

# **“Understandest Thou What Thou Readest?”**

## **Topical Bible Studies**

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# Angels

## Defined:

1. Appears over 280 times in the Bible
2. Old Testament word = MALAK  
“To dispatch as a deputy, messenger” (*Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance*)  
“Messenger, representative, courting angel” (*Theological Wordbook of the O.T.*)
3. New Testament word = ANGELOS  
“A messenger, sent whether by God or by men or by Satan ... most frequently of an order of beings, superior to man” (*Vine’s Expository Dictionary*)  
“A messenger, envoy, one who is sent ... mostly of that host of heavenly spirits that ... wait upon the monarch of the universe” (*Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon*)

## Various Uses:

1. Of supernatural beings sent by God (cf. Numbers 20:16; Luke 2:9; Matthew 26:53) — the majority of usages as this.
2. Of men - sometimes men called angels (cf. 2 Samuel 19:27). Also many translations of “messenger” from MALAK and ANGELOS (cf. Job 1:14; 1 Samuel 11:3; Luke 7:24; 9:52)
3. Angel of the Lord (approximately 64 times) ... see the study on “Angel of the Lord”

## Some Biblical Facts About Angels:

1. They are spiritual beings (Hebrews 1:14)
2. They are created beings (Colossians 1:16; Exodus 20:11).
3. They are always spoken of in the masculine gender in the Hebrew and Greek. When named they are given masculine names (cf. Jude 9; Revelation 12:7). When they appeared to man, they appeared as men (Mark 16:5; Genesis 18:2).
4. They neither “marry, nor are given in marriage” (Matthew 22:30).
5. There is some sort of hierarchy or rank among them (1 Thessalonians 4:16)
6. They worship God (Philippians 2:9; Hebrews 1:6)
7. They are above men, but below God (Hebrews 2:7)
8. They are immortal (Luke 20:36)
9. They have somewhat to do with us when we die (Luke 16:22).
10. They are limited in knowledge (1 Peter 1:12).

## Some Questions About Angels:

### 1. *What are Cherubim and Seraphim?*

- ▶ Cherubim guarded the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:24)
- ▶ Cherubim were used in the design of the tabernacle and temple (Exodus 26:1, 31)
- ▶ Cherubim were placed on the ark of the covenant (Exodus 25:17-22; 1 Samuel 4:4)
- ▶ Seraphims mentioned only once (Isaiah 6:2,3)

Possibly these names represent a rank in the order of angels.

### 2. *Do we have “guardian angels”?*

Examination of “supporting passages”

- ▶ Hebrews 1:14 — they minister FOR us, not TO us (their work is for our benefit)
- ▶ Acts 12:15 — Not saying Peter had an angel, but they thought he was an angel (though he was still imprisoned or dead)
- ▶ Matthew 18:10 — The angels are in the presence of God. Are not said to protect or guard.
- ▶ Revelation 1:20; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14 — Nothing is said of guarding. Given the definition and usage of ANGELOS it is possible these passages could simply be translated as “messenger.”

### 3. *What are the angels of Satan?*

- ▶ Real beings (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:7)
- ▶ Created beings (as is Satan) (Colossians 1:16)
- ▶ Originated from rebellion toward God (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6)

### 4. *Do angels visit among us today?*

- ▶ Some use Hebrews 13:2 to so teach, but this passage only teaches the need of hospitality based on past occurrences (Abraham - Genesis 18; Lot - Genesis 19)
- ▶ What would they do? The message is to be delivered by “earthen vessels” (2 Corinthians 4:7), this would exclude angels who are spirit beings. They could not intervene in a miraculous way (1 Corinthians 13:8-10), even to the extent of making themselves known.
- ▶ The passage in Hebrews simply takes occurrences from the past to illustrate the need to demonstrate brotherly love to all.

### 5. *Do we become angels when we die?*

- ▶ When we die we become “as angels” (Matthew 22:29), not angels (here referring to the fact that they do not marry)
- ▶ When Lazarus died, he was still Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31).

# Angel of the Lord

## Defined:

1. The phrase “angel of the LORD” appears some 52 times in the old testament of the King James version of the Bible. Several more passages refer to the “angel of God” and others still “His angel.” [Remember that LORD in the KJV Old Testament is a translation of the Hebrew JEHOVAH]
2. This angel is identified by commentators as:
  - ▶ “an uncreated being ... the designation of the Messiah” (*Wilson’s Old Testament Word Studies*)
  - ▶ “He is recognized as a divine being, even though in human form” (*New Bible Dictionary*)
  - ▶ “a distinct personal self-manifestation of God, who may be called the incarnate Logos” (*The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*)

## Examination of Some of the Biblical Texts:

1. Genesis 16:7-14 He appears to Hagar and promises a child (Ishmael). [Note especially in verse 13 where he is identified as “Thou God”]
2. Genesis 22:11-18 He appears to Abraham as he is about to sacrifice Isaac. [Note in verses 16-17 he is identified as God (cf. 12:1-3)]
3. Genesis 32:24-30 Jacob wrestles with a man. [Note in verse 30 he says he saw God. In 48:15-16 he refers to this man as God and an angel.]
4. Exodus 3:2-14 He appears to Moses in a burning bush. [In verse 4-7, 11, 13, 14 he is clearly identified as God.]
5. Exodus 14:19 He appears before the camp of Israel in a pillar of cloud. [In 13:21 we are told that the Lord went before them in this cloud.]
6. Exodus 23:20-23 He is to be before Israel. [In verse 21 he is to be obeyed and can forgive their sins.]
7. Joshua 5:13-6:2 He appears to Joshua. [In 5:14 he accepted worship from Joshua and in 6:2 is identified as the Lord.]
8. Judges 2:1-5 He appeared to the Israelites at Bochim. [In verse 1 he is identified as the one with whom they have a covenant and their deliverer. In verse 2 as the one who is to be obeyed.]
9. Judges 6:11-23 He appears to Gideon. [In verse 14 ff. he is clearly identified as the Lord]

## Conclusions:

1. From the above passages we see that the “angel of the Lord”:
  - ▶ is identified repeatedly as “the Lord” and “God”
  - ▶ is identified as the one who makes covenants and establishes promises with man
  - ▶ is to be obeyed
  - ▶ is the “I Am” (self existent one)

- ▶ accepts worship of man
2. It is clear then that the angel of the Lord is not just another in the hierarchy of created beings identified as angels. He is rather an uncreated being, thus a divine being.
  3. Since this being has been seen, and we are told that no man has seen God (John 1:18), it is clear that He is someone other than the Father.
  4. It is this writers opinion that these appearances were those of the pre-incarnate Jesus.

# Antichrist

## Defined:

1. ANTICHRISTOS — A compound word of the preposition “anti” and the noun “Christ.”
2. “Can mean either against Christ or instead of Christ ...” (*Vine’s Expository Dictionary*)
3. “An opponent of the Messiah” (*Strong’s Greek Dictionary of the New Testament*)
4. “Against Christ, or an opposition Christ, a rival Christ.” (*Easton’s Bible Dictionary*)

## Biblical Texts In Which The Word Is Used:

### 1. 1 John 2:18

Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

### 2. 1 John 2:22

Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

### 3. 1 John 4:3

And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

### 4. 2 John 1:7

For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

## Biblical Texts In Which People Think The “Antichrist” Is Referred To:

### **Daniel 8:23-25**

<sup>23</sup>And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. <sup>24</sup>And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. <sup>25</sup>And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify *himself* in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.

### **Daniel 11:21-29**

<sup>21</sup>And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. <sup>22</sup>And with the arms of a flood shall they be overflowed from before him, and shall be broken; yea,

also the prince of the covenant. <sup>23</sup>And after the league *made* with him he shall work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people. <sup>24</sup>He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province; and he shall do *that* which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers; he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches: yea, and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a time. <sup>25</sup>And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army; and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand: for they shall forecast devices against him. <sup>26</sup>Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow: and many shall fall down slain. <sup>27</sup>And both these kings' hearts *shall be* to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper: for yet the end *shall be* at the time appointed. <sup>28</sup>Then shall he return into his land with great riches; and his heart *shall be* against the holy covenant; and he shall do *exploits*, and return to his own land. <sup>29</sup>At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter.

### **Matthew 24:5, 23, 24**

<sup>5</sup>For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

<sup>23</sup>Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here *is* Christ, or there; believe *it* not.

<sup>24</sup>For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

### **2 Thessalonians 2:3-4**

<sup>3</sup>Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; <sup>4</sup>Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

### **Revelation 13:11-18**

<sup>11</sup>And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. <sup>12</sup>And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. <sup>13</sup>And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, <sup>14</sup>And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the means of* those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. <sup>15</sup>And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. <sup>16</sup>And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: <sup>17</sup>And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. <sup>18</sup>Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number *is* Six hundred threescore and six.

### **Revelation 16:12 through Revelation 16:16**

<sup>12</sup>And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

<sup>13</sup>And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *come* out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. <sup>14</sup>For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, *which* go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

<sup>15</sup>Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed *is* he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. <sup>16</sup>And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

### **Revelation 17:7-18**

<sup>7</sup>And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. <sup>8</sup>The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. <sup>9</sup>And here *is* the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. <sup>10</sup>And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, *and* the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. <sup>11</sup>And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. <sup>12</sup>And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. <sup>13</sup>These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. <sup>14</sup>These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him *are* called, and chosen, and faithful. <sup>15</sup>And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. <sup>16</sup>And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. <sup>17</sup>For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. <sup>18</sup>And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

### **Conclusions:**

# Apostles

## Defined:

1. From the Greek word APOSTOLOS (ἀπόστολος) which appears 81 times in the New Testament.
  - (1) “A delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders ...Specially applied to the twelve disciples whom Christ selected, out of the multitude of his adherents, to be his constant companions and the heralds to proclaim to men the kingdom of God; ... With the apostles Paul claimed equality ...” (*Thayer’s Greek English Lexicon*)
  - (2) “One sent forth (*apo*, from, *stello*, to send) (*Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*)
2. 133 times the verb form APOSTELLO (ἀποστέλλω) is used. It is usually translated as “sent forth” or “sent” (ie. Matthew 2:16 - Herod “sent forth” soldiers to slay the children; Matthew 10:5 - Jesus “sent forth” the twelve apostles).
3. The word is used (as are Greek words translated as deacons, elders, angels) in both an “ordinary” sense (simply of one who is sent forth) and a “special sense” (one divinely sent forth by Christ — the twelve and Paul).

## Some Texts In Which The Word Is Used:

1. “Special Sense” - of ones divinely called by Christ
  - (1) *Of the Twelve apostles:*
    - ◆ Luke 6:13-16 — From His disciples He chose twelve and named them His apostles
    - ◆ Matthew 10:1-4 — Jesus sends the twelve forth with power
    - ◆ Luke 14:36-53 — The eleven remaining apostles commanded to tarry in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 1:1-4)
    - ◆ Acts 1:15-26 — Matthias chosen to replace Judas
    - ◆ Acts 2:1-11 — The twelve receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit
    - ◆ Acts 2:43 — They performed “wonders and signs” (cf. 5:12)
    - ◆ Acts 6:1-3 — They were in control of the Church in Jerusalem
    - ◆ Acts 8:14-22 — It was by the laying on of their hands that miraculous abilities were given
  - (2) *Of the apostle Paul*
    - ◆ Paul was not one of the “twelve.” He could not meet the qualifications to be such given in Acts 1:21.
    - ◆ He is clearly identified as one “called to be an apostle” (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:1)
    - ◆ He is identified as “the apostle of the Gentiles” (Romans 11:13)
    - ◆ He was “not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles” (2 Corinthians 11:5; 12:11)
    - ◆ He possessed the “signs of an apostle” (miraculous ability) (2 Corinthians 12:12)
    - ◆ His calling was of God (1 Corinthians 1:1; Acts 9:1ff)

2. “Ordinary Sense” - of ones who were sent, but not divinely called as the twelve and Paul
  - ◆ 2 Corinthians 8:23 — of messengers of the church (“messengers” is from the same word)
  - ◆ Philippians 2:25 — of Epaphroditus, the “messenger” of the Philippians
  - ◆ Acts 14:14 — of Barnabas

**“Can their be apostles today?”**

1. NO —
  - (1) Can any meet the qualifications of Acts 1:21 to be among the twelve? — No
  - (2) Can any claim to have seen Jesus, thus be called by Him? — No (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:8)

There cannot be any apostles in the sense of those who possessed the signs of the apostles as in the first century.
2. YES — there can still be individuals sent by the churches for special tasks (cf. 2 Corinthians 8:23), but it is best to call them the term common to us — messengers.
3. As in the days of the first century, there can be those who claim to be apostles. If so, let us try them (Revelation 2:2), that is ask them to demonstrate the signs of an apostle (cf. 2 Corinthians 12:12)

# Ark of the Covenant

## What is the Ark of the Covenant?

1. “Ark” defined: “An ark, chest, box, coffer, coffin; in which anything is laid up and preserved” (*Wilson’s Old Testament Word Studies*). Used of Joseph’s “coffin” (Genesis 50:26) and Joash’s collection “chest” (2 Kings 12:9-10).
2. The ark of the covenant was distinguished by its titles:
  - ▶ ark of God (1 Samuel 3:3)
  - ▶ ark of the covenant (Joshua 3:6; Hebrews 9:4)
  - ▶ ark of the testimony (Exodus 25:22)
  - ▶ ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts (1 Samuel 4:4)
3. It was made to house the testimony (tablets) which the Lord gave Moses (Exodus 25:16). At one time it also contained a pot of manna and Aaron’s rod that budded (Hebrews 9:4).

## What Did the Ark of the Covenant Look Like?

(Description found in Exodus 25:10-22)

1. Verse 10 — 2 ½ cubits long; 1 ½ cubits wide; 1 ½ cubits high (app. 45"X27"X27")
2. Verse 11 — made of shittim wood overlaid with gold
3. Verse 12-15 — there were four gold rings, two on each side through which two staves made of shittim wood and overlaid with gold were placed to be used for carrying the ark.  
*[Note — the Koathites were the ones selected to carry the ark by these staves (cf. Numbers 3:30-32; 4:15; 7:9; 10:21)]*
4. Verse 17-21 — there was a covering on top of the ark called the “mercy seat” It was made of pure gold with a winged Cherubim on each end, facing toward each other.

## What Was the Purpose of the Ark of the Covenant?

1. To house the tablets (Exodus 25:16, 21)
2. A place from which God communed (Exodus 25:22). The ark was placed in the most holy place (Exodus 26:34).
3. To guide the Israelites through the wilderness and in battle (Numbers 10:33-36). The ark led the children of God over Jordan (Joshua 3) and around Jericho (Joshua 6). *[Note the tragic consequence of not following in Numbers 14:40-45]*

### **Where is the Ark of the Covenant Now?**

1. It was captured by the Philistines when the Israelites took it to battle thinking they would be assured of victory (1 Samuel 4:3-11). It remained with the Philistines for 7 months (troubled months for the Philistines!) and was then returned to the Israelites (1 Samuel 5-7).
2. It was placed in Kirjath-jearim by the Israelites and remained there until David moved it to Jerusalem (after 1 failed attempt that resulted in the death of Uzzah) (2 Samuel 6:1-19).
3. Solomon had it placed in the temple (1 Kings 8:1-11). [At this time all that remained in the ark was the tablets of stone (1 Kings 8:9)]
4. It was in the temple in the days of king Josiah (2 Chronicles 35).
5. The temple was destroyed not long after that by Nebuchadnezzar, at which time he carried the “vessels of the house of the Lord to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon” (2 Chronicles 36:7).
6. Seventy years later the children of God were released from captivity and given permission by Cyrus to build the temple again. Cyrus returned the vessels from the temple at Babylon so they could be used by the children of Israel (Ezra 5:13-17). History records that the ark was never in the second temple, one of the reasons it was inferior to the first.
7. Some assert that when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the temple that the priests hid the ark of the covenant and other temple furniture. Some claim to have found them (one says under the temple mount, another under the site of the crucifixion, and another says they are in Ethiopia.). There has never been any substantiation for this.

### **Some Lessons To Be Learned:**

1. From the mercy seat (Exodus 25:22; Romans 3:24; Hebrews 9:5)
2. About seeking God after due order (2 Samuel 6:1-19; 1 Chronicles 15:13)

# Armageddon

## “Armageddon” Defined:

1. Revelation 16:16 is the only verse in all the Bible in which the word "Armageddon" appears.
2. The word “Armageddon” in this verse is a compound word HAR MEGEDON (ἀρμαγεδδών) and literally means “mountain or hill of Megiddo.”
3. In the days when John wrote the book of Revelation, that little mountain or hill was only about 70 feet high. It is located in the central section of the land of Palestine, looking down over the rich, fertile Valley of Jezreel, and was the crossroads of the trade routes from Egypt and Babylon and Syria, it was of strategic importance. Whoever controlled Megiddo would control the trade routes and all the area around about.
4. Megiddo played an important role in history and witnessed a succession of conquerors: Egyptians, Canaanites, Philistines, Israelites, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans.

## Old Testament Scriptures Relating to Megiddo:

1. *During the Conquest of the Land of Canaan* Megiddo is first mentioned in Joshua 12:21 in the of “the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel smote on this side of Jordan” (12:7). It was during the conquest of Canaan, under the leadership of Joshua, that the Israelites won a temporary victory over the king of Megiddo. When Joshua divided the land among the tribes, Megiddo was assigned to the tribe of Manasseh (Joshua 17:11; 1 Chronicles 7:29). However, because Joshua did not completely drive the Canaanites out of the city, the victory was only temporary and the Canaanites actually controlled it during the period of conquest.
2. *During the Reign of the Judges* in the days of Deborah the northern tribes of Israel, under Barak, fought the Canaanites under Sisera by the waters of Megiddo and defeated them (Judges 5:19).
3. Baana (one of the twelve officers of Solomon over Israel) was over Megiddo (1 Kings 4:12).
4. Solomon collected a levy to build a wall there (1 Kings 9:15).
5. King Ahaziah of Judah died there after he was struck by an arrow from the bow of Jehu, king of Israel (2 Kings 9:27).
6. Good king Josiah was sorely wounded in a battle with Necho, king of Egypt at Megiddo, and died before he arrived in Jerusalem (2 Kings 23:29-30; 2 Chronicles 35:22-24).
7. Megiddo was a historical battlefield, the scene of some great victories and some

disastrous defeats, thus it came to be a symbol of bloody conflict and devastating loss.

### **The Revelation And Armageddon (Revelation 16:12-16)**

1. When John came to write in the book of Revelation about a great conflict of some kind, he employed this symbolic language. He is not talking about a particular war, physical combat involving hundreds of millions of people in any period of history (Armageddon would not accommodate such a number).
2. To take this passage in Revelation and make it speak of a final battle that ushers in a “millennial reign” thousands of years after the writing is wrong for several reasons:
  - (1) The text bears out that John is using it in a symbolic way. What exactly is to be taken “literally” in this passage — the vial (12)? The frogs coming out of the mouth of a dragon, beast and false prophet (13)? Will the “battle of Armageddon” be fought by armies led by frogs?! Then why take the gathering together in Armageddon as literal?!
  - (2) Such an interpretation is not in accord with the statements in the book of Revelation that indicate the events were to occur during the time of those to whom it was written (1:1-9).
  - (3) The whole idea of a future millennial reign is false (cf. Mark 9:1; Colossians 1:13; Revelation 1:9). Were it not for the propagation of this error, the idea of literalizing Revelation 16:16 would not even have occurred.
3. We have an expression, "he met his waterloo" meaning someone suffered defeat. Such a phrase is taken from the well known defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo. In a similar way, to the people of John's day the expression, “gathering at Armageddon,” would signify making a final stand. A person would no more have to literally go to the hill of Megiddo to make his final stand than he would have to go literally to Waterloo to suffer total defeat.

### **Conclusion:**

1. There will not be a literal “battle of Armageddon.” John wrote of the great conflict which was occurring as the Christians of that day were persecuted by the Roman armies under Domitian and used a well known landmark to symbolize this battle. He assured them the battle would rage, but that God would triumph (Revelation 17:14).
2. The battle for good still continues, and we too must realize that we should choose the side of victory, before the final blow is given.

# “Understandest Thou What Thou Readest” ... About Covenant (Testament)?

## I. Defined

1. *Zondervan’s Pictorial Bible Dictionary* states that the word “covenant” describes various “types of legal relationships.”
2. Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary says that a covenant is a “solemn and binding agreement .”
3. The word in the Old Testament comes from the Hebrew word *bereeth*. It is generally translated as “covenant,” though about 16 times it is translated as “league.” It is used of agreements between individuals, monarchs and subjects, and of course of the covenants between God and man.
4. The New Testament word is *diatheke*. This word appears 33 times and is translated 20 times as “covenant” and 13 times as “testament.” Of this word *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* tells us that “In contradistinction to the English word ‘covenant’ (lit., ‘a coming together’), which signifies a mutual undertaking between two parties of more, each binding himself to fulfill obligations, it does not in itself contain the idea of joint obligation, it mostly signifies an obligation undertaken by a single person.”  
*God is never in a “covenant” relationship with man in which He is reckoned as an equal party to the other.*

## II. Covenants Between Men

1. Covenants between men are designed to regulate interaction regarding property, personal rights, and such.
2. The Bible records many such agreements, such as: the covenant between Abraham and Abimelech in which Abraham swore to deal properly with Abimelech and Abimelech swore to give Abraham possession of a well which had been taken from him (Genesis 21:22-32); a covenant of friendship between David and Jonathan (1 Samuel 18:1-4); the “league” between the elders of Israel and David regarding his kingship (2 Samuel 5:1-3).
3. The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* notes that with each covenant there were generally certain elements found:
  - (1) A statement of the terms agreed upon
  - (2) An oath by each party to observe the terms
  - (3) A curse invoked by each upon himself in the event of disregarding the covenant
  - (4) The formal ratification by some external act
4. *We would do well to realize the value of agreements (covenants) between ourselves and others — in the workplace, personal relationships, marriage, ....*

## III. Covenants Between Man and God

1. In regard to such covenants the *ISBE* makes an important point:  
“It cannot in this case, however, be an agreement between contracting parties who stand on an equality, but God, the superior, always takes the initiative. To some extent, however, varying in different cases, it is regarded as a mutual agreement; God with His commands makes certain promises, and men agree to keep the commands, or, at any rate, the promises are conditioned on

- human obedience.”
2. Such covenants may be “localized” (that is upon specific individuals) or “universal” (applicable to all mankind).
  3. Some examples of such covenants in the Old Testament are:
    - (1) Genesis 1:27-30— Though the word “covenant” is not used, there is clearly a covenant (or agreement) found in the passage. God gave blessings to Adam and Eve but along with such gave stipulations (verse 28; 2:15-17). This was a “localized” covenant which placed obligations to God upon Adam and Eve.
    - (2) Genesis 6:8; 9:1-17 — Here God made a covenant not to destroy the earth by flood again (a universal covenant which we today, as we view the rainbow, should be reminded of).
    - (3) Genesis 15:3-6, 17-18 — The covenant to Abraham pertaining to God’s promises to him.(see also Genesis 17:1-14 for the covenant of circumcision in relationship to this). These were covenants with Abraham and his descendants, not binding upon us (though we reap the benefits of them).
    - (4) Exodus 19:3-6 — The covenant with Israel commonly known as the Mosaic Covenant. This covenant (which contains over 600 specific laws) was made to govern the people through whom the Abrahamic promise had been given.

#### **IV. The New Covenant**

1. The final and universal covenant from God was foretold in the Old Testament (covenant) (Jeremiah 31:31-34) - emphasizing that the Old Covenant was never meant to be universal nor to endure till the end of time.
2. Of this covenant we are told much:
  - (1) Its price ... Jesus Christ Himself - Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:11-15
  - (2) Its value in regard to the old ... better - Hebrews 7:22; 8:6
  - (3) Its promise ... a better hope - Hebrews 7:19
  - (4) Its provision ... forgiveness- Hebrews 8:12; 10:16-17
  - (5) Its application ... universal - Matthew 28:19
  - (6) Its duration ... “unto the end of the world” - Matthew 28:20

#### **Conclusion:**

1. God has made a covenant with ALL mankind at the cost of His very own Son.
2. We ALL ought to consider the cost of our failure in regard to this covenant (Hebrews 10:28-31).

# Demons

## What Is a “Demon”?

1. In the King James version the word “demon” does not occur. The Greek words for demon (DAIMON δαίμων (n) [5 times]; δαιμόνιον DAIMONION (adj) [60 times]; and δαιμονίζομαι DAIMONIZOMAI (v) [13 times]) are translated by the English word “devil.” The actual word for “devil” (διάβολος DIABOLOS) appears 38 times and refers to that one being known as the devil. The distinction of these two words is generally clear in the English by the context.
2. The definition of the word for demon is “an evil spirit” (*Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*).

## Was Demon Possession Real?

1. Some seek to attribute the accounts of demon possession to superstition. For example, in an article in the February 21, 1974 *Gospel Advocate* the writer states: “Demon possession, as described in the New Testament appears to have always been some sort of medical problem.”
2. While demon possession could produce illnesses there is a clear distinction made between physical illness, mental illness and demon possession (cf. Matthew 4:24; 8:16; 10:8; Mark 1:32). Thus it is clear that demon possession was not, as some contend, simply a superstitious explanation for physical illness.
3. To deny the reality of demons and demon possession causes a very serious problem. Jesus obviously taught that demons and demon possession existed (Matthew 10:5-8). One must then ask — “Did Jesus lie?;” “Was Jesus mistaken?;” or “Was Jesus correct?” Of course the latter is the only acceptable answer.

## Where Did Demons Come From?

1. Several untenable “explanations” are offered:
  - (1) They are the result of cohabitation between angels and earthly women (cf. Genesis 6:1-6). This cannot be reconciled with Christ’s teaching that angels are sexless beings (Matthew 22:30).
  - (2) They are the spirits of a pre-Adamic race that lived in the “gap period” between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. But the Bible affirms that Adam was the “first man” (1 Corinthians 15:45).
  - (3) They are alien beings.
2. Some plausible explanations can be offered:
  - (1) They are the spirits of wicked men who God, in harmony with His purposes, allowed to leave the abode of the dead (hades).
  - (2) They are fallen angels who God allowed to leave their confinement (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6) in order to fulfill His purposes.
3. It is clear that they must be beings created by God, for He alone has such power (Genesis 1:1; Exodus 20:11).

### **What Did Demons Do To People in the New Testament Record?**

*(Note: Demon possession is a New Testament phenomenon. Idols are sometimes referred to as “devils” in the Old Testament (cf. Leviticus 17:7; Psalm 96:5; etc.)*

1. When one was “possessed” by a demon that individuals emotional and physical actions were controlled by the demon.
2. Some of the signs exhibited by such people were: fierceness (Matthew 8:28), speechlessness (Matthew 9:33), blindness (Matthew 12:22), deafness (Mark 9:25), foaming at the mouth (Luke 9:39), loss of physical control (Matthew 17:15), loss of sense of shame (Luke 8:27), superhuman strength (Acts 19:16).
3. It is notable that while many depictions of demons today have them as being vile and disrespectful to God that in the Bible record they knew and believed in God (James 2:19), respected God’s authority (Mark 1:24; 3:11), and knew of Christ’s power over them (Mark 5:7-8; Luke 8:31).

### **What Was the Purpose of Demon Possession?**

1. Demons and demon possession were used by God to show His divinity and supreme power as well as the authority of Christ and His message.
2. Jesus clearly demonstrated his power over nature (Matthew 14:25-32), disease (Matthew 11:4-5), material things (John 2:1-11), and even death (John 11:43-44). With the demons He was able to show His power and authority over the spirit realm.
3. It signaled the approaching kingdom (Luke 11:20).
4. It demonstrated His power over “unclean spirits” (Mark 1:27) thus His control over even the devil.
5. It enabled men to confirm that they had indeed been sent by God with His message (Mark 16:17-20; Hebrews 2:3-4).

### **Does Demon Possession Occur Today?**

1. The supposed accounts of demon possession today are far from the Biblical accounts, thus can be discounted.
2. The purpose for demon possession has been fulfilled, thus it (being allowed by God in the first place) is no longer needed.
3. Note the following:
  - (1) The ability to cast out demons was a miraculous ability (Mark 16:17-20)
  - (2) Miraculous abilities have ceased, their purpose being fulfilled (1 Corinthians 13:8-10; Ephesians 4:11-13)
  - (3) If demon possession occurred mankind would then be defenseless against it.
  - (4) But we are not defenseless against the devil (1 Corinthians 10:13; James 4:7)
  - (5) It is clear then that demon possession cannot occur today.
4. Even demons recognized that their ability to influence others was limited (Matthew 8:29).

**Conclusion:**

1. Demon possession was a very real phenomenon which God allowed to occur in order to fulfill His purposes.
2. Demon possession does not occur today.
3. If I act in a “devilish” way, the only one I have to blame is myself.

# Diseases of the Bible

## Introduction:

1. Many different diseases are mentioned in the Bible: leprosy, palsy, dumbness (unable to speak), blind, issue of blood, crippled, epilepsy.
2. One can use a good Bible dictionary to determine the characteristics of these diseases.
3. Our desire in this lesson is to look, not at the description of the diseases, but some lessons we can learn from them.

## II. God’s Treatment of Disease Revealed in the Bible

1. What He DIDN’T teach
  - (1) The *Papyrus Ebers*, a medical book written in Egypt about 1552 contains the following treatments:
    - A. “To prevent the hair from turning gray, anoint it with the blood of a black calf which has been boiled in oil, or the fat of a rattlesnake.”
    - B. When one’s hair falls out, “one remedy is to apply a mixture of six fats, namely those of the horse, the hippopotamus, the crocodile, the cat, the snake, and the ibex. To strengthen it, anoint with the tooth of a donkey crushed in honey.”
    - C. If bitten by a poisonous snake, drink “magic water” - water that has been poured over a special idol.
    - D. If you have an imbedded splinter, apply a salve of worms blood and asses’ dung.
  - (2) Note that in Acts 7 we read that Moses, a contemporary with the above medical practices, was “learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians” (verse 22). Yet when he penned the Pentateuch not a one of such foolish remedies is to be found. Why? God (who inspired Moses) did not teach such!
  - (3) In the middle ages physicians sought to stop the spread of leprosy by telling people not to eat hot food, peppers, garlic and the meat of diseased hogs.
2. What He DID teach
  - (1) Leviticus 13 — a leper was to be segregated from the camp to prevent spread of the disease (cf. Verse 46) [When the Black Plague swept through Europe in 14<sup>th</sup> century it killed an estimated 60 million people. When physicians failed to succeed against it, the religious leaders applied the precepts taught in Leviticus. Only then was the “black death” stopped.]
  - (2) Deuteronomy 23:12-13 — God gave instruction as to the disposal of human wastes. Yet until the 18<sup>th</sup> century it was the practice to dump such in streets. The result was rampant disease.
  - (3) For centuries disease was spread by the unwashed hands of practitioners. In Numbers 19 one who handled dead or infected people were to clean their hands and clothes.
3. When you read of disease in the Scriptures, when you read of “preventative” measures, you should marvel at the God of heaven and the book He has

delivered.

## II. Christ's Power over Disease

1. We are told that "Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people" (Matthew 4:23). The variety of disease and afflictions He healed people from attest to His divinity as well as show the foolishness of modern day "faith healers."
  - (1) Palsy (Matthew 4:24; 8:7)
  - (2) Withered hand (Matthew 12:10-13)
  - (3) Blind and dumb (Matthew 12:22)
  - (4) Lame, maimed (Matthew 15:30)
  - (5) Issue of blood for 12 years (Mark 5:25)
  - (6) Leprosy (Luke 17:12-19)
  - (7) Cut off ear (Luke 22:51)
2. Imagine the reaction of these were to show up at a "healing service"! Yet when such as these were brought to Jesus He healed "every one of them" (Luke 4:40).
3. Such accounts clearly testify to the divinity of Christ ... and the foolishness of modern "healing" accounts.

## III. A Comparison ... Leprosy and Sin

**LEPROSY**  
Without Respect of persons  
Separates  
Not inherited, acquired  
Incurable by man, cured only by God

**SIN**  
Romans 3:23  
Isaiah 59:2; 1 Corinthians 15:33  
Ezekiel 18:20  
John 14:6; Hebrews 5:9

# Eunuchs

## Defined:

1. The word “eunuch” is found 23 times in the Bible (17 Old Testament references and 6 New Testament).
2. The word has several shades of meanings:
  - (1) Word study books bear out that the general meaning of the word is one who is emasculated.
  - (2) Sometimes it is used to refer to one who is a servant or chamberlain (cf. Genesis 37:36 and 39:1 the word is translated as “officer”; in Esther 2:6 and 15 as “chamberlain”).

## Some Questions as to Eunuchs:

1. *Why were eunuchs sought as household servants?*
  - (1) In Matthew 19:12 we find that one class of eunuchs were those “made eunuchs of men.” Sometimes those in power felt that mutilating men as such gave them and also protection in placing such men in positions such as guardians over harems or laborers in their houses.
  - (2) Given the promiscuity amongst many pagan peoples, such could be a wise choice (cf. Genesis 39).
2. *Why were eunuchs forbidden from being a Jew? (Cf. Deuteronomy 23:1)*
  - (1) It is unclear exactly what this phrase meant. Many take it to mean that the eunuch was forbidden from civil office (leadership) amongst the nation. Others believe they had to be separate from the people in worship.
  - (2) Isaiah speaks of the lament of the eunuch being as a “dry tree” (56:3), that is unfruitful. He uses the figure of God’s blessings on the eunuch to foretell of the coming glory available to all in Christianity, but in doing so he speaks of the eunuch who “keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant.” From this I would assume that eunuchs were not “forsaken” by the Lord, but limited in their involvement (cf. Leviticus 21:20) and of course unable to bring forth seed for the family.
3. *What are the three classes of eunuchs spoken of by our Lord in Matthew 19:12?*
  - (1) Eunuchs “so born from their mother’s womb” — that is they were born with a physical abnormality that rendered them eunuchs.
  - (2) Eunuchs “which were made eunuchs of men” — those who were taken and physically mutilated by men for their own purposes.
  - (3) Eunuchs “for the kingdom of heaven’s sake” — not physical mutilation, but refraining from marriage in order to focus more on the work of the Lord (ie Paul, 1 Corinthians 9:5; 1 Corinthians 7:1-7)

### ***Some Lessons From the Thoughts on Eunuchs***

1. The sanctity of the body. God did not desire man to be disfigured or “damaged” even in an accidental fashion. What of us when we participate in those things which would damage our bodies? (Drugs — from tobacco to alcohol to cocaine, it doesn’t matter, we should refrain from it to protect our bodies!)
  
2. Being a “eunuch for the kingdom’s sake”:
  - (1) Abstaining from marriage so that we can enter into heaven (Matthew 19:9)
  
  - (2) Abstaining from *anything* so as to keep ourselves right with God, thus headed for heaven.
  
  - (3) Being pure sexually so as to remain pure for God. (It is not a shame to keep yourself for marriage!)

# Gospel

## Defined:

The word gospel is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word which meant “the story concerning God.” In the New Testament the Greek word *euaggelion*, means “good news.”

## Good News Concerning . . .

1. The kingdom (Matthew 4:23; 9:35; 24:14; Mark 1:14)
2. Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Mark 1:1; Romans 1:9; 1 Corinthians 9:12)
3. Deliverance - Salvation (Luke 4:18; Romans 1:16; Ephesians 1:13)
4. The grace of God (Acts 20:24)

## What Does The Gospel Do?

1. Save our souls (Romans 1:16)
2. Reveal the righteousness of God (Romans 1:17)
3. It “shall judge the secrets of men” (Romans 2:16; cf. John 12:48)
4. It can “stablish you” (“fix, make fast, set” *Vines*) (Romans 16:25)
5. One is “begotten” through it (“impart spiritual life” *Vines*) (1 Corinthians 4:15)
6. Provide light to the lost (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)
7. Provide protection for the Christian (Ephesians 6:11-17)
8. Provide hope (Colossians 1:23)
9. Call us to God (2 Thessalonians 2:14)
10. Allow us to live according to God (1 Peter 4:6)

## Who Is The Gospel For?

1. All mankind throughout the world (Matthew 24:14; Mark 14:9; Mark 16:15;)

## What Should Be Done With The Gospel?

1. Believe it (Mark 1:5; Hebrews 4:2)
2. Obey it (Romans 10:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 4:17)
3. Preach it (Mark 16:15; Romans 1:15,16; 15:20)
4. Strive not to hinder it (1 Corinthians 9:12)
5. Stand in it (1 Corinthians 15:1; Galatians 2:14; Colossians 1:23; 2 Timothy 1:8)
6. Defend it (Philippians 1:7, 17; 27 (here done together))
7. Examine it closely! There can be “another gospel” which is perverted and leads to destruction (Galatians 1:6-9). This can be done through “with wisdom of words” (1 Corinthians 1:17)

# Hell and Hades

## Some Distinctions Needed:

1. The word “hades” does not appear in the King James Version of the Bible.
2. There are four words translated as “hell” in the KJV:
  - (1) In the Old Testament the word SHEOL is translated 31 times as “hell.” The meaning of the word is the world of the dead. The context generally speaks of the realm of the dead without reference to their state.
  - (2) In the New Testament three words are translated as hell:
    - A. GEHENNAH — derived from the Valley of Hinnom which was beside Jerusalem. This was the place which burned with trash and the bodies of poor were thrown into it. It refers to the eternal abode of the wicked wherein is found everlasting punishment.
      - ◆ Matthew 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33
      - ◆ Mark 9:43, 45, 47
      - ◆ Luke 12:5
      - ◆ James 3:6
    - B. HADES — meaning an unseen place of the departed souls.
      - ◆ Matthew 11:23; 16:18
      - ◆ Luke 10:15; 16:23
      - ◆ Acts 2:27, 31
      - ◆ Revelation 1:18; 6:8; 20:13, 14
      - ◆ \*\* In 1 Corinthians 15:55 the word “grave” is a translation of HADES
    - C. TARTAROS — in old writings referred to the place of punishment for fallen angels, while GEHENNAH was the place for fallen men. Peter uses the word in 2  
Peter 2:4.

## Some Notes on Hell:

1. *Other passages refer to hell, though not by name, and tell us some about this place:*
  - ◆ Matthew 25:41, 46 — *Hell is just as real as “life eternal”*
  - ◆ 2 Thessalonians 1:8-10— *The inhabitants of hell are given*
  - ◆ Revelation 14:10-11; 20:10-15; etc.— *The description of hell is fearful*

## Some Notes on Hades:

1. Luke 16:19-31 in the account of the rich man and Lazarus we find that hades is an abode of the dead which is divided into a place of torments and a place of comfort.
2. Such understanding makes clearer another passage which has troubled some — Acts 2:27-31 (Cf. Also Luke 23:43 wherein Jesus told where he was going, another affirmation that “paradise” is in hades)

**Some Lessons to be Learned From These Passages:**

1. "Soul sleeping" is false — Luke 16:19-31
2. There is no "second chance" (ie. Mormon's "baptism for the dead") — Luke 16:26
3. There is recognition after death — Luke 16:23-24 (cf. 2 Samuel 12:23)
4. Jesus is in control of all this (Revelation 1:18) and He wants me to be in eternal comfort! (Cf. Romans 5:6-9; John 3:16...)

# Inspiration

## What Is “Inspiration”?

1. Paul clearly defines it in 2 Timothy 3:16-17
2. THEOPNEUSTOS — a compound word from THEOS (God) and PNOE (breath), meaning “God breathed.”
3. Many passages affirm the source of the Scriptures as divine:
  - (1) John 14:26
  - (2) Acts 2:4
  - (3) Galatians 1:11-12
  - (4) Hebrews 2:1-4
  - (5) 2 Peter 1:19-21
4. We further affirm “verbal plenary inspiration.”
  - (1) Verbal — men wrote exactly what God wanted them to write, yet used words common to their own vocabulary. For example . . .
    - A. Matthew and Mark, in writing of the “eye of a needle” (Matthew 19:24 and Mark 10:25) used the word RHAPHIS which refers to an ordinary needle.
    - B. Luke, a physician (Colossians 4:14), in writing of the same thing, used the word BELONE, which is in reference to a surgeon’s needle.
  - (2) Plenary — means complete or throughout. All of God’s word is inspired (ie. “All scripture” - 2 Timothy 3:16).

## Why Do We Claim Inspiration For The Bible?

1. Because the Bible claims such! (See 3. above)
2. Because the Bible (*and only the Bible*) can be shown by proofs to be inspired!
  - (1) *Prophetic Accuracy* (cf. Isaiah 41:22-23 - here predictive prophecy is shown as a proof of diety).
    - A. Destruction of Babylon (Isaiah 13:17-22)
    - B. Destruction of Ninevah (Zephaniah 2:13-15)
    - C. Destruction of Tyre (Ezekiel 26:3-14)
    - D. The fate of the Jewish nation (Ezekiel 22:15; Jeremiah 9:16; 24:9)
    - E. Over 300 specific prophecies pertaining to Christ (cf. Micah 5:2; Malachi 3:1; Isaiah 53; etc.)
  - (2) *Unity of the Scriptures*: 66 books written over 1600 years by approximately 40 men of various cultures, times and education, yet there is complete unity. Unity of theme, purpose and message; with no contradictions!
  - (3) *Scientific Accuracy*
    - A. While not a “book of science” the Bible has always been shown as accurate when it mentions matters of science.
      - a. The law of biogenesis is set forth plainly in Genesis 1 when we find that things bring forth “after their own kind” (ie. Life comes from life). This was not known as a scientific principle until the times of Pasteur! (And is unbelievably denied even today when evolution is taught!!)
      - b. Genesis 9:4 and Leviticus 17:11, 14 teach that the “life is in the blood.” It was not until the 16<sup>th</sup> century that men began to understand the circulatory system and much later before men

realized the role of blood in delivering nutrients to sustain the body.

- B. Also it is notable that the Bible never sets forth the “popular” but erroneous teachings of science contemporary with it’s writers.
- (4) Historical Accuracy:
- A. The Hittite nation, referred to many times (Genesis 23:10; 26:34; 1 Samuel 26:6; etc.) was often used to ridicule the Bible’s accuracy since man did not know of any such nation. But in the mid 1800's archaeological findings confirmed a large nation of such people in the area northeast of the Great Sea.
  - B. It was often denied that writing was in existence before the time of David’s kingdom. But the Bible refers to writing long before that time (cf. Exodus 17:14). Subsequent discoveries have shown writing as well known long before Moses’ time and even the Hebrew alphabet can be shown to have existed as far back as 3,500 B.C.

**Conclusion:**

1. We need not look to the Word of God as anything other than just that, “THE WORD OF GOD.” Such a faith is not based on some subjective means — rather on the FACTS which show the Bible beyond any human means.
2. No other book on earth can make and uphold such a claim!

# Jewish Writings

## Introduction:

1. The Bible does not speak of much of what would be termed “Jewish Writings.” There is in the New Testament reference to the Jewish writings in such passages as Matthew 22:40 (the law and the prophets).
2. When speaking of the Jews (as is done much today), it would be good to have some recognition of their “rule of faith” — their writings.

## Torah:

1. The word can refer to several different things:
  - (1) The five books of Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy)
  - (2) The total Jewish Bible (what we would call the Old Testament). This is referred to as the “Written Torah.”
  - (3) The whole of Jewish law and teachings.
2. The “Written Torah” (the total Jewish Bible) has 24 books in 3 divisions. There are some slight differences in the numbering of verses and a few translations. The divisions, names and order are:

### TORAH (The Law)

[The Hebrew names of these are from the first few words of the book]

Bereshit (In the beginning...) [Genesis] Bemidbar (In the wilderness...) [Numbers]

Shemot (The names...) [Exodus] Devarim (The words...) [Deuteronomy]

Vayikra (And He called...) [Leviticus]

### NEVI'IM (The Prophets)

Yehoshuah [Joshua]

Shofetim [Judges]

Shmuel [1 & 2 Samuel]

Melachim [1 & 2 Kings]

Yeshaya [Isaiah]

Yirmiya [Jeremiah]

Yehezkel [Ezekiel]

The Twelve [Treated as one book]

Hoshea [Hosea]

Yoel [Joel]

Amos

Ovadya [Obadiah]

Yona [Jonah]

Micha [Micah]

*(The twelve continued)*

Nahum

Habbakkuk

Sefanya [Zephaniah]

Haggai

Zecharya [Zechariah]

Malachi

### KETHUVIN (The Writings)

Tehilim [Psalms]

Mishle [Proverbs]

Iyov [Job]

Shir Ha-Shirim [Song of Songs]

Ruth

Echa [Lamentations]

Kohelet (The author's name) [Ecclesiastes]

Esther

Daniel

Ezra and Nehemya [Nehemiah] (one book)

Divrei Yamin (words of the days) [Chronicles]

3. Often the Written Torah is referred to as Tanakh, an acronym of Torah, Nevi'im and

Ketuvim.

4. The Torah (five books of Moses) is read weekly in the synagogue worship. Each passage read is referred to as a parshah. There are 54 parshahs, one for each week of a leap year. Thus in the course of a year the entire Torah is read. (In non leap years shorter passages are doubled up). The last reading is followed immediately by reading the first paragraph of Genesis, showing that the Torah is a circle.

### **Torah Scrolls:**

1. The scriptures used in services are hand written on parchment scroll in unpointed text (no vowels). This is the way the Hebrew was originally written.
2. The parchment is not to be touched, thus a pointer called a “yad” (hand in Hebrew) is used to follow the reading. The reason for not touching the parchment is given variously as: (1) they are too holy to touch, (2) they are made of animal skins and thus the reader would be ritually defiled and (3) the sweat on one’s fingers would cause the decay of the parchment.
3. These scrolls are kept in a cabinet in the synagogue called an “ark” (as in the ark of the covenant).

### **Talmud:**

1. This is sometimes called the “Oral Torah.” It is a tradition explaining what the Torah means and how to interpret them and apply the Laws.
2. Orthodox Jews believe God taught the Oral Torah to Moses and he taught it to others — a process continuing to this day.
3. These traditions were maintained in oral form until the 2<sup>nd</sup> century when they were written in a document called the Mishnah.
  - (1) The Mishnah is divided into six sections: *Zera'im (Seeds)* - containing agricultural rules of ancient Palestine, especially covering produce brought as an offering in the temple; *Mo'ed (Holy Days)* - laws of Passover, Purim, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot and Shabbath (Sabbath); *Nezikin (Damages)* - Jewish civil and criminal law; *Nahsim (Women)* - issues pertaining women; *Kodashim (Holy Things)* - laws of sacrifice and ritual slaughter; *Taharat (Purities)* - laws of purity and impurity.
4. Over the next few centuries (200 to 600) additional commentaries were written down that elaborated on the Mishnah. These are known as the Gemara. These together are known as the Talmud.
5. There are actually two Talmuds: the Jerusalem Talmud and the Babylonian Talmud, the Babylonian being the most comprehensive. It is the one usually meant when people refer to the Talmud.
6. The Talmud is actually revered above the Bible in Judaism. This is seen as true in:
  - (1) Jesus’ rebuke of the Jews in Matthew 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-13 (cf. Galatians 1:13-14)
  - (2) The Talmud itself says (in Erubin 21b) “My son, be more careful in the observance of the words of Scribes than in the words of the Torah.”
7. There is a small Jewish sect (Karaites) which strive to adhere to the Talmud (Old Testament) alone. They are hated and persecuted.

### **Other Writings:**

1. *Midrashim* — stories expanding on Biblical incidents to derive principles or Jewish law or to teach moral lessons. An example given is that there is a midrash about why Moses wasn’t a good speaker (cf. Exodus 4:10). The midrash states that as a child

- he put coals in his mouth to prove he was not greedy.
2. *Kabbalah* — a compilation of mystical tradition. Rabbis discourage teaching this to anyone under 40 years old for fear they will misinterpret it without proper grounding in the basics.
  3. *Targums* — translations of the Hebrew Old Testament into Aramaic with oral traditions, paraphrases and interpretations. These became necessary during the time between the testaments when Aramaic became prevalent.
  4. *Septuagint* — also done between the testaments, it is a translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek. The name is derived from the 70 translators who purportedly worked on it. (Many quotations in the New Testament are from the Septuagint).

# Land Promise?

## Introduction:

1. “God is not finished with the Jewish nation, nor with the land which He gave them to possess fully”... “Moreover, restored Israel shall inherit the land God gave to Abraham and his seed for an everlasting possession.” (*Israel and the Nations in Prophecy*, Richard W. DeHann)
2. Such statements are typical of those of a premillennial persuasion — those who believe that the nation of Israel will be finally restored and the land returned to them.
3. Many look to the beginning of the Israeli State in 1947 as the first step in such a restoration. Thus it would be valuable to see what the Bible says about the land promised to Abraham.

## The Land Promised:

1. The promise can be traced as it was repeated to Abraham and his descendants:
  - (1) To Abraham — Genesis 12:1-3; Genesis 13:14-17; Genesis 15:7,18; 17:8
  - (2) To Isaac — Genesis 26:4
  - (3) To Jacob — Genesis 28:13; 35:12
  - (4) To the children of Israel through Moses — Numbers 34:1-12; Deuteronomy 1:7-8; 11:24
  - (5) To the children of Israel through Joshua — Joshua 1:3-4

## The Promise Was Fulfilled According to the Scriptures:

1. Joshua 21:43-45
2. Nehemiah 9:7-8, 23-24
3. 1 Kings 4:21
4. 2 Chronicles 9:26; Psalm 105:42-44

## Some Objections to the Promise Being Fulfilled:

1. “*The land was given as an ‘everlasting’ possession.*” (Cf. Genesis 17:8)
  - (1) Note in context that circumcision is also an “everlasting covenant” — but it is clear that circumcision can no longer be bound as a covenant (cf. Galatians 5:6).
  - (2) Sabbath observance is likewise called a covenant “for ever” (same word as used for “everlasting”), but it is likewise clear that Sabbath observance is no longer binding (Galatians 4:10; 5:6)
  - (3) If there is no qualification to the land being an “everlasting possession” then Peter should have clarified such in 2 Peter 3:9-13).
  - (4) As with the other things for and “everlasting” time, God has set the bounds. What defined the bounds of the land being an everlasting possession? *The promise was CONDITIONAL!*
    - A. Genesis 17:8-9
    - B. Deuteronomy 28:1, 9, 15, 21; 30:15-20
    - C. Joshua 23:11-16
2. “*But God promised to restore them to their land.*” (Cf. Jeremiah 29:14)
  - (1) Note the context — verse 4, 10-13; 20-23
  - (2) The fulfillment is recorded in Ezra!

- (3) A study of chronology will also answer the same objections regarding such passages as Ezekiel 36: 17-28

**Conclusion:**

1. The land promise, begun in Abram, was carried on for a purpose — as God prepared the people through whom the seed would come (and the world) for the “fulness of time” when He “sent forth His Son” (Galatians 4:4).
2. Since His Son has come “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:28-29).
3. The land promise has been fulfilled. The Jewish nation has been, as was prophesied, rejected of God and their land taken from them.
4. The hope of those who claim to be Jews today is, like all men, not in a restoration of the land or the old law, but in Christ (John 14:6).

“Understandest Thou What Thou Readest” ... About the  
**Measurements in the Bible**

**I. Approximate Equivalents For Measures in the Bible**

Measure of Weight		Equivalent	Measure of Liquid		Equivalent
Gerah		1/40 ounce	Caph		.6 pints
Bekah (10 Gerahs)		1/4 ounce	Log		2/3 pint
Shekel (2 Bekahs)		.4 ounce	Cab		3.3 pints
Maneh		2 pounds	Hin		1 Gallon
Talent		125 pounds	Measure		2 ½ Gallons
Measure of Length		Equivalent	Bath (same as ephah)		7 ½ Gallons
Finger		.9 inches	Homer		75 Gallons
Hand breadth (4 fingers)		3.5 inches	Firkin		9 Gallons
Span (3 hand breadths)		9-11 inches	Dry Measure		Equivalent
Cubit (2 spans)		18-22 inches	Cab		2.8 pints
Pace		3 feet	Omer		5 pints
Fathom		6 feet	Seah		1/5 bushel
Reed (6 cubits)		9-11 feet	Ephah (3 Seahs)		3/5 bushel
Furlong		600 feet	Homer		6 1/4 bushels
Days journey		20 miles			

**II. Can Studying Measurements in the Bible Help My Study?**

1. Assurance of Bible accuracy is aided by the knowledge of measurements
  - (1) Many, when reading the account of the flood deny it because they say the animals could not fit in the ark.
    - A. Genesis 6:15 — the ark was 300 cubits X 50 cubits X 30 cubits. Since a cubit is 18-22 inches the ark would have been 450-550' long by 75-85' wide by 45-55' high!
    - B. More than enough space to accomodate all the animals.
  - (2) Also the fact of a worldwide flood is attested to in Genesis 7:20 where we are told the water prevailed 15 cubits (22 ½-27') above the mountains. (Which scientists say would be adequate for the ark to float over the highest mountain.)
  - (3) 2 Timothy 3:16
2. Assurance of God's care.
  - (1) In Numbers 11:18-23 we find God's promise to the children of Israel

that they would have flesh, not for “one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days: but even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils...”.

- (2) Moses was shocked by such a promise for his people were “six hundred thousand footmen” (Numbers 11:21).
- (3) God furnished a wind that “brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day’s journey on this side, and as it were a day’s journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth” (Numbers 11:31).
  - A. A day’s journey was approximately 20 miles for a group. Thus the quail were 36-44 inches deep for twenty miles around the camp!
  - B. This provided amply for all the people, for the least amount gathered was “ten homers” which would be 62 bushels! (Numbers 11:32).

(4) Philippians 4:19

3. Assurance of victory with God!

- (1) In 1 Samuel 17:4-7 we find frightening description of Goliath:
  - A. His height: “six cubits and a span” = 9' 9" to 11' 11" tall!
  - B. A coat of mail (armor): “five thousand shekels of brass” = 85 pounds
  - C. His spearhead: 600 shekels of iron = 24 pounds
- (2) No wonder we read that the men of Israel “saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid” (1 Samuel 17:24)!
- (3) But he was defeated... note 1 Samuel 17:45-50 to see how!
- (4) James 4:7; Romans 8:31

**Conclusion:**

- 1. Another measurement God is concerned with is us ... how do WE measure up to the standards set in the Bible?

# Millenium

## Defined:

1. “Derived from the Latin *Mille* for thousand ... a period of 1000 years ... the thousand years mentioned in Revelation 20 during which holiness is to prevail and Christ is to reign on earth” (*Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*)
2. While much is said and heard about the “millennial reign” in the religious world today, the Bible only mentions a “thousand years” in four instances:
  - (1) Psalm 90:4 — referring to the eternity of God wherein we are told “a thousand years in thy sight *are but* as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.”
  - (2) Ecclesiastes 6:6 — referring to the vanity of man’s riches and the certainty of a common fate, death: “Yea, though he live a thousand years *twice told*, yet hath he seen no good: do not all go to one place?”
  - (3) 2 Peter 3:8 — “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”
  - (4) Revelation 20:2-7 — And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,<sup>3</sup> And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.  
<sup>4</sup>And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.<sup>5</sup> But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. <sup>6</sup>Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.<sup>7</sup> And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,
3. It is the latter two passages that we will examine in this lesson.

## III. 2 Peter 3:8 and the “Millenium”:

1. Some seek to make some parallels from the idea that God created the earth in six days, and on the seventh He rested (cf. Genesis 1, 2; Exodus 20:11). From this they say that since Peter says that a day equals 1,000 years, we are approaching the “seventh day” or thousand year period in which there will be rest — the millennial reign on earth.
2. But note:
  - (1) Peter does not say any such thing. Rather he says a day is “as” a thousand years, and a thousand years are “as” a day — “with the Lord.” The context is not of a millennial reign, but of some denying that God would bring about the “coming” of the Lord (verse 4). The writer is

assuring them that time is nothing to God (verse 8; cf. Psalm 90:4) and He is in fact longsuffering (verse 9), but the “day of the Lord will come” (verse 10). The subject of a “millennial reign” is not even in consideration! What is in consideration is the end of the world and our attendant responsibility! (Verse 10)

- (2) Another problem with such is the fact we cannot know how long the earth has been in existence. Though we can show (Biblically and scientifically) that the earth is relatively young, we cannot say that Usher’s timetable of 4,000 B.C. for the creation is correct.
- (3) Still another problem is the calendar we use.
  - A. The “new millenium” will begin, not in 2000, but in 2001. This is due to the fact that there was not a year 0, but A.D. (The year of our Lord — “Anno Domini”) began with year 1.
  - B. The Gregorian Calendar (which we use) was begun in 525 by the Roman abbot Dionysius Exiguus. His estimate of the year of Jesus’ birth was off by about 5 years (Jesus was born from 6-4 B.C.). Thus if we are to have a “new millenium” based on 2,000 years from Christ’s birth, it has already come!

## II. Revelation 20 and the Millenium (Millennial Reign)

1. “If verses 4, 5, and 6 of Revelation 20 had been omitted, no one would ever have dreamed of a literal thousand years of Christ’s reign upon the earth . . . . Yet whole systems of eschatology, theology, and philosophy of history have been constructed on this precarious basis of highly symbolical verses” (*Worthy Is The Lamb*, Ray Summers).
2. As noted above, the verses are highly symbolic (such should be no surprise, since we are told in the very beginning of the book it is a book of signs (1:1, 11). Which of the following is to be taken literal (and why?)
  - (1) “the key”
  - (2) “the bottomless pit”
  - (3) “a great chain”
  - (4) “the dragon”
  - (5) “that old serpent”
  - (6) “a thousand years”
3. The book of Revelation makes it clear that Christ’s kingdom was already in existence as the book was written and that the Christians were members of it (1:9)!
4. Those to whom be book was written needed assurance that those who were oppressing them would not be victorious. In Chapters 18-20 we see their defeat — the final one defeated being Satan, the real “power” behind all the persecution being bound for a complete time (“thousand years”) and finally cast into the “lake of fire and brimstone,” along with the false prophet and the beast.

### Conclusion:

1. What is the “millenium”? The word means thousand years. While the Bible uses the phrase, it nowhere teaches a literal thousand year reign upon this earth by Christ. Rather it teaches that He NOW reigns (Matthew 28:18-20).
2. While we are approaching a “new millenium” (in 2001, not 2000), it has no Biblical

- significance.
3. We should realize each passing year as further evidence of the longsuffering of God, and should use that opportunity live holy lives (2 Peter 3:10-11).

# Money in the Bible

## Introduction:

1. “But godliness with contentment is great gain. <sup>7</sup>For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. <sup>8</sup>And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. <sup>9</sup>But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. <sup>10</sup>For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Timothy 6:6-10)
2. The Bible has much to say about money (the word “money” itself is used 123 times!). Our lives, like it or not, revolve much around money. But as the above passage states, money must be viewed properly if it is to be an aid rather than a snare. This hope of this study is to give a bit of knowledge about the “money system” as revealed in the Bible and also to give some insight as to proper and improper use and attitude toward money.

## I. The History of Money

1. Coined or stamped money is not known to have existed any earlier than 700 B.C. Coined money was not known in Israel until after the exile, which ended in 536 B.C. Before this time exchanges of values were just that — exchanges of things of value, or bartering. The use of “precious metals” (gold, silver, copper) as an exchange began not with coins, but measured weights of these metals. (Ezra 2:69 is probably the first mention of coined money in the Bible.)
2. The first mention of wealth in the Bible is when we are told that “Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan” (Genesis 12:5). We are told in the next chapter that Abram was “very rich in cattle, in silver and in gold” (13:2). These were no doubt the main items of wealth in the world at that time.
3. The first purchase (exchange of goods) found in the Bible is in Genesis 23 when Abraham purchased the field of Machpelah to bury Sarah. This was done by the exchange of four hundred shekels of silver from Abraham to Ephron the Hittite.
4. Value in the Old Testament was determined by weight, the shekel being the weight used in the Old Testament (that it is a weight and not a coin can be seen in such passages as Ezekiel 4:10 where the daily portion of meat in the famine was to be “twenty shekels a day.”)
5. Most authorities believe that coinage of money began around 700 B.C. when the small kingdom of Lydia in Asia Minor stamped small lumps of metal of uniform weights with official marks to guarantee their value. The Jews probably carried the coins of the Babylonians and Persians with them when they returned to Palestine.

## II. Some Coins of the Bible

1. Shekel — While this was a weight measure in the Old Testament, it came to be a term used for coins. By the time of Jesus the shekel had come to mean a coin with the value of a shekel — about a days wages. (It required about

- 3,000 shekels to equal one talent — imagine the enormity of the debt of 10,000 talents forgiven in Matthew 18:23-35 !)
2. Drachma — In Luke 15:8 the “pieces of silver” were “drachma” in the Greek, a silver coin also worth about a days wages.
  3. Stater — In Matthew 17:27 the “piece of money” was a “stater” in the Greek, a coin sufficient to pay the temple tax for two (thus equal to two half shekels (cf. Exodus 30:11-16). It is believed by many that the pieces of silver for which Judas betrayed our Lord were these coins, thus for about a month’s wages Judas betrayed our Lord.
  4. Farthing — Mentioned in Matthew 10:29 and Luke 12:6 in regard to the price of a sparrow. This was a small coin in size and value, comparable to a penny today. “Farthing” was taken from the English coin of small value, the Greek term was “assarion”.
  5. Mite — In Mark 12:42 (Luke 21:2) and Luke 12:59 the word “mite” is in reference to a coin of the least value, even the material from which it was made was inferior and did not last. This was one of the first coins the Jews were allowed to mint themselves. The “farthing” mentioned in reference to the value of two mites was actually a “Quadron” — another coin minted specifically for the Jews. These coins, unlike those of the Romans and other pagan rulers, did not have Roman rulers or dieties on them.
  6. Denarius — The “penny” mentioned in the scriptures (ie. The wages paid the laborer in the vinyard (Matthew 20:2,10) was really a coin of Roman origin. The coin was of silver, resembling our dime, and was the equivalent of a days wages
    - (1) Thus the 100 pence owed a fellow servant (who had himself been forgiven a debt of 10,000 talents!) was about 3.3 months wages.
    - (2) The “two pence” given by the good Samaritan to care for the man beaten by thieves would have been two days wages — and he still agreed to pay whatever else was needed!

*(Note: Some of the problem in relationship to the value of money in Bible times is that we often hear the value given as the value of the metal, not of the purchasing power)*

### III. Some Thoughts on Money From The Bible:

1. 1 Timothy 6:8-10 — The **LOVE** of money a root of all evil (cf. vs 9 - “will be rich”)
  - (1) We can see ourselves in danger when we have “false balances” (cf. Proverbs 11:1; 16:11; 20:23) in our business practices!
  - (2) Do we use the things of this world (money) to “...Make to yourselves friends . . . that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations” (Luke 16:9) ? *(Would I be ashamed for God to know my desire for money and in what place He falls?)*
2. Some proper use of our money: (1 Corinthians 10:31)
  - (1) 1 Timothy 5:8 — Family and personal needs
  - (2) Galatians 6:10 (James 2:15-17) — Benevolent needs
  - (3) 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 — Giving on the first day of the week
 An important note in regard to #2-3 .... Glorify God “in the church” (Ephesians 3:21)

### Conclusion:

*“What is the purpose of money in MY life?”*

# The Passover?

## I. The Passover Feast

1. Instituted (Exodus 12)
  - (1) Each house to choose a lamb without blemish on the tenth day of the month (3-5).
  - (2) On the fourteenth day the lamb was slain (6).
  - (3) The blood of the sacrificial lamb was to be sprinkled on the doorposts (13).
  - (4) The lamb was to be eaten with bitter herbs, and the people to remain indoors until morning (8)
  - (5) The bones of the lamb were not to be broken (46), but were to be consumed by fire in the morning, with any uneaten portion (10).
  - (6) The meal was to be eaten in haste and the people equipped for journey (11).
  - (7) For seven days after the feast unleavened bread was to be eaten and there was to be no leaven in the house.
2. The purpose of the passover was to commemorate the Lord's passing over the children of Israel (11-13)
3. The passover, held in Abib (Exodus 34:18) [later called Nisan (Esther 3:7)] became the start of the Israelites' religious year.

## II. Christ — Our Passover

1. Scripture plainly teaches that Christ is our passover (1 Corinthians 5:7).
2. The parallels are many, as type and anti-type.

<b>Passover</b>	<b>Christ — Our Passover</b>
(1) Passover started new year (12:2) Christ (2 Cor. 5:17)	(1) Start of a new life in
(2) An unblemished lamb (12:5)	(2) Christ, the lamb of God (John 1:29) was without sin (Hebrews 4:14-15)
(3) The lamb preselected (12:3)	(3) Christ's sacrifice foreknown (1 Peter 1:19-20)
(4) The lamb was slain (12:6, 21)	(4) Christ the lamb slain (Revelation 5:6; 13:8)
(5) No bones broken (12:46; Nu. 9:12)	(5) No bones broken (John 19:33, 36)
(6) Blood sprinkled on doors (7, 22)	(6) Sprinkled on hearts (1 Pet. 1:2; Heb. 12:24)
(7) Lamb to be eaten (8-10)	(7) Christ spiritually partaken (John 6:53)
(8) Ready to depart while eating (11)	(8) Ready to depart while partaking (1 Thess. 5:1-7)
(9) Those without blood suffered	(9) Those without Christ's blood suffer (12-13, 29) (Heb. 9:2; Rom.

(10) Leaven to be removed (15, 19-20)	5:9)	(10) Purge out old leaven (1 Corinthians 5:6-8)
(11) Convocation (assembly)kept (16)	(11) Assembly not to be forsaken (Heb. 10:15; Acts 20:7)	
(12) Deliverance from bondage (30-33)	(12) Deliverance from sin (Heb. 2:14-15)	
(13) Children of Israel to speak always of the passover (24-27)	(13) We are to speak always of our hope (1 Pet. 3:15)	

**Conclusion:**

1. With Christ, our passover, how is one to apply the blood?
  - (1) Jesus shed his blood in death (John 19:34)
  - (2) Any who will may contact this blood by being baptized into the death of Christ (Romans 6:1-3).
2. Do we have a means of remembering Christ's offering as our passover? — 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

# Pharisees?

## I. What Is A Pharisee?

1. The name is derived from the Hebrew word *parash*, meaning “to separate.” They are thought to be successors to the Assideans, a party that originated in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes in revolt to his policies.
2. They are first mentioned in secular writing in the works of Josephus as he relates about the three sects of the Jews that existed in 145 B.C. — the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Essenes.
3. They were the most prominent party in the time of Christ (cf. John 7:48)

## II. What Were Some of the Doctrines and Characteristics of the Pharisees?

1. They believed in the resurrection and spiritual beings (angels) (Acts 23:8).
2. They strived to be extremely accurate and minute in matters pertaining to the law of Moses — to the point of hypocrisy and pride (cf. Matthew 9:14; Luke 18:10-12; Acts 26:4-5).
3. They added traditions to the law of God (Matthew 15:2-9).
4. They “say and do not” (all word ... no work!) (Matthew 23:3-4).
5. What they did was for vain glory received of man (Matthew 23:5-7, 14).
6. By their ungodly lives and failure to teach the truth, they “shut up the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 23:13, 15)
7. They failed to see the necessity of all God’s law (Matthew 23:23-24).
8. They thought “outward show” made up for “inward sin” (Matthew 23:25-28).
9. Their fate was sure if they failed to repent (Matthew 23:33).

## III. Some Lessons to Be Learned From The Pharisees: *We Can Be Pharisees Today ...*

1. If we become hypocritical and self righteous in our obedience to Christ
2. If we allow traditions of men to be put on par with God’s will
3. If we “talk the talk” but don’t “walk the walk”
4. If we act to be seen of others
5. If we, by our hypocrisy, cause others to be lost as they follow our error
6. If we “pick and choose” at God’s Word
7. If we believe a few hours of pious action make up for a heart filled with sin

### **Conclusion:**

Not much good is said of the pharisees ... and those who live like them today will face the same condemnation by our Lord!

# Priests?

## I. What Is A Priest?

1. The New Testament word for priest is *heireus*, related to the word *heiros* for “holy.” It denotes one who is consecrated to and involved in holy matters. The Old Testament word *kohen* means one who has to do with divine things.
2. The word priest can be used to speak of one who is a person set apart for involvement in religious matters.
3. The Bible speaks of heathen priests (Genesis 41:45; 47:22; Acts 14:13) as well as priests of God. Our study will center on the priests of God.

## II. The Pre-Mosaic Priests

1. The first mention of a priest is in Genesis 14:18. Here we read of Melchizedek who “was the priest of the most high God” to whom Abraham offered tithes. We read more of him in Hebrews 5 and 7, where we are told that Christ is a high priest after his order.
2. Jethro, father in law of Moses, was the priest of Midian (Exodus 2:16:3:1; 18:1).

## III. The Aaronic Priesthood

1. In Exodus 28 & 29 and Leviticus 8 we have the record of Aaron and his sons chosen to serve as priests before God. Their duties were in the offering of sacrifices before God (cf. Leviticus), a duty which was to be taken very seriously (cf. Leviticus 10:1-2)
2. In Numbers 3 we find the tribe of Levi chosen as the ones to serve as assistants to those in the Aaronic priesthood. In the strict sense, there was no such thing as a Levitical priesthood as opposed to an Aaronic priesthood. The Levites had special duties in regard to the tabernacle (temple) (Numbers 3). This distinction can be seen even in the New Testament record (cf. Luke 10:31-32).
3. There was to be a succession from Aaron of men to serve as high priest (cf. Exodus 29:9; Leviticus 21:10ff) (also “the anointed priest” - Lev. 6:22). Aaron is identified in Exodus 31:10 as “the priest” in distinction to his son’s office as “priests.” In Numbers 20:28 we see the succession of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, to his position as high priest.
4. The high priest, in addition to his regular priestly duties, was the only one allowed to enter into the most holy place (Leviticus 16:3, 15-16, 33-34) on the day of atonement.
5. The levitical priesthood of necessity ended when the law was changed (Hebrews 7).

## IV. The Priesthood of Christ

1. While Christ is clearly identified as a priest in the book of Hebrews (5-7),

it is clear He could not be a priest of the Mosaic system, for He “sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthod” (Hebrews 7:14).

2. His priesthood is then “after the order of Melchisedec” (7:15, 17). This helps explain the statement in regard to Melchisedec being “without father, without mother, without descent” (7:3), for he, as was Christ, was called of God to the office (7:21).
3. As our High Priest, Christ is “able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him” (Hebrews 7:24-27).

**V. The Priesthood of Believers**

1. Each Christian is called a priest (1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6).
2. Such emphasizes our responsibility to God in His service.

# Prophets?

## I. Defined and Usage

### 1. Old Testament

- (1) Translation of the Hebrew word NABI. The basic meaning is to speak for another  
(cf. Exodus 7:1 with Exodus 4:16; Deuteronomy 18:18).
- (2) The word is used of both godly and heathen or false prophets  
(Deuteronomy 13:1-5; 1 Kings 18:19).

### 2. New Testament

- (1) The Greek word PROPHATAS is a compound word literally meaning to speak forth. It is used in regard to:
  - A. Old Testament prophets (Matthew 5:12).
  - B. Prophets in general (Matthew 21:46).
  - C. John the baptist (Matthew 21:26).
  - D. Prophets in the church (Acts 13:1; 15:32; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 3:5; 4:11). Note that these passages make clear that it is, in regard to prophets of God, a miraculous ability and that apostles and prophets were not one in the same.
  - E. Of Christ as THE Prophet (John 1:21; 6:14; Acts 3:22 with Deuteronomy 18:15)
  - F. A prophet of the Cretans (Titus 1:12).

## II. There Were Both Literary and Oral Prophets in Service to God

1. Many times when one speaks of prophets he limits it to the writers of the seventeen books that conclude the Old Testament, but these are only the “literary prophets.” That is, their message (speaking forth for God) was recorded as a written record. Their purpose was to do the bidding of God in confronting such things as immorality and apathy, as well as providing assurance, comfort and encouragement.
2. The “oral prophets” are those who, though portions of their message may be recorded by other writers, did not pen books of prophecy. Their purpose was the same as that of the literary prophets. This would include such men as Samuel, Nathan, Elijah and Elisha.

## III. A Warning Regarding Prophets

1. If the message of a prophet was from God, but there were false prophets, how was one to tell the difference between a true and false prophet? Deuteronomy 18:15-22 — his message must agree with truth!
2. Does this warning have application to us today?
  - (1) No — for there are no prophets today (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:8-10)
  - (2) Yes — when the “office” of prophets ceased it seems that

“teachers” were to take their responsibility, though in a non-miraculous way by “speaking forth” the word of God (cf. 2 Peter 2:1-3). Thus our responsibility is to apply the principle taught in regard to prophets in Deuteronomy 18:15-22. Does the message of the teacher concur with truth (God’s Word)? (cf. Also Acts 17:11; Galatians 1:6-9)

- (3) The Prophet has spoken, and we must heed His words!  
(Cf. Deuteronomy 18:18-19; Hebrews 1:1-2; 2:1-4; 5:9)

# Publicans?

## I. Defined and Usage

1. “...a tax gatherer; such were naturally hated intensely by the people; they are classed with sinners with harlots... with ‘the gentile’” (*Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*)
2. “An under collector of Roman revenue. Of these there appear to have been two classes: 1 - The ‘chief of the publicans’ of whom Zacchaeus is an example. 2 The ordinary publican, the lowest class of servants engaged in the collecting of the revenue, and of whom we have in instance in Levi, who was afterwards the apostle Matthew.
3. The publicans were hated as the instruments by which the subjection of the Jews to the Roman emperor was perpetuated, and the payment of tribute was looked upon as a virtual acknowledgment of his sovereignty.” (*Zondervan’s Bible Dictionary*)

## II. Usages

1. As noted above, there seems to be two classes identified:
  - (1) Zacchaeus as “chief among the publicans” (Luke 19:2-10)
  - (2) Levi, who “sat at the receipt of custom” as a publican (Mark 2:14; Matthew 10:3)
2. Their supposed depravity, and thus reason for antagonism against them, is seen by various passages:
  - (1) They loved only them which love them (Matthew 5:46-47), completely disregarding the “golden rule” (Matthew 7:12).
  - (2) They were dishonest, as noted when inquiring of John what they needed to do, were told “Exact no more than that which is appointed you” (Luke 3:12-13)
  - (3) Their estimation in the eyes of others is seen in that they are compared with “sinners” (Matthew 11:19); “harlots” (Matthew 21:31); “heathen” (Matthew 18:17).

## III. Some Lessons

1. Don’t be too quick with “prejudging” [prejudice]. While many “good jews” rejected the message, there were publicans converted by John (Matthew 21:31-32) and Jesus (Luke 7:29) (ie. Matthew). Jesus even compared the a humble publican with the haughty Pharisee in a parable, noting that it was the publican who was to be justified (Luke 18:9-14).
2. Don’t underestimate the power of the gospel! (Cf. Luke 7:29; Matthew

21:31-32; Romans 1:16)

3. Don't underestimate your ability to stay "aloof" even in the midst of a crooked generation (or workplace) — some of the publicans did!
4. Remember there is a time to treat others as "an heathen man and a publican" (Matthew 18:15-17; cf. Romans 16:17; 2 John 9-11; Titus 3:10-11: etc.)

# The Rapture?

## I. What Is The “Rapture”?

1. The word is not found in the Scriptures, yet it is one of the basic tenets of the doctrine of Millennialism (the belief that Jesus will one day return and set up a kingdom on this earth).
2. The word “rapture” itself comes from the word for “caught up” in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 in the Latin Vulgate: “reperere.”
3. “It [rapture] is not found in the Bible, so there is no need to race for your concordance, if you have one. ... The word ‘rapture’ means to snatch away or take out. But whether we call this event ‘the Rapture’ or the ‘translation’ makes no difference — the important thing is that it will happen.... To avoid confusion, we will refer to the event when the church ... will meet Christ in the air as the rapture.” (Hal Lindsey, *Late Great Planet Earth*, 124-127)
4. It is the supposed event that will precede/be in the midst of/follow (depending on the type of millennialism followed) the “seven years tribulation.” After being raptured to Jesus, the saints will one day return to earth and reign with Him for 1,000 years.
5. According to this doctrine one day millions will be missing, graves will be opened and empty. This will have occurred secretly and without sound. All the unbelievers will be left on this earth to puzzle over the situation.
6. Though the word is not in the Bible, millennialists insist the teaching is found in several passages: John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-58

## II. Does The Bible Teach This Doctrine — A Brief Examination Of The “Proof Texts”

1. John 14:1-3
  - (1) Jesus had told his disciples of His impending death (cf. Matthew 26; John 13). He then begins to comfort them, thus the text at hand — John 14:1-3.
  - (2) While this passage does say Jesus will one day take us to the prepared place, it does not have any specific teaching regarding the doctrine of the ‘rapture’ — a secret coming, a time spent with Him and then a return to earth, others left on the earth...
  - (3) All this passage does say is that the disciples were promised they could one day be with Jesus.
2. 1 Corinthians 15:51-58
  - (1) The text is a discussion of the resurrection (cf. 12-19).
  - (2) Verse 23-24 deny the millennial doctrine — when He comes it will be “the end,” not a 1,000 year reign on earth, and in addition the kingdom will not be established on earth, but delivered up to God! (No wonder, since the kingdom is the church!)

- (3) The event discussed in verses 51-58 is not a secret event, but will be done at “the last trump” (52).
  - (4) Lacking is again the idea of a secret coming in which the saints will be raised to be with Jesus until the kingdom is established on this earth.
3. 1 Thessalonians 4:17
- (1) The context is that of concern of those in Thessalonica for those who had already died (13). They were concerned that those who had died would miss the coming of Christ. He assures them (and us) that when Christ returns the “dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them...” (15-17)
  - (2) Note the things of this text that **deny** the doctrine of the rapture:
    - A. The coming is to be accompanied with “a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God” (16) (cf. Rev. 1:7) — *Secret?!*
    - B. When this occurs, there will not be any return to this earth, but “so shall we ever be with the Lord” (17) — *Gone for a while?!*
    - C. This coming will not be preceded by any signs, but will be “as a thief in the night” (5:1-6) — *Not at the time of great “tribulation” and signs!*

**Conclusion:**

- 1. *Why Do People Believe In The “Rapture” If It Is Not Taught In The Bible?*
- 2. Failure to STUDY - Acts 17:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:21
- 3. As a result, the whole doctrine of millennialism is put upon religious people.
- 4. Such happens with many doctrines of man.

# The Sabbath?

## I. Defined and Usage

1. “Sabbath” is a translation of the Hebrew word meaning to cease or desist.
2. Some attempt to discredit the Bible record of the sabbath by looking for its origin in the Babylonian calendar. The Babylonian calendar contained days in which the kings and priests were not to engage in their official functions. The problem with trying to derive the Biblical sabbath from this is that the days in the Babylonian calendar correspond to the lunar cycle, whereas the Biblical sabbath had nothing to do with the lunar cycle.
3. The Biblical record is plain as to the origin and beginning of the sabbath:
  - (1) As recorded in Genesis 2:1-3 God rested from His work on the seventh day and blessed and sanctified it. Note that the sabbath is not mentioned here, nor is any observance by man.
  - (2) The first mention of the sabbath is in Exodus 16. Here we find that God, hearing the murmuring of the children of Israel, provides quail and manna (11-15). God sets regulations as to gathering the manna, forbidding it to be gathered on the seventh day for it was the “sabbath” (23-26). From the context we can clearly see that this was a new command and that the regulations concerning it had not yet been declared by God - other than that of gathering the manna. (Compare Exodus 31:12-15 with Exodus 16:27-31 and Numbers 15:32-36)
  - (3) There is no record of any observance of or commandments pertaining to the sabbath before Moses, either Biblical or extra-Biblical.
  - (4) The sabbath’s importance after the time of Moses can be seen in the writings of the prophets as they commonly rebuke the people for their failure in regard to proper observance (cf. Isaiah 1:10ff; Malachi; etc.)
4. During the interBiblical period (between the testaments) many traditions were attached to the sabbath observance.
5. During Jesus earthly ministry He refused to be bound by the traditions of man in regard to the sabbath, causing great problems between Himself and the Jewish leaders (Mark 2:23-28; 3:1-6).

## II. Since God Placed Such a Great Importance on the Sabbath, Must We Keep It Today?

(The following is edited from “*The Sabbath — Must Christians Keep It Today?*” by Roger Campbell)

1. **Which day of the week is the Sabbath?**

In Exodus 20:9,10 it is written, “Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.” Thus, the Sabbath is the seventh day of the week, or Saturday. Please note that the word “Sabbath” does not mean worship or day of worship, but rather it means cessation from labor, or rest.
2. **Does Genesis 2:2,3 show that God has wanted men of all ages, even from the creation, to keep the Sabbath as a holy day?**

Please notice that in these two verses the Bible speaks about GOD, and about what GOD did. These verses do not mention mankind, they do not mention any command that God gave to man, and they do not mention man

keeping the Sabbath. There is simply no proof in these verses in Genesis two that God wanted all men of all ages to keep the Sabbath.

**3. Since the Sabbath was part of the ten commandments, should we not keep it today?**

The first few verses of these two chapters plainly show that the ten commandments were given ONLY to the nation of Israel. If we say that we ought to keep the Sabbath because it was part of the law that God gave His people at Mt. Sinai, then by the same logic we ought to say that we are obligated to keep all of that law. Paul pointed this out to those who were trying to bind one part of the law of Moses (circumcision): “For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law” (Galatians 5:3). The New Testament teaches that Jesus abolished the law of Moses, the Old Testament law (Ephesians 2:14,15).

**4. Is there any New Testament verse that directly says that the Sabbath was done away?**

No. But the New Testament says that Jesus blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross (Colossians 2:14). The “handwriting of ordinances” refers to the law of Moses, and the context plainly shows that this includes the Sabbath (2:16).

**5. Is it correct to say that Jesus abolished the law of Moses or ceremonial law, but did not abolish the law of God, the ten commandments?**

Is there really a difference between “the law of Moses” and “the law of God,” as some claim? After the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary took Him to the temple in Jerusalem to offer a sacrifice and present Him to the Lord. They did this “according to the law of Moses” (Luke 2:22), or, “As it is written in the law of the Lord” (2:23). Consider also Nehemiah 8:1,7,8,13,14,18. Obviously, the law of Moses and the law of God are one.

**6. Does the Bible say that the Sabbath is a sign?**

Yes, it does. But, a sign between whom? Jehovah said, “Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath...it is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever” (Exodus 31:16,17).

**7. Did not God give the Sabbath to man forever?**

The Bible says that God gave the Sabbath to Israel “for ever” or as a “perpetual covenant” (Exodus 31:16,17). The feast of Tabernacles was also given to Israel “for ever” (Leviticus 23:41,39). Jonah said that he was in the fish’s belly “for ever,” (Jonah 2:6), yet in fact he was in there “three days and three nights (Jonah 1:17). “For ever” simply means the complete duration of a set period of time.

**8. Why did God give the Sabbath law to Israel?**

God chose the seventh day as the day in which the nation of Israel was to rest, because that was the day in which He Himself rested after six days of creation (Exodus 20:11). But with what purpose was Israel to keep the Sabbath? Jehovah said to Israel, “But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God...and remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm; therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day” (Deuteronomy 5:15). Jehovah commanded the Israelites to keep the Sabbath in order to remember that they had been slaves in Egypt and that God delivered them! Christians were never slaves in Egypt, so it is

not possible for us to keep the Sabbath in order to remember that the Lord delivered us from physical slavery. The Sabbath was given only to Israelites, and God made His Sabbath known to them at Mt. Sinai (Nehemiah 9:13,14).

**9. What about punishment for breaking the Sabbath law?**

The Sabbath law required complete rest from labor (Deuteronomy 5:12-15). What if one did not obey this law? "...a Sabbath of rest to the Lord; whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death" (Exodus 35:2). "Every one that defileth it shall be put to death" (Exodus 31:14). Once a man violated the Sabbath in the Old Testament, and Jehovah commanded the people to stone him to death (Numbers 15:32-36). Thus, if we claim that we must keep the Sabbath because it was part of God's law, then this means that we would also be required to kill anyone who broke it, for that was God's law also!

**10. Is Sunday the Christian's Sabbath?**

In fact, there is no New Testament passage that says that the first day of the week (Sunday) is a Sabbath or day of rest for Christians. The first day of the week is extremely important to the followers of Jesus, for on that day the Lord Jesus rose from the dead (Mark 16:9). In the first century disciples of the Christ assembled on the first day of the week to break bread (take the Lord's supper) (Acts 20:7) and to give contributions (1 Corinthians 16:2). Without doubt, in the New Testament the first day of the week or Sunday is the special day of worship for Christians. But, in the bible this day is nowhere called the Christian's Sabbath or day of rest.

The Sabbath — Must Christians keep it today? The Sabbath law, which required rest from physical labor on the seventh day of the week, was a command that Jehovah gave only to the nation of Israel. But the law of Moses, including the Sabbath law, was abolished when Jesus died on the cross. Today we must teach men to observe all things that Jesus commanded His apostles, for Jesus possesses all religious authority (Matthew 28:18,20). The Sabbath law is not a part of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is God's power unto salvation (Romans 1:16). Therefore the Sabbath is no longer binding on anyone living today.

# Sadducees?

## I. What Is A Saducee?

1. The name is a transliteration of the Greek word Saddoukaios [Ζαδδουκαίος]. The name is used but 14 times in the New Testament (Matthew 3:7; 16:1,6,11,12; 22:23, 34; Mark 12:18; Luke 20:27; Acts 4:1; 5:17; 23:6,7,8) and none in the Old Testament. Some hold that this name is to be traced back to Zadoc, the high priest during the reign of David (2 Samuel 8:17), while others say it was derived from “Zadok, a disciple of Antigonus of Socho c. 250 B.C.), who taught that obedience to God should be absolutely disinterested, without expectation of future reward” (*Zondervan’s Bible Dictionary*). Of course the derivation of the name is pure speculation — it may have been another Zadok unknown to us!
2. While quite distinct from one another in beliefs, they were joined in several things:
  - (1) Being classed by John as a “generation of vipers” (Matthew 3:7)
  - (2) Tempting Jesus (Matthew 16:1)
  - (3) Being warned of by Jesus as a “wicked and adulterous” generation whose leaven (teaching) should be avoided (Matthew 16:4-12)
3. “In religion the Sadducees ... denied the permanent validity of any but the written laws of the Pentateuch [far from the “traditions” which the Pharisees highly esteemed - JHW]. They rejected the later doctrines of the soul and its after-life, the resurrection, rewards and retributions, angels and demons.” (*The New Bible Dictionary*)

## II. What Were Some of the Doctrines and Characteristics of the Saducees?

1. We find seven events in which the Saducees are mentioned ... each of these reveals a bit of the doctrines and character of the Saducees:
  - (1) Matthew 3:1-12 — *An Altercation With John as They Desire His Baptism*
    - A. Their hypocrisy — Though they denied the resurrection they had come to be baptized of John to “flee from the wrath to come” (7)
    - B. Their wickedness — “generation of vipers” (7)
    - C. Their “boast” of geneology (9)
  - (2) Matthew 16:1-4 — *Tempting Jesus By Desiring a Sign*
    - A. Their hypocrisy — though they claimed to be spiritual leaders, they had more discernment regarding the physical things (signs of weather) than the spiritual (ie. fulfilled prophesy - “the signs of the times”) (3)
    - B. Their wickedness (4)
  - (3) Matthew 16:6-12 — *Being Marked as False Teachers by Jesus*

- A. The danger of their teachings (6, 11-12)
- (4) Matthew 22:23-33 — *Trying To Entrap Jesus Regarding the Resurrection (Cf. Mark 12:18-27; Luke 20:27-38)*
  - A. One of their central doctrines — no resurrection (23)
  - B. Their problem — “not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God” (29; 31)
- (5) Acts 4:1-22 — *An Altercation With Peter and John About The Resurrection*
  - A. Their objection again to the resurrection (2)
  - B. Their “companions” — “priests, and the captain of the temple” (1) Josephus records that they had no following amongst the common people, but that their appeal was to the rich and privileged. This was undoubtedly brought about by their emphasis, as recorded in history, of “maintaining the political status quo than in the religious purity of the nation. Since they were satisfied with the present, they did not look forward to a future Messianic age. (*Zondervan’s Bible Encyclopedia*)
- (6) Acts 5:12-29 — *An Altercation With The Apostles Over Preaching Jesus*
  - A. Their true motivation — Pride [indignation] (17)
- (7) Acts 23:1-9 — *As Paul Addressed The Council*
  - A. Their objection again to the resurrection (6-8)
  - B. Their hypocrisy in companionship — (Though they obviously thought the acceptance and teaching of the resurrection was a grievous sin, they would gladly join with others who taught so in order to gain acceptance or further their cause (6-8; cf. Matthew 3:1-12; 16:1-4))
- 2. What kind of people were the Sadducees?
  - (1) Hypocritical in their actions
  - (2) Wicked
  - (3) Trusting in genealogies rather than following God
  - (4) Lack of Biblical knowledge
  - (5) Dangerous to others because of their teaching
  - (6) Prideful
  - (7) Self satisfied with being “politically correct” and “getting along”
  - (8) Self serving in companionship to accomplish their selfish goals

**Conclusion:**

- 1. Is there a danger of “Sadduceeism” today? Look at the list - it is alive and well!
- 2. What were the Sadducees? LOST ... What are those who follow such things today? LOST  
Don’t be a Sadducee!

# Scribes?

## I. Defined

1. Hebrew - *sopher* - scholar; lawyer; literary professor
2. Greek
  - (1) *grammatās* - (translated as scribe) scholar; student of the scriptures
  - (2) *nomikoi* - translated as “student of the law”; “lawyers” (Matthew 22:35; Luke 7:30; 10:35...)
  - (3) *nomodaskaloi* - translated as “doctor of the law” (Luke 5:17; Acts 5:34)
3. “Person trained in writing skills and used to record events and decisions (Jer. 36:26; 1 Chron. 24:6; Esth. 3:12). ... They interpreted the law, taught it to the disciples, and were experts in cases where people were accused of breaking the law of Moses. They led in plan to kill Jesus (Luke 19:47) and heard His stern rebuke (Matt.23).” (*Holman’s Bible Dictionary*)

## II. The Origin and Growth of the Scribes

1. The Hebrew word *sopher* is first used in Judges 5:14 where it is translated as “they that handle the pen of the writer.” It is later translated as “scribe” (cf. 2 Samuel 8:17). The role of these people was the business of preparing and issuing decrees in the name of the rulers.
2. By the time of Jeremiah there were such men as Baruch who acted as copyists for the prophets. Baruch “wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord” (Jeremiah 36:4, 32).
3. When, during the Babylonian captivity, the Israelites lost their independence, there arose a group of scribes who attention was turned to copying the law and teaching it to others (cf. Ezra 7:6, 10-12; Nehemiah 8:1,4,9,13 — here the work of Ezra as a scribe is clearly seen).
4. During the Babylonian captivity it was the scribes who produced the teachings which were eventually written as the Talmud (see “Understandest What Thou Readest About Jewish Writings”).
5. After the Babylonian captivity the priesthood became largely tainted with the culture of the times and turned away from the law. It thus evolved that the scribes, not the priests, were the defenders and proclaimers of the law. By the time of Christ this distinction was complete.
6. The scribes began to exalt themselves. They demanded great honor from the people, thought themselves above the commands they taught and sought even by dress and titles to be above others (cf. Matthew 23:1-10).
7. Most of the scribes were of the Pharisees, but passages which speak of the “scribes of the Pharisees” (Mark 2:16; Luke 5:30; Acts 23:9), seem to suggest that there were scribes of the Sadducees also.

## III. The Result of the Abuses of the Scribes

1. “Class” religion (Matthew 23:6-7)
2. Self righteousness (Romans 10:1-3)
3. Tradition of “great teachers” exalted above God’s Word (Matthew 15:1-9)

## IV. Lessons For Us

1. While the perversions of the scribes led to great problems, they began with an

honest and needed goal — the preservation of the Word of God. We need such today, seeing that the Word MUST remain pure (Galatians 1:6-9; Romans 1:16) and is clearly under attack on many fronts. While we do not need an “elite class” of teachers, we need each individual to have the zeal and love for God’s word that will cause us to be “set for the defense of the gospel” (Philippians 1:17). This should be considered in such matters as translations of the Bible, Bible class materials, songs, etc.

2. We must avoid at all costs the institution of a special class of teachers who are exalted above others. Such abuses in denominationalism have led to the development of the Papal system, pastoral systems and such. In the church today we must realize that while we may respect the studies of others, they are just men like us! The church in Corinth displayed an unhealthy admiration for teachers of God’s word (1 Corinthians 1).
3. We must always, though we fight dogmatically to preserve the Word of God, refuse to make it a legal system by which we approach God, thus becoming self righteous rather than servants (Luke 17:10).
4. We must not allow the traditions of men (whether it be that of respected preachers, long held beliefs or family traditions) to be put above the plain teaching of the Word of God.

# Tabernacle?

## I. Defined

1. Hebrew
  - (1) *mishkan* — dwelling place
  - (2) *ohelmedh* — a tent of meeting
2. Greek: *skene* — tent
3. Each has reference to a temporary dwelling place

## II. The Biblical References to a Tabernacle

1. Old Testament
  - (1) The “provisional” tabernacle or “tabernacle of the congregation” (Exodus 33:7-11)  
This tent was constructed after the idolatry with the golden calf. Moses entered within and “the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses” (9). Joshua remained with this tabernacle.
  - (2) The “Sinaitic” tabernacle (Exodus 25-40)  
This was the tabernacle which most are familiar with. It and all the instruments of it were made according to a specific pattern which the Lord revealed (cf. Exodus 25:9; Acts 7:44; Hebrews 8:5).
  - (3) The “Davidic” tabernacle (2 Samuel 6:17)  
This was built by David in Jerusalem to house the ark of the covenant when he retrieved it from Kirjath-jearim.
2. New Testament
  - (1) Several references to the “Sinaitic” tabernacle (cf. Acts 7:44; Hebrews 8:5) and how it was used as a type for the true heavenly things (Hebrews 8:1-5; 9:1-11; Revelation 13:6; 15:5; 21:3)
  - (2) The body as a dwelling place for the soul (2 Corinthians 5:1-4; 2 Peter 1:13-14)

## III. Some Lessons We Can Learn From The Tabernacle

1. One of the valuable uses for the Old Testament, thus the need to study it (Hebrews 8; 9; cf. Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:6)
2. God has always desired and set forth a structure ... a “pattern” in religious matters (Hebrews 8:5), any other way would lead to “confusion” (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:33)
3. Any doctrine which defines man as a single natured being (ie. Jehovah’s Witnesses; evolution) is false (2 Corinthians 5:1-4; 2 Peter 1:13-14)
4. This body is not me! (2 Corinthians 5:1-4; 2 Peter 1:13-14)

# Temple?

## Introduction:

1. “... the human heart has always desired, if not a local Diety, at least some local manifestation of his presence. ‘Oh, that I knew,’ says Job, xxiii, 3, “where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat!’  
To gratify this desire of the human heart was, therefore, evidently one of the benevolent objects for which both the Tabernacle and Temple were erected. God’s primary design in both cases was simply to furnish a House in which his presence, and his power, and his glory might be manifested to his people, and where they might all seek and find him.” (Robert Milligan)
2. “Concerning this house which thou art in building ... I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel” (1 Kings 6:12-13)

## I. “Temple” Defined

1. Hebrew - There are two words used:
  - (1) *bayith* - house; used about ten times in reference to the temple of God
  - (2) *heykal* - palace, temple, large building - dwelling of the king; used over 50 times in reference to the temple of God. When referring to God’s temple it is usually identified by such terms as “the holy” temple, the temple “of the Lord”, or sometimes “the” temple.
2. Greek - There are two words used:
  - (1) *hieron* - from the word for “sacred” it refers to “a sacred place, a temple.” This word, when used of God’s temple, generally had reference to the whole of the building and its courts.
  - (2) *naos* - denoting a “shrine or sanctuary.” When used in reference to the temple of God it denoted the area into which only the priests could enter (Luke 1:9, 21-22)

## II. The History of the Temples in the Old Testament

1. *Solomon’s Temple*  
David had desired to build the temple for God (2 Samuel 7:1-3), but God forbade him from doing so (2 Samuel 7:4-17). God had though entrusted David with the pattern for the building of the temple, a pattern which David passed to his son along with provisions needed for the building (1 Chronicles 28:9-29:19). The building of the temple began “in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign” (1 Kings 6:1). The design of the temple was magnificent and monumental. If one figures eighteen inches for a cubit it was 90 feet long, thirty feet wide and forty five feet high (1 Kings 6:2). Of the length thirty feet were for the “oracle” or Most Holy Place which housed the ark of the covenant. The remaining sixty feet were for the “house” or holy place (1 Kings 6:16-17). Within the Most Holy Place or oracle, he formed two cherubim fifteen feet high. Each wing was seven and one-half feet, with the wingspan being fifteen feet. They were placed with their wings touching one another and the outer wings touching the walls (1 Kings 6:23-30). There was much intricate carving and the cherubim and most of the structure was overlaid with pure gold (1 Kings 6:18, 20,-22, 28, 29-35). One writer states that it was “no doubt, the most costly and resplendent building on the earth at

that time” being valued in our dollars at from two to five billion dollars! Seven years of labor went into this beautiful temple (1 Kings 6:38). Solomon’s reign ends with his heart being turned from God because of his love for many strange women thus the kingdom was divided at his death (1 Kings 11:1, 9-11). Solomon’s demise was likewise followed by the demise of the grandeur of the temple. In the fifth year of Rehoboam’s reign the king of Egypt took many of the treasures from the temple (1 Kings 14:26). When Rehoboam’s grandson, Asa, reigned he desecrated the temple with his idols (1 Kings 15:15) and eventually plundered the temple in order to form an alliance with the king of Syria (1 Kings 15:18). Later Athaliah also stole the dedicated things from the temple to bestow them on Baalim (2 Chronicles 24:7). King Joash restored the temple (1 Chronicles 24:13-14), but Joash himself soon fell into idolatry, forsaking the temple of God (1 Chronicles 24:17-18). Later Jehoash king of Israel came down and plundered the temple again (2 Kings 14:13-14). Several other attempts were made to restore the temple before Ahaz took the treasures, again to form a league with another king and further destroyed the temple, making a new altar and removing much of the furnishings from the temple (2 Kings 16:8-18). Hezekiah attempted to restore the temple, but the invasion of Sennacherib caused him to go so far as to cut the gold from the doors of the temple and give as tribute (2 Kings 18:14-16). Manasseh, Hezekiah’s son was perhaps the worst of all in his desecration of the temple. He built altars within the temple itself to worship the “host of heaven” (2 Kings 21:3-7). Energetic efforts at restoration of the temple and reform came at the hand of Josiah (2 Kings 22:1-23:25), but the people soon returned to their old ways. The end for the great temple came when Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, first plundered the temple and its treasures (2 Kings 24:13) and ultimately destroyed it with the city of Jerusalem (2 Kings 25:8-10).

2. *The Temple of Zerubbabel*

The children of God had been in captivity for seventy years, just as Isaiah had prophesied (Jeremiah 25:8-12). In 536 B.C. Cyrus king of Persia was “stirred up” by the Lord to allow the release of the people and the building of the temple (Ezra 1:1-4; Isaiah 44:28; 45:1). Ezekiel, prophesying during the captivity of the children of God (Ezekiel 1:1-3) had given a pattern for the temple to be rebuilt (Ezekiel 40:1-48:35). Though some of Ezekiel’s vision was clearly figurative, it still emphasized that the temple was to be constructed as He commanded and for the purpose for which He desired. Zerubbabel was the one who led a group of some 50,000 back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:1-70). After overcoming many obstacles, and at the prompting of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, the temple was completed about 515 B.C. (Ezra 6:15). Not much is known of the physical appearance of this temple, though it was larger than that built by Solomon, being 60 cubits in height (90 feet) and 60 cubits in breadth (90 feet) (Ezra 6:3). Cyrus had returned to the people many of the treasures Nebuchadnezzar had taken in addition to many other treasures (Ezra 1:7-11). In spite of its physical size and the treasures supplied by Cyrus and the people we read that when the foundations were poured that those who had seen the glory of the first temple wept as they compared it to the grandeur of the first temple (Ezra 3:12; see also Haggai 2:3). The time of great prosperity as had been under Solomon was now past and the ransacking and pillaging of the temple had taken its toll

on the treasures within. The temple was divided into the holy and most holy place like its predecessor and a veil separated the two. The “most holy place ... was empty, save for a stone on which the high priest, on the great Day of Atonement, placed his censure” The temple furniture was much simpler and less ornate. This temple remained for some 500 years, again enduring the ravages of ungodly men. The history of the temple built by the people under Zerubbabel is found in the writings of men, not in the sacred record which fell silent for the 400 years between Malachi and the New Testament record. In 1 Maccabees 1:20-24 we read of Antiochus Epiphanes taking the altar and furniture of the temple. These were restored by Judas Maccabaeus (1 Maccabees 2:48-50). In 66 B.C. Pompey took the temple hill and entered the most holy place, but did not take the temple treasures. Some years later Crassus carried away everything of value he could find.

3. *Herod's Temple*

Herod began rebuilding the temple in about 20 B.C. John records for us that the time for the building of the temple and its surrounding buildings had consumed some forty six years at the time of Jesus (John 2:20). This was the temple to which Christ came. The temple was of marble and gold, a truly magnificent structure.

### III. The Temple in the New Testament

1. *Herod's Temple*: There are clearly references to Herod's temple (Matthew 4:5; Luke 1:9; etc.). Of this temple we read that Jesus prophesied “There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down” (Matt. 24:2). This was fulfilled by the destruction by the Romans in A.D. 70.
2. *Christ as the temple of God* (John 2:19-22; Colossians 2:9)
3. *The church of our Lord* collectively (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)
4. *The individual Christian* (1 Corinthians 6:19)

### IV. Some Lessons We Can Learn

1. PATTERN. God has always demanded that His temples be constructed following His pattern. Such applied to the physical buildings constructed, and would likewise apply to the church and the individual Christian as temples of God (cf. Matthew 16:18; 1 Peter 2:21)
2. SANCTITY. Throughout Bible history we have seen the tragic results of desecrating the temple of God. We must take care today to keep the temples of God (the church and the individual) pure from worldly things. (Cf. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:9-20; cf. John 2:13-17)
3. PRESENCE. Man has desired, and God has provided, an assurance of God's care and presence. While the temple of Herod has been destroyed and Jesus has ascended to the heavens (another place designated as the temple of God), He has not left us without assurance of His presence (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19)

# Urim and Thummim?

## I. Biblical References to the “Urim and Thummim”

1. Exodus 28:1-4; 26-30  
As instructions were given for the garments of the high priest we are told there were to be a “breastplate of righteousness” which appeared to be a bag of sorts which was a span (about 7-9 inches) square. Set in gold into the breastplate were twelve precious stones engraved with the names of the twelve tribes. The Urim and Thummim were to be put in the breastplate.
2. Leviticus 8:1-8  
When Moses consecrated Aaron and his sons for the priesthood we are told he placed the Urim and Thummim in the breastplate.
3. Numbers 27:12-22  
When Moses was told he would be allowed to view the promised land, but then would die before entering, God instructed him to set Joshua before the people and Eleazar (Aaron’s third son and successor as high priest). Eleazar was to “ask counsel for him after the judgment of the Urim before the Lord.”
4. Deuteronomy 33:8  
The care of the Urim and Thummim were entrusted unto the Levites.
5. 1 Samuel 28:1-6; 15  
Samuel had died and the Lord had departed from Saul, thus when the Philistines prepared to come against Israel Saul was fearful. Before seeking the aid of the woman with a “familiar spirit” (the “witch of Endor”), Saul appealed to God for his answer on what to do. Amongst the means by which God would not answer we find “dreams ... Urim ... prophets.”
6. Ezra 2:62-63; Nehemiah 7:63-65  
Those of questionable lineage among the “children of the priests” were forbidden to partake of the holy things until “there stood up a priest with Urim and with Thummim.” It seems that the power of the Urim and Thummim to make such a distinction were recognized, but that they were not available. In fact, there is no mention of their use after the captivity.
7. Summary of Biblical information:
  - (1) Description of the Urim and Thummim — unknown, except that they would be able to fit in a nine inch by nine inch pouch (the breastplate).
  - (2) Able to divinely communicate approval of God’s appointed leaders (ie. Joshua)
  - (3) Able to give a course of action (ie. Saul’s inquiry in 1 Samuel 28)
  - (4) God could refuse to speak by them (ie. Saul’s inquiry in 1 Samuel 28).
  - (5) They were cared for by the Levites
  - (6) They are not seen nor heard of in use after the Babylonian captivity.

## II. Traditional and Recent Views

1. The Talmud and Josephus both identify the Urim and Thummim with the stones of the breastplate. This is not in accord with the Bible record which shows a distinction between the two (Exodus 28).
2. The Talmud states that they were absent from the second temple.
3. Many commentators today hold that the Urim and Thummim were two sacred lots — one affirmative and the other negative. This comes from a

reconstruction of 1 Samuel 14:41ff in the Septuagint). The problem with this is that the Scriptures hold that there was the possibility of no answer at all (how, if there was simply one lot drawn out?) and it seems that Saul desired to know more than a yes or no answer (cf. 1 Samuel 28:15).

### **III. Mormon References**

1. Abraham 3:1 — given to Abraham while he was at the Ur of Chaldees
2. Joseph Smith 2:34-35 — they were deposited by the angel Moroni with the “gold plates” to be used in their translation
3. Joseph Smith 2:52 — Joseph Smith was able to view the stones while still in the ground with the plates
4. Joseph Smith 2:59 — The plates and Urim and Thummim given to Joseph Smith and he begins translation with them
5. Problems:
  - (1) Historical accounts show that the stones that Joseph Smith had were used by him previous to the account supposed in his account recorded in Joseph Smith. In fact Joseph Smith was tried in 1827 in New York for being a “glass looker” — searching for treasure using the stones as seers.
  - (2) The supposed translation by Joseph Smith was not consistently done with the peep stones according to Mormon sources.

### **IV. Some Lessons We Can Learn**

1. Deuteronomy 29:29
2. The Urim and Thummim, among the other means used by God to reveal His will (cf. Hebrews 1:1) are no longer needed nor would be usable (1 Corinthians 13:8-10; Jude 3; Galatians 1:6-9)