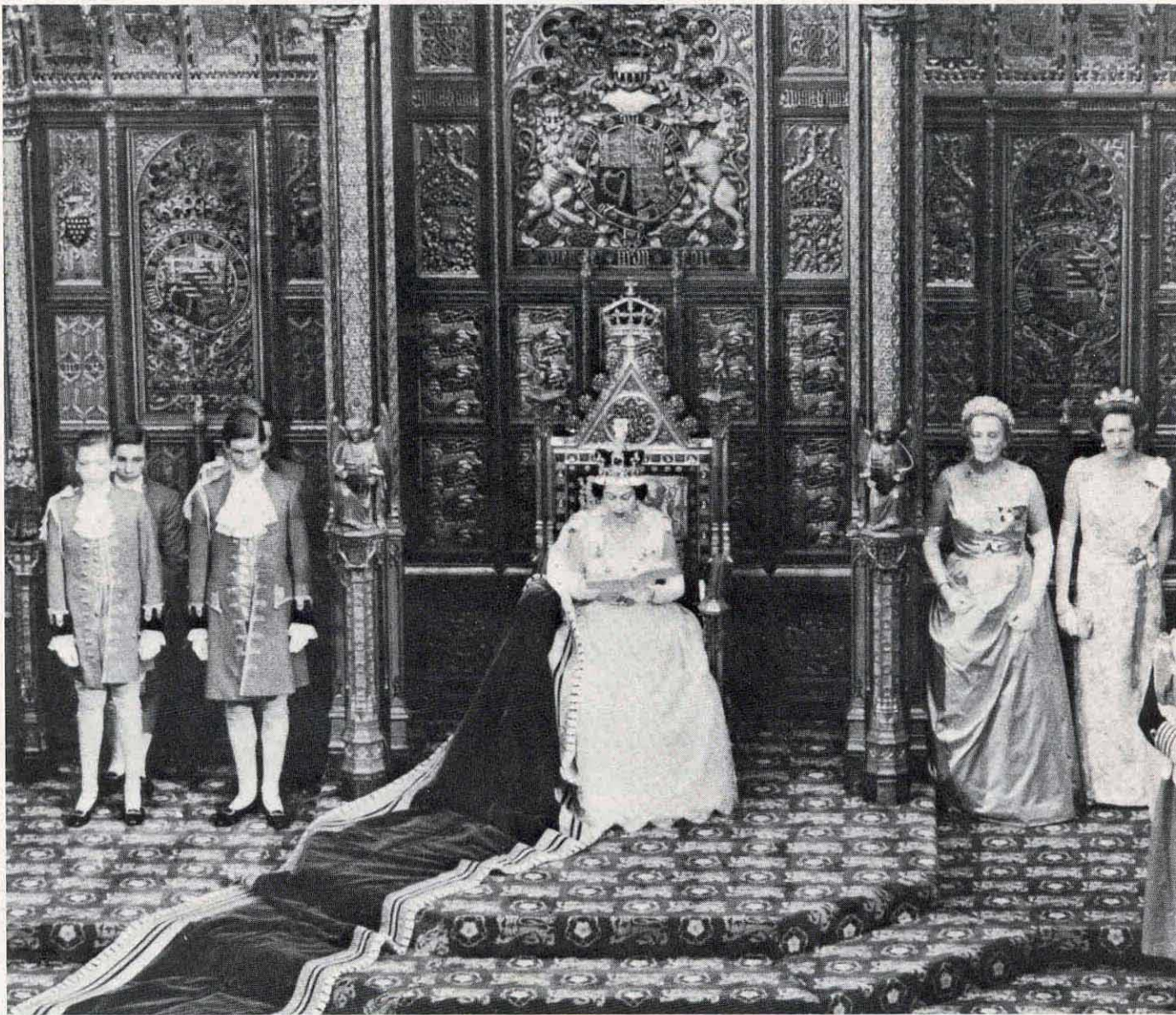




Ambassador College

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

An International Course of Biblical Understanding



Queen Elizabeth II

What OUR STUDENTS SAY

I can't begin to tell you how much I enjoy the Correspondence Course. It's so clear. It has answered a lot of questions for me. I understand a lot more in the Bible now that is the *truth*, instead of myths that I have been brought up to believe.

— James F., Conway, Arkansas

I have just received my third lesson of your Bible course. I must say it is the best study help and guide for understanding the Bible I have ever seen. It is first-class all the way.

— Student, St. Bernard, Ohio

I have received only five lessons and am very well pleased with your course. I never thought the Bible could ever be presented in such a way that it would be EASY to understand. I also appreciate the supplementary reading material request card you send with each lesson. The last lesson was so interesting that I would appreciate a couple of booklets to further my knowledge on the subject.

— Ruth M., Cornwall, Ontario, Canada

I was doubting if the Correspondence Course would do me very much good, as I am 72 years old. But the more I studied with it, the more I knew I had done the right thing by taking it. Us older ones need it as we are the ones that have time to sit down quietly and absorb its meaning and talk it over in our household. Come on you 70-year-olds, try it, you'll like it!

— Student, Manchester, Tennessee

I am now in Lesson 2 and find the course the most exciting and comprehensive guide to the study of the Bible possible. It is a wonderful education. Since childhood I have read and re-read the *King James Version*. I have also read, most carefully, other translations of the Bible, as well as many related articles and opinions and interpretations. But, in all truth, I wish you to know that only through *The PLAIN TRUTH* and your course of study have I been able to "put it all together" and arrive at TRUTH as the Word reveals it. At last I know I am being taught (to my own satisfaction, by my own proving), instead of being influenced or being given *interpretations*.

— C. M. R., Fairmont, West Virginia



Ambassador College CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

LESSON 9

An international course of Biblical understanding published by the Department of Theology, Ambassador College, 300 West Green St., Pasadena, California, 91123. ©1972 Ambassador College for the entire contents of this publication.* All rights reserved.

EDITOR

HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Garner Ted Armstrong

DIRECTOR

David Jon Hill

MANAGING EDITOR

Richard H. Sedliacik

Staff Writers

Lawson C. Briggs William F. Dankenbring

Art Editor

Thomas Haworth

Copy Editor

Ronald Beideck

Circulation Manager

Edward C. Kleier

YOUR ENROLLMENT has been paid by others. Bulk copies for distribution not given or sold.

ADDRESS COMMUNICATIONS to the Editor at the nearest address below:

United States: P. O. Box 111, Pasadena, California 91123.

Canada: P. O. Box 44, Station A, Vancouver 1, B.C.

Latin America: Institución Ambassador, Apartado Postal 5-595, México 5, D. F.

United Kingdom, Europe, India, Africa and West Indies: P. O. Box 111, St. Albans, Herts., England.

South Africa: P. O. Box 1060, Johannesburg, Transvaal, R. S. A.

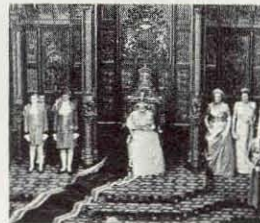
Australia and Southeast Asia: G. P. O. Box 345, Sydney, NSW 2001, Australia.

New Zealand: P. O. Box 2709, Auckland 1, New Zealand.

The Philippines: P. O. Box 1111, Makati, Rizal D-708.

*Portions of contents previously copyrighted by Ambassador College ©1965, 1969.

NOTICE: Be sure to notify the Correspondence Course Department immediately of any change in your address. Please include both old and new address. Important!



About Our Cover . . .

One of the modern world's few remaining monarchs, Elizabeth II — Queen of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland — presides at the opening of a new Parliament. When Jesus Christ returns to Jerusalem as *King* of kings, He will, together with the resurrected saints, set up the *divine* government of God and will begin administering God's government over all the earth. This lesson reveals how *you* can prepare now to be one of those rulers!

Wide World Photo

YOU WERE BORN TO RULE!

The Bible reveals you were born for a tremendous PURPOSE. But few really grasp the MAGNITUDE of the awesome future God offers mankind. This lesson makes that astounding truth plain!

WHY were you born? Ask scientists. Ask scholars. Ask religious leaders: Is there any purpose for human life? Why are we here? Where are we going, and what will we do when we get there?

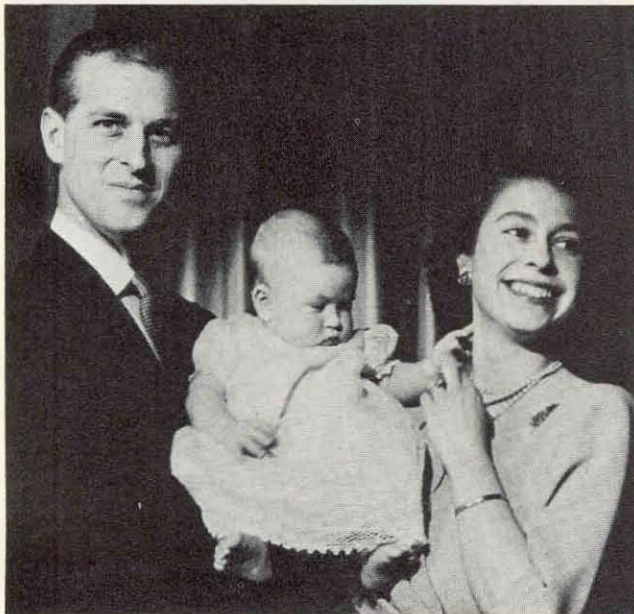
Most people will freely admit they don't know the answers. They assume there are none. But these basic questions of life have plagued and puzzled philosophers from time immemorial.

Historians Don't Know

Famous historian Hendrik Van Loon frankly states in his book *Story of Mankind*: "We live under the shadow of a gigantic question mark."

BORN TO RULE — Below left, Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip as they posed in 1949 with their year-old son, Prince Charles. Twenty years later Prince Charles knelt before his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, as she crowned him Prince of Wales. Prince Charles is next in line to sit on the British throne. Since birth he has been *trained* to become the King of Great Britain!

Wide World, Keystone Photos



What are we? Where did we come from? Whither are we bound?"

His answer to these vital questions? "*We still know very little* but we have reached the point where (with a fair degree of accuracy) we can *guess* at many things" (emphasis ours throughout lesson).

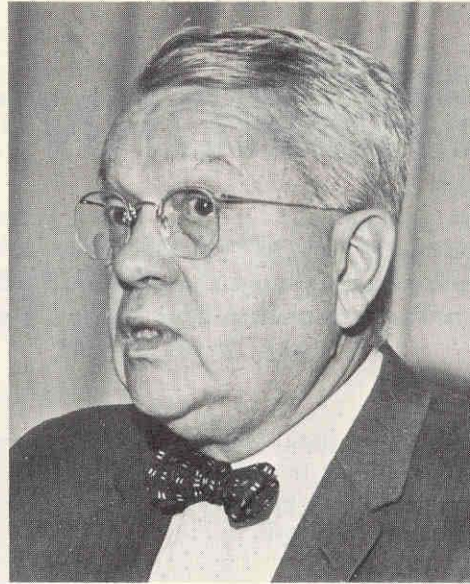
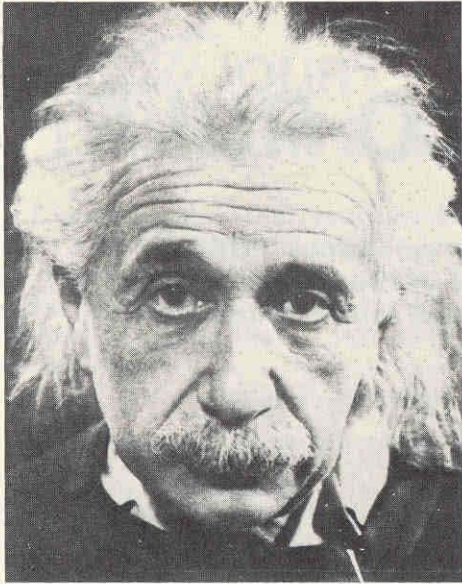
Historians cannot authoritatively answer these questions. They can only "guess."

Today the commonly accepted — but unproved — *theory* of evolution purports to show the "pre-history" of mankind and how we came into being. But this theory — and it is only a *theory* — has failed utterly to show any PURPOSE for human life!

Scientists Can't Answer

Astronomers scan the heavens with telescopes and marvel at the fantastic universe with its incredible order and precision. They stand in awe of the fact that man possesses an intelligence powerful enough to penetrate deeply into the vast universe. But they haven't the smallest clue





PURPOSE OF LIFE ELUDES SCIENCE —

Great scientists, such as Albert Einstein (far left) and Harold C. Urey (left), discovered previously unknown principles of physics which were used to devise fantastic instruments for peaceful and destructive purposes. But the great minds of science have not been able to discover the most basic truth of all!

Wide World Photos

as to *why* man has this ability, nor the slightest hint of man's potential destiny!

Faced with the same unfathomable enigma, Nobel prizewinner Dr. Harold C. Urey declared: "Science gives us no *purpose* in living beyond having a pleasant existence in one way or another.

"Science," said Dr. Urey, "does not give the ordinary man, whose daily life is often drab . . . any motive that gives him a feeling of dignity. . . . One of the great needs of this age is a great interpretation which can accept the facts of science and at the same time give inspiration to fill this great void."

Like the rest of mankind, scientists yearn to fill that yawning emptiness — to understand the **PURPOSE OF LIFE!**

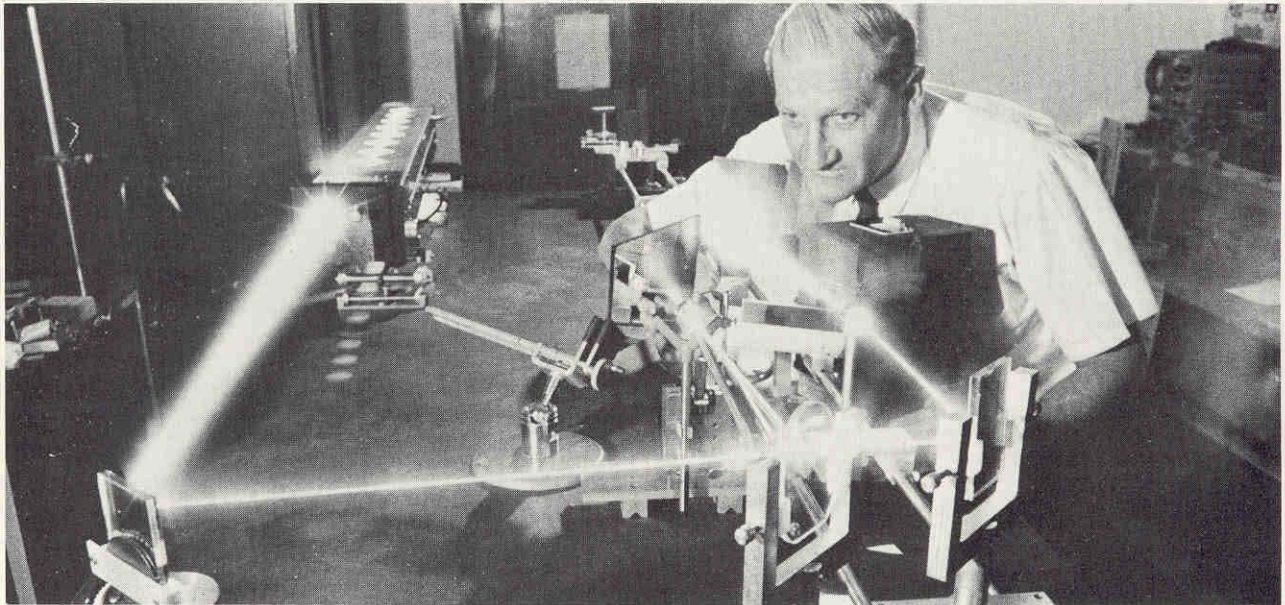
Brilliant scholars have been *unable* to answer the most vital questions of all time. The tools of science have not revealed the **PURPOSE** of human existence.

But does religion, then, have the answers?

Ministers Confess Ignorance

When it comes to answering these vital questions, most of today's religious leaders admit ignorance. An English minister confessed: "One of the most awkward . . . questions that I have been asked by young people is: 'Why did God create the universe?'"

"To this I am tempted to give the slick reply: 'God only knows!' But clearly this is no real answer — and perhaps there is no answer that



we as finite human beings can give to such a question.

"If we believe that God exists then it is very natural for us to ask: 'Why did He make us and what is the purpose of man's life here on earth?'"

"Why God created us I don't know. . . ."

What an astonishing confession! Why do men who profess to believe in God admit they don't comprehend His plan and purpose for mankind?

The answer is simple. They don't really understand what is plainly revealed in the Bible. Consequently most read doctrines into the Bible which are not there!

Many religions have promised heaven as the "reward" of the saved — a heaven of idleness and ease. And so millions of people believe they were born to go to heaven when they die. But most have never given much thought to what they will DO when they get there! Eternal life is presented as a virtual *nirvana* awaiting those who pass the "pearly gates" — a never ending



UPI Photo

NOT THE "REWARD" — If the "reward" of the saved is indeed eternal retirement, thousands of elderly men and women already know it's boredom and unhappiness. Your Bible reveals something infinitely more exciting!

rest, with nothing to occupy their time except to sing hymns and look upon the face of God.

If the reward of the saved is indeed eternal retirement, thousands of elderly men and women already know its boredom and unhappiness. Few realize that eternal life with so little to do would be an eternity of **UTTER BOREDOM** — a *terrible* kind of punishment!

And so again we ask, Why were YOU born?

It's time this question were answered — fully and completely.

Born to Rule!

In 1948, Queen Elizabeth of Great Britain gave birth to her first son, Charles. Her son was born to be a ruler. Everyone knew he was destined from birth to become a king. From his birth he received the necessary training and education to *prepare* him to become the King of England and other British countries.

Just as surely as Prince Charles was born into the reigning family of England to be a king, *you* are destined, when "born again" into the universe-ruling Family of God, to reign as an even *greater* and **ETERNAL KING!** Incredible as it may sound, your Bible reveals that you were born to **RULE THE UNIVERSE!**

In Revelation 21:7, the Apostle John was inspired by God to write of man's destiny: "He that overcometh shall **INHERIT ALL THINGS**; and I will be his God, and he shall be **MY SON.**"

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans of this awesome destiny: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and **JOINT-HEIRS WITH CHRIST . . .**" (Rom. 8:16-17). God intends that *you* should **CO-INHERIT THE UNIVERSE** with *Jesus Christ!*

Think of it! Unbelievable? With the help of this lesson, you are going to see the proof made absolutely *plain* in your Bible!

LESSON 9

Co-Rulers With Jesus Christ

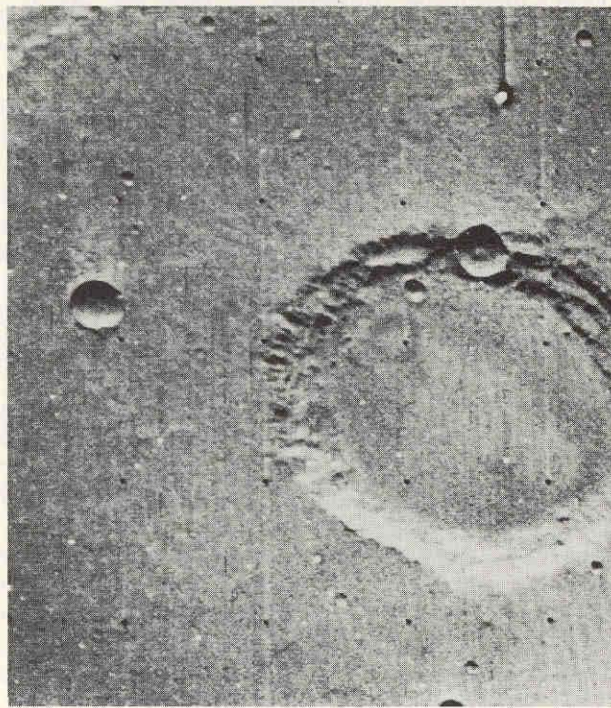
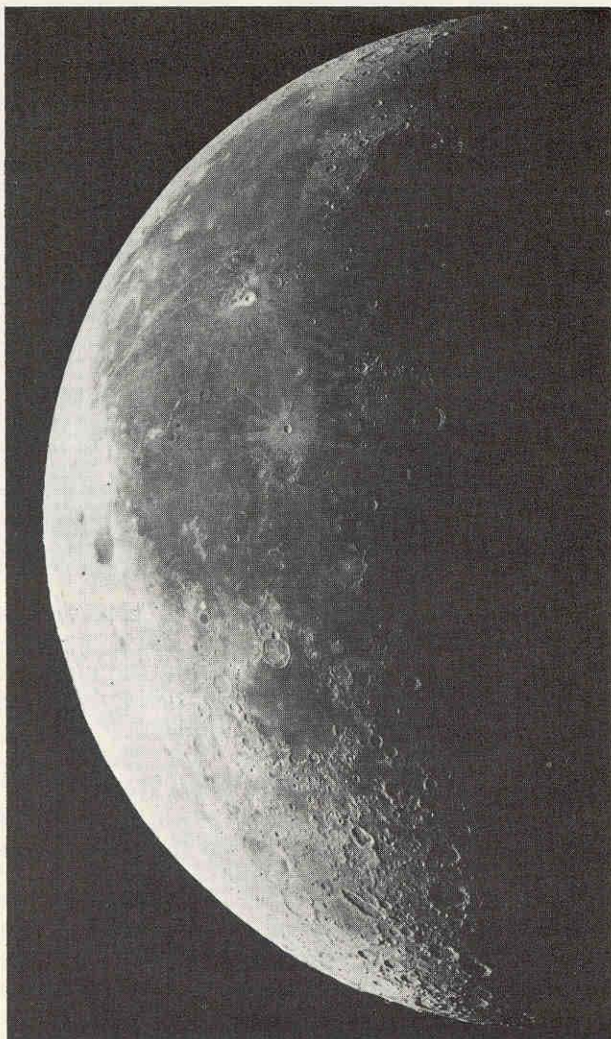
1. Because Jesus Christ *overcame* during His human life and was "born again" by a resurrection, where is He presently seated? Rev. 3:21. Have *all* angels, authorities and powers been made subject to Him under His Father? I Pet. 3:22; Eph. 1:20-22; I Cor. 15:27.

2. What will be Christ's official title when He returns to rule the nations of earth? Rev. 19:16. Will there ever be an end to the *increase* of His glorious government? Isa. 9:6-7.

3. Just how great is the authority which Christ has already inherited? Heb. 1:1-2; Matt. 28:18.

COMMENT: Notice how the Moffatt translation renders the original Greek of Hebrews 1:2: "But in these days at the end he has spoken to us by a Son — a Son whom he has appointed heir of *the UNIVERSE . . .*"!

4. Will Christ be the lone inheritor and ruler of this earth and the vast universe? Or will there be *co-rulers* — "joint-heirs" with Him to share His great inheritance and responsibility? Rom. 8:16-17. What further training will they receive after Christ returns? Rev. 2:26-27; 5:10; 20:4.



COMMENT: We — if we have become true Christians — are now the spirit-begotten “children” of God. We are heirs — JOINT-HEIRS with Jesus Christ to inherit EVERYTHING God has created!

Notice also the second chapter of Hebrews. Beginning with verse 6, the Apostle Paul quotes Psalms 8:4-6: “What is man, that thou [God] art mindful of him?” Yes, why should the great God be concerned about us mortals? Why *were* we born?

Here is the answer: “Thou hast put ALL THINGS in subjection under his feet. For in that he put ALL in subjection under him, he *left nothing* that is not [to be] put under him” (Heb. 2:8).

Do you grasp that? Absolutely nothing God has created is excepted. The awesome destiny of mankind is rulership of the entire vast UNIVERSE with Jesus Christ! But not until we have *qualified* and been “born again” as sons of God.

Thus far only Jesus Christ, the “firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. 8:29), has received this power. So “. . . now [in this present time], we see NOT YET all things [the universe] put under him [man]. But we see JESUS . . . crowned with glory and honor” (Heb. 2:8-9). He alone has received the power and glory we shall receive when we, too, are born of God at the resurrection!

Can your mind begin to grasp the magnitude of these sure promises of God?

5. In what capacity is Christ *now* serving true Christians? Heb. 4:14-16.

COMMENT: As the “High Priest” of all spirit-begotten children of God, Christ is supervising their spiritual development — preparing them so they one day can inherit “all things” with Him.

Certain Offices Already Filled

As our Savior and elder brother — “the firstborn among many brethren” — Jesus Christ has already qualified for the highest office under God the Father in the coming World Tomorrow. No one else can ever receive the position of rulership the Father has promised Him.

Certain other individuals have also been promised particular positions of responsibility in God’s Kingdom. Let’s notice who they are and what jobs they will hold.

NOT YET UNDER MAN’S CONTROL — The barren surface of the moon (top) and Mars (left). Man was created to co-inherit, restore and govern everything God has created. But only after he has *qualified* to rule.

1. Do Romans 4:13 and Galatians 3:7-9, 29 indicate that Abraham — the “father” of the faithful (Rom. 4:11) — will rule over the whole world as a direct assistant of Jesus Christ?

2. After Saul rebelled, whom did God make king over ancient Israel? II Sam. 7:8. How long would David’s throne be established? Verses 16-17. In the Millennium, who does God promise will rule over Israel and Judah? Ezek. 37:21-22, 24.

COMMENT: God first selected Saul to rule over Israel (I Sam. 10:24; 12:13) because the people wanted a human king over them. Had he yielded to God and kept His commandments and conquered the temptations of his flesh, he would have qualified to exercise that same office in the Kingdom of God during the Millennium. But Saul *rebelled* against God and would not repent, thus disqualifying himself from maintaining his high office.

Then God chose David, a man after His own heart, to rule instead of Saul. David made some serious mistakes too, and even sinned grievously against God. But his repentance was deeply sincere, and he sought to obey God with all his heart. He strove to overcome himself. And so David qualified to rule in God’s Kingdom. No one else can receive the office of king over Israel, because David is promised that job!

3. What positions of rulership did Jesus promise to give each of His twelve apostles? Matt. 19:27-28; Luke 22:29-30.

COMMENT: The apostles will rule over each of the twelve tribes of Israel under David. Judas Iscariot failed to qualify for his position, and so Christ chose another man, Matthias, to replace him (Acts 1:15-26).

Many other overcomers mentioned in the Bible have qualified for specific responsibilities in God’s ruling Family, but God has not definitely revealed their positions to us in His Word.

Now where do Christians *today* fit in?

4. Are God’s children to be *learning* to rule and judge? I Cor. 6:1-3.

COMMENT: Each one of God’s spirit-begotten children today is qualifying for a position of great responsibility with Jesus Christ in the Kingdom of God. These positions are “rewards” which God wishes to bestow on us *in addition* to the “gift” of eternal life (Rom. 6:23). But to receive a reward, each of us must be overcoming ourselves and developing our abilities now! More about this later in the lesson.

Now to avoid any possible confusion regarding the “rewards” and the “gift” God promises to give His children, let’s notice carefully the *difference* between a gift and a reward.

What Is a “Reward”?

No one misunderstands the word “reward” when an employee is “rewarded” with a bonus for outstanding service, or when a citizen earns a “reward” for supplying information to the police which leads to the arrest of a criminal. And no one misunderstands when a parent *gives* a child a “gift.”

But when it comes to the Word of God, confusion regarding these terms reigns supreme!

Why?

Because Satan the devil has *deceived* the whole world (Rev. 12:9). Since the devil first led astray Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, he has diligently propagandized the world about God’s plan and purpose for mankind, deceiving *all* nations about the truth!

Today the vast majority of professing Christians confuse the “gift” of eternal life with the “rewards” Christ will bring to His saints at His second coming. Therefore, it is imperative that we correctly distinguish the difference between the two.

1. What is the GIFT God has for us? Rom. 6:23, last part. Can we “earn” God’s gift of eternal life? Eph. 2:7-9.

COMMENT: A “gift” is something granted as a favor, something given freely. God’s gift of eternal life comes by His *grace* and *favor*. It is unmerited. There is absolutely *nothing* we can do to “earn” it.

2. How then does one qualify for grace — God’s mercy, favor, pardon? Acts 2:38. And how do you *remain* within it? Rom. 6:14-16; I John 3:22; Eph. 2:10.

COMMENT: The terms and conditions for coming within and *remaining* in God’s grace — by which He makes the precious “gift” of eternal life available — are that we repent of sin, accept Christ’s sacrifice for our sins, and then live a *life of obedience* to His spiritual laws — which are the way to true happiness and prosperity.

3. What PROMISE has God made to His spirit-begotten children? Heb. 9:15.

COMMENT: As we learned in detail in a previous lesson, God has promised New Testament Christians, along with the patriarchs to whom the promise was originally made, the *eternal inheritance* of this earth — its real estate, its wealth. And as we learned before, *eternal inheritance* obviously presupposes the gift of eternal life.

But what your station and occupation — your office, or position, or rank — will be in the World Tomorrow is a matter of “reward.” Notice:



Ambassador College Photo

TEMPORARY RULERS — Most of the world leaders (above) who attended the funeral of Konrad Adenauer in 1967 are no longer in power. Several are dead. In this world, rulers last only a relatively short span of years. In the World Tomorrow, however, those who will have qualified to rule in God's Kingdom will reign forever!

4. What did Jesus tell His disciples? Matt. 16:27.

COMMENT: Your "reward" depends on the zeal and effort *you* put forth during this present life — during your Christian life after receiving God's Holy Spirit! Your reward — your future position in God's Kingdom — will be determined by your spiritual "works"!

5. Exactly how do the "rewards" God has in store for His children differ from His "gift"? I Cor. 3:8, 13-15; Rom. 4:4.

COMMENT: Notice first that each man will be "rewarded" *according to his own* LABOR. Our reward, then, is something we EARN. In fact, the Greek word originally used by the Apostle Paul and translated "reward," means pay for service, hire, or wages. It is *payment* for doing something. A reward is given to the man who *earns* it by his work.

Second, notice that a man might even lose most of his *reward* and still receive, by God's grace, the *gift* of eternal life (I Cor. 3:15).

The "reward" of the saved, therefore, is *not* the same thing as the "gift" of eternal life. It is *entirely different!* Rewards will be given, or paid, to those who will have *already received* the "gift" of eternal life!

So clearly what we want is not GRACE or WORKS, but GRACE *and* WORKS.

The "grace" will get us into God's Kingdom — give us immortality as God's GIFT. The "works" will *earn* us, or QUALIFY us for, a better office — an opportunity for greater SERVICE, for doing more good — once we are born into God's Family.

Rewards Can Be Good or Bad

Let's notice now how tremendously different individual rewards can and will be.

1. Did Jesus promise to bring a reward with Him when He comes? Rev. 22:12. Again, does the exact reward depend on each man's *individual works*? Same verse.

2. What else did the Apostles Peter and Paul say to show that God will reward (or "pay") each man on the basis of his own deeds, whether good or bad? I Peter 1:17; II Tim. 4:14; Rom. 2:6. Will some receive good rewards and some bad? Rom. 2:7-10. (The Greek expression for "well doing" in verse 7 is literally "doing a good work.") Will some even receive the *ultimate punishment* as their reward? — What are the "wages" for sin, which is the transgression of God's Law (I John 3:4)? Rom. 6:23.

COMMENT: Everyone has "WORKS" — either good, or bad! Those who do good works will receive good rewards. Those who do evil works will be *punished*, unless their evil works are repented of and covered by the blood of Christ. Unrepentant sinners will receive the "wages" or "reward" or "payment" for sin which they have *earned* — DEATH for all eternity — complete disintegration and total oblivion, as we learned in a previous lesson. How important it is, then, to obey God and to depart from sin!

3. Is this principle of being rewarded for good and bad works also revealed in the Old Testament? Isa. 3:9-11. Will God reward everyone with complete fairness? Rom. 2:11.

Degrees of Reward

Every person who is born of God will receive exactly the same gift — eternal life and eternal inheritance — but there will be different degrees of rewards meted out to the saved.

Let's notice how the Bible speaks of these differences.

1. Has God promised to give rewards to the *small* and the *great*? Rev. 11:18.

COMMENT: Some saints are worthy in God's sight of greater rewards than others because they have produced greater spiritual works.

2. Does the parable of Jesus recorded in Matthew 13:3-8 show that some bring forth much more "fruit" than others? Verses 8, 22-23. Does Christ want us all to bring forth "much" fruit? John 15:1-8.

3. But must Christ "abide" in us before we can produce the kind of spiritual fruit God desires? John 15:4-6; II Cor. 13:5; Col. 1:27; Gal. 2:20. How does Christ live in a person? Rom. 8:9-10.

COMMENT: *Bearing good fruit* involves spiritual works, and overcoming the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21). It involves letting Christ — by means of His Spirit — live IN us to empower us to bear spiritual "fruit" — to perform spiritual "works."

4. What is one of the GREATER rewards Christ will give to those who overcome to the end? Is it rulership over the nations? Rev. 2:26-27.

COMMENT: In the Kingdom or Family of God there will be individuals having greater or lesser positions of authority and degrees of glory (compare I Cor. 15:41-42). But *every* individual will have a great responsibility, a tremendous job to do, for an entirely new civilization must be built on earth (to say nothing of THE UNIVERSE beyond) — built this time to God's specifications. It will take many different, vital jobs to re-create world society as it ought to be.

But exactly how will Jesus determine who will receive the greater and lesser rewards?

How Rewards Are Determined

In being apportioned these jobs, each Christian will be rewarded according to how much he *grew* and *overcame spiritually* in this life — how much "good fruit" he produced by his spiritual works. Each will receive a job in God's Kingdom commensurate with the level of SPIRITUAL CHARACTER he has developed in this physical, mortal life! The parable of the pounds recorded in Luke 19 helps to explain it.

In this parable Christ pictures Himself as a young nobleman going to a far land (heaven)

to receive a kingdom and to return (to earth) (Luke 19:11-12). But before He left, He delegated certain responsibilities to each of His ten servants (verse 13). These servants represent every converted true Christian to whom God has *given* His Holy Spirit.

1. At His return, having obtained the Kingdom, how will Christ judge his servants? Verse 15. Notice the words "that he might know how much every man had *gained by trading*."

COMMENT: Each "pound" (Greek, *mina*) was an amount of silver worth several dollars in today's money. This "money" (Greek *argurion*, "silver") is used as a symbol of spiritual value and represents the spiritual capabilities and opportunities God has given to each Christian to be *used* to serve others, to develop spiritual character and to accomplish the Work of God.

2. Is the actual degree each servant develops and overcomes — "gains by trading" (or use) — still considered *small* in Christ's sight, even though multiplied as much as ten times over? Verses 16-17. Will each servant's reward be much greater than the "pound" temporarily entrusted to him, and *directly proportional* to the degree of his growth? Verses 18-19 compared with verses 16-17.

COMMENT: True Christians are the servants of Jesus Christ (I Cor. 7:22-23). Some overcome more than others — accomplish more spiritual works with what they have been given — make more use of their opportunities — develop more spiritual character than others. Therefore, some, after they are born into God's Family, will be given rulership over *many* cities (or some similar responsibility) during the Millennium, while others will have qualified to rule only a few cities. Each is rewarded "according to his works" — according to what he does with what he is given to do it with. Those who accomplish much will be given much authority and responsibility. Those who do less will receive less authority in God's Kingdom.

Whether your reward is great or small *depends on you!* It depends on your *WORKS!* It depends on how much *effort* you expend in overcoming and growing spiritually. It depends on whether you always willingly let God mold you into His character image, or whether you tend to resist His correction!

3. What will happen to those who *fail* to overcome and grow even a little — who fail to increase their spiritual usefulness and effectiveness? Luke 19:20-24.

COMMENT: The one who GAINED NOTHING in this present mortal life — the one who had no good "works"—who did NOT GROW and OVERCOME spiritually — not only was NOT given *any* posi-

tion, but even had that which was previously entrusted to him *taken away!* God gives us salvation so we may *SERVE* others — and if we do not qualify to serve, we may have taken away even the salvation we thought we had!

4. What will be done with the wicked servant's "pound"? Verse 24. Does this seem unjust to some? Verse 25. But what does Christ say? What is one principle by which each person's reward will be determined? Verse 26.

COMMENT: The servant who overcomes much is more capable of ruling one additional city for the good of its inhabitants than either the servant who did not overcome at all, or the one who qualified to rule over only five cities.

5. Now turn to the parable of the talents recorded in Matthew 25. In this parable Christ compares himself to a rich man traveling to a far country (verse 14). In what way did the rich man (Christ) divide up His goods? Verse 15.

COMMENT: The Greek word translated "talent" was originally a measure of weight by which gold or silver was valued.

6. This time are all the quantities equal, or did He give responsibilities according to each man's *natural* aptitude or ability? Same verse.

COMMENT: Not everyone has the same natural inherent abilities. Some have more education, more intelligence, more leadership, more physical strength or natural inherited capacity to work with than others.

In His wisdom, God Almighty knows each one of us far better than we can know ourselves. He knows where our strengths lie, and what our weaknesses are. He also knows that for us to be really happy, our responsibilities must challenge us, yet not be a burden. So in this life He gives all spirit-begotten Christians *spiritual* responsibilities in accordance with their natural abilities, and gradually *adds* to them as they become *increasingly more capable* of directing them rightly and wisely — as they *GROW* and *OVERCOME* spiritually.

7. In this parable, how did the servants deal with the talents given to them to develop before Christ came back to "reckon" with them, or *judge* their works? Verses 16-19.

8. Does this parable, like the parable in Luke 19, reveal that each servant who is faithful "over a few things" — that is, over the limited "talents" and opportunities given him or her in this life — will be rewarded with "many things"? Verses 20-23. Isn't it clearly *rulership* which Christ promised? Verses 21, 23.

COMMENT: Notice how fair God really is. In verses 21 and 23, even though each man was originally given responsibility based on his natural abilities, both of the first two servants

increased their responsibilities *one hundred percent!* Christ therefore puts them both essentially on an *equal level* in rewarding them. The Bible here reveals the principle that God will judge and reward us according to *how well we do with what we have to do with!*

9. What about the third servant? Out of fear and laziness, did he hide his one "talent" instead of working with it? Verses 24-25. What will Christ say to such a person? Verses 26-27. What will happen to those who fail to do good works — who don't make any spiritual progress after their initial conversion? Verses 28-29. Does verse 30 indicate they may even lose out on receiving God's *gift* — eternal life itself?

Why Overcoming Is So Important

The Bible speaks a great deal about "overcoming." Let's understand exactly why overcoming is so important in living the Christian life, and what bearing it has on our ultimate rewards.

1. Did Jesus Christ *become* perfect? Heb. 2:9-10. Notice especially the last part of verse 10. Does Christ command His followers — true Christians — to become perfect also? Matt. 5:48.

COMMENT: The word "be" in Matthew 5:48 should properly be translated "become." Christ spoke of becoming perfect in *CHARACTER* — a process which takes time.

2. Even though Christ was the very Son of God, did He have to *learn* obedience? Heb. 5:8-9. Did Christ "overcome"? John 16:33. Did He resist temptation? Matt. 4:1-10; Heb. 4:15.

COMMENT: Jesus Christ became perfect through the trials and tests of human experience. He *OVERCAME* the *temptations* of the devil, His flesh and the world around Him. In spite of opposition and temptation, He kept God's commandments perfectly. In so doing He developed the perfection of *spiritual character* which enabled Him to become our Savior and elder brother.

3. Does God expect Christians to overcome the same influences Christ overcame? Rom. 12:21. Just how important is overcoming to your salvation and reward? Rev. 21:7; 2:7, 11, 17, 26-27; 3:5, 12, 21.

COMMENT: No one can overcome for you. Overcoming is something each person must do himself with the help of Jesus Christ living in him through the Holy Spirit. And just as with Christ, our overcoming involves "good works" — obedience to God, service to others, personal sacrifice, struggle against sin, fighting the good fight of faith. It requires putting forth effort to become the kind of spiritually minded and motivated person God can *use* to rule the universe!

To put it in a nutshell, overcoming is vitally important to God because that is the only way the CHARACTER necessary in a son and co-ruler in God's ruling Family can be developed.

Through overcoming the evil pulls of the flesh, the devil, and the world, our character is perfected — we build the very kind of character God has. The more we overcome, the greater our character will become and the greater authority and rulership we will be capable of exercising — therefore, the more we overcome, the greater will be our reward!

4. Does Matthew 24:46-47 emphasize that it is those who overcome to the very end — those who are still growing in character at Christ's return (or at the end of their physical life, if that comes first) — who shall inherit God's Kingdom and receive a reward?

COMMENT: Christ will not be satisfied with just a little overcoming now and then. He desires *continual, constant overcoming* and the obedience it entails. There is never a time to let down — to flag — to grow fainthearted.

5. Does II Peter 1:5-9 also show there is need for continual growth in the Christian virtues of character as long as a person lives? Does verse 10 imply that those who don't continue to grow and overcome will not make it into God's Kingdom?

Abraham Qualified to Rule

Let's take another look at the life of Abraham to see what a tremendous example he set for us.

1. What does the Bible say about Abraham's faith in God? James 2:23. But must faith in God be accompanied by "works"? Verse 20. What supreme test of faith did God require of Abraham? Verse 21. Did Abraham prove his faith in God by his works? Verses 22, 24.

COMMENT: Abraham was willing to sacrifice his *only* son, although he knew that only through his son could God's promises to him be fulfilled. By *stepping out* and ACTING on the Word of God, Abraham *proved* his faith in God. Abraham has *already qualified* to receive a high position of rulership when born into God's Family because he was willing to do whatever God said.

God wants *each one of us* to have the same kind of steadfast obedient faith that was demonstrated by righteous Abraham. Before anyone can be allowed to govern others in God's Kingdom, God must know that he will submit himself to God's rule *now!*

2. Even before Abraham's supreme test, did he show by his actions that he was willing to *give up* his old ways, customs and surroundings in order to perform God's commands? Gen. 12:1

and the first ten words of verse 4. Note the word "departed" in verse 4. Did Abraham do this by faith? Heb. 11:8-9.

3. By faith, did Abraham also look forward to dwelling in God's heavenly city when it descends to earth after the Millennium? Verse 10; Rev. 21:2, 10-14. And did his son and grandson come to exhibit the same kind of faith and obedience? Heb. 11:9; Luke 13:28.

COMMENT: Abraham "departed" from his old ways. He yielded himself to his Creator, gave up his own way, and kept all of God's commandments (Gen. 26:5). Isaac and Jacob, since they will be in God's Kingdom, also came to this same point of surrender to God's government.

This is exactly the kind of submissive attitude God requires of Christians today, as we shall now see!

"Keep the Commandments"

1. What did Christ tell the young rich man who wanted to know what he must do to receive eternal life? Matt. 19:16-17. Did Jesus enumerate enough of the commandments to make it clear He was indeed talking about the TEN COMMANDMENTS? Verses 18-19. What is one very good reason why we must "keep" God's Law? Rom. 2:13.

COMMENT: It must be noted at this point that God does NOT require the "works" of animal sacrifices, rituals, washings, or various other carnal ordinances of Old Testament times (see Hebrews 9:9-10).

Let's notice a few other scriptures showing how imperative it is for every true Christian to *keep* God's spiritual Law today.

2. How can we know that we truly "know" God? I John 2:3. What does *God* (since He *inspired* the Apostle John to write this epistle) call us if we claim to know him, but *don't* keep His commandments? Verse 4. Is the truth of God in such individuals? Same verse.

3. If we do not obey God's Law, what do we commit? I John 3:4. And what has God decreed to be the penalty of sin? Rom. 6:23.

4. What is the first step one must take to escape this penalty and come within God's "grace" — His unmerited free pardon? Mark 1:14-15; Acts 3:19.

COMMENT: To "repent" means to turn around and go the *other way* — to forsake YOUR way which is contrary to God's Law, and turn to God's WAY which is the way of His Law. To "believe the gospel" means to believe the very message Jesus brought — the GOOD NEWS of the coming Kingdom of God, which includes belief on Him as personal Savior.

God makes it very plain that no one who practices sin will ever be born into His universe-ruling family (Gal. 5:19-21). All who want to become born-again sons of God and co-rulers with Jesus Christ in the Kingdom of God must *stop sinning* — stop breaking His Laws. All must *REPENT* of rebellion against God, must desire and actually begin to literally *OBEY* His Word, submitting to His authority over their lives — *KEEPING ALL HIS COMMANDMENTS!*

Symbol of Submission

1. After belief and sincere, heartfelt, deep repentance of sin, what is the next step toward becoming a Christian — a spirit-begotten co-heir with Jesus Christ? Acts 2:38.

2. Is this what was done to 3,000 people who believed the Gospel and desired to obey God? Verses 39-41.

COMMENT: They were baptized — *immersed* — in water. That's what the Greek word *baptizo* means — to immerse or plunge into water!

3. What does baptism picture? Read and study carefully Romans 6:3-7.

COMMENT: Baptism symbolically pictures the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But it has a *DUAL* meaning, as many things in God's plan are dual. Baptism also pictures our voluntary crucifixion or putting to death of our *old sinful self* (verses 6-7). Our coming up out of this watery grave pictures a *changed* person — one "resurrected" to a new, righteous, *OBE- DIENT LIFE* dedicated to God (verses 4, 11-13).

To be baptized in water is a command of Christ. By being baptized we express our *faith* in Him as our Savior — we show our acceptance of His death for our sins, and our belief in His resurrection to eternal life. For it is by His *life* that we are saved (Rom. 5:8-10).

Baptism is also an *OUTWARD SYMBOL* of our repentance of our old sinful, disobedient life — of our willingness now to obey God in every way — and of our *complete departure* from our old sinful way of living!

4. What is the gift God promises to give to every repentant believer upon baptism? Acts 2:38. What is one reason it is so vital to receive God's Holy Spirit? Rom. 5:5; 13:10.

COMMENT: God's Spirit is His very own *LIFE* which comes into you as the begetting of *ETERNAL* life. You become then an *heir* of God — a joint-heir, a co-heir with *CHRIST* to inherit the entire universe when He returns!

The Holy Spirit imparts to you the characteristics of God (Gal. 5:22-23). First of these is *LOVE* — not carnal or human love, but *divine* love — God's love. It is the love that

enables us to *KEEP* God's Law, for only God's spiritual love can keep His *spiritual* Law! (Rom. 7:14.)

Also, it requires *FAITH* to keep God's commandments. But *your* faith is not strong enough. It requires *CHRIST's* faith — the same faith He exercised and lived by during His human lifetime. God also gives us this very same faith, *by the Holy Spirit*.

God's Spirit also imparts to you spiritual comprehension — *power* to *UNDERSTAND* spiritual truth — as well as wisdom and patience. All these are imparted to you from God, by His Holy Spirit — as His *GIFT!* But they are given to you to *USE*, in order to *GROW* spiritually, to serve others and to overcome.

5. Once we have truly repented, been baptized and received the miraculous begetting of God's Holy Spirit, do we automatically become part of a "body"? I Cor. 12:13. What body is Paul talking about? Verse 27; Eph. 1:22-23. Be sure to read all of I Corinthians 12.

COMMENT: In I Corinthians 12, the Apostle Paul has drawn an analogy between the human body and God's Church. We cannot become a part of the true body of Christ — the Church of God — by simply making a decision to "attend" a church service. The stamp of a member of God's true Church is the begetting of the Holy Spirit. Those who have not received the Holy Spirit are simply not a part of the true body of Christ — they are not *real* Christians! (Rom. 8:9.) God promises His Spirit *only* to those who repent of sin and are baptized (Acts 2:38; 5:32).

But after we are baptized and begotten by God's Spirit — what then?

We Must GROW Spiritually

1. What are we commanded to do once we become Spirit-begotten Christians? II Peter 3:18.

COMMENT: Once we have repented and have received God's Spirit, divine life has been *be- gotten* in us. But we are not yet spirit-born divine sons of God. We are only "begotten." Our spiritual life has begun as a very small "seed" which must then *grow*.

To grow spiritually, we must take in *SPIRIT- UAL nourishment*. This we receive from *BIBLE* study. We also absorb this spiritual nourishment through personal, intimate, daily contact with God in *PRAYER*, through meditation on God's Word, and through regular Christian fellowship with God's people in His Church.

Spiritual growth is the development of the very *CHARACTER* of God in us. We must gradually become more and more like God in the way

AWESOME CHALLENGE

— The mind-boggling problems of running a megalopolis such as New York City are beyond the capacity of any human mayor. In the World Tomorrow, cities will be ruled over by spirit-born individuals who will have the Godly power and wisdom to administer government for the good of all.

Part of New York Authority Photo



we think, act and do things (Matt. 5:48).

But what is the character of God? It is the ability to discern what is right, *choose* what is right, and then do it regardless of pressures and circumstances to the contrary. Character is the ability in a free moral agent to determine and to direct one's own actions always in the right direction, which is the way of righteousness — the way of obedience to God, of giving, serving, helping others. It is the way which produces real — and eternal — happiness.

This kind of character must be *developed* in Christians through independent free choice, combined with learning, experience, trial and test.

Years of experience with people of every social level and walk of life have shown that every Christian who is really growing and developing spiritual character *has his heart completely in THE WORK OF GOD* on earth, which the living Christ has called His servants to do as His instruments. Our "works" include our part in helping to spread His true Gospel to the whole world as a witness, preparing the way for Christ's coming to rule the world! (Matt. 24:14.)

2. What did Christ commission His ministers to do for those in His Church? Matt. 28:19-20; John 21:15-17; I Peter 5:2. Notice the last three words of each of the three verses in John 21. For what *purpose* are God's ministers to "feed" Christ's "sheep"? Eph. 4:11-15.

COMMENT: God has set His called and chosen ministers in His Church to FEED THE FLOCK — "For the *perfecting* of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ [the Church of God]: till we all come in the *unity* of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a *perfect* [fully mature, full grown] man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:12-13).

Just as a human mother feeds her begotten child within her womb through the placenta and umbilical cord, God's children are nourished with spiritual food within His Church. The parallel is exact. Spiritually, God's CHURCH is the "mother" of all who have been begotten by His Holy Spirit. Christ's ministers instruct, teach and counsel the members of the Church (Heb. 13:17). And as the human mother carries her unborn baby in that part of her body where she can best PROTECT it from physical harm, the



Hendrickson — Ambassador College

IN TRAINING — A wife and mother who learns to properly carry out her responsibilities toward her family and home is learning how to rule.

function of God's true Church is to also **PROTECT** the begotten children of God from false doctrines and false ministers.

Through this "feeding" process, each Christian receives the nourishment necessary to "grow" until he is ready to be actually **BORN** as a very *son of God* in the ruling Family of God!

3. Did Jesus promise that His Church — the "mother" of all true Christians — would *continue* to exist through the ages? Matt. 16:18.

COMMENT: On the day of Pentecost in 31 A.D. (Acts 2), Christ sent the Holy Spirit to inaugurate His Church. And the "gates of the grave" ("hell" is a mistranslation) have never prevailed against it through the centuries. Since that time the Church, however small, has *continued* to exist just as Jesus promised it would.

In Revelation 1:13, Jesus Christ is plainly pictured as dwelling in the *midst* of His Church. Here the Church is represented by seven golden candlesticks. Each one of these candlesticks represents a stage in the history of the true Church, as chapters 2 and 3 relate. That same Church of God exists **TODAY!**

Are *you* a part of it?

A future lesson will show exactly how you can recognize God's true Church today.

Are You Preparing to Rule?

You were born to **RULE** — to have a part in governing, teaching, guiding this world in the Millennium — and after that, to help rule the entire creation of God for all eternity.

That is the awesome destiny God offers to mankind!

But how are you progressing toward this **GOAL**? Analyze your own life and character. Have you begun *obeying* God? Are you *growing* spiritually? Are you developing — growing — in self-control? In the ability to restrain wrong desires, selfish motives or vanity?

If you suddenly had some really great power thrust into your hands to direct — perhaps a major department of a city — perhaps a vast manufacturing concern with many subsidiaries — would you be able to direct and exercise that power as you know God would have it used?

Well, the test is this: If you are *now* rightly directing the *little* powers in your control, such as your temper, your voice, your passions and emotions, or your present, possibly small income, then you probably could be entrusted to properly control at least a slightly larger power.

LEARNING RESPONSIBILITY

— Even little children can begin to learn how to rule by picking up and putting away their toys after use. A child who is taught responsibility when he is young will find it easier to develop responsible, righteous, spiritual character when he is an adult.

Ambassador College Photo



But if you have not yet learned to control and constructively guide even these little powers God has permitted you to use, then how could God entrust you to handle awesome responsibilities in the Kingdom of God? If you don't learn to be faithful even in the use of your present income, who will entrust to your care the *true riches*, and the great powers of God?

Ask God for wisdom, knowledge and understanding so you can rightly direct the comparatively little powers and responsibilities you now have. Ask Him for wisdom and help in properly exercising and using the abilities you've been given so you can be a faithful and **PRODUCTIVE SERVANT!**

Strive to learn to be faithful over what God has already given you, so that one day you will hear Christ say to you: "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a *little*, I will set you over *MUCH...*" (Matt. 25:21, *RSV*).

This life is the training ground. We must learn to rule by performing our responsibilities faithfully and by *learning to rule over ourselves*. We must come to submit to God's authority, keeping His commandments. Preparing to rule in God's Kingdom begins with submission to *His rule now!*

God will never save any person He does not

govern. So learn God's laws. Study them. Meditate on them. Live by them. And with the help of God's Holy Spirit, overcome your human nature, pulls of the world, and the wiles of Satan the devil. Change. Grow spiritually until death, or until the moment Jesus Christ returns, when God will instantly *change* our vile bodies into sinless, glorified spirit bodies (Phil. 3:20-21; I John 5:18). Then you will be fully qualified to **RULE** the nations according to God's laws.

To help rule the earth and the universe beyond as a member of the God Family is *our destiny!*

It's a breathtaking, exciting, incredible calling! A glorious, wonderful future! Have you *begun* to qualify for it? It's up to you.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

- | | | | | |
|-----|-----|------|------|------|
| 1-C | 5-B | 9-A | 13-T | 17-D |
| 2-C | 6-D | 10-B | 14-F | 18-J |
| 3-B | 7-C | 11-F | 15-T | 19-E |
| 4-B | 8-D | 12-T | 16-F | 20-C |

Rate Yourself

- 19-20 correct excellent
 16-18 good
 13-15 fair

TEST YOUR MEMORY

This quiz is designed to help you remember the important facts you learned in the lesson. You simply circle or underline each correct answer. After you've finished the test, check your choices with the correct answers listed on page 15, and then rate yourself.

1. The purpose for human life **A.** is known to historians. **B.** has only recently been discovered by modern science. **C.** is admittedly a mystery to religious leaders. **D.** does not have to be revealed because it is obvious to all.

2. Eternal life **A.** is all that God has promised His spirit-begotten sons. **B.** is what we earn for doing "good works." **C.** is a prerequisite to receiving God's reward. **D.** is the "reward" God promises to give all true Christians.

3. Reward, as used in the Bible, **A.** does not mean "wages, hire, pay." **B.** is something which must be earned. **C.** has no connection with "Christian works." **D.** can only be good, never bad.

4. The reward of born-again Christians will **A.** be utter boredom, since they will have nothing to do for eternity. **B.** include rule over cities and nations of the earth during the Millennium. **C.** merely be to behold the face of God. **D.** not be a foretaste of what they will do for all eternity.

5. The "reward" Christ will bring with Him **A.** will be the same for each born-again Christian. **B.** is a specific job, or responsibility, that will be given to those who grow and overcome in this life. **C.** is eternal life. **D.** has not been defined in the Bible.

6. Which is false? **A.** The degree of each Christian's reward will depend on the amount of growing, overcoming and serving he does in this life. **B.** Individual Christians will be set over nations, cities and other districts of the earth. **C.** Many different, vital jobs must be filled in order to build a civilization according to God's specifications. **D.** There will not be enough positions of rulership for all born-again Christians in the Kingdom of God.

7. Christ will apportion the various positions of authority **A.** by casting lots. **B.** by giving the best jobs to those He likes best. **C.** according to each saint's "works." **D.** entirely on a "first-come, first-served" basis.

8. Abraham will become a ruling member of God's Family **A.** because he merely believed God. **B.** not because his faith was accompanied by works. **C.** of very low rank. **D.** because he proved himself faithful by his works.

9. Baptism **A.** is an outward sign of one's repentance and submission to God. **B.** in no way represents the burial of the old sinful self. **C.** does not also symbolize a resurrection. **D.** is no longer a requirement for salvation.

10. Christ's command, "Feed my sheep," means **A.** be sure the poor have enough food to eat. **B.** His called ministers are to feed the members of God's Church on the spiritual food of His Word. **C.** merely protect the Church members from spiritual harm. **D.** preach the Gospel of His coming Kingdom as a witness to the world.

TRUE OR FALSE

11. The parables of pounds and talents show you can be rewarded in God's Kingdom without doing "works" in this life. **T F**

12. God will reward each person according to how well he does with what he has to do with. **T F**

13. To receive a good reward in God's Kingdom, a Christian must continue to grow spiritually throughout his entire mortal life. **T F**

14. You will grow in spiritual character and qualify for a high reward if you seldom resist temptation to disobey God. **T F**

15. A Christian woman wisely ruling her home and her children, if any, is learning to be a ruler in God's Kingdom. **T F**

MATCHING

Draw a line from each phrase in the left-hand column to the correctly related phrase in the right-hand column.

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 16. Baptism | A. Christ's corpse |
| 17. "Body of Christ" | B. Any church |
| 18. Overcomer | C. According to "works" |
| 19. Eternal life | D. God's true Church |
| 20. Rewarded | E. God's gift |
| | F. Symbol of submission |
| | G. Self-willed person |
| | H. Eternal death |
| | I. A reward |
| | J. Growing Christian |