringing glory to the eternal King!

**1 Peter 2:9** *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light... .*

## RESPONSIVE READING

### Question 1: What is the realm of God's authority?

The Bible reveals that God rules over all of nature. This includes:

- a. The elements

**Psalm 147:15-18** *He sends out His command to the earth; His word runs very swiftly. He gives snow like wool; He scatters the frost like ashes. He casts out His hail like morsels; who can stand before His cold? He sends out His word and melts them; He causes His wind to blow, and the waters to flow.*

- b. The animals

**Genesis 2:19** *Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name.*

- c. The vegetation

**Psalm 104:14** *He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the service of man, that he may bring forth food from the earth... .*

God also controls:

- d. Life and death

**1 Samuel 2:6** *The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and brings up.*

- e. The rich and the poor

**1 Samuel 2:7** *The LORD makes poor and makes rich; He brings low and lifts up.*

- f. All rulers

**Romans 13:1** *Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.*

- g. All kingdoms

**2 Chronicles 20:6** *...and said, "O LORD God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?"*

- h. The nations

**Psalm 47:8** *God reigns over the nations; God sits on His holy throne.*

## THE ETERNAL KINGDOM

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i. Heaven and earth

**Acts 17:24** *“God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.”*

j. The angels

**Psalm 103:20** *Bless the Lord, you His angels, who excel in strength, who do His word, heeding the voice of His word.*

k. Satan and his demons

**Revelation 20:10** *The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*

l. God rules over all!

**Psalm 103:19** *The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all.*





**Psalm 119:160** *The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.*

The eternal King is also the eternal Judge of all (Hebrews 12:23). God's judgments are eternal and always based on His eternal perspective. However, in order to help us understand God's judgment, we will look at it in terms of past, present and future. Because we are creatures of time, we see some of God's judgments as completed, some as current, and some as future. But from God's perspective, all judgments are eternal.

There are many biblical words for "judge" and "judgment." The basic root meaning of "judgment" is "to try (through investigation and examination), to reach a verdict or decision, to pronounce the sentence and to carry out judgment, either through punishment (if guilty) or exoneration (if not guilty)." Judgment involves more than reaching a decision, it also requires execution, or enforcing the sentence.

## WHAT IS JUDGMENT?

When Adam sinned, man fell. Adam did not fall alone. Because he was the father of all mankind, all men fell with him. By one man, sin entered the world and death passed on to all men (Romans 5:12-21). Since all men were in Adam when he sinned, "...*judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation...*" (Romans 5:18). As we learned in the Repentance series, all men are born sinners (Psalm 51:5). "*There is none righteous, no, not one...*" (Romans 3:10, Psalm 53:1). Because no man is righteous and the "...*wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness...*" (Romans 1:18), all men stand condemned before God.

## PAST JUDGMENT

The light of Jesus Christ came into the world, but some men loved darkness rather than light because of their evil deeds (John 3:19; 8:12). When a person refuses the light of Jesus, he rejects Christ's saving work. This results in condemnation that leads to eternal punishment.

**John 3:17-18** *For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

Every man has sinned and, in so doing, has earned death and hell. Death is the wages for our sin; it is what we deserve (Romans 6:23). However, because of God's great love for us, He sent His innocent Son to die in the place of all who are guilty. When we believe this and turn from self to God, we receive the gift of salvation and are made righteous in the sight of God. However, everyone who refuses this gift of eternal life will receive what he deserves: death and everlasting torment in hell. Those are our only two options, either believe in Christ and get what we do not deserve, or reject Christ and receive what we do deserve.

The first Adam sinned and death passed to all men. However, Jesus Christ is the last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45). This means that when Jesus died, all that had to

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do with the first Adam also died. Our old man (all that we were in Adam) was “...*crucified with Him...*” (Romans 6:6). Praise God! Jesus is not only the last Adam; He is also the second Man (1 Corinthians 15:47). This means that He is the Father of a whole new creation of men (2 Corinthians 5:17). The old man is dead and the second Man is a life-giving spirit (1 Corinthians 15:45) who gives us new life and conforms us into His own image.

**Romans 5:17-19** *...For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous.*

God is a God of justice and His justice must be fulfilled. Likewise, His holiness and wrath must be fulfilled. So, how can man escape God’s wrath and judgment? He cannot! God’s wrath is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness. This includes the unrighteousness of every man. No one can escape God’s judgment. However, those who receive the saving work of Christ have already been judged, condemned and punished. God has given us the death sentence and we have died.

**Romans 6:3-6** *Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with that we should no longer be slaves of sin.*

When Jesus died, He died not only **for** us, but **as** us. He died in our place, so we were actually crucified with Him. This is an accomplished fact!

**Galatians 2:20** *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

We who are “in Christ” were in Him when He was crucified. Therefore, in Christ we have already been judged, found guilty and have been punished. This is the glory of the cross! “*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all*” (Isaiah 53:6). “*...He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many...*” (Isaiah 53:12). Jesus became sin for us “*...that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus was made sin for us. He bore our sins and died for us. Why?

**Isaiah 53:10** *Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed... .*

Because Jesus died for us and as us, He received in His body the judgment and wrath of God for our sins. We mentioned that judgment was not only reaching a decision or verdict, but also enforcing the sentence. God reached a guilty verdict about our sin which required the death penalty. Jesus allowed the sentence to be enforced on Him, rather than on us. So, God's judgment was complete—a verdict was reached and a sentence carried out. Jesus' sacrifice completely satisfied God's righteous judgment.

The results of our death in Christ are amazing, almost beyond our ability to comprehend. First, our sins are forgiven and God does not remember them anymore (Isaiah 43:25). The blood of Jesus cleanses all sin (1 John 1:9). Next, we are "justified by faith" (Romans 5:1). Justification is more than forgiveness. Justification imputes the righteousness of Christ to us. We now stand before God as if we had never sinned! This justification gives us "... peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1).

**Romans 5:8-9** *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.*

Because of Jesus, we are saved from God's wrath. Jesus is our propitiation (1 John 2:2, 4:10). Propitiation is a big word which simply means that God is not angry with us anymore!

**Romans 3:22-25** *...even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed... .*

Since we are in Christ, we are no longer condemned (Romans 8:1). We have been redeemed from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13). The curse of the law is the punishment which results from not keeping it. However, we who are born again are no longer under the law or its curse (Galatians 3:10-26).

A man can be judged and punished for a crime only once. Since we have already been judged and punished in Christ, then we are totally free from condemnation and future judgment of sin. Our sins have been eternally judged! Praise God!

The fact that we are free from condemnation and judgment of sin does not mean that we will escape future judgment.

**Hebrews 9:27** *And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment... .*

Yes, our sins have already been judged, but we will still stand before the judgment seat of Christ where our works will be judged.

### FUTURE JUDGMENT

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**2 Corinthians 5:10** *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

There are two future eternal judgments. One is the great **white throne judgment** which will take place at the end of the thousand year reign of Christ on earth. The other is the **judgment seat of Christ** where believers will be judged.

**Revelation 20:11-15** *Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*

As previously explained, non-believers are already condemned because of their unbelief. Since their names are not in the Book of Life, they will be “*cast into the lake of fire.*” This is where the devil and his demons will also be cast (Revelation 20:10). It is a place of torment “day and night forever and ever.” Hell is the final place or state of punishment of all who rebelliously die in their sins. It is an actual place prepared for the Devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41). If men choose to serve the Devil in this life, then they will dwell with him eternally in hell.

The Old Testament teaches that all men go “down” to “**sheol**,” a Hebrew word which is translated “hell,” “grave” and “pit.” It is probably represented also in the phrase, “He was gathered to his people.” In the New Testament, both the redeemed and the unregenerate are spoken of as going down to “hades,” the Greek word translated “hell” and “grave,” before the resurrection of the Lord. Sheol and **hades** are commonly held to be identical since the Old and New Testament confirm each other regarding the place of departed spirits. Jesus spoke of hades having two compartments divided by a chasm, one side for the wicked and one, “Abraham’s bosom,” for the just (Luke 16:19).

After the resurrection of Christ, there seems to have come a change. Believers are presented as going into the presence of the Lord at death, while unbelievers continue to go to hades. Apparently, when Christ arose, he took with him the souls of the righteous in hades (Acts 2:31, Ephesians 4:9-10).

The Greek word “**Tartarus**” is used once in the New Testament (2 Peter 2:4) and is translated “hell.” Placing this verse with Jude 6 suggests that Tartarus is a prison related to fallen angels.

The “**Abyss**” and the “**Bottomless Pit**” (Luke 8:31, Romans 10:7, Revelations 9:1-3) are words referring to a prison or dungeon similar to hades. We might look

at sheol or hades as a place for departed human spirits, and tartarus and the abyss as a place for fallen angelic spirits or demon spirits. Possibly these are the same. All are awaiting the great white throne judgment.

Jesus used the word “**Gehenna**” when He spoke of the final and eternal Hell. It means “The Valley of Hinnon.” When Israel began to worship Baal, they used part of the valley on the east side of Jerusalem to burn their children alive and to burn the refuse of the city. It is here that the wicked kings made the children pass through the fire to the gods of Baal and Molech (2 Chronicles 28:3, 33:6; Jeremiah 7:31, 19:5-6). The godly King Josiah destroyed these altars so that the abominations would cease and the valley became a place for the filth and refuse of the city. Fires kindled by brimstone burned continually to consume the impurity of the place. Thus, Jesus spoke of this horrible place when describing the final hell, the Lake of Fire.

Hell will be a place of fire and brimstone, horrible torment, continually ascending smoke, and where “the worm never dies.” Hell is not annihilation, some state of non-existence, or temporary punishment. This Lake of Fire awaits the Great White Throne judgment to receive those who will be eternally separated from the presence of God. However, God is not willing that any should perish (1 Timothy 2:4). Man still has a choice until death.

The Devil, the Antichrist and the False Prophet are to be cast into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:10). The unredeemed of all mankind will be cast into hell after the judgment (Revelation 20:15). Finally, death and hades are to be thrown into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:14).

When Jesus returns to begin His reign on earth, all believers will appear before the judgment seat of Christ where we will be judged according to our works (Matthew 16:27, Revelation 22:12). This will not be judgment for salvation, but judgment for rewards. The things God has worked in us, we are responsible to work out in our lives (Philippians 2:12-13). God expects good works from us. We are saved by grace, not works. Works have no redemptive power, either before or after initial salvation. However, true saving faith will always result in good works (Ephesians 2:8-10; James 2:14-26).

The Bible reveals specific areas of works that will be judged:

1. Stewardship – how we used what God entrusted to us: both time (Ephesians 5:16, Colossians 4:5, 1 Peter 1:17) and money (1 Corinthians 16:2, 2 Corinthians 9:6).
2. Authority – how we handle God given authority and how we respond to those in authority over us (Acts 20:26-28, Hebrews 13:17, James 3:1).
3. Witnessing or soul winning – how we share Christ with others (2 Corinthians 5:10-11, 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20, Ezekiel 3:18-21, Proverbs 11:30).
4. Relationships – how we treat others (Matthew 10:41-42, Romans 14:10).

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5. Fruitfulness – how we have matured and developed (John 15:1-11, Galatians 5:22-23, 2 Peter 1:2-12).
6. Discipline – how we have run the race (1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Philippians 3:13-14).
7. Faithfulness – how we have endured temptation and suffering (James 1:2-4; Revelation 12:11; Matthew 5:11-12; 1 Peter 2:19-21, 4:12-19).

### HOW WILL JESUS JUDGE?

God the Father is the judge of all (Hebrews 12:23). However, He has chosen to delegate the authority to carry out His judgment to Jesus (John 5:22).

**1 Corinthians 3:10-15** *According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*

Jesus Christ is the foundation of our lives. We will be judged according to what we build upon this foundation. We can build with either gold, silver and precious stones or with wood, hay and straw. Gold, silver and precious stones are valuable works which result from our union with Christ. They have already been tried and purified and are imperishable. On the other hand, hay, wood and straw are the works of the flesh. They are the results of self effort rather than abiding dependency on the Lord. Since they are our works, not His, they are dead works and will perish in the fire.

The fire that will test our works is nothing other than the eyes of the Lord! (Psalm 11:4, 90:8; Revelation 1:14). His eyes are discerning and penetrate to the very depths of our being. What we are and have done will be exposed in the light of His presence. *"For our God is a consuming fire"* (Hebrews 12:29). He will expose, make manifest and try our works. Only what can stand the test of a direct encounter with a holy God will be rewarded.

According to Romans 6:12-14, good works are the actual works of God performed through a yielded instrument. Good works are works which are instigated by the will and Spirit of God and are performed in God's way, power and time for His glory. These works will receive eternal rewards.

### WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT OF OUR FUTURE JUDGMENT?

According to 1 Corinthians 3:14-15, some believers will suffer loss and others will receive rewards. The Bible describes these rewards as crowns, which speak of public recognition and honor. Also, crowns represent Christ's approval and acceptance of our work. The Bible mentions five crowns. Each one will be given for a specific accomplishment.

1. The crown of life is given for faithfulness (James 1:12, 2:10).
2. The crown of glory is given to God's shepherds (1 Peter 5:1-4).
3. The incorruptible crown is given for self-mastery (1 Corinthians 9:25).
4. The crown of rejoicing is given for soul winning (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20).
5. The crown of righteousness is given to those who love His appearing (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

The Lord tells us that our crowns are to be guarded.

**Revelation 3:11** *"Behold, I come quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown."*

When we receive our crowns, we can join the four and twenty elders as they *"...fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne..."* (Revelation 4:10).

Not only will judgment result in crowns, but it will also determine our position in God's eternal kingdom. The bride of Christ (Church) will rule and reign with Christ forever (Revelation 1:5-6, 11:15, 20:4-6, 22:5). We shall reign on earth (Revelation 5:9-10). The meek will indeed inherit the earth (Matthew 5:5, Psalm 37:9, 22, 29). The saints will also be involved in judging the world and angels (Psalm 149:6-9).

**1 Corinthians 6:2-3** *Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?*

According to Daniel 7, Jesus was given dominion, glory and an everlasting kingdom (verse 14). This kingdom will be possessed by the saints forever (verse 18). Judgment (verse 22) and the entire kingdom will be given to the saints under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ (verse 27).

**Jude 14-15** *... "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."*

Christ has chosen to rule, reign and execute eternal judgment through His bride, the Church (Revelation 2:26-27). We will be judged by our works to determine what our position will be in God's kingdom. God will be in control, but there will be levels of rulership under His authority. Those who are faithful now will rule over many cities (Luke 19:12-27). Others will rule a few cities. Those who do nothing now will receive nothing then. They will be eternally saved, but will go unrewarded in the Kingdom.

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The ultimate reward of the righteous is seen in the place which Scripture calls heaven, a place created by God (1 Chronicles 16:26). Heaven is the hope, inheritance and eternal dwelling place of the righteous. The Tabernacle of Moses was a shadow of this heavenly sanctuary (Hebrews 8:1-5).

The Bible alludes to three distinct heavens. The **first heaven** is our earth's atmospheric covering. The **second heaven** is the starry, planetary space of untold billions of planets, galaxies and suns, or simply the universe created by God.

The **third heaven** (2 Corinthians 12:2), is called Paradise (Revelation 2:7), the presence of God (Hebrews 9:24), the throne of God (Acts 7:49), God's dwelling place (2 Chronicles 6:33), and heaven of heavens (2 Chronicles 6:18). It is where Jesus Christ ascended to and sits on the right hand of the Father and from where the Holy Spirit was sent. Believers who have died are "...*present with the Lord*" in heaven (2 Corinthians 5:8).

The Scriptures reveal that in time the first heaven and first earth will "pass away" and there will be a new heaven and new earth (2 Peter 3:10-13). A new Jerusalem (Revelation 21) will come down out of heaven from God. The new Jerusalem is a literal city with foundations, gates, walls and streets. This will then be the eternal dwelling place of God with His redeemed people of all ages. There will be no more sea, no tears nor sorrow, no more death, no curse, no sin nor unrighteousness, no night, and no shadows nor darkness. The city will be filled with God's glory and presence which will give light to the new heaven and earth. Both the Father and the Son will dwell there. Worship will be given to God and the Lamb continually and eternally. Heaven will be a place of love, joy, peace, holiness, righteousness, light and eternal life because Jesus the Redeemer will be there. What a wonderful reward! He is worthy to be praised!!

The nations are said to walk by its light (Revelation 21:24), suggesting that the city will be suspended over the new earth. The kings of the earth will bring their glory (their praise and worship) to it. Apparently, they do not reside in the new Jerusalem, but make visits to it.

**Romans 11:33** *Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!*

### PRESENT JUDGMENT

We now live between two great judgments: the judgment of our sin (past) and the judgment of our works (future). How then should we live?

**1 Peter 1:16-17** *...because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy." And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear... .*

All believers will stand before the judgment seat of Christ. The thought of standing before our holy God causes a holy fear to rise up in us. We will stand before the judgment seat of Christ, we need the "terror of the Lord" now so that we may judge ourselves continually (2 Corinthians 5:10-11).

**1 Corinthians 11:31** *For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.*

The absence of self judgment necessitates divine judgment. Therefore we judge ourselves by examination (1 Corinthians 11:28, 2 Corinthians 13:5, Galatians 6:4). Remember, to judge is to examine, reach a verdict and carry out the sentence. The sentence is always death. We must confess our sins (1 John 1:9) and appropriate the work of the cross by reckoning ourselves dead to sin and alive to God (Romans 6:11). We don't pay a penalty, but we die to sin and self. Since the old man is dead, we must put him off and put on the new (Ephesians 4:22-24). The crucified life is a daily dependence upon God, choosing His will over our own. Because of our past judgment at the cross we live, yet Christ lives in us (Galatians 2:20). As we are identified with Him, we can rest in His work and allow Him to live out His life through us. We are eternally judged in Him and He will eternally judge through us!

# ETERNAL JUDGEMENT

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## RESPONSIVE READING

**Question 1: All believers will appear before the judgment seat of Christ where we will be judged according to our works. What specific areas will be judged?**

- a. Our stewardship will be judged to show how we used what God entrusted to us. This includes our:

Time

**1 Peter 1:17** *And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear... .*

Talents and Gifts

**Luke 19:26** *"For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."*

Money

**2 Corinthians 9:6** *But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.*

Authority

**James 3:1** *My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.*

- b. We will be judged according to how we shared Christ with others.

**Ezekiel 3:18-19** *"When I say to the wicked, You shall surely die, and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul."*

- c. Our relationships will be judged to reveal how we treated others.

**Romans 14:10-13** *But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: "As I live, says the LORD, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God." So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.*

- d. Our fruitfulness will be judged.

**2 Peter 1:5-8** *But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

- e. Our self-discipline will be judged.

**1 Corinthians 9:24-25** *Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.*

- f. Our faithfulness will be judged.

**1 Peter 4:17-19** *For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God...Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.*

# ETERNAL JUDGEMENT

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## HOMEWORK

1. What does it mean to judge?
2. Why is Jesus called the “last Adam” and the “second man”?
3. What are the results of our past judgment in Christ?
4. Who will be judged in the future?
5. What will be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ?

1. The absence of \_\_\_\_\_ judgment necessitates \_\_\_\_\_ judgment.
2. How are you judging yourself now?





**Psalm 119:89** *Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.*

**Isaiah 40:8** *The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.*

**Matthew 24:35** *Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.*

**1 Peter 1:25** *But the word of the LORD endures forever.*

When God created man, He did not intend for man to live independently from Him. In fact, man was created for God's pleasure (Revelation 4:11) and for fellowship with his Maker. When man fell, he became separated from God. However, God carried out His purpose and plan for reconciling man to Himself. To do this, He graciously revealed Himself to man.

God has revealed Himself to man in many different ways. The first way is through natural, or general revelation. Romans 1:20 states that God's creation reveals His eternal power and Godhead. The universe itself is proof of the existence of a powerful God. God reveals Himself in nature, for the creation is proof of a Creator (Acts 14:17, Psalm 97:6).

**THE PROGRESSIVE  
REVELATION OF  
GOD**

God has also revealed Himself through special supernatural revelations, including angels (Exodus 14:19), dreams (Job 33:15-16), visions (Ezekiel 1:1), the gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:4-10), and through an audible voice (Acts 9:5, Isaiah 30:21). God moved upon some men to write down what He had revealed to them. The Lord told Jeremiah, "Take a scroll of a book and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you..." (Jeremiah 36:2). The Apostle John said, "Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, 'Write...'" (Revelation 14:13). The Lord led men to record forever His unfolding revelation.

**2 Peter 1:20-21** *...knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*

This progressive revelation of God can be seen in Psalm 19. Verse one shows how God's creation (natural revelation) reveals His glory and handiwork. Verses two through six show how this revelation is seen by the whole world. Verses seven through fourteen speak of God's written revelation and its benefits. However, these natural and written revelations are not the ultimate revelation of God.

**Hebrews 1:1-3** *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high... .*

## THE ETERNAL WORD

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Jesus Christ is the ultimate revelation of God. All other revelations testify of and point to Him. Jesus Christ is the Word! The written word is a revelation of the living Word.

**John 1:1-4** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.*

This written revelation of the living Word of God is now called the Bible, which means “The Book.”

### WHO WROTE THE BIBLE?

The Bible does not just contain the Word of God; it is the Word of God! As we saw in 2 Peter 1:20-21, the Holy Spirit moved men to speak and write God’s word. 2 Timothy 3:16 states that “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...*” The Greek word translated “inspiration” is “*theopneustos*,” which literally means “God-breathed.” Just as we speak by breathing through our mouths, so also God breathed, or spoke His words to and through men. The result is the verbal, plenary (fully) inspired, inerrant (without error) Word of God.

**Matthew 5:18** *“For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.”*

### HOW WAS THE BIBLE WRITTEN?

The fact that God breathed the Word does not mean that He dictated words to men who were simply passive instruments or machines. Instead, God used the different personalities of the over 40 men who wrote the Bible. They knew God was giving them revelation and inspiring them to write the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 14:37).

As we saw in Hebrews 1:1, God spoke in “*different ways*.” Some of the words of the Bible are the identical words written or spoken by God (Exodus 32:16, Daniel 5:5, Matthew 3:17). Other words are the very words that God told men to speak or write (Exodus 34:27, Isaiah 8:1-12, Jeremiah 30:1-2, Revelation 2:1-18). Some words of the Bible were God’s truth put in the writer’s words under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:1-4). Inspiration does not necessarily mean dictation; it means that the Spirit of God breathed clear ideas, thoughts and facts that the writers could put in their style of writing. The Bible is the Word of God expressed in the language of men. Hence, we have various styles and different writers, but one inspired Word given by one Author. God is solely responsible for every word of Scripture. In fact, this is so true that God has magnified His Word above His name (Psalm 138:2).

### HOW DO WE KNOW THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD?

We know that the Bible is the Word of God by many different proofs, each showing that the Bible is supernatural-start to finish. First of all, the unity of the Scriptures is proof of divine authorship. The Bible was written over a period of 1,500 years (c. 1450 B.C. - c. 90 A.D.) in three different languages (Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic) by over 40 men. These men had extremely diverse backgrounds. They include kings, shepherds, fishermen, priests, prophets, a

general, a cupbearer, a doctor, a tax collector and a tentmaker. The conditions under which they wrote ranged from palace to prison, from war to peace, from times of plenty to times of lack. Yet, with all this incredible diversity, the Bible has one unifying theme, one subject, one message: Jesus Christ!

**John 5:39-40, 45-47** *“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come Me that you may have life...Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you-Moses, in whom you trust. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”*

The words of Moses testify of Jesus. The Psalms speak of Jesus (Luke 24:44). In fact, all the Old Testament from Moses to the prophets testifies of Jesus Christ (Luke 24:27). This is because there is one Author. Jesus said that *“...the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me”* (John 15:26). The Bible is the Word of God because it has one Author and one message: *“...Jesus Christ and Him crucified”* (1 Corinthians 2:2).

Another reason that we know the Bible is the Word of God is the testimony of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. On many occasions He quoted Old Testament scriptures, such as when He read from Isaiah at the start of His ministry (Luke 4:18-19). Also, when He was tempted in the wilderness, He quoted three Old Testament scriptures. So, the Bible is the Word of God because the Son of God honored it as such.

Third, we know the Bible is the Word of God because of its infallibility and accuracy. It gives thousands of names, titles and dates with absolute accuracy.

Fourth, the hundreds of fulfilled prophecies are amazing proof of the divine origin of the Bible. There are hundreds of prophecies concerning the life of Jesus alone, and they all came to pass without exception. There are also prophecies concerning Israel, Egypt and other lands—all of which are 100 percent accurate. No other book has even a small fraction of this supernatural content.

Another proof of the Bible being God’s Word is the fact of its preservation. Down through the centuries, many rulers have tried to destroy the Bible, yet it remains to this day, numbering in the millions of copies. Even present day dictatorships cannot totally suppress the circulation of God’s Word. This is truly miraculous. God’s eternal Word will last forever (1 Peter 1:25).

There are many other reasons which show that the Bible is the Word of God, such as the testimony of the early church, history and archaeology. There is not one shred of archaeological evidence against the truth of the Bible. However, one of the best ways to see that the Bible is God’s Word is the effect it has on people’s lives. God’s Word has changed countless lives and this is the unanswerable argument.

**Psalm 19:7-10** *The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure,*

## THE ETERNAL WORD

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*enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.*

### WHAT IS THE VALUE OF GOD'S WORD?

The Word of God is valuable first and foremost because it is God's revelation to us. As we have seen, the Bible is a book with one message: Jesus Christ. God's Word and Jesus are one, for "...His name is called *The Word of God*" (Revelation 19:11-13). To believe in the name of Jesus is to believe in the Word of God. Therefore, the written Word testifies of the living Word (John 5:39).

The Word is important because God uses it to accomplish His eternal purpose in us, which is to conform us to the image of the living Word (Romans 8:28-29) so that we will glorify Him in all things (Ephesians 1:9-12). To do this God uses circumstances, teachers, other people, prayer, praise and worship. One of the central things He uses is His Word.

**2 Peter 1:4** *...by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

This can be seen in what the Word accomplishes in us:

The Word cleanses us (John 15:3).

The Word sanctifies us (John 17:17).

The Word reveals our hearts and divides soul from spirit (Hebrews 4:12).

The Word is a devouring fire (Jeremiah 5:14).

The Word is a crushing hammer (Jeremiah 23:29).

The Word heals (Psalm 107:20).

The Word feeds us (Matthew 4:4).

The Word gives victory over sin (Psalm 119:11).

The Word builds faith (Romans 10:17).

The Word gives hope (Romans 15:4).

The Word makes us fruitful and prosperous (Psalm 1:2-3).

The Word works in those who believe (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

The Word of God is profitable for us (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The Word is profitable for **doctrine**, or principles to live by; **reproof**, in that it reveals our hearts and convicts us; **correction**, to line us up with the word; and **instruction in righteousness**. The end result is maturity and equipping for the work of the ministry.

The Word of God is also a powerful spiritual weapon.

**Ephesians 6:17** *And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God...*

The power of God's Word can be seen in the instance of Satan's temptation of Jesus in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-14). Jesus spoke the Word to him and totally defeated him. We are to likewise:

**Revelation 12:11** *“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.”*

**Joshua 1:8** *“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”*

**HOW SHOULD WE  
RESPOND TO  
GOD’S WORD?**

This word of the Lord to Joshua is also important for us in our walk with the Lord. It is absolutely necessary for us to read the Word, meditate upon it, and then do what it says. It’s not enough to read. We must also meditate on it, pray over it, and recall and think on it again and again. Our attitude should be one of teachableness.

**John 16:13** *“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.”*

The Holy Spirit is our Teacher. As the Spirit breathed the Word into those who wrote it, He must also breathe it afresh to those who read it. Without the Holy Spirit, God’s Word is a dead letter.

**1 Corinthians 2:12-14** *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

We need to be in the Word, but we need to depend upon the Holy Spirit to reveal and enlighten. We cannot divorce the Word from the Spirit. Jesus said that true worship involves both spirit and truth (John 4:24). He also told the pharisees that they were “... mistaken (deceived), not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God” (Matthew 22:29). It is not enough to know the Bible, for without the Spirit it is a dead letter which leads to legalism. However, seeking the power of God apart from the Word can lead to error and “strange fire.” We need both the Word and the Spirit. So, we must read, meditate-listen to the Spirit and then do what He tells us.

As we have seen, we cannot grow as Christians without being in the Word. We must study to show ourselves approved unto God (2 Timothy 2:15). However, we must also act upon God’s revelation. He does not give revelation just to add to our knowledge; He wants to change us. It is important to act on God’s Word for the following reasons:

**WHY IS IT  
IMPORTANT TO ACT  
UPON GOD’S  
WORD?**

3. It is necessary for eternal life.

## THE ETERNAL WORD

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**1 John 2:17** *And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*

We are not saved by knowledge. We are saved when we act on revelation through repentance and faith. Faith always involves action.

4. It gives a stable foundation.

**Matthew 7:24** *“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock... .”*

It is not enough to hear the Word; we must also do it.

5. It leads to a personal relationship with Jesus.

**Mark 3:35** *“For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.”*

6. It leads to revelation knowledge.

**John 7:17** *“If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.”*

7. It keeps us from deception.

**James 1:22-25** *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.*

As we continue in God’s eternal Word, our lives will be grounded in relationship with Jesus and we will be stable and free from deception.

**John 8:31-32** ... *“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”*

## RESPONSIVE READING

### Question 1: Why is God's Word important to us?

- a. God's Word testifies of the living Word.

**John 20:31** *...but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*

- b. God's Word conforms us to His image.

**2 Peter 1:4** *...by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature... .*

- c. The Word sanctifies us.

**John 17:17** *"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth."*

- d. The Word reveals our hearts and divides soul from spirit.

**Hebrews 4:12** *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

- e. The Word is a devouring fire and a crushing hammer.

**Jeremiah 23:29** *"Is not My word like a fire?" says the Lord, "And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?"*

- f. The Word heals.

**Psalms 107:20** *He sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.*

- g. The Word feeds us.

**Matthew 4:4** *But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"*

- h. The Word gives victory over sin.

**Psalms 119:11** *Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.*

- i. The Word gives hope.

**Romans 15:4** *For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*

- j. The Word makes us fruitful and prosperous.

## THE ETERNAL WORD

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**Psalm 1:2-3** *But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.*

- k. The Word works in those who believe.

**1 Thessalonians 2:13** *...when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.*

- l. The Word is profitable.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17** *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 complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

**HOMEWORK**

1. Contrast God's general revelation with His special revelation.
2. What is God's ultimate revelation?
3. What does “inspiration” mean?
4. How do we know the Bible is the Word of God?
5. How should we respond to God's Word?
6. What is God revealing to you through His Word?



We saw in our last lesson that the Bible has one unified message: Jesus Christ. The written Word reveals the Living Word. The Bible's message is Jesus and its most common theme concerns our worship of Him. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible is about worshiping God.

**Revelation 22:8-9** *Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then he said to me, "See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."*

Is worship a doctrine? Is it another "spiritual" thing that we add to our lives like faith, warfare or deliverance, or is there something altogether different about it? Some things are going to pass away when we leave this earth or when this age comes to a conclusion. They are not eternal. Can we be involved in something now that is eternal? We will discuss the answer to these questions.

When we are finally with the Father, we will have no need of doctrines; they will pass away. We won't need deliverance; we will have no need for faith. But people's souls are eternal, God's government is eternal, and worship is eternal. Each of us need to be convinced that worship is an issue at the center of God's heart (John 4:23), and an activity in which we are now involved, one way or another.

In "Resurrection Life," page 23, we discussed the beginning of the conflict of the ages involving the fall of Lucifer. War in heaven began with the "iniquity of his trading," Lucifer's prideful desire to be worshiped. The issue was raised, "Who are you going to worship? Are the angels going to worship God or are they going to worship Lucifer? Who is God's creation going to worship?"

God built worship into His creation, into angels and into man. You do not have to tell people to worship. Everyone is worshipping something-God or an idol. The issue throughout the Word of God is "Who are you going to worship? To whom are you going to bow the knee?" Adam and Eve were faced with it. If a person comes to a place where he says, "I am like god," then he will not worship the Creator, but the created. The first scene of Cain and Abel was the bringing of a sacrifice to worship God. Worship is not a doctrine that we teach. Worship is your life, your obedience, your heart. It is not the outward form; it is of the heart. We are not talking about casting your crown before Him, falling on your knees, nor prostrating yourself. We are talking about that being a result of what is in the heart. It's the heart that worships. That's the eternalness of worship.

Cain killed over the issue of worship. Abraham worshiped God through his obedience. Moses told Pharaoh, "... *Let My people go, that they may serve* (margin, "worship") *Me in the wilderness'...*" (Exodus 7:16). David exhorted us to worship God (Psalm 95:6-7). Mary worshiped God in song (Luke 1:46). Satan told Jesus, "... *All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me*" (Matthew 4:9). The life of Jesus was full of worship ("Vision," page 36).

Even now, worship is the highest occupation of the angels. Every glimpse of heaven is filled with worship (Isaiah 6:1-3; Luke 2:13-14). Heaven is a place of continual worship.

**Revelation 4:8-11** *The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!" Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created."*

Heavenly worship consists of non-stop, active giving of glory, honor and thanks to God. We know that Jesus prayed for God's will to "... be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). Since God's will is done in heaven, and it is a place of continual worship, then it must be His will for us to be involved in continual worship. We can enter into our eternal occupation now through worshiping the Lord.

**Revelation 14:6-7** *Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people-saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."*

This incredible passage ties together the major themes we have studied in this Eternal Judgment series. The angel speaks from the eternal perspective of heaven about God's eternal kingdom, judgment, Word and worship. He proclaims the eternal gospel, which is to fear God and to give Him glory and worship. Since worship is so important, it must be central in our lives.

### THE HEART OF WORSHIP

In this lesson we will examine the heart of worship, not the forms or expressions of worship (such as singing, shouting, bowing, dancing, etc.) since these have been covered in past lessons. We mention them here to say that you can be involved in the forms of worship and still not worship. Worship is not just something you do. Worship is the expression of your heart. We enter into God's manifested presence through praise (Psalm 100:4), but worship is what we do once we are in His presence. Worship is simply our heart response to God expressed in an appropriate manner. Sometimes we dance; sometimes we fall on our faces. At other times, we may laugh, cry, shout or be silent. Always we express what is in our heart for God. This is worship: the attitude of our heart expressed.

### THE ESSENCE OF WORSHIP

The essence of worship is giving. Every time someone worships, they give.

**Psalm 29:1-2** *Give unto the LORD, O you mighty ones, give unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD the glory due His name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.*

**Psalm 96:7-9** *Give to the LORD, O families of the peoples, give to the LORD glory and strength. Give to the LORD the glory due His name; bring an offering, and come into His courts. Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before Him, all the earth.*

Worship always involves giving: giving God the glory He is due, giving a sacrifice, giving an offering or simply giving “...thanks in the great assembly...” (Psalm 35:18). The essence of worship is giving.

This can be seen throughout the Word of God. The issue between Cain and Abel was proper worship, which involved giving offerings to God (Genesis 4). When Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac, he told his servants, “...the lad and I will go yonder and worship...” (Genesis 22:5). Sacrificial giving is worship.

The major part of Israel’s worship was giving. The three compulsory feasts all involved giving. At the feast of Passover, the Lord said, “...none shall appear before Me empty...” (Exodus 23:14-19). At the feast of Pentecost, the Lord said, “...none shall appear before me empty-handed...” (Exodus 34:20-23). At the feast of Tabernacles, the Lord said, “...they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed. Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you” (Deuteronomy 16:16-17).

In the Old Testament, no one could approach God with empty hands. Old Testament worship always involved sacrifices, offerings and giving.

We see this also in the life of David, a man after God’s own heart (Acts 13:22). When he brought the ark of God back to Jerusalem, he shouted, sang and danced with all his might (1 Chronicles 15:27-29). Then he offered burnt sacrifices and offerings to God (1 Chronicles 16:1-2). Following this he gave every one in Israel food and wine (1 Chronicles 16:3). Then he gave a psalm of thanks to the Lord, in which he spoke over and over of giving to the Lord (1 Chronicles 16:8, 28-29, 34). He worshiped with all his might and all he had to give.

We can see this giving attitude even more developed later in David’s life. In 2 Samuel 24 we have the account of God’s judgment against David for numbering Israel. The prophet of God told David to build an altar and sacrifice to God in a certain spot. This place belonged to someone else, but the owner offered to give it to David. However, David said, “... ‘No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God with that which costs me nothing.’ So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen...” (2 Samuel 24:18-25). David, Abel, Abraham and all the children of Israel knew the essence of worship: giving. True worship is costly!

This can also be seen in the New Testament. When the wise men found Jesus, they “...fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh” (Matthew 2:11). The early church understood that giving is the essence of worship so much that they “...had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need” (Acts 2:44-45). Worship always costs us something!

### HOW TO GIVE TO GOD

**Psalm 24:1** *The earth is the LORD'S, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein.*

The key to giving is simply realizing that God already owns everything. We do not really own anything; God owns it all. However, He has entrusted things to us to manage, or be stewards of. Stewardship is recognizing that God owns everything and then managing God's things in God's way. The tithe is the first fruit which we give in recognition of God's ownership of all. It is the starting place of giving to the Lord.

We need to recognize that God is a giver. He gives food (Genesis 1:19), wealth (Deuteronomy 8:18) and sleep (Psalm 127:2). His greatest gift is a new heart and a new spirit (Ezekiel 11:19-20) through the gift of His Son.

**John 3:16** *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

God so loved that He gave! The Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for us (Galatians 2:20). This was the ultimate sacrifice (Philippians 2:5-11). God is still giving gifts through the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12). God gives “...to all liberally...” (James 1:5).

**John 3:27** *John answered and said, “A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven.”*

God is a giver. He has given us everything we have. Since we are being conformed to His image (Romans 8:29), surely we can do no less. We too, must be givers.

**Matthew 10:7-8** *“And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.”*

We give of our money, time, talents and gifts. In short, we give our lives, our very selves. We give by healing the sick and casting out devils. We live to give! When we do this, we store up treasure in heaven (Matthew 6:20).

### TITHING AS WORSHIP

The tithe is seen as worship 430 years before the Law was given to Israel (Genesis 14:18-19). In this instance, Abram worshiped God by giving a tithe (“one-tenth of everything”) to Melchizedek, “...the priest of the God Most High...”, acknowledging God's deliverance of his enemies into his hands (see

also Hebrews 7:1-10). Jacob, 150 years later, has an encounter with God at Bethel, admits that God is his source, and commits to pay a tithe from that time forth (Genesis 28:22). From these early records we can say that tithing is not begun by the law. It is only a continuation of a principle already established in the lives of those who knew God. In fact, Hebrews 7:9 states that Levi, who received the tithe from the people under the Law paid tithe through Abraham before the Law. Before the Law was ever given, when a person had an encounter with God and came to know God, he tithed to Him.

We understand that God gave the Law for a purpose. Generally, obedience to the Law caused Israel to walk in the principles of God without a knowledge of them. As they obeyed the Law, Israel was then demonstrating the kingdom of God among the nations.

**Deuteronomy 4:6-8** *“Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day?”*

What purpose then did the tithe have in the demonstration of the kingdom of God? Repeatedly, the Bible declares, “... The earth is the LORD’S” (Exodus 9:29, Deuteronomy 10:14, 1 Chronicles 29:11, Psalm 24:1, 1 Corinthians 10:26). The tithe was an admission that this was true and that man was steward over God’s earth. The first-fruit tithe declared loud and clear that the land was God’s. It asserted the absolute lordship and ownership of God over the earth. It still does. God’s response to the obedience of His people was to bless them (Deuteronomy 28). It still is.

Why do we stress tithing? Because it is biblical and we want you to be blessed. Tithing opens the windows of heaven! It makes heaven open to you! Tithing causes God to rebuke the devourer from the fruit of your labor. That means you will be successful and favored in your labor; you will be fruitful. On the other side, we do not want you to be under a curse! It’s true; God curses the one who does not tithe. How many years has the devourer been stealing from you?

The beautiful thing about the following scripture is that God is challenging us to prove Him, to trust Him (see Hebrews 11:6 also). It obviously requires New Testament grace of faith to trust God.

**Malachi 3:8-11** *“Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,” says the LORD of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,” says the LORD of hosts... .*

We notice several things within these verses. First, we are to **bring** the tithe, not send. Next, we are to bring **all** the tithe (10 percent), not a part. Lastly, we are to bring all the tithe to the **storehouse** that there might be food. The storehouse was adjacent to the temple or house of the Lord, indicating that the tithe is to be brought to the place where we receive spiritual food. At this point we will reiterate that Jesus died to establish the church. There is no other plan of God in the New Testament other than the church as the agency of the kingdom of God. There is no other biblical method for feeding the poor, caring for widows and orphans, changing society, visiting the sick, or preaching the gospel than through the local church. Therefore, the tithe goes to the local church.

Jesus himself validates the New Testament tithe in his statement to the pharisees.

**Matthew 23:23** *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay **tithe** of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. **These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.***

Some may reject tithing with “the tithe was under the law but we are now under grace.” Jesus states that he came to fulfill the law, not to destroy it, that whosoever shall do and teach these commandments shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven, and that unless our righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, we shall by no means enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:17-20). By these statements Jesus raises the **keeping** of the law to the higher ground of grace. **In other words, it takes grace to tithe.**

We see this in the verses that follow (Matthew 5:21-48). Take for example verses 27 and 28, “... ‘*You shall not commit adultery.*’ *But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*” What did Jesus do with the law? He raised it to the level of grace. He has done the same thing with the tithe.

We can attribute lack of spiritual growth to refusing to tithe. Money is a tangible item and it is a testing ground before God of our true willingness to surrender complete self to the Lord. For most of us, before God dealt with our heart, there was an invisible string or connection between our pocketbook and our heart. It was difficult to give because we were “tight” or selfish. “I don’t want anyone telling me what to do with my money,” was our response to a pastor’s call to give cheerfully. This attitude was not biblical on our part. If we truly had the understanding of stewardship, then we would have known that our money was really His. It was necessary for God to show us that we did not have a giving heart like His, and therefore He could not trust us with the true spiritual riches.

**Luke 16:10-11** *“He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?”*

Many are held back in their spiritual lives by their refusal to tithe and give because their money is where their ego is located. Giving is the drain plug for our

greed. For the rich young man, money (riches) was a symbol of success (Matthew 19:16-22). He would not cut the string between his heart and his pocketbook.

The exciting thing about New Testament tithing is to link it with the promise and provision of Luke 6:38, *“Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”*. As we tithe and God blesses us, there is more to give. As we give in faith, we reap bountifully, overflowing. This is God’s principle to distribute His wealth to His church.

The world says, “Do it to them before they do it to you!”  
 “Don’t let people treat you that way!”  
 “Get all you can!”  
 “Don’t be a sucker!”  
 God says, “If you will..., then I will...”  
 “Give and I will...”

Of course, tithing involves trusting leadership. Some may have been hurt by leadership previously and find it difficult to trust God through leadership now. Healing does need to come. But if you can’t trust your money to local leadership, how can you trust them with your soul?

**Luke 12:34** *“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

**WHERE IS YOUR TREASURE?**

Our treasure’s location reveals the location of our heart. We are either storing up worldly treasure or heavenly treasure. We can determine where our storehouse is by examining where we spend our time, talents and treasure. Our giving reveals our heart: we worship what we give ourselves to.

We saw that the key to worship is giving. We can also say that the key to giving is worship. Just as we cannot truly worship without giving, likewise, we cannot truly give without an attitude of worship. Whenever we selfishly give in order to receive, we give in vain.

**1 Corinthians 13:4** *Love suffers long and is kind...does not envy...does not parade itself, is not puffed up... .*

For giving to be an act of worship, it must be true giving. We give in love as unto the Lord. We cannot substitute sacrifice and service for true worship. True worship is wholehearted sacrifice and service without thought of receiving. In worship, we come to give, not receive; to bless, not be blessed; to give glory, not receive glory.

**Romans 12:1 (NAS)** *I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.*

**THE LIFESTYLE OF WORSHIP**

## ETERNAL LIFE

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Worship is not something we do only on Sundays at church. Worship is not something we just add to our lives. Jesus is our life (John 14:6) and our worship consists of giving ourselves to Him in total abandonment and complete obedience. Every thing else is an overflow of our hearts full of the Lord! Then, and only then, our lives will be lived as an act of worship to the glory of God.

## RESPONSIVE READING

### Question 1: What does the Bible reveal that God gives to us?

- a. God gives food.

**Psalm 145:15-16** *The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.*

- b. God gives wealth.

**Deuteronomy 8:18** *“And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.”*

- c. God gives rain.

**Joel 2:23** *Be glad then, you children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God; for He has given you the former rain faithfully, and He will cause the rain to come down for you—the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.*

- d. God gives sleep.

**Psalm 127:2** *...He gives His beloved sleep.*

- e. God gives children.

**Psalm 127:3** *Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb is His reward.*

- f. God gives blessings.

**Malachi 3:10** *“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and prove Me now in this,” says the LORD of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.”*

- g. God gives a new heart and a new spirit.

**Ezekiel 11:19** *“...I will put anew spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh... .”*

- h. God so loved that He gave His Son.

**John 3:16** *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

- i. The Son so loved that He gave Himself.

**Galatians 2:20** *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”*

## ETERNAL LIFE

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- j. The Son gave gifts to men.

**Ephesians 4:8, 11-12** *Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men." ...And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ... .*

- k. The Holy Spirit gives gifts to men.

**1 Corinthians 12:4-7** *There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit...But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all... .*

- l. All good gifts come from God.

**James 1:17** *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.*



# ETERNAL LIFE

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**John 5:26** *“For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself... .”*

THE LIFE OF GOD

**1 John 5:20** *And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.*

God has life in Himself. His life is self-existent, self-sufficient and eternal. This means that God's life is uncreated and is derived from no other source than Himself. God depends upon nothing or no one for life because He is life (John 14:6). The life of God is eternal; without beginning, end or succession. In other words, God's life cannot be changed in any way.

It is important for us to understand that the writers of the New Testament used four different words which were translated “life” in the King James Version of the Bible. These four Greek words are “bios, psuche, anastrophe and zoe.” The word “bios” means “manner of life, or existence.” An example of “bios” can be found in 1 John 2:16. An example of this is when people might say “life is found in a package or bottle.” “Psuche” speaks of natural human life or the self-life (Matthew 10:39; 16:25-26). “Anastrophe” is usually translated “conversation,” which is an Old English term for behavior, conduct or manner of life (Galatians 1:13). It speaks of the way we are living. The word “zoe” is the word used when speaking of the life of God. “Zoe” literally means “life as God has it.” It is the eternal God-kind of life. An example of “zoe” is found in John 5:26. It is the life that God has in Himself. “Zoe” is the life from which man was alienated in the Fall (Ephesians 4:18).

BIBLICAL WORDS  
FOR LIFE

Since God alone has life in Himself, He is therefore the source of all life. Acts 17:25 says that *“...He gives to all life, breath, and all things.”* Verse 28 says *“...for in Him we live and move and have our being... .”* All living things owe their very existence to God because all life is God-given.

RECEIVING  
ETERNAL LIFE

The following reveals how God gave life to man:

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

God formed man from the ground and then breathed into man “the breath of life,” or more literally, “the breath of lives,” and man became a “living being.” The word “breathed (naphach)” is the same word used in Ezekiel . 37:9. In regard to the giving of life to the dry bones. Man received his spirit and soul, his very life, from God as He breathed the breath of lives into his physical body, and man became a “speaking spirit,” a three-part or tripartite being. Man's spirit, the God-conscious part of man, and man's soul, the self-conscious part of man, are eternal.

**Job 33:4** *“The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.”*

God told Adam that sin would result in the loss of his life (Genesis 2:17). The fall of man did indeed result in immediate spiritual death and the onset of physical death. This did not affect Adam alone, but through his fall, sin and death passed to all men (Romans 5:12). All men are born sinners and furthermore, are born spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1) because man is "... alienated from the life of God..." (Ephesians 4:18). However, God did not leave man in this fallen condition, for "... while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

**John 10:10** "...I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."

Jesus came to earth for the very reason of imparting life to man once again. This is truly the greatest miracle! Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, life is once again made available to men who are spiritually dead. Hallelujah! When we are born again through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ, we receive new life (Romans 6:4). This new life is eternal life (John 3:15-16). Eternal life is nothing less than the very life of God. We who were dead in sin (Ephesians 2:1) are made alive in Jesus by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:11).

**1 Corinthians 15:45-46** *And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.*

The life given to Adam was "psuche," which is natural human life. The natural came first. However, the last Adam (Jesus) is a life-giving Spirit. The life He gives is "zoe," the very life of God. When we are born again, we don't receive new natural life, but the actual uncreated eternal life of God. This life cannot be earned or worked for in any way (Ephesians 2:8-9). The only thing we deserve in ourselves is death, but God offers us the free gift of His eternal life through His Son, Jesus Christ (Romans 6:23). Salvation is a gift of God's grace, or unmerited favor, and is received by turning from trusting in self (repentance) and then placing our trust in Jesus Christ (faith). He is the only source of life (1 John 5:12).

When we receive Jesus Christ, we receive eternal life. Eternal life is not something we enter into after death. Eternal life is ours now! Jesus said, "...he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life" (John 5:24). He also said, "...he who believes in Me has everlasting life" (John 6:47). We have already "...passed from death to life..." (1 John 3:14). 1 Timothy 4:8 states that we have the "...promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come," Eternal life is ours both now and forever! Hallelujah!

We who are in Christ are totally new creations (2 Corinthians 5:17) partaking of God's divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). This is true because we were in Jesus when He died and when He resurrected (Romans 6:4-5). We are dead to the old life and alive in the new. Our life is now "...hidden with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3). Christ now lives His life through us (Galatians 2:20). In fact, Jesus Christ is our life (Colossians 3:4; John 11:25,26, 14:6). For us to live, is Christ (Philippians 1:21). Jesus is the Water of Life (John 4:10), the Bread of life (John 6:35,48) and



the Light of Life (John 8:12). He alone has the words of life (John 6:63,68). Jesus Christ is indeed our life! Eternal life is not something we possess apart from Jesus Christ; He is eternal life.

Christianity is not an institutional religion, a man-made tradition, a legalistic system of do's and don'ts, nor a way of honoring a dead religious hero. Rather, Christianity is a living relationship with a living God!

## A LIVING RELATIONSHIP

**John 17:3** *And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*

We are saved and receive eternal life not just so we can escape Hell and live forever. Rather, we receive eternal life so that we can know God. It is impossible to know God without the Spirit of God revealing Him to us (1 Corinthians 2:9-14). It is possible to know a great deal about God without really knowing Him. It is not enough to have correct doctrine; we must have a living knowledge and relationship with our Lord.

We were created for God's pleasure (Revelations 4:11). God has done everything necessary to reconcile us to Himself so that we can live in relationship with Him (Romans 5:11). We were made to know God intimately and He gives us His very life so that we can "...pursue the knowledge of the LORD..." (Hosea 6:3). Some people think that because they received the Lord when they were born again, they no longer have the need to seek God. This is not true! Being born again is just the beginning of our relationship with God and we spend the rest of our lives getting to know Him. God actually desires for us to know Him (Hosea 6:6). What an incredible thought this is, that we can know the holy, loving, just, eternal, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent Lord God Almighty! This knowledge of God is the only thing we should glory in.

**Jeremiah 9:23-24** *Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD.*

If God had given us eternal life only to make us acceptable for heaven, then He would have arranged to take us home as soon as we are born again. However, He must have some work for us to do on earth before we depart.

## FRAGRANCE

**2 Corinthians 2:14-16** *Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life... .*

The very life of God within you spreads abroad a fragrance of the knowledge of Him. To the one, it is a fragrance producing life that draws him to God, that he too might receive eternal life. To another, by choice, you bear a death-conveying

odor, offensive and unacceptable, and by his rejecting it, he draws death on himself. See yourself spreading the fragrance of the knowledge of God to those about you. You may be the only opportunity they will ever have to receive Christ.

Eternal life is not a pie-in-the-sky, mansion-over-the-hill-top existence where we float on clouds playing shiny new harps. Eternal life is knowing God, ruling and reigning with Christ, fellowshiping with the Lord and His saints in the Spirit, and worshiping the Lord of lords and King of kings. Eternal life is abiding in God with Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Eternal life is ours both now and forever. Hallelujah!

### CONCLUSION

With this lesson the 42 weeks of the Foundation Series comes to a close. It is our hope that you have grown spiritually and in the true knowledge of God. We urge you to continue to study the Word, to seek to know God, and be blessed according to His promises.

**Joshua 1:8** *"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."*

**Psalm 1:1-3** *Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither, and whatever he does shall prosper.*

**Psalm 119:1-2** *Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD! Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with the whole heart.*

**1 Peter 2:1-2** *Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.*

# A Study of the Elementary Principles of Christ

This series, based on Hebrews 6:1-2, is designed to lay a firm foundation in your life. It is necessary to be grounded in these basic principles in order to “go on to maturity.” It is our prayer that God will richly bless you through your study of FIRST PRINCIPLES.

## **Book One: Vision**

The Sure Foundation  
The Plan and Purpose of God  
Restoration  
Vision of the Local Church  
Praise and Worship  
Local Church Ministry

## **Book Two: Repentance**

The Biblical View of Sin  
Repentance  
The New Covenant  
The Father Heart of God  
Forgiveness  
The Lifestyle of Repentance

## **Book Three: Faith**

Faith Toward God  
The Abiding Faith  
Living by Revelation  
Developing Faith  
The Response of Faith  
The Testing of Faith

## **Book Four: Baptisms**

The Doctrine of Baptisms  
Baptism in the Body of Christ  
Water Baptism  
The Baptism of the Holy Spirit- Part I  
The Baptism of the Holy Spirit-Part II  
The Baptism in Fire

## **Book Five: Laying on of Hands**

Laying on of Hands  
Healing  
The Gifts of the Spirit  
The Motivational Gifts  
The Five-Fold Ministry  
Presbytery

## **Book Six: Resurrection Life**

Resurrection Life  
Body Life  
Church Life  
Overcoming Life  
Family Life  
Prayer Life

## **Book Seven: Eternal Judgement**

The Eternal Perspective  
The Eternal Kingdom  
Eternal Judgement  
The Eternal Word  
Eternal Worship  
Eternal Life



