

LESSON 41
(1969)

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE
BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

Queen Elizabeth II

About Our Cover ...

This world's monarchs sit in dignity and splendor, surrounded by counselors and servants. Queen Elizabeth II is the present monarch of Great Britain, Scotland and Ireland. The throne to which she has fallen heir is actually the ancient throne of David, which Jesus Christ will inherit when He returns (Luke 1:32). When that throne has once again been restored to Jerusalem, He will, together with the resurrected saints, administer the government of the earth from it. This lesson reveals HOW we can prepare NOW to be one of those ruling saints.

YOU WERE BORN TO RULE!

You were born for a PURPOSE! But do you know what that purpose is?

Are you sure?

You need to see the MAGNITUDE of God's great and wonderful purpose for your existence. You need to understand the fantastic future God has in store for you!

Born to Be a King

In 1948, Queen Elizabeth gave birth to her first son. Everyone in Britain knew that her son was born to be a ruler. They knew he was destined to become a king. From birth he has received the necessary training and education to prepare him to become the KING of England.

But if someone were to tell you that YOU were born with the potential to be a king -- and a RULING king at that -- you'd also probably expect him to tell you that he, himself, is Napoleon. But incredible as it may sound, you were born for that purpose. Yes, just as surely as Prince Charles was born to become the King of England, you WERE BORN TO RULE!

Born Into God's Ruling Family

Just as surely as Prince Charles was born into the ruling family of England, you have the fabulous opportunity of being born into the universe-ruling Family of God!

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

Your Bible plainly reveals the purpose for your life. Let's notice what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans about this fantastic 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).

But what will we "co-inherit" with Jesus Christ? The Bible shows we will inherit "ALL THINGS" (Rev. 21:7) with Christ, if we become the begotten children of God! Notice it further:

In the introduction of his letter to the Hebrews, the Apostle Paul wrote concerning Jesus Christ who was sent to this earth with the message of God's coming Kingdom: "God ... hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed HEIR OF ALL THINGS ..." (Hebrews 1:1-2).

 PHOTO CAPTION: BORN TO RULE -- Prince Charles kneels as his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, crowns him Prince of Wales. Prince Charles is next in line to sit on the English throne. Since birth he has been trained to become the King of England.

The Moffatt translation clearly renders the phrase "heir of all things" as "HEIR OF THE UNIVERSE"!

Think of it! We can eventually become the born Sons of God's Divine Family -- to rule and reign with Jesus Christ over the ENTIRE UNIVERSE!

What a fantastic inheritance -- a far greater inheritance than that of any earthly king!

Festivals Reveal How to Become a Ruler

Just as Prince Charles has been TRAINED for his future position of rulership, we must also TRAIN for our future positions of rulership in the ruling Family of God. To make this fact plain, and to keep God's goal for us uppermost in our minds, God ordained certain festivals for us to keep ANNUALLY.

These festivals give us the outline of God's Master Plan of Salvation. They actually show us how we can become members of the very Family of God -- co-rulers of this earth and of the entire universe with Jesus Christ!

Let's briefly review the meaning of God's Holy Days to be sure we understand.

The first feast mentioned in Leviticus 23 is not an annual feast, but a WEEKLY FEAST -- the weekly Sabbath -- the seventh day of the week (verses 2-3). God the Father wants us to be constantly reminded of the fact that He is the Creator and Sustainer of His universe. Therefore, He gave mankind His Sabbath Day.

God ordained that we should rest and worship Him on the Sabbath, acknowledging Him as our Creator and Ruler. It is only those who do acknowledge, obey and worship God as their Supreme Ruler, that will receive co-rulership of the universe with His Son!

The weekly cycle itself reveals the basic outline of God's Plan. The first six days are given to man, but the seventh day is HOLY time set aside for God. In the same manner, the first 6,000 years of human history have been given to man to learn how wretched his own way of life without God has been, and that it ends in DEATH (Prov. 14:12; 16:25). And the last 1,000 years will be given to Jesus Christ to prove to mankind that God's way is best after all! (Rev. 20:4.)

Now let's get down to the specifics of God's purpose for mankind, as revealed through His festivals.

The First Step

The Bible reveals that Christ's DEATH is the beginning -- the very first event, or step, in God's Great Plan for the salvation of all mankind.

Jesus Christ came to die for our sins so that we, if we repent and accept His sacrifice, may stand blameless before God the Father. Jesus also became the FIRSTBORN from among the dead -- the first completed, perfected, spiritual Son of God (Rom. 8:29).

The PASSOVER, the first of God's annual festivals, pictures the sacrifice of Christ. Jesus commanded that it be observed year by year, with the new symbols of unleavened bread and wine, so we will never forget His great sacrifice for us (Luke 22:19-20).

It is only through the sacrifice of Christ that our sins can be blotted out and the death penalty removed. There is no other way to start on the road to salvation (Acts 4:10-12).

But this world -- because of its rebellion against God and its observance of counterfeit pagan holidays -- has lost sight of the real meaning of Christ's sacrifice. It has, instead, substituted Easter, supposedly in honor of His resurrection -- an event the Bible nowhere commands us to celebrate. Yet the world even has the resurrection on the wrong day -- Sunday!

And because professing Christians have also refused to recognize and observe the Days of Unleavened Bread, they have falsely assumed that Jesus Christ kept the Commandments FOR us. They falsely assume that at Christ's death the Ten Commandments were "nailed to the cross" -- were done away -- and no longer need to be kept today!

If the churches were to keep the Days of Unleavened Bread as did the Apostle Paul and the early New Testament Church of God (I Cor. 5:7-8), they would know that sin is STILL the transgression of GOD'S LAW (I John 3:4), and that we must PUT SIN OUT OF OUR LIVES!

Your Bible shows that we are to BECOME perfect (Matt. 5:48). We are to do this by constantly putting sin out of our lives. God reminds us of this process annually by having us put LEAVEN -- a type of sin -- out of our homes for seven days.

Only Begotten Sons Now

God the Father is now in the process of creating Sons -- children to be born into His own Family. He is accomplishing this miraculous creation through the power of His Holy Spirit.

But this creation is going on only in those who have received the BEGETTAL of His Spirit! The Day of Pentecost pictures this phase of God's Plan.

 PHOTO CAPTION: TEMPORARY RULERS -- Many of these world leaders who attended the funeral of former German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer in 1967 are no longer in power. Their influence lasted only as long as their individual countries retained them. But once you become a Son of God, you will have a part in ruling not only the earth, but also the vast reaches of the limitless universe forever!

After our begettal by the Holy Spirit, which we receive after repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38), we then have the presence of ETERNAL LIFE -- God life -- through God's Spirit, but

we are not yet immortal spirit beings. We are merely the spiritually BEGOTTEN Sons of God!

If God's Spirit continues to dwell in us until death, or until Christ comes (if we remain alive), God will give us immortality at the resurrection BY HIS SPIRIT (Rom. 8:11; I Cor. 15:49-53). Our physical, mortal bodies will then be changed into glorious, SPIRITUAL IMMORTAL bodies. We will then become the Spirit-born Sons of God. We will be LIKE HIM! (I John 3:1-2.)

But as a physical fetus must grow to be born physically, so the spirit-begotten Christian must GROW in grace and in the knowledge of Christ (II Peter 3:18) before he can be born SPIRITUALLY. He must, with the help of God's Spirit, resist and overcome his human nature, and the sinful pulls of the world and the devil. He must grow and develop in spiritual CHARACTER during his lifetime in order to be BORN into the ruling Kingdom of God!

The begotten Christian must gradually, continually, develop the divine, SPIRITUAL character of love, faith, patience, gentleness, humility, kindness, temperance -- just as the physical fetus gradually develops one by one the physical organs, features and characteristics of a human being before it is finally born into the human family.

 PHOTO CAPTION: DICTATOR HITLER -- The former totalitarian dictator of Nazi Germany inspects the guard of honor outside the Reichstag. Some who do not fully understand the government God will establish on earth -- which will be government from the top down -- erroneously compare it with the reign of terror of such dictators. The free booklet, "The Wonderful World Tomorrow -- What It Will Be Like", explains how God's world-ruling government will function to bring lasting world peace.

Then, at Christ's coming, the Spirit-begotten children of God shall be instantaneously BORN of God as Jesus was! It is then that we, as the "Firstfruits" of God -- pictured by the Day of Pentecost -- will have the opportunity of bringing the same salvation to all the world as we rule during the Millennium.

To Rule With Christ

The Feast of Trumpets points to the next event in God's Great Plan. It pictures the now-imminent return of Jesus Christ to save this sick and dying world from annihilation.

At His return, the dead in Christ -- those who had been begotten and led by God's Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:11-14) -- will be RESURRECTED and made IMMORTAL -- including the prophets of old (Luke 13:28). Those Spirit-begotten Sons who are alive when Christ returns shall be instantaneously CHANGED from mortality to immortality (I Cor. 15:50-54); and, together with those resurrected, shall rise to meet the descending, glorified Christ in the air (I Thess. 4:17).

These newly born-again, immortal Sons of God shall then descend WITH CHRIST out of the clouds to stand on the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4-5), and to begin RULING the nations WITH CHRIST! (Dan. 7:22; Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21.)

The New World Government

Now notice briefly how Christ's new world-ruling Government,

in which you can have a part, will function.

It will NOT be a Democracy. It will NOT be Socialism, Communism, or Nazism. It will not be human Monarchy, Oligarchy, or Plutocracy. It will not be MAN's government over man. Man has PROVEN his utter incapability of ruling himself!

It will be DIVINE Government -- the Government of God! It will NOT be government from the bottom up. The people will not VOTE their rulers into office. It will NOT be government of or by the people -- but it will be government FOR the people! It will be government from the TOP (God Almighty) DOWN!

There will be no time wasted in election campaigns. No \$100-per-plate campaign fund-raising dinners. No dirty, mud-slinging political campaigns in which each candidate attempts to put himself forward in the most favorable light -- defaming, denouncing and discrediting his opponents in his lust for power.

There will be TWO kinds of beings on earth in the Millennium -- mortal human beings, and immortal Sons of God. But no HUMAN will be given any top governmental office. ALL high-level rulers will then be divine spirit beings in the Family -- the Kingdom -- of GOD! And all officials will be appointed by the Divine Christ.

Remember, God is the great God of Love who GIVES -- who rules with outgoing concern for the ruled. His government will be for the HIGHEST GOOD of the people! Therefore, those who have qualified in this life will be placed in all offices of great responsibility and power.

Some resurrected saints will rule over ten cities, some over five (Luke 19:17-19). Chapters 2 and 3 of the book of Revelation explain more about the future rulership of this earth which Christ has promised His Elect.

Think of it -- you have the opportunity to be one of those ruling saints!

World Deceiver Removed

We have just seen how Christ will suddenly intervene in this world's affairs to set up His Father's perfect government.

But what about Satan the Devil? What will happen to him?

The fifth Annual Sabbath -- the Day of Atonement -- reveals the answer. It pictures Christ deposing Satan from his present position as world ruler, and removing him to a place completely away and apart from mankind. The Devil is to be bound, no longer able to deceive the nations for ONE THOUSAND YEARS! (Rev. 20:1-2.)

Most professing Christians today do not understand that Satan has deceived THE WHOLE WORLD! (Rev. 12:9.) Many are not really aware of Satan's existence, and that he is the "god" they have been worshipping -- the "god of this world" (II Cor. 4:4; 11:13-15).

It is at this point in God's Plan that the scales of blindness will fall from the eyes of all mankind. People will then realize just how deceived they have been. They will begin to have their chance to understand God's Plan, and QUALIFY for RULERSHIP in His Glorious Family!

With Satan chained, his six-thousand-year reign over this earth will come to an abrupt end. Then God's 1,000-year Sabbatical reign will begin. This 1,000-year period of worldwide peace and harmony is pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles. During this millennial period the earth will experience the bountiful blessings of obedience to God's perfect government.

But what about all those billions who have lived and died

since the time of Adam without knowing anything about God's way of life? What about many of your own friends and relatives who have not understood this precious truth?

All Will Learn to Rule!

God will give every man, woman and child who has ever lived a chance to learn His Truth -- a chance to qualify for rulership -- a chance to become His Spirit-born Son! God is "... not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9).

 PHOTO CAPTION: ALL TO UNDERSTAND -- This crowd of people in India is symbolic of the billions of earth's inhabitants who have died not knowing God's truth. They will have their chance to understand during the 100-year period immediately following Christ's millennial rule.

Our kind and loving Father has planned to set aside 100 years at the very end of His 7,000-year plan, during which those who have never known about HIS WAY of life will have their chance for salvation and rulership. This period is pictured by the Last Great Day immediately following the Feast of Tabernacles.

During this time of judgment, the vast majority of mankind who have lived and died since the time of Adam will be resurrected to mortal life to receive their first and only opportunity for salvation. After a full 100 years, those who will have refused to keep God's Law will be condemned to eternal death in the Lake of Fire (Isa. 65:20; Rev. 20:15). All others will have become Spirit-born Sons of God, having received immortality and glory.

But think of it! You -- as a SPIRIT-BORN RULER -- will have the opportunity to show your friends and relatives who died without having known God's Truth, HOW to become members of the ruling Family of God!

Yes, because God has chosen to open your eyes to His Way NOW, YOU can very soon become a part of God's Family. You'll have the privilege of ruling and teaching with Christ for 1,000 years during the Millennium, and then helping your friends and relatives during the 100-year period following the Millenium -- and finally helping to rule the ENTIRE UNIVERSE FOR ALL ETERNITY!

This is the very purpose for your existence. This is why YOU were born! Our limited, mortal minds just cannot fully comprehend this awesome calling. It dwarfs human imagination! And yet God reveals this to be our destiny.

Let's study that purpose more closely.

Be sure your Bible is before you so you can turn to every scripture. Only then can you comprehend the REAL meaning of God's purpose for your life.

LESSON 41

Man Created in God's Image

Man is not just another "animal" as evolutionists would have us believe. The very first chapter of the Bible reveals the overwhelming DIFFERENCE between animals and human beings. Let's understand.

1. After what "kind" were the animals created? Gen. 1:20-25.

COMMENT: These verses plainly say, without interpretation, that God created fish after their particular KIND, birds after their particular kind, and cattle after the cattle kind. Each KIND may have varieties, but the Eternal Creator says in Genesis that He created all creatures to reproduce after THEIR OWN "KIND"!

2. But what about man? Was he created after the animal kind? After what "image" and "likeness" WAS man created? Gen. 1:26-27.

COMMENT: Man was created in GOD'S likeness! These scriptures refute the THEORY that man is the highest of the animals, evolving from lower mammals. They say God CREATED man after His own "image" and "likeness"!

Whatever God is LIKE, He made man LIKE Him -- same form and shape. In His LIKENESS -- after HIS KIND!

Only a very few have understood this precious truth in our deceived world today, but this revelation affirms God is reproducing Himself after His KIND! Our destiny is to become the literal CHILDREN of God -- members of His own Divine Family!

3. Even though man is made in the likeness of God, are both now composed of the same type of "material"? What is God composed of -- Spirit? John 4:24. But what is man composed of -- mere matter? Gen. 2:7.

COMMENT: Man does not HAVE a soul -- man IS a soul (Gen. 2:7), made of matter from the ground. In other words, the soul is made of MATTER that CAN DIE (Ezek. 18:4, 20), in spite of Satan's lies to the contrary (Gen. 3:4) which a deceived "traditional Christianity" has gullibly believed and borrowed from the pagan religions.

In I Corinthians 15:46 we read: "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is NATURAL; and AFTERWARD that which is spiritual. The first man (Adam) is OF THE EARTH, EARTHY: the second man (Christ) is the Lord from heaven And as we (speaking of converted, spirit-begotten Christians) have borne the image of THE EARTHY, we shall also (by the resurrection) bear the image of the heavenly" (verses 46-49).

Clearly, man is not an animal! Unlike the dumb brutes, man has the potential to become God! But what is God?

God Is a Divine "Family"

Did you notice in Genesis 1:26 that God said, "Let us ... "? Not "Let ME." But "Let us make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness."

Why the "us," the "our"? Why the PLURAL form? Turn to the very beginning of the Bible. The first words in all the Bible are:

"In the beginning GOD created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).

The original Hebrew word for "God" in Genesis 1:1, and throughout the account of creation, is ELOHIM, which actually means MORE THAN ONE! It is the plural form of the Hebrew word EL, or ELOAH, which can be correctly translated as "Mighty One." The plural form, as used in your Bible, means "The Mighty ONES" -- MORE than just one person.

Elohim is a UNIPLURAL noun, such as "church," or "family," or "kingdom," which stands for a SINGLE CLASS composed of TWO OR MORE individuals. Elohim, then, means the "God KINGDOM," or "God FAMILY."

And so "God" is not merely one person -- GOD IS A FAMILY!

GOD IS ALSO A KINGDOM -- the Supreme Divine Kingdom which created and RULES the entire universe!

The ONE GOD -- "Elohim" -- the ONE DIVINE FAMILY -- HAS A HEAD. He is the One called the Father. He IS God. With Him, in the beginning, was the second member of the Godhead -- the "Word" or "Spokesman" (John 1:1-3) who became Jesus Christ. He also is God. And by a resurrection from the dead, Jesus became the Divine Son of the Father (Rom. 1:4).

The Gospel Jesus brought to mankind is simply the good news of the KINGDOM OF GOD -- and that Kingdom is God. And, incredible as it may sound, Jesus taught that humans can be born into the RULING FAMILY, or KINGDOM, of God!

God Will Increase His Family!

Presently there are ONLY two members in the God Family -- God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son. But God plans to increase His Family! Let's notice this marvelous truth in the Bible:

1. Does God plainly show it is His purpose to increase His Divine Family by having MANY more sons born into it? Heb. 2:10. Isn't Jesus Christ only the firstborn of MANY sons of God? Rom. 8:29.

2. Is it God's "good pleasure" to add to His Family? Eph. 1:6. The word translated "adoption" here should be "sonship," according to the original Greek. Doesn't Luke 12:32 also show us that God wants to share His Kingdom with others?

COMMENT: Billions upon billions of human beings have been born on this earth, but none of them (except Christ) are yet on God's level of existence -- the God Plane. Yet this is the very level of existence He wants to SHARE with us!

 PHOTO CAPTION: INSTINCT AT WORK -- This young calf has been able to walk on its own since birth because animals are born with instinct -- their brains have been programmed to do what is necessary for each kind from birth. But man is entirely different. He is born with a potential far above the animal kingdom! Unlike the animals, a human must be taught everything from birth because man was created in the "likeness" of God -- offer the God kind -- with a mind that must develop and grow both physically and spiritually.

God the Father has planned a large family with which He can share the joys of accomplishment. He wants a family of His own upon whom He can lavish His love -- a family that will joyfully return that love through obedience to Him.

3. Does God want us to set the goal of entering His Divine Family -- the Kingdom of God -- far above all of the physical pursuits of this world? Matt. 6:33 -- note the word FIRST. Is the Kingdom of God like a precious treasure in a field -- a treasure so precious that a man will give up everything he has to obtain it? Matt. 13:44.

COMMENT: God shows us that we must be willing to give up our own way to become a part of His Glorious Family. Yet He also shows us that being in His Family will be far more wonderful than anything we can experience in this life!

4. Will even the "least" person born into the Family of God be greater than John the Baptist? Luke 7:28.

COMMENT: Jesus Christ said that John the Baptist was the greatest prophet born of women. Yet even the person of least authority in the Family of God will be greater than he was. What tremendous powers we have been promised!

5. Does God want any of mankind to miss out on the wonderful opportunity of becoming a part of His Family? II Peter 3:9.

COMMENT: God does not want anyone to fail in becoming a member of His Family. "He is not willing that any should perish." Yet, because some few will refuse to obey, they will perish -- not because God wants them to, but because they have CHOSEN the wrong way -- the way of willfull rebellion against God which ends in DEATH! (Rom. 6:23.)

6. What will happen to those who continue to break God's commandments? Matt. 13: 24-30 and Rev. 21:8.

COMMENT: The "man" in this parable is God. The enemy is Satan. The tares are those who continue to be disobedient to God's Law. These "tares" -- those who refuse to obey God -- will be destroyed by an all-consuming fire that will accompany the end of God's plan of salvation.

7. What will these wicked people become? Mal. 4:3.

8. Does the Apostle Paul also verify what is to happen to those who, knowing the truth, WILLFULLY refuse to obey God? Heb. 10:26-27. Won't the time of God's final judgment upon incorrigible sinners burn up all the wicked and their works? II Pet. 3:10; Mal. 4:1 and Rev. 20:15.

COMMENT: The Apostle Paul exhorts, "Wherefore we" -- those of us who are striving to enter the Kingdom of God -- "receiving a kingdom (the Kingdom of God) which cannot be moved, let us have grace (or hold fast) whereby (that) we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:28-29).

Those who will have been born again at the completion of God's Plan for mankind will be immortal -- fire can't hurt them. God will then carry out His final righteous judgment upon all the incorrigible wicked by consuming them and their works in a worldwide fire -- called in Bible terminology the "Lake of Fire"!

Co-Heirs and RULERS With Jesus Christ

1. Has God the Father appointed Jesus Christ to be the heir of the entire universe? Heb. 1:2.

COMMENT: Notice again how the Moffatt translation renders "all things" in 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 ..."!

2. Does David also mention that Christ has been made the heir to a fantastic amount of wealth? Ps. 2:7-8. Will all the nations of the earth be ruled by Christ? Verse 9 and Rev. 19:15.

3. Will the entire government of this world be Christ's responsibility? Isa. 9:6. Will there ever be an end to the increase of His glorious government? Verse 7.

4. Will Christ inherit and rule this earth and the vast universe alone? Or will there be CO-HEIRS with Him to share this great inheritance and responsibility? Rom. 8:16-17 and Rev. 2:26-27; 21:7.

COMMENT: We -- if we have repented, been baptized, and received God's Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38) -- are the begotten "children" of God. We are the HEIRS -- JOINT-HEIRS with Jesus Christ to inherit everything! Can your mind grasp the MAGNITUDE of these sure promises of God?

5. In preparation for this awesome responsibility, will the saints first rule and reign over the nations with Christ during the Millennium? Rev. 20:4.

6. Will we just suddenly become qualified to rule by being born as the Sons of God? Or does the Apostle Paul show that we will have to first LEARN to rule and judge in THIS LIFE? I Cor. 6:1-3.

COMMENT: Each one of us can have the tremendous opportunity to rule and reign with Jesus Christ in the Kingdom of God. But we must PREPARE for that responsibility Now! Let's notice how.

Abraham Qualified to Rule

Look at the example of Abraham. By believing God -- having the FAITH to step out and ACT on the Word of God -- Abraham has ALREADY QUALIFIED to receive a high position of rulership when born into God's supreme, universe-ruling Kingdom. Let's understand what Abraham's example has to do with us.

1. What does the Bible say about Abraham's faith in God? James 2:23. What supreme test of faith did God require of him? Verse 21.

COMMENT: Abraham was willing to sacrifice his ONLY son, knowing that only through this son could God's promises to him be fulfilled. Abraham obeyed without question.

Before anyone can be allowed to govern others, God must know that he himself will be governed. God wants each one of us to have the same unquestioning obedience that was demonstrated by righteous Abraham.

2. But even before Abraham's supreme test -- the commanded sacrifice of Isaac -- he proved that he would be obedient. Did he show by his actions that he was willing to GIVE UP his old ways, customs, surroundings -- to do whatever God might require? Gen. 12:1 and the first ten words of verse 4. Note the word DEPARTED in verse 4.

COMMENT: DEPARTURE was the pattern of Abraham's entire life. Abraham "departed" from his old ways. He yielded himself to his Creator, gave up his own way, and kept all of God's commandments (Read Gen. 26:5).

3. How do we know that Abraham, as well as Isaac and Jacob, will be in the Kingdom of God? Luke 13:28 and Heb. 11:8-9.

COMMENT: The Bible shows they definitely will be born into the Kingdom of God at Christ's second coming. Their obedience is an example of the submission God requires of us today!

4. Because of Abraham's surrendered attitude, God gave him an insight into the future. Did God reveal that there was to be a magnificent city on earth in the future? Heb. 11:10. What city will this be? Rev. 21:2, 10-14.

COMMENT: Abraham was looking forward with great anticipation and confidence to being in the heavenly Jerusalem, which will descend to and remain forever on this earth. We, too, can share in this great reward -- if we will accept the sacrifice of Christ as payment for our past sins, and begin to walk in newness of life by learning to SUBMIT to God's rule IN THIS LIFE!

Submit to God's Authority

Because of Abraham's submission to God, he will be in God's Kingdom to rule with Christ. We, if we follow Abraham's example, can also qualify to rule and reign under Jesus Christ.

Notice what the Apostle Paul was inspired to say regarding

our submission to God.

1. Does Paul plainly teach that we MUST yield ourselves to GOD when we become Christians? Rom. 6:12-15. And does he show there is also another force extant in the world that we could become subject to, if we're not careful? Verses 13, 16.

COMMENT: It is important "to WHOM" we yield ourselves. If we yield to sin and unrighteousness -- the way of the "god of this world" -- Satan (II Cor. 4:4) -- we'll die eternal death (Rom. 6:23). But if we yield ourselves to God, we will inherit eternal life.

2. Therefore, shouldn't we become as teachable in God's ways as a "little child"? Matt. 18:3-4.

3. All little children should receive loving correction from their parents when they do wrong. God the Father also corrects His Spirit-begotten children -- not out of hatred, but in LOVE. Are we to accept that correction when it comes? Heb. 12:6-7.

4. What will be the result if we willingly accept God's correction? Heb. 12:9-11. Notice the last part of each of these verses.

COMMENT: Correction from God is ALWAYS for our own GOOD -- for our learning and development of Godly character. If taken in the right attitude, God's chastisement will lead to eternal life!

5. Didn't even Jesus Christ -- the Savior of mankind -- LEARN obedience by the things He suffered in the flesh? Heb. 5:8.

COMMENT: Jesus Christ, who lived a sinless life, was never chastised by His Father for sin. But Jesus was able to learn valuable lessons in obedience by the things He SUFFERED, or experienced, while a human being on this earth.

Christ is our living EXAMPLE (I Peter 2:21). Therefore, we also need to be learning obedience by the daily trials and tests we encounter in our Christian lives!

Baptism -- Symbol of Submission

1. When Philip went down into the city of Samaria to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom, what did the people DO to show their belief in the Gospel, and their desire to obey God? Acts 8:12.

COMMENT: Baptism pictures our willingness to submit to God's Law and live a totally new life. Notice how:

2. How does the Apostle Paul describe baptism? Read and study carefully Romans 6:3-7.

COMMENT: Baptism SYMBOLICALLY pictures the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

But it is also a DUAL picture, as many things in God's Plan are dual. Baptism also pictures the crucifixion of our old sinful self (verses 6-7). And our coming up out of this watery grave pictures a CHANGED person -- "resurrected" to a new, righteous, spiritual life dedicated to God (verses 4, 13).

Water baptism is the ordinance commanded by Christ by which we express our FAITH in Him as our Savior -- our acceptance of His death, burial and resurrection. It is also an outward symbol of our repentance of our old sinful, disobedient life -- our complete departure from our old sinful way of living.

3. Once we have truly repented, been baptized, and received God's Spirit, do we automatically become part of a "body"? I Cor. 12:13. What body is Paul talking about? Verse 27 and 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 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 Holy Spirit. Those who have not received the Holy Spirit are simply not a part of the body of Christ -- they are not real Christians! (Rom. 8:9.)

God's Church Nourishes His Children

Jesus Christ promised to build His Church (Matt. 16:18). He kept that promise. Now let's understand why He built His Church.

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, we are not yet spirit-born divine beings. The divine life has merely been BEGOTTEN in us. This spiritual life starts as a very small "seed." So far as spiritual KNOWLEDGE, and developed spiritual CHARACTER goes, there is not much, as yet.

Therefore, in order to grow spiritually, we must be fed and nourished on SPIRITUAL food. This we receive from the BIBLE. But we also absorb this spiritual knowledge and character through personal, intimate, daily contact with God through PRAYER, and through Christian fellowship with God's children in His Church.

2. Growing requires feeding. What did Christ commission His ministers to do? John 21:15-17 and Matt. 28:19-20. What is God's Church to do for its Spirit-begotten members? Eph. 4:11-13.

COMMENT: Christ ordained that His Church should feed its members with spiritual food, just as a mother feeds her begotten child within her. Notice the exact parallel.

The physical embryo or fetus is fed physically through the mother. God's CHURCH is called Jerusalem ABOVE "which is the MOTHER OF US ALL" (Gal. 4:26).

The CHURCH is the spiritual MOTHER of its members. 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 (CHURCH) of Christ: TILL we all come in the unity of the faith, and of THE KNOWLEDGE of the Son of God, unto a perfect (fully mature SPIRITUAL) man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:12-13).

It is also the duty of Christ's TRUE ministers to PROTECT the begotten, but yet unborn saints from false doctrines and false ministers.

The HUMAN mother carries her unborn baby in that part of her body where she can best PROTECT it from PHYSICAL harm; and that protection is part of her function, as well as to nourish the child. Even so, the CHURCH, through Christ's ministers, instructs, teaches, counsels with, advises and PROTECTS from spiritual harm the unborn members! (Heb. 13:7, 17.)

Then, after having grown in God's character, in God's due time -- either by the resurrection, or by instantaneous CHANGE to immortality at Christ's coming -- each Christian shall be BORN OF God into the RULING KINGDOM OF GOD as very SONS 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.

 PHOTO CAPTION: WHAT IS A CHURCH? -- To most the "church" is a building where people attend religious services. The original Greek word for church literally means "the called out ones." So the people, not the building, make up the church!

COMMENT: On the day of Pentecost in 31 A.D., Christ's promise to begin His Church was fulfilled. And the "gates of the grave" have not prevailed against it through the centuries. Since that time the Church, however small, has CONTINUED 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 separate era in the history of the true Church.

From that day of Pentecost in 31 A.D. until the return of Christ, there were to be seven -- and only seven -- eras of the true Church of God. (For more information about the history of God's Church, send for our free booklet, "A True History of the True Church".)

In Revelation chapters 2 and 3 is a specific description of the characteristics of each of these eras of God's Church. These chapters were written as warnings to all who should come to understand -- "He that hath an ear" -- so that once part of God's Church, we could avoid making similar mistakes.

These chapters also point out the rewards that will be given to the churches when Christ returns. These specific rewards, including that of God's Church today, will be examined more closely in the next lesson.

Learn to Rule NOW!

The Bible shows very clearly that the degree of your REWARD in the Kingdom of God depends entirely upon what you DO in this physical life. Anyone who does not learn to SUBMIT to God and does not GROW spiritually, simply will NOT become a member of God's Family.

1. If we are faithful NOW in the smaller things of life, will we be entrusted with greater things later? Compare Matt. 25:21, 23 with Luke 19:17.

COMMENT: Jesus is plainly telling us through these parables that before anyone can be entrusted with the powers and riches of God -- including rulership in the Kingdom of God -- he must FIRST learn to be faithful in the smaller physical responsibilities of this life.

Analyze for yourself your own life and character. How are you USING the powers you have at your disposal? Are you developing -- growing -- in self-control? In the ability to restrain impulse, wrong desire, selfish motive, or vanity? If you suddenly had some really great power thrust into your hands to direct -- perhaps thirty million dollars -- perhaps a vast manufacturing concern with many subsidiaries -- would you be able to direct and wield that power as you know God would have it used?

Are you SURE? Well, the test is this:

If you are NOW rightly directing 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 control properly at least a slightly larger power. 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 the awesome responsibilities of the God Family? If you don't

learn to be faithful even in the paltry unrighteous mammon, 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 little powers and responsibilities you now have. Ask Him for His guidance and help in exercising all the abilities you've been given so you can be a faithful and productive servant.

If you do learn to be faithful over what God has already given you, He will say to you some day: "Well done, good and faithful servant; because you have been faithful in a VERY LITTLE, have authority over MUCH!"

2. Will the AMOUNT we change and grow in God's character during this life determine our position of responsibility in God's Kingdom? Read Luke 19:11-26 carefully.

COMMENT: Jesus disciples wrongly supposed the Kingdom of God was to appear in their lifetime. To correct this error, Jesus gave them this parable.

In the parable Jesus compares Himself to a young nobleman who went away to receive a kingdom (verses 11-12). But before going, He called all His servants together and gave each one a "pound," symbolizing the begetting of the Holy Spirit, and commanded them to use it and increase it until He resumed (verse 13).

At Christ's now imminent return He will demand all true Christians -- those who have been given a "pound" -- to give account of what they have accomplished with what they have been given (verse 15).

Now notice what happens in the parable.

The first man had increased his "pound" ten times over. He received authority over 10 cities because of his diligence (verses 16-17). The second increased his "pound" only five times over, so he received authority over five cities (verses 18-19).

But the third servant didn't do anything with what he was given. He didn't grow or change once he had received the begetting of the Holy Spirit. He stagnated spiritually. He had the false idea that there is nothing to DO in the Christian life -- that Christ did it all long ago!

 PHOTO CAPTION: IN TRAINING -- Some women feel they have no way to qualify now to rule in the World Tomorrow. They couldn't be more wrong. A woman who learns to properly care for her home and family is learning how to rule!

 PHOTO CAPTION: LEARNING RESPONSIBILITY -- Even little children can begin to learn how to rule by keeping their toys picked up and put away after use. A child who is taught responsibility when he is small will be a more responsible adult.

Because he didn't grow or overcome at all, he did not inherit the kingdom -- he wasn't born of God -- and the Spirit ("pound") that he had been given was taken FROM him (verses 20-26).

This parable plainly teaches that a Christian must OVERCOME and GROW SPIRITUALLY -- grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ (II Peter 3:18). If we fail to grow and overcome in this life, we will lose out on the salvation we THOUGHT we had, as did the man who neglected his pound!

The parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30) illustrates the same principle, showing that each person will be judged according to WHAT HE DOES with what he has to do with. God will judge each one fairly. He will expect more from those given more talents and abilities. But the one who makes no spiritual progress after his initial "conversion" will be cast as an unprofitable servant into outer darkness (Matt. 25:30), and LOSE OUT ON EVERYTHING!

3. Does the parable of Matthew 22:1-14 also show that we must prepare NOW to enter the Kingdom of God? Study this parable carefully, noticing especially verses 11-14. What does the wedding garment symbolize? Rev. 19:7-8.

COMMENT: The parable in Matthew 22 compares the Kingdom of God to a wedding feast. Those who are present at the soon-coming marriage of the lamb must be "clothed" with the RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD!

Christ shows us that those who don't have a wedding garment -- those who haven't prepared themselves by growing in grace, knowledge and RIGHTEOUSNESS -- will be cast out as unfit for God's Kingdom!

The Apostle Paul's Example

1. What does the Apostle Paul say about the development of perfect Godly character? Phil. 3:11-16. Was Paul already perfect? Or was he in pursuit of perfection during his physical life? Verses 12, 14.

2. Did Paul allow his past mistakes to overwhelm him? Verse 13. What did he do about them? Same verse.

3. What did Paul mean by the expression "as many as be perfect" in verse 15? Did he think that some Christians never make mistakes? See comment.

COMMENT: Paul was talking about the attitude of mind of true Christians. God demands PERFECT WILLINGNESS to do His will. We WILL slip and sin occasionally, but we must constantly WILL to do what is right and repent of our sins.

Only those who endure to the end will receive salvation (Matt. 24:13). If we expect to become a part of the Family of God, we must be constantly changing, growing, and overcoming our human nature until the time of Jesus Christ's return when God will CHANGE our vile bodies into sinless, glorified spirit bodies! (Phil. 3:20-21; I John 3:9.)

When Jesus Christ returns, He will assign those who have overcome and learned to LIVE His way -- the way of submission to His government -- positions of RULERSHIP OVER THIS EARTH! (Matt. 24:44-47; Rev. 2:26-27.)

This life is the TRAINING ground. You must learn to RULE NOW by learning to rule yourself, and by performing your responsibilities faithfully. And you must always be under God's authority, obeying His Law and keeping His Commandments. Learning to rule in God's Kingdom begins with SUBMISSION TO RULE. You first must learn to BE RULED by Christ NOW, before God will allow you to rule in the World Tomorrow!

God will never save any person He does not govern. If you are to RULE the nations, you must learn to rule in harmony with God's Government -- according to His Laws -- not according to your own human ideas.

Have YOU LEARNED this vital, all-important lesson?