

# Audio Bible Studies by Russell L. Harris

Lesson Outline

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## An Introduction to the Christian Faith :: Introduction and Course Survey ::

Lesson Outline

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### 1. Introduction to the Course

With this class, we begin a course of study entitled *An Introduction to the Christian Faith*. The course is designed to impart to

the Christian an elementary, yet comprehensive, understanding of the Christian Faith, and thus, to serve as a basis for further study. The purpose of this class is twofold. First, the class pro-

vides a frame of reference for our course of study. Second, the class presents an overview of the course.

### 1.1 A Need Neglected

Every Christian requires instruction in the Christian Faith—which is nothing other than instruction in the teaching of the Scripture—for it is only through an understanding of that which is taught by the Scripture that the Christian develops discernment and is able to progress from the status of babe at the mother's breast to that of spiritual maturity.

But the Christian Faith delineated in the pages of the Scripture no longer is being taught from the pulpits of the land; it has been supplanted by a false, 'feel-good' religion which stimulates the emotion, soothes the conscience, and makes few demands upon the mind and the body. Consequently, Biblical concepts which once were familiar to every Christian no longer are common knowledge. Matters of Scripture and theology which once were discussed in the home, the shop, and the marketplace today are discussed only in the classrooms of the theological seminary.

### 1.2 The Obstacle of Talmudic Tradition

The dearth of Scripturally-accurate teaching is due largely to a problem which is fundamental in nature—a problem which has plagued the Church since the very beginning, and which, for centuries before that, plagued the nation of Israel. The problem is tradition—tradition which is venerated above the Scripture. Ignoring the repeated commands of Jesus to be ware of the leaven of the Jew, the great majority of Christians historically have followed in the footsteps of the Scribes and the Pharisees of old, who brazenly set aside the commandments of the Scripture in order to observe their own tradition. Ignoring the repeated commands of the apostles to shun Jewish myth, Christians, generally and historically, have rejected the Faith which is delineated in the Scripture, embracing instead the fantastic myth and perverse doctrines of Talmudic Judaism.

#### 1.2.1 Tradition: Its Origin

Almost immediately after the death of Solomon, the nation of Israel became divided into a pair of kingdoms: a southern kingdom which was comprised of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and a northern kingdom which was comprised of the remaining ten tribes. The Levites, having no inheritance in the land, were scattered among the other tribes. Within a few generations, the Assyrians invaded the land of Israel, eventually slaying or carrying off captive all of the inhabitants of the Northern Kingdom, together with most of the inhabitants of the Southern Kingdom; this took place circa 721 B. C. Only those who took refuge within the city of Jerusalem escaped the final wave of the Assyrian invasion. Neither the Israelites who were taken captive by the Assyrians nor their descendants ever returned to the land of promise.

Subsequently, circa 586 B. C., the Southern Kingdom was invaded by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, with the result that the remnant which escaped the Assyrian captivity was carried off captive to Babylon. In accordance with prophecy, this

captivity lasted seventy years. At the end of the seventy years, the captives were set free, but only a small fraction of them elected to return to Judaea. Some of those who returned had remained true to the Faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But others who returned to Judaea had forsaken the Faith of the patriarchs; these brought with them a body of myth and doctrine which they had acquired during the captivity.

This body of myth and doctrine is known as the 'oral tradition', for it appears not to have been recorded in written form; rather, like the esoteric doctrines of secret societies, it was memorized and passed from generation to generation entirely by means of the spoken word. In the Scripture this body of Jewish myth and doctrine is called the 'Tradition of the Elders' and the 'Tradition of men'. Not until after the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70, was the oral tradition reduced to writing; today it is known as the 'Talmud'. It is this tradition which lies at the heart of the modern religion known as 'Talmudic Judaism' or simply 'Talmudism'.

The Scripture does not provide details regarding the manner in which Talmudism became established in Judaea. All that may be said with certainty is that Talmudism established itself as the dominant religion of the Jews long before the birth of the Christ. Consequently, during the period of the Incarnation and the subsequent apostolic era, only a minority of the Jews continued in the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the majority of the Jews had embraced the myth and doctrine of Talmudic tradition. In the former group were to be found many of the poor of the land and those upon whom society frowned; this group generally recognized Jesus to be the prophesied Christ, and with gladness heard and embraced the Gospel. In the latter group were to be found most of the wealthy of the land and most of the leaders of the Jews—the Scribes, the Pharisees, the Herodians, and many of the priests; this group generally rejected Jesus as the Christ, took offense at his teaching, and sought to put him to death.

#### 1.2.2 Tradition: Its Propagators

Jews motivated by Talmudism set themselves in opposition to Christ Jesus, the apostles, and the first generation of Christians. Likewise, Jews motivated by Talmudism have set themselves in opposition to the Church from generation to generation, down to the present day.

In his Gospel account, John contrasts the 'Tradition of the Elders' with the incarnate Christ Jesus, and, by extension, with the Gospel which Jesus proclaimed. In this contrast, John uses the term 'the darkness' to describe the Tradition, and the term 'the light' to describe Jesus. John declares that men loved 'the darkness' rather than 'the light' because their deeds are evil. And indeed, the darkness of Jewish Tradition conceals the true nature of the deeds of men, while the light of the Gospel<sup>1</sup> dispels the darkness of the Tradition and makes manifest those deeds, whether they be good or whether they be evil. It is for this reason that deceitful and wicked men, hoping to extinguish the light of truth, ever persecute those who accurately and faithfully are teaching the truth of the Scripture.

Though repeatedly warned of it by the Scripture, Christians generally are oblivious to a clever stratagem which, from the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. II Corinthians 4:3-4.

first century of the Christian era, has been employed by Talmudic Jews seeking to silence truth. The stratagem is that of infiltration, with cryptic Jews falsely claiming to be converts to the Christian Faith. In many instances, the infiltrator is the graduate of a theological seminary and claims to have received a call to the ministry. And not a few cryptic Jews are to be found on the faculty of Christian theological seminaries. Once accepted into the congregation or seminary, the Talmudic Jew patiently goes about his pernicious work of leavening, scattering bits of Talmudic myth and tradition here and there, at every opportunity. Often, the Jew purports to offer insight into matters such as the ritual of the Table of the Lord—‘insight’ which he draws from the rabbinical teaching of the Talmud. An idea of the effectiveness of this stratagem may be gained by noting the large number of Christian pulpits and the large number of seminary faculty posts which today are occupied by men having a surname which obviously is of Jewish origin. Indeed, it would appear that such men today comprise the majority of ministers and seminary professors within the Christian community. It is concerning such men that the apostle Paul speaks in the entirety of the eleventh chapter of his second epistle to the Corinthians. Christ Jesus repeatedly warned<sup>2</sup> concerning the leaven of the Jew. The epistles of Paul<sup>3</sup> and the epistles of John<sup>4</sup> contain multiple warnings against such infiltrators.

### 1.2.3 Tradition: Its Perversity

It is vital to understand that Talmudic Judaism is incompatible with and contrary to the Faith which is delineated in Old Covenant scripture—the Faith of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. Thus, while lauding the Faith of Abraham, Jesus condemned the ‘Tradition of the Elders’. It hardly needs to be pointed out that Talmudic Judaism likewise is incompatible with and contrary to the Christian Faith. The popular notion, that the Christian Faith is an extension of the Faith of the contemporary Jew, arises from an utter misapprehension of the substance and nature of the ‘Tradition of the Elders’.

Over the centuries, the unregenerate Jew has made every effort to conceal the precise content of the Talmud. While some Christians have purchased books purporting to be the Talmud, such books are nothing more than highly-abridged editions of the Talmud which have been created expressly for public consumption; the books have been carefully edited to expunge teaching which the Christian, were he to read it, would find utterly reprehensible. And such books typically consist of only a single volume, whereas the genuine Talmud is about the size of an encyclopaedia, being comprised of multiple volumes. Very few Christians have managed to gain direct access to a set of the unabridged and unedited volumes which comprise the Talmud.

<sup>2</sup>Matthew 16:5–12; Mark 8:13–21; Luke 12:1–2.

<sup>3</sup>Galatians 5:1–10; 1 Timothy 1:3–7; 1 Timothy 4:7; 2 Timothy 1:1–5; Titus 1:10–16.

<sup>4</sup>1 John 2:18–23; 1 John 4:1–3; 2 John 1:7.

<sup>5</sup>While the term *apostolos* is used in a non-technical sense when speaking of various individuals other than the twelve who were appointed personally by Jesus, the term is used in a technical sense for a commander of the highest rank—the admiral of the fleet. Accordingly, Paul was an apostle, having been directly appointed by Jesus; but neither James of Jerusalem nor Matthias (whose election to apostleship had no validity) received such an appointment. And without question, there are but twelve apostles of the highest rank; consider Matthew 19:27–28 and Luke 22:23–30.

### 1.2.4 Tradition: Its Means of Propagation

While the Jewish tradition which the Christian has embraced is of Talmudic origin, it is not directly from the Talmud that the Christian has been taught the tradition. Rather, the Talmudic tradition which has been embraced by the Christian has its immediate source in five documents—all of them forgeries—which Christians generally venerate, supposing them to have a legitimate place in the Christian Bible. All five documents are of Jewish origin, and all contain teaching which is incongruous with the teaching of documents which unquestionably are canonical. The spurious documents are (1) the book of Esther, (2) the book of James, (3) the book of Revelation, (4) the book of Jude, and (5) the book of II Peter.

In accepting as canonical these five documents, Christians have set aside virtually all of the criteria normally used to ascertain whether a document indeed has a rightful place in the Canon of Scripture. For example, Christians commonly consider New Covenant scripture properly to be comprised only of documents which were authored by an apostle or by a close associate of an apostle working under the aegis of that apostle. This criterion disqualifies the book of James, the book of Jude, and the book of Revelation. Contrary to popular notion, James is no apostle; James is not numbered among the twelve<sup>5</sup>. Likewise, Jude, the brother of James, is no apostle. And it is not difficult to demonstrate that the author ‘John’ of the book of Revelation is *not* John the apostle. Moreover, teaching found in the book of James directly contradicts the teaching of Moses and of Paul. II Peter and Jude obviously have a common source; they contain teaching which has the fantastic character of Jewish myth, and they are in conflict with documents which indisputably are canonical. Thus, it is apparent that the document popularly known as the second epistle of Peter is a forgery which falsely is attributed to the apostle.

Unlike every genuine book of the Scripture, the book of Esther makes no mention of God, nor does it make the slightest criticism of the Israelite—things which may be said of no document which is canonical.

The book of Esther is a brazen forgery which has been crafted by the unregenerate Jew, and is designed to serve several purposes:

(1) A primary purpose of the book of Esther is to reinforce the common notion that, irrespective of the period of history, the Jews enjoy the status of being the ‘chosen’ people of God. This purpose has been accomplished by the setting in which the tale of Esther takes place. It appears that the events of the tale take place subsequent to the Babylonian captivity. But the faithful remnant did not remain in Babylon; they returned to Judaea. The setting has no definite correspondence with the history of Israel. It would appear

... but there were no prophets between Ezra/Nehemiah and John the baptizer.

(2) The book justifies revenge on the part of the unregenerate Jew against anyone he deems an enemy.

(3) The book is designed to intimidate idates those who view the Jew with objectivity.

### 1.2.5 Tradition: Its Pervasiveness

Apart from the fact that Christians historically have venerated as genuine these five spurious documents, it would be quite difficult for an objective student of the Scripture to take seriously the body of Jewish tradition which they present. But the weight of tradition is heavy, and few Christians have the temerity to defy tradition and obey the Scriptural injunction to “prove all things”.

A surprisingly large segment of Christian doctrine has been distorted significantly by Talmudic teaching, some of it to a degree that it directly contradicts the teaching of the Scripture. And some of the doctrine to which Christians hold has no basis whatsoever in the Scripture, but is based wholly upon the Talmudic tradition. During our course of study, we shall make note of numerous instances of distortion and outright fabrication. Among the many false doctrines which may be traced to Talmudic Judaism, the following are foundational:

1. The notion of a prehistoric rebellion in the angelic realm—a rebellion which supposedly led to warfare in Heaven and the casting out of the rebellious or ‘fallen’ angels.
2. The notion of a fallen angel (called ‘Satan’ or ‘the Devil’) as the archenemy of God and the great adversary of the righteous.
3. The notion of everlasting torment (that is, torture) of fallen angels, as well as the everlasting torture of humans who reject the deliverance or salvation which the Gospel offers.
4. The notion that the reign of the Christ does not begin until the end of history.

### 1.2.6 Tradition: Its Consequence

Not surprisingly, most of the false doctrines which the Christian has received from Talmudic Judaism are related to the matter of government.

- The doctrines have been designed obfuscate—that is, to darken, becloud, or obscure—the fact that government is the great and central issue of life and thus, a principal concern of the Scripture.
- The doctrines have been designed to obfuscate the fact that the governments of man constitute the supreme evil of the *kosmos*.
- The doctrines have been designed to obfuscate the centrality of the Kingdom of God to the Gospel message.
- The doctrines have been designed to obfuscate the present reality of the Kingdom of God and the reign of Christ.

- The doctrines have been designed to obfuscate the true nature of the deeds of depraved men.

At the heart of Talmudic tradition is a deep-seated contempt for God—a contempt which manifests itself in a multitude of ways. One of the most obvious manifestations of this contempt is blasphemy, a prime example being the portrayal of God as a cruel and sadistic being, whose perverse sense of justice demands that certain of his creatures be subjected to torture which is unremitting and which shall continue throughout eternity.

### 1.3 The Remedy: A Housecleaning

Thus, in the present generation of the Church, Talmudic myth and doctrine is being propagated by cryptic Jews within the congregation, by cryptic Jews standing in the pulpit, and by spurious books which have been bound into the Bible. This deadly leaven of the Jew has permeated Christian thinking and forms the basis for many of the doctrines which contemporary Christians hold dear. Led astray by the influence of Talmudic tradition, Christians unknowingly blaspheme God with their teaching and assertions, such as the teaching concerning everlasting torture of the wicked.

Consequently, not only has instruction in the Christian Faith become a rarity in the present day, but even when one *does* encounter a pastor who is teaching the Scripture, it typically is the case that the instruction has been leavened thoroughly with the myth and doctrine of Talmudic tradition. Such a deeply-entrenched system of myth and doctrine is not easily ferreted out and purged.

The only remedy to this sad state of affairs is a return to accurate and faithful teaching of the Word of God. Such a return necessitates that Christians give whole-hearted and bountiful support to men who have a genuine calling to the ministry of the Gospel—men to whom the Spirit of God has imparted the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher or evangelist. And such a remedy necessitates a house-cleaning within the Church; a house-cleaning in which a great many men—some of whom are hirelings, others of whom are unfaithful shepherds, and still others of whom are wolves in sheep’s clothing—must be evicted from the pulpit and driven out of our local assemblies, and replaced with faithful shepherds. The Scripture repeatedly calls for such action to be taken against men who have sold themselves to do evil in deceiving the sheep. Error committed in sincerity may be forgiven, upon repentance; but deliberate deception is not to be forgiven. The gravity of the offense is demonstrated by the fact that the Scripture records two separate occasions<sup>6</sup> on which, at the express command of God, the priests of Ba-al who had led Israel into apostasy were slaughtered *en masse*, with measures being taken to ensure that none of the priests were allowed to escape. And in the ceremony which confirmed the Old Covenant with the generation which was about to enter the land of promise, Moses condemned<sup>7</sup> with utter destruction any “*root springing up with gall and bitterness*” who should seek to lead Israel into the error of idolatry. This condemnation is cited by the author of the epistle to the

<sup>6</sup>I Kings 18, II Kings 10.

<sup>7</sup>Deuteronomy 29:18–20.

Hebrews<sup>8</sup>, who, under inspiration of the Spirit of God, commands the Christian to ensure that no such “root of bitterness” springs up within the congregation.

Not until the voices of deception have been silenced and truth is being taught from the pulpits of the land shall widespread revival be possible, with Christians progressing to spiritual maturity as they grow in their knowledge of Christ Jesus and in their understanding of the Christian Faith.

7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. 8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 **And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;** 12 **For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:** 13 **Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:** 14 **That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;** 15 **But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:** 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

— Ephesians 4:7–16

## 2. Course Survey

The remainder of this lesson is devoted to the synopses of the lessons which comprise the course.

### 2.1 Prerequisites

Before setting out in our course of study, we pause for a brief review of the fundamental concepts and principles involved in learning, with particular emphasis upon the distinction between training and education and between knowledge and understanding. Moreover, we consider the vital role of vocabulary as a mechanism of thought.

Then, we discuss the need for a study of this nature—why it is, that we need an introduction to a subject, the Christian Faith, with which virtually everyone already ought be familiar. Next, we consider the possible schemes for organizing a study of this nature, and the scheme chosen for the present study. Finally, we look briefly at the rationale behind selection of the Bible versions and translations which are used in this course.

### 2.2 The Nature of the Godhead

This lesson perhaps is the most vital lesson of the entire course, for a misunderstanding of the nature of God sparks or fuels heresy of every category. Indeed, some argue that every theo-

logical heresy may be traced to a misapprehension of the nature of the Godhead.

Theologians endlessly ponder the nature of the Godhead, and teachers struggle to reconcile the concept of a triune Godhead with the declaration of the Scripture, that God is one. But does the Scripture fail to teach plainly regarding a matter so fundamental? Investigation reveals that, at the root of the problem is Talmudic tradition—tradition which for centuries has skewed the thinking of Christians, resulting in an almost universal misunderstanding of the sense in which God is one.

In this lesson, we first consider theological speculation concerning the nature of God; then we discover the conflict between that speculation and the teaching of the Scripture. We next look in detail at the teaching of the Scripture regarding the nature of the Godhead, the incarnate Christ Jesus, the Spirit of God, and the phenomenon of indwelling. We pay particular attention to the divine attribute of omniscience and the concept of foreknowledge, for misapprehension of these subjects has led a many a devout man to embrace notions which range from the absurd to the blasphemous. Finally, we consider several practical—and quite profound—implications of a correct understanding of the nature of the Godhead.

### 2.3 The Purpose of Mankind

One of the most fundamental matters addressed by theology, as well as by secular philosophy, is that of the purpose for which man was brought into existence. But theologians and philosophers, both of whom typically view with contempt the plain declaration of the Scripture, haven't a clue: at best, they are able to do nothing more than to speculate. But the resort to speculation is futile: the Scripture alone provides the answer, and it does so in simple terms easy to understand.

Neither do evangelists, pastors, and Bible teachers typically possess a correct understanding of the matter. Following the lead of Jewish myth, these men have cobbled together a fanciful tale of rebellion in the angelic realm and subsequent warfare in Heaven between ‘elect’ and ‘fallen’ angels; this they have done by “reading between the lines” of the Scripture, and by wresting several passages of the Scripture from the respective contexts. On the basis of this notion of angelic rebellion, they claim that man was created “to resolve the angelic conflict”. But this is to say that the creation of man came about as an unintended consequence of the conduct of other, more important affairs, rather than as a primary goal of God.

In their speculation, that man is nothing more than an afterthought of God, these men demonstrate themselves to be utter fools; for the Scripture reveals the purpose of God in his creation of man, together with the fact that the angels were created expressly for the role of ministry.

In this lesson, we consider first the passages of the Scripture which are cited in support of the speculation, and then we proceed to demolish the speculation by an objective reading of those passages, taking into account the context. Moving to the declaration of the Scripture, we first consider the identity of ‘Satan’, the fall of Satan, and the ultimate destruction of Satan. We conclude by considering passages which declare plainly the purpose of God in his creation of man, the purpose

<sup>8</sup>Hebrews 12:15.

of the present fleshly existence, and the ultimate state of man.

## 2.4 The Creation Account

Anyone who has made a serious attempt to reconcile the creation account of the first chapter of Genesis with the account of the second chapter understands that no reconciliation is possible. The accounts differ not only in the sequence of creation, but also in the nature of the creatures. Clearly, the accounts differ, not because of a difference of perspective, but because each account has in view a separate and distinct event.

The theological implications of this realization are profound. In the first place, the Adamic race and domestic animals constitute a separate creation. Moreover, only members of the Adamic race and representatives of the domestic animals needed to be preserved during the deluge in the days of Noah. Furthermore, this understanding forces one to view in a new light the concept of ‘particular redemption’, a concept which is fundamental to Reform Theology.

In this study, we consider first the traditional interpretation of the two creation accounts. Next, we consider the factors which demand rejection of the traditional interpretation. Finally, we consider the truth of the matter, which becomes apparent once the two accounts are seen to be descriptions of separate events.

## 2.5 The Nature of Life and the Nature of Death

The theologian claims that man, in essence, is a spiritual being, consisting of an immortal soul which comes into existence at the moment of conception, if not before. He claims that the residence of the soul in a fleshly body is but temporary; and that death is nothing more than a change of residence. He claims that the soul never sleeps, but remains conscious in death. And the contemporary pulpit makes to the wicked the same promise which it makes to the righteous, namely, eternal life, the only difference being that the wicked supposedly are destined for an eternity of torment in ‘Hell’, while the righteous supposedly are destined for an eternity of blessing in ‘Heaven’.

These notions regarding the nature of life and the nature of death are diametrically opposite to the plain teaching of the Scripture. Moreover, were these concepts true, then the resurrection from the dead would be of no great consequence, and certainly would not be a necessity; yet the entire matter of covenantal relationship between God and man hinges upon the promise of resurrection.

In this study, we first consider the traditional view of man, of life, of death, and of judgment, and show how the traditional view is in conflict with the teaching of the Scripture. Next, we consider the Scriptural revelations concerning the nature of man, the origin of the soul, the phenomenon of animation, the nature of death, the nature of the judgment, and the nature of the resurrection. Finally, we consider the implications of a proper understanding of these matters with regard to stillbirth and abortion.

## 2.6 The Resurrection from the Dead

Christ Jesus and the apostles repeatedly testified and taught concerning the resurrection from the dead. Yet the subject of

resurrection hardly ever is mentioned from the contemporary Christian pulpit, other than in the context of the resurrection of Christ Jesus. Indeed, in the system of doctrine which today represents itself as the Christian Faith—a system which, having been corrupted by the leaven of the Jew, abounds with Talmudic tradition and Jewish myth—the concept of resurrection has been relegated to obscurity, and is viewed as a mere curiosity.

Apathy toward the resurrection may be traced directly to the lie which was instrumental in bringing about the downfall of Adam, namely, the assertion, “*You are not going to die.*” Down to the present day, the descendants of Adam continue to embrace the lie, which is embodied in the commonly-held notion, that man, in essence, is a spiritual entity—an ‘immortal soul’—which resides temporarily in a fleshly body. According to the contemporary pulpit, the soul possesses the inherent capability of both cognitive activity and perception, and thus has no vital dependence upon the body. Moreover, it is asserted that the soul never loses consciousness, so that death is nothing more than a conscious transition in which the soul departs the body. And, supposedly, the soul cannot be destroyed—even by its creator. But such a viewpoint is contrary to the teaching of the Scripture.

According to the Scripture, resurrection is a process in which corruptible, mortal flesh is transformed into incorruptible, immortal spirit. Moreover, the resurrection from the dead is equated with the “birth from above” of which Jesus spoke to Nicodemus.

The promises made to the justified hinge upon the resurrection from the dead. But the promise of resurrection is realized only through the New Covenant. Accordingly, the justified of previous ages, including Adam, Noah, Abraham, and the prophets, all have been made partakers of the New Covenant. Thus, the resurrection and the New Covenant inextricably are linked.

In this study, we begin by looking at the nature and necessity of the resurrection, and we note the distinction between resurrection and resuscitation. Then we move to the promise of resurrection. Next, we consider the exemplar of resurrection, Christ Jesus, who is the first being to undergo the transformation of the resurrection. Finally, we view the teaching of the Scripture concerning the epoch and sequence of the resurrection.

## 2.7 The Fall of Adam

A cornerstone of contemporary theology is the concept of a genetically-inherited sin nature, supposedly being the result of the sin of Adam. Theologians, fearing the charge of blasphemy, are unwilling to attribute to God creation of the sin nature; so, disregarding the absurdity of their assertion from both the physical and logical standpoints, they claim that the sin nature came into being spontaneously, becoming integral to the genetic makeup of Adam. But the tale grows yet more fantastic, with Bible teachers claiming that the fall of Adam brought about dramatic and fundamental changes in the very order of nature, particularly in the animal kingdom. Furthermore, the general notion is that, prior to the fall of Adam, death was unknown in the entire realm of nature.

But all these concepts are nothing more than Jewish myth.

According to the Scripture, the rebellion of the first Adam brought upon upon the progeny of Adam a judicial imputation of guilt—an imputation which corresponds to the judicial imputation of righteousness through faith, which is a consequence of the obedience of Christ Jesus, who is the last Adam.

In this study, we begin by looking at the fantastic claims of traditional theology concerning the implications of the fall of Adam. Then, we look at nature, and see the impossibility and absurdity of the traditional position. Next, we consider the Scriptural teaching concerning the consequences of the sin of Adam. We conclude the lesson by considering the Scriptural teaching concerning the propensity of man to sin.

## 2.8 The Consequence of the Fall

Because of the fall of Adam, a great many of the descendants of Adam are destined to a shadowy period of torment in the interval between death and the judgment, followed by an eternity of torment in the company of the Devil and his angels in the lake of fire—or so we are told by Bible teachers, who invariably point to the account of Jesus concerning the rich man and Lazarus, claiming the account to be not a parable, but, rather, the relating of an actual historical event.

But is that really the case? If the account of Lazarus and the rich man—an account which obviously abounds with symbolism—is not allegorical, then what of the multitude of passages in the Scripture which plainly are in conflict with the details of the account?

In this lesson, we first consider the traditional view of the afterlife, both prior to the judgment and after. Next, we look closely at the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, then at the teaching of the Scripture regarding ‘Hell’, ‘Gehenna’, the ‘lake of fire’, and ‘everlasting fire’.

## 2.9 The Seed of the Woman, the Seed of the Serpent, and Justification

When approaching the ‘head and heel’ prophecy of Genesis 3:15, Bible teachers generally interpret the seed of the Woman as Christ Jesus, or as the entire physical line of descendants from the Woman to Jesus. However, there seems to be no general consensus regarding the seed of the Serpent. Many teachers consider the seed of the Serpent to be a spiritual progeny, that is, individuals who, irrespective of physical descent, pursue a life of wickedness. However, some teachers promote the so-called ‘seedline’ thesis (also called ‘dual-seedline’), according to which the seed of the Serpent is a literal, physical line of descendants.

The seedline teaching is based on the notion that the seduction of the Woman was a sexual seduction, by which the Woman was impregnated by the Serpent, Cain being the offspring of that union. Those who promote the seduction thesis typically make appeal to the Masoretic Hebrew word which the King James version translates ‘beguiled’, claiming that it has a sexual connotation. But, from the standpoint of logic, the most compelling argument is that, if the seed of the Woman is a physical line of descendants, one should expect the seed of the Serpent also to be a physical line of descendants.

In this lesson, we look first at the arguments given in sup-

port of the seedline teaching, together with the difficulties, not the least of which is how the seed of the Serpent managed to survive the flood in the days of Noah. Next, we consider the teaching of the Scripture regarding justification, which provides an alternative interpretation regarding the seed of the Woman, and thus, an alternative explanation regarding the seed of the Serpent. Finally, we consider a number of Scriptural illustrations which demonstrate the fallacy of the seedline thesis.

## 2.10 Human Government and its Handmaiden, Religion

Though few realize the fact, the great issue of life is not ‘good versus evil’, or even ‘attitude toward Christ’. Rather, the great issue, from the moment Adam was placed in the Garden of Delight until the end of time, is that of government.

All human government—whether righteous and benevolent or evil and oppressive—proceeds from God, exists at the pleasure of God, and serves the purpose of God. Moreover, God allows no man to escape the domination of government: the notion that any man can achieve the status of ‘sovereignty’ is a delusion. Every man is subject to the governing authority of God, either directly, or else through the rule of other men.

In this lesson, we begin by considering the history of earthly government, from the day in which Adam was placed in the Garden of Delight to the present day. Next, we consider the nature of human government. We proceed to consider the historical, symbiotic cooperation of human government and religion. Then we look at false gods and their false prophets. Finally, we consider human government in its historical role of adversary of the righteous—a role which, when properly and fully appreciated, is seen to have profound theological implications.

## 2.11 The Flood in the Days of Noah

Many Bible teachers of the present day, having embraced the notion of an ‘angelic conflict’ and ‘fallen’ angels, claim that, by the time of Noah, humanity had become corrupted by intermarriage with fallen angels, giving rise to creatures half-angelic and half-human, called ‘giants’. According to this thesis, a primary purpose of the flood which occurred in the days of Noah was destruction of the hybrid creatures. Irrespective of their position regarding fallen angels, most Bible teachers claim the flood to have been universal, submerging even the tallest mountains. Integral to both of these beliefs is the notion that all races sprang first from Adam, and then again, from Noah.

In this lesson, we begin by looking at the traditional teaching, starting with fallen angels and giants, the matter of racial origin, and the infamous ‘mark of Cain’. Next, we consider the fallacies inherent in the traditional teaching. Finally, we look at the teaching of the Scripture concerning the agents and nature of the corruption which necessitated the flood, the extent of the flood, the matter of Noah and the races, and the curse upon Canaan.

## 2.12 The Promises Made to Abraham

Many of the problems of the modern world spring from fundamental misunderstandings concerning the promises which God made to Abraham. The almost-universal misconception is that (1) the promises have to do with the physical progeny of Abraham (which most take to be the Jew); (2) the promises concern a specific and limited region of the earth; and (3) the promises are to be fulfilled in the present age.

A great many Christians, failing to apprehend the teaching of the Scripture concerning the promises made to Abraham, foolishly have supported the so-called ‘Zionist’ Jew in his demand for title, not only to the region occupied by the nation of Israel during the reign of David, but also to a vast region of the Middle East, of which the ancient nation of Israel never came into possession.

In this lesson, we first look at common misconceptions concerning the promises made to Abraham. Next, we discover the factor which gives rise to the misconceptions. We proceed to consider the teaching of the Scripture concerning the inheritance which was promised to Abraham; in particular, we give consideration to the agency, the nature and the epoch, and the scope. Finally, we see that the vast majority of the physical descendants of Abraham—indeed, the vast majority of physical descendants of the line Abraham-Isaac-Jacob—are disqualified from partaking of the inheritance.

## 2.13 The Old Covenant, the Jew, and the Gentile

Few Christians of the present day have an accurate understanding of the nature of the Old Covenant. Few understand that the Old Covenant was a covenant of marriage; fewer still know the identity of the husband. Few understand that the Old Covenant was a temporal covenant, unable to provide benefit beyond the grave. Few understand that justification was not necessary for covenantal relationship under the Old Covenant. Few understand that the Old Covenant was the basis for the existence of Israel as a nation, and that Israel could exist as nation only so long as covenantal relationship continued.

Few Christians of the present day have an accurate understanding of the history of the Old Covenant. Few understand the consuming proclivity of the Israelite toward idolatry. Few understand the covenantal implications of the division of the nation following the reign of Solomon—that covenantal relationship continued independently in the resulting pair of kingdoms. Few understand that the covenantal relationship of the Northern Kingdom ended with divorce. Few understand that the so-called ‘Gentiles’ are the product of the divorce, and that the embrace of Christianity by the nations of Western Europe is a direct consequence of the fact that the Northern Kingdom was carried off captive by the Assyrians, circa 721 B. C. Few understand that the same prophecies which foretold the divorce and captivity of the Northern Kingdom likewise foretold the eventual restoration to covenantal relationship of the descendants of the Northern kingdom and their reunification with the descendants of the Southern Kingdom in the Kingdom of God, under the rulership of Christ Jesus. Few understand that the Southern Kingdom was comprised of two categories of individual, portrayed in the Scripture as two categories of figs, the one group being very good, and the other, too vile to be eaten;

and few are aware that Jeremiah prophesies concerning each group. Few understand the history of the Babylonian captivity and how it gave rise to the false religion of Talmudic Judaism. Few understand the purpose of the prophecy of Ezekiel to the captives—that it made a conditional offer which was declined and therefore was withdrawn. Few understand that the death of Christ Jesus irreversibly dissolved the Old Covenant, with the result that the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A. D. 70 represents the final and ultimate desolation of the nation—a desolation from which no recovery or revival is possible.

In this lesson, we shall consider in detail first the nature of the Old Covenant, followed by the history of the Old Covenant.

## 2.14 The Davidic Throne

Some Bible teachers, citing Jeremiah 33:17, “*For thus saith the LORD; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel,*” claim that the ‘throne of David’ is a physical, uninterrupted line of royal succession, and they point to the throne of Britain, which claims to be able to trace an unbroken succession of monarchs back to the kings of ancient Israel. However, there is a fly in the ointment. The citation is taken from the Masoretic Hebrew Text, which is a counterfeit of the ancient Hebrew canon of Scripture.

In the Septuagint, which is the canon of Old Covenant scripture from which Jesus and the apostles quoted, the thirty-third chapter of the book of Jeremiah ends with the thirteenth verse, so the primary basis for the argument—found in the seventeenth verse of the counterfeit Masoretic Text—is seen to be fraudulent. Moreover, multiple passages in the Scripture prophesy of the demise of the throne of David, and multiple passages testify to the fact that the throne of David fell many years prior to the birth of Christ.

Then, too, there is the fact that the kingly line of David terminates in Christ Jesus. And there is the fact that the reign of Christ Jesus, seated upon the throne of David, began two millennia ago, upon his Ascension, when, having been raised from the dead and having ascended into Heaven, Jesus was seated at the right hand of God the Father.

Sadly, many Christians of the present day, having fallen victim to false teaching concerning the throne of David and having embraced Jewish myth, eagerly anticipate the return of Christ Jesus to begin his reign, failing to realize that the event to which they look forward transpired long ago.

In this lesson, we first shall consider common misconceptions regarding the throne of David. Next, we shall consider the prophetic teaching of the Scripture concerning the demise of the throne of David, together with the Scriptural testimony regarding the fact that throne did cease to exist, and the prophecy concerning revival of the fallen throne in the era of the New Covenant, with Christ Jesus reigning as the son of David. Finally, we shall discover in the hostility of Saul toward David with respect to the throne of Israel a remarkable foreshadowing of the hostility of the Jew toward the Gentile with respect to covenantal relationship.

## 2.15 The New Covenant and the Regathering of Israel

Like the Old Covenant, the New Covenant is a covenant of marriage. However, whereas the Old Covenant was a national covenant which embraced both believer and unbeliever, the New Covenant is open only to those who have been justified by faith in the blood of the Lamb of God, Christ Jesus.

It is under the New Covenant that Israel is regathered. Contrary to popular notion, it is not the Jew who is regathered and brought into covenantal relationship; rather, those who are regathered are the descendants of the Israelites who were scattered by the Assyrian captivity, which carried out of the land the majority of Israelites, including members of all twelve tribes. These descendants of the line Abraham-Isaac-Jacob, losing their identity as 'Israelites', became known in the Scripture simply as 'the nations' or 'the tribes', which in the Greek is *ethnos*, and in the Latin, *gentilis*.

The regathering of Israel could not take place until the sacrifice of Christ Jesus was accomplished, because of several factors. First, the Law of God forbids the restoration of a marriage union which has been dissolved by divorce. Second, the Law of God forbids a woman from being bound by more than one marriage covenant. Third, it was the death of Christ Jesus as covenant sacrifice which instituted the New Covenant.

In this lesson, we first shall consider the nature of the New Covenant. Next, we shall look at the heralds of the New Covenant. Then we shall consider the legal considerations and impediments concerning entrance into the New Covenant. Finally, we shall inspect the factors which have led some to conclude—erroneously—that there are separate 'new covenants' for the Jew and the Gentile, or that there is yet to be unveiled an 'everlasting covenant' which supersedes the New Covenant.

## 2.16 The Gospel

While many today think themselves to be 'Christian' and think themselves to be living the Christian way of life, the reality is that most of these individuals have been deceived: most have embraced a counterfeit gospel, with the result that few of them truly have entered the Way of Life. To verify that this, indeed, is the case, one need only survey those who profess to be Christian, and ask them to give a statement of the Gospel—for it is the Gospel message which one must believe, in order to be saved. In the vast majority of cases, the perception of the 'gospel' which is held by the individual who claims to be a Christian has little resemblance to the Gospel which is declared and taught in the pages of the Scripture.

The Gospel of the Scripture is not the simple, brief message of personal salvation which pastors recite at the close of their 'services' and so-called 'evangelists' present at their 'crusades'. Rather, the true Gospel is the news that the reign of the Christ has come—that the Kingdom of God has been instituted. The Gospel of the Scripture is a comprehensive message, which includes instructions for entering into and walking in the Way of Life, together with warnings concerning the price to be paid and the necessity of endurance.

In this lesson, we shall consider first the subject of the Gospel and the nature of the Gospel message. Next, we shall

consider the essence of the Gospel. Finally, we shall discover that the exhortation to *believe* the Gospel in reality is an exhortation to *obey* the Gospel, with obedience being essential to salvation.

## 2.17 The Kingdom of God and its Relationship to the New Covenant

The term 'New Covenant' is familiar to most Christians of this day. Most are aware of the fact that the New Covenant has to do with the Church, as opposed to the Old Covenant, which has to do with the nation Israel. Some know that the ritual of the table of the Lord speaks of the New Covenant. But, outside of the ministry, seldom today does one find a Christian whose understanding of the New Covenant has progressed beyond these rudiments.

Surprisingly, there are many, both inside the ministry and without, who think the New Covenant to be a promise which lies yet in the future. And it appears that very few comprehend the centrality of the Kingdom of God to the New Covenant, understanding that both are present realities.

In this lesson, we first shall consider the characteristics of the Kingdom of God: its monarch, its law, its domain, and its citizens. Next, we shall look at the inauguration of the kingdom, which took place two millennia ago. Then we shall consider the great issue of the present age, that of Christ versus Caesar. Finally, we shall consider a number of salient matters which confront the Christian as a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven residing within the domain of Caesar.

## 2.18 The Role of the Jew: Counterfeits, Leaven, Ploys, and Persecution

Contemporary Christians are abysmally ignorant of the fact that the historic persecutor of the Church always has been and always shall be the unregenerate Jew. Typically in alliance with government, the Jew is found in virtually every assault which has been made against the body of Christ Jesus. Indeed, Jewish leaders openly remark that, while the worldwide population of Jews is fragmented and generally unable to cooperate, the one factor which does unite Jews is their opposition to Christ Jesus and to the Christian Faith. Despite the large number of fronts and the frequency and ferocity of the attacks, Christians generally remain unaware of the identity of the ultimate perpetrator.

The general ignorance of the contemporary Church regarding the true nature of the Jew is due primarily to two factors. First, Christians, and society in general, are inundated with an incessant stream of propaganda which pours forth not only from the Establishment media, but also from the Christian pulpit, concerning the purported 'evil' of 'anti-Semitism' and the supposed historic persecution of the Jew by Christendom. Because of this propaganda, many (if not most) Christians have the erroneous perception that it is the Jew, rather than the Church, which is the victim of relentless, age-old persecution.

The second factor in the ignorance of the contemporary Church regarding the true nature of the Jew is the set of mechanisms which the Jew has created to deflect criticism. Foremost among these mechanisms are the false religion known as the

'Holocaust', together with the never-ceasing false accusation of 'anti-Semitism'.

In this lesson, we shall consider an unusually large number of topics. Beginning with the origin of the Talmudic Jew and the basis for his role as persecutor of the Church, we move on to counterfeit gospels; then, the Papal system; then, counterfeits among documents considered canonical; then, the appeal to tradition and mysticism; then, Jewish myth, red herrings, and dialectics; then, infiltration; and finally, Jewish ploys for preventing exposure and for silencing criticism.

## 2.19 Prophecy, Eschatology, and Current Events

One of the easiest ways to generate interest and draw a large crowd in contemporary Christian circles is to teach a series of lessons on the subject of Bible prophecy. But this approach is difficult for a faithful and competent teacher, because there isn't much prophecy left to be fulfilled. But that fact does not deter the typical prophecy teacher, who simply dredges up old prophecies and presents them out of context, as if they pertain to yet-future events.

The Olivet Discourse—the memorable prophecy of Christ Jesus concerning the final destruction of Jerusalem and the death of Israel as a nation—is a favourite for such recycling. While the prophecy has to do entirely with the period between the crucifixion of Jesus and the destruction of Jerusalem by Rome in A. D. 70, fraudulent teachers have managed to twist the figurative language of the prophecy into a vision of a yet-future event—and, perversely, an event in which the unregenerate Jew emerges as the righteous and triumphant hero, rather than as the deserving recipient of the wrath of the Almighty.

In this lesson, we begin by considering the traditional teaching—virtually all of it being nothing more than Jewish myth—concerning the Antichrist, the Rapture, the Tribulation, the national repentance of the Jewish people, the Second Advent, and the Millennial reign of Christ. We next consider the large volume of Scripture which speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70. These passages include (1) the warning of John the baptizer, (2) the parables of Jesus which warn of the destruction and which speak of the transition from the economy of the Old Covenant to that of the New Covenant, (3) the pronouncement of judgment by Jesus, (4) the Olivet Discourse, in which Jesus foretells in detail the events surrounding the judgment, and (5) a testimony of Paul regarding the judgment. Next, we consider the obedience-disobedience cycle which characterizes the present age of the Church, and which may continue indefinitely. Finally, we consider the Resurrection from the dead, and conclude by looking at the brief glimpse which the Scripture provides of the future beyond the Resurrection.

## 2.20 Routine Functions in the Christian Way of Life

Christianity is infinitely more than a belief or conviction; Christianity is a way of life. This being the case, there are routine functions which need to be performed on a regular basis, some of them, daily. Prolonged or habitual neglect of these functions is deleterious not only to the individual Christian, but also to the function of the body of Christ Jesus, of which each Christian is a vital member. Moreover, such neglect can eventuate in a straying from the Way of Life.

In this lesson, we look at the functions which should be part of the routine of every Christian: sacrifice, thanksgiving, prayer, confession of personal sin, feeding upon the Word of God, separation from the world, assembling with fellow Christians, giving, and endurance of discipline and testing.

## 2.21 Baptism for the Remission of Sin

Despite the fact that the Scripture clearly and unequivocally commands baptism for the remission of sin, Acts 16:31, few Christians take the command seriously. Indeed, the great majority of Christians reject as heresy this command, which Peter, with the full authority of an apostle of Christ Jesus, gave on the day of Pentecost.

Being unwilling to comply with the command, Christians have mounted numerous arguments against the necessity of baptism, in order to justify their rebellion. Arguments against the necessity of baptism for the remission of sin typically are based upon the premise that baptism is a work, and thus is excluded by the principle, that salvation is by "... *grace... not of works, lest any man should boast...*". However, such arguments are fallacious, for the Scripture specifically states that the works which are excluded from salvation are '*works of the Law*'. Thus, the exclusion has in view those who seek to be justified on the basis of their observance of the law of Moses; the exclusion does not have in view acts of obedience.

In this lesson, we first consider the matter of obedience versus works. Next, we consider the Scriptural example of ritual baptism. We examine the concept of baptism into Christ, then we consider the mode of baptism, and the meaning of the declaration, "*one Lord, one Faith, one baptism*". Finally, we consider the often-heard argument against baptism which is based upon the salvation of the thief on the cross. We conclude the lesson by noting the Orwellian irony in the name of the Protestant denomination called 'Baptist'.

## 2.22 Biblical Giving and Support of the Ministry

Contemporary Christianity is mired to the neck in apostasy, with the result that it is not functioning as salt and light to society. Recovery from apostasy demands accurate and faithful instruction in the Word of God, but such instruction demands adequate funding of the teaching ministry. The pattern is seen with Israel under the Old Covenant, in which the first step of recovery from a period of apostasy was to fund the teaching ministry.

In this lesson we begin by considering the declaration of the Scripture regarding the necessity of feeding upon the Word. Then we look at instruction in the Word as the means by which one attains spiritual maturity and discernment. We consider the responsibility of the shepherd (that is, the pastor) to feed the sheep under his care, and the commands for the sheep to provide remuneration in the physical realm to the shepherd who feeds them in the spiritual realm from the Word of God.

## 2.23 Race, Interracial Marriage, and the Gospel

God is the author of race. And God is *not* the author of confusion. God designed and created each of the races, and he pronounced his creation 'good'. Racial differentiations are a

fact of life, with each race having inherent strengths and weaknesses, as well as a distinctive appearance.

However, in recent years, it has become politically-incorrect within contemporary society to make mention of race or of the inherent differentiations between the various races. But such behaviour is no more ‘civilized’ or ‘Christian’ than it would be to visit the municipal zoo and refuse to consider the differences between the various species of animals which are on display.

Prominent in Old Covenant scripture are the prohibitions against unnatural practices and the prohibition against the union of things dissimilar. In the Scripture are found the commands that man is not to copulate with the quadruped, male is not to copulate with male, the male is not to wear the apparel of the female, the female is not to wear the apparel of the male, cattle are not to be crossbred, the vineyard is not to be sown with seed of different varieties, garments are not to contain wool and linen together, an ox and an ass are not to be yoked together to plough, and so forth. But the writers of New Covenant scripture declare that certain of these prohibitions—such as the command not to muzzle the ox which treads the grain—were recorded for the instruction of the Church, and are to be taken as allegories concerning proper conduct in other realms of life.

Additionally, the Scripture speaks of practices which are contrary to nature. Despite the intense and persistent efforts by the Establishment to blind the populace to the reality of racial distinctions, disregard of disparity of race in marriage remains a practice which is contrary to nature. Those who engage in interracial marriage demonstrate a selfishness and insensitivity which borders on the incredible, for the offspring of an interracial union typically possess genetic abnormalities which not infrequently result in deformities or hideous markings. And even offspring which escape such deformity and marking typically suffer from ostracism by society as a whole. Contrary to the dreams of those who, through indoctrination, would transform the nature of man, multi-racial societies invariably are torn along racial lines. The conflict which inevitably occurs when men of different race are forced to live and work in proximity, one to another, makes obvious the fact that racial segregation—which is the natural state of human affairs—is the order which is ordained of God, and that racial segregation in no respect may properly be considered ‘un-Christian’ or contrary to the teaching of the Scripture.

Curiously, many Christians who acknowledge the calling to privilege of Abraham, who recognize divine sovereignty in the rejection of Esau and the selection of Jacob, who delight in the exclusivity of the relationship between the Eternal and the nation Israel, and who take as axiomatic the concept of limited atonement, flatly reject the possibility that the Atonement and the offer of life everlasting is exclusive to the Adamic race.

In this lesson, we consider first some of the most prevalent false notions and teaching concerning race. In particular, we consider the primary argument which has been used to attack racial segregation, namely, the argument that all races sprang first from Adam, and then, again, from Noah. Next, we consider teaching of the Scripture which is pertinent to the matter of interracial association and interracial marriage. Next, we look at racial considerations with respect to the Gospel and

evangelism. Finally, we consider the matter of racial diversity within the local assembly.

## 2.24 Bible Versions and Translations

Among Christians, one of the most hotly-debated subjects is that of Bible versions and translations. Many swear by the King James version, despite its archaic, often-incomprehensible language, the inferior manuscripts upon which it is based, and its numerous blunders in translation; not a few swear at it. While some have investigated the matter of the Greek text upon which a particular translation is based, very few have investigated carefully the history of the Masoretic Hebrew text, and have become aware of the fact that there is an alternative text of Old Covenant scripture which not only is infinitely more reliable than the Masoretic Text, but also is the only extant text of Old Covenant scripture which is divinely-authorized.

Almost no one seems to have stepped back from the debate over versions and translations and inspected the premise upon which the entire debate rests; namely, the assumption that the typical Christian is able to feed himself from the Scripture. Once this assumption is demonstrated to be false, it is seen that the matter of which Bible version or translation a Christian uses is of relatively little importance.

In this lesson we look first at the arguments typically used to promote the King James version, and discover the unstated assumption behind those arguments. Next, we examine considerations which should enter into the selection of a Bible version or translation. We next discover the proper approach to study of the Scripture, together with the academic qualifications demanded of a teacher of the Scripture. Finally, we review our findings.

## 2.25 Television Programming, Hollywood Movies, Popular Music, and Talk Radio

Hardly a dwelling in America is without a television set, and, during a typical evening in an American home, hardly a hour passes in which flashing light and blaring sound does not emanate from the television, penetrating every region of the domicile. Television programming today consists primarily of situation comedies (‘sitcoms’) which clearly are designed to indoctrinate the viewer with respect to politically-correct behaviour.

Hollywood movies, once a tantalizing ‘treat’ experienced only on occasion, have become daily fare for the American, being introduced both by means of television and by video tape, CD, or DVD. Movies serve to incite lust in the viewer, to corrupt the standards and the behaviour of the viewer, and to accustom the viewer to accept as normal or inevitable phenomenon which he otherwise would find offensive, or which he instinctively would oppose.

Popular music today is little more than a continuous stream of depraved lyrics and deafening cacophony—degrading noise which is devoid of artistic merit—impinging continually upon the eardrums of American youth.

Radio, at one time a source of informative broadcasts ranging from news bulletins and ball games to Bible teaching, now offers only two categories of fare: popular music and so-called ‘talk’ radio. The primary role of talk radio is to provide an

incessant flow of hate-mongering Establishment propaganda, with the subject matter being controlled by ‘hosts’ who, often insulting and defamatory in their remarks, typically are Jewish.

In this lesson we examine television programming, Hollywood movies, popular music, and talk radio, and discover the forces which are behind their assault upon Christendom.

## 2.26 Freemasonry and Secret Societies

The term ‘Freemasonry’ may be used in a general sense to designate the entire realm of secret societies and so-called ‘fraternal’ organizations. In the eyes of many Christians, Freemasonry is benign. Indeed, Freemasonry permeates many Baptist congregations, particularly in the southern regions of the United States, with pastors and deacons themselves openly being members of a Freemasonic lodge.

In actuality, Freemasonry is anything but benign. Freemasonry embraces the occult; Freemasonry is bound up with deception and subterfuge; Freemasonry is incompatible with and antagonistic to the Christian Faith. It is impossible for a man—Baptist or otherwise—who is involved in Freemasonry to be a Christian.

Few Christians have an appreciation of the role of Freemasonry in contemporary society. In essence, the Establishment and Freemasonry are one and the same. Freemasonry permeates and dominates the upper ranks of government, military, agriculture, industry, transportation, banking, education, mass media, medicine, and religion. It is the hierarchy of Freemasonry which provides direction and coordination for the mechanism which is the *kosmos*.

In this lesson, we examine briefly the role of Freemasonry in contemporary society, after which we examine the characteristics of Freemasonry. In the process, we discover that Freemasonry not only is subversive to society as a whole, but also is a deadly enemy of the Christian Faith.

## 2.27 The Reformation, Reformation Theology, and Protestant Denominations

Many Christians view the Protestant Reformation of the 16th Century as a rescue and restoration of the Christian Faith, apart from which Christians still would be mired in the dreadful bog of Papistry. But can this actually be the case?

The record found in the Scripture indicates that the seeds of Papistry were sown in the apostolic era by covert Jews posing as Christians, one of the chief being James of Jerusalem, who shows himself to be the prototype of the Pope. Thus, Papistry is a force which has plagued the Church from the very beginning. The writings of the so-called ‘Church Fathers’ reveal that those men were mired to the neck in the dogma and myth which characterizes Papistry.

To accord legitimacy to the organization represented by the ‘Church fathers’—an organization which, according to historical record, eventually grew into the Papacy against which the Reformers rebelled—is to argue that Christ Jesus for a period of fifteen centuries neglected his very body, for the true Church is the figurative body of Christ.

Is it not eminently more reasonable to assume that Christ Jesus nurtured and protected the Church during this period, and

that the Christian Faith was preserved during this period by the Church, apart from the agency of Roman Papistry?

In this lesson, we make no attempt to survey the Reformation or its many consequences. The Scripture declares that God works together for good all things, for the sake of his elect; undoubtedly, the world is a better place because of the impairment of the Papacy which resulted from the Reformation. But while the Reformation provided benefit, it also is the source of serious error—error to which most Christians are oblivious.

Thus, in this lesson we look at the Reformation from the standpoint of its great and tragic failures with respect to the doctrines of the Christian Faith: in many respects, the Reformation established a new class of religiosity, founded upon some of the most pernicious doctrines of the Scribes, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees. Accordingly, we consider first the Scriptural command for separation, a command which the Reformers, by attempting to ‘reform’ the Papacy, ignored. Next, we examine the most serious errors of Reform Theology. Finally, we consider a major and serious consequence of the Reformation, namely, the fragmentation of the body of Christ by the mechanism of Protestant denominations.

## 2.28 Miraculous Healing

Christ Jesus and the apostles proclaimed and taught only one Gospel—the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. But even in the days of the apostles, counterfeits of the Gospel were being crafted and proclaimed. Of the almost endless variety of counterfeits of the Gospel, perhaps none is more devastating to its victims than is the ‘healing’ gospel. So-called ‘evangelists’ draw great crowds by promising to effect miraculous healing in order to cure disease, deformity, and injury.

The Scriptural basis upon which these charlatans claim their ability to heal is the 53rd chapter of Isaiah; they argue that healing in the present life is provided by the Atonement. While Jesus did heal many during the period of the Incarnation, this was done primarily as a sign or verification of his identity as the Christ. Likewise, the gift of healing was given to the apostles as a badge of authority. Once the authority of the apostles had been established and the exercise of the gift had demonstrated that apostolic authority resided only in the original disciples and in Paul (who, rather than Matthias, took the place of Judas), the gift of healing was withdrawn.

In this lesson we begin by examining the basis for the claim of healing in the Atonement, and the fallacy in that claim. Next, we consider the use of healing as a sign by which was established the identity of Jesus as the Christ, and by which, subsequently, the claim of apostolic authority was validated. Then we consider Scriptural evidence which reveals that the gift of healing was withdrawn during the era of the apostles. Next, we see that healing indeed *is* provided by the Atonement, but only through the Resurrection. We conclude by discovering that God does accomplish miraculous healing in this life, but only as an act of mercy, rather than as an entitlement which comes by virtue of the Atonement.

## 3. Conclusion

As should be evident from the preceding synopses, traditional Christian doctrine—despite its widespread embrace—often is

at variance with the teaching of the Scripture. So, as we progress through this course of study, be prepared to have some of your most cherished beliefs demolished by the plain declaration and teaching of the Scripture, and be prepared to view both reality and the Christian Faith in a new light. Keep in mind the fact that the gaining of understanding is as much a matter of the identification and casting out of error as it is a matter of the discovery and embrace of truth. Our goal in this course of study is to gain an understanding of the truth—an understanding which sets one free from the bondage of error, John 8:32.

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The evangelist and teacher is Russell L. Harris. The ministry is supported by the tithes of those who are taught by this ministry and by the offerings of those who understand the responsibility of the Christian to send forth and support men as evangelists, to proclaim and teach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God; consider Isaiah 32:20, Isaiah 52:7, Romans 10:13–15, Galatians 6:6, and I Corinthians 9:7–14. All teaching is made available without charge; this ministry has nothing to sell. Fellow Christians who desire to join in the support of this ministry, whether financially or through prayer, are invited and encouraged to do so.

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*These, having put the world in commotion,  
are also here present...and these all do contrary  
to the decree of Caesar, saying another  
to be king—Jesus.*

– Acts 17:6–7

*We ought obey God rather than men.*

– Acts 5:29