AMBASSADOR COLLEGE **Bible** LESSON 2

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

Here's good news...the MESSAGE sent from Heaven

WHY ISN'T the *true* gospel of Jesus Christ being preached *today? Why* haven't *you* heard Jesus' *own* gospel—the message *He* preached?

Understand that JESUS came into the world not as a *human* philosopher or idealist, but as A MESSENGER DIRECT *FROM GOD*, the Creator of heaven and earth, the One who gives you your very life and breath, the One who is All-Wise, and who knows the end from the beginning. Realizing this, you had better *heed* His message!

From the beginning to the end of the New Testament, that *MESSAGE*—that *GOSPEL*—is repeatedly taught. And yet we have *hundreds* of different denominations, each teaching a *different* message—and all of them appropriating Christ's name.

Why?

The truth is that men seem unwilling to take JESUS' MESSAGE *literally*. Men fail to realize that the same God who inspired Isaiah, Daniel, Micah, and the other prophets to write of His coming Kingdom, was the One who sent Jesus into the world to *PREPARE THE WAY* for that Kingdom.

Jesus BEGAN His ministry when He came into Galilee, "PREACHING *the gospel of the* KINGDOM OF GOD, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: REPENT ye, and BELIEVE the gospel" (Mark 1:14-15).

Jesus proclaimed *repentance* in connection with the gospel of God's Kingdom, or government. You have to be willing to *change*—to *repent* of *your* ways—in order to *enter* that Kingdom.

Notice that Jesus didn't say, "Just believe in ME." He said, "*Believe* the GOSPEL." What was this gospel—or *good news?* Jesus came preaching the good news—not only about Himself as Savior—but about the KINGDOM of God—the MESSAGE that God is Supreme *Ruler* of the universe, that He is soon going to establish His *government* on this earth, and that we should acknowledge His rule in our lives *now*. This is the true gospel! That *is* the *message* Jesus brought to this earth from God the Father!

Message Perverted Today

Most of *you* have been hearing a vague, sentimental gospel which DENIES the message Jesus brought from the Father about the SOON-COMING, WORLD-*RULING* KINGDOM OF GOD.

Instead, you hear a lot of vague, spiritual-*sounding* ideas like the following: "By Christians everywhere working together to bring peace, tolerance, and brotherly love, the Kingdom of God may at last be established in the hearts of all mankind."

Have YOU heard this kind of talk? Probably you have, because this is the kind of philosophy set forth by hundreds of the more "modern" Protestant ministers throughout the world today. In spite of the gripping *fact* of the prophesied DOOM of this present world which we studied in the first lesson, these MEN apparently *see no need* of God's intervention in human affairs. They TRY TO "SPIRITUALIZE AWAY" this prophesied intervention, and to hide their eyes from REALITY—mounting *world cataclysm!*

The "Kingdom of God" is often used as a sort of catch-all phrase to define the state of idealism which men hope to attain some day *through their* OWN *efforts*. Of course, the name of God is employed to give the idea a more "spiritual" flavor,

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but everyone knows that the results would depend on *man's ingenuity*.

Yes, most of you have heard *man's* gospel about the *person* of Christ, and *man's* sentimental theories about a so-called "kingdom" to be set up in your "heart." But spiritual TRUTH does *not* proceed from human ideas and reason; it comes as a *revelation* from God. It is contained in His Word—the Bible.

Does your *Bible* reveal God's kingdom as an *objective reality*—A LITERAL *KINGDOM* which will rule *this earth?* If so, then *who* is to be the *King* of the Kingdom? *What* are its *laws? When* will it take over the *rule* of this earth?

As you study this introduction—and the questions to follow—*keep these questions in mind.* The answers are found in *your Bible.*

Gospel Revealed to Mary

Before Jesus was born, an angel told Mary of His destiny: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the *throne* of his father DAVID; and *he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever;* and of his Kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32-33).

This inspired angelic messenger from God revealed to Mary important truths of which this world is in *total ignorance!* He revealed that CHRIST would someday take over an actual throne—an *EARTHLY* THRONE—the THRONE OF DAVID! History and prophecy both prove that David's throne is in existence *today*—awaiting Christ's return! (If you do not already understand this truth, write at once for Mr. Armstrong's *free* booklet, "*The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy.*")

The angel also said that Christ was to rule over the *house of Jacob* FOREVER. The angel did not say "reign spiritually, invisibly, in the hearts of believers." He said "reign over the house of Jacob"—a *literal nation.* He was to rule from an actual *earthly* throne.

Jesus Preached the Real Gospel of the Kingdom

Jesus himself preached throughout His entire ministry "the gospel of the *Kingdom*" (Mat. 9:35)—the GOOD NEWS OF HIS COMING WORLD RULE. The apostles knew that He would return and bring this present "world" (the inspired Greek word means "*age*") to an end by establishing His Kingdom over all nations. They asked Jesus for details, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming and of the end of the world?"—"the end of this *age*" (Mat. 24:3).

It is well known that the early New Testament church expected Christ's *return to this earth.* To teach them that this would not occur until a *great apostasy* first set in, Paul was inspired to write that there would be a great "falling away"—a *great* APOSTASY—before Christ returned (II Thes. 2:3). It had commenced even as he wrote these words: "There be some that trouble you, and would *pervert the gospel* of Christ" (Gal. 1:7).

Then in our time—at the crisis at the close of this age—*CHRIST SHALL RETURN TO "RULE ALL NATIONS WITH A ROD OF IRON"* (Rev. 19:15) for a thousand years, or millennium (Rev. 20:4) here *on this earth* (Rev. 5:10).

Stop and *think.* Do these scriptures indicate that the *Kingdom of God* was to be the church, or that the church—*men themselves*—would improve this world's society to the place that *it* would be called the *Kingdom of God?* No!

Even the world-recognized historian, Gibbon, in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, shows us that the *EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH BELIEVED* in Christ's *literal* return to set up God's Kingdom here on earth. In his well-known 15th chapter on the Christian church, Gibbon says:

"The ancient and popular doctrine of the *Millennium* was intimately connected with the second coming of Christ. As the works of creation had been finished in *six* days, their duration in their present state, according to a tradition attributed to the prophet Elijah, was fixed at *six* thousand years. By the same analogy it was inferred that this long period of labor and contention, which was now almost elapsed, would be succeeded by a joyful *Sabbath* of a *thousand years;* and that Christ, with the triumphant band of the saints and the elect who had escaped death, or who had been miraculously revived, would *reign upon earth* till the time appointed for the last and general resurrection."

Here is amazing proof even from a famous secular historian that Christ's message of God's rule here on earth was *taught* and *believed* by early Christians. Those who lived *shortly after Christ,* had the *TRUTH.* It had not been *LOST* yet!

WHO said that Christ was to establish God's rule here on earth? The answer is that this message was proclaimed by the Old Testament prophets, by the New Testament apostles and evangelists, by Jesus Christ himself, and is even referred to in numerous secular histories.

This message is the very *heart* of the true gospel. Study the following questions *in your own Bible*, and PROVE this with your very own eyes.

Final Important Instructions

Now we are ready for the actual lesson.

Is your Bible in front of you? If not, don't read another word.

STOP RIGHT HERE! Go and GET YOUR BIBLE. Also several sheets of paper, and a pencil or pen, so you can MAKE NOTES to help you remember what you learn. (This course is based on the King James Bible because we find it the most accurate.)

Got them? That's fine! Now we are ready to begin this lesson. REMEMBER—you must open your Bible to *every* passage we give you in this lesson. You must READ, and *re-read*, and actually *study* EVERY PASSAGE *IN YOUR BIBLE*. This is a Bible STUDY course—a *study* of the *Bible*, not just a study of these words we have sent you. Our words are intended to show you *where* to look in your Bible—to *help* you to know *how* to study the *Bible*.

Now, with your Bible, a good DICTIONARY, and your note paper and pencil or pen on a desk or table before you, here is the method of study: Write down, neatly, on your note paper, the caption "Lesson 2, Part I," and underscore it. WRITE DOWN the lesson heading and question section heading. Then, underneath, number each question, and *write down the answer to each*, in your own handwriting. As an EXAMPLE, for the question section, this is what you will write on your note paper: Coming Proclaimed by Prophets of Old. Then write:

1. Amos 3:7—"Surely the Lord God will do nothing but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets."

Also write in any other thoughts you want to remember. *Study* and *understand* this question.

Keep these lessons and your own notes and answers fastened in the binder. DO NOT SEND US YOUR ANSWERS TO THESE REGULAR LESSONS. Keep them for reference.

By writing down all these answers, and by writing down all the words of every Bible passage that answers a question, you will find you will REMEMBER what you have learned. It takes a little more time, but you will really LEARN your lessons that way, and remember them.

Yet some ask, "Is this WRITING *really* NECESSARY?" YES! EXTREMELY SO! Why?

YOU CAN *QUICKLY* REVIEW YOUR LESSONS. Also, it will aid you greatly in explaining the Bible to others.

WE ARE GIVING YOU THE BRIEF, COMPREHENSIVE, TRUE OUTLINE OF THE BIBLE. We know of no other place where you can obtain it! You will want to refer to these lessons AND THE EXPLANATION OF THEM IN YOUR OWN WORDS time after time in future years as you apply them to clear up related points in the Bible.

And remember, you are to spend at least a half hour *every* day studying YOUR BIBLE with this Correspondence Course. TESTS WILL BE SENT *after each group of four lessons.*

Now READ THE LARGE TYPE WORDS IN THIS FINAL INSTRUCTION SECTION right down to the end of this section—*pay no attention to the small type*. AND SUDDENLY—YOU HAVE A FLASH REVIEW OF ALL THE IMPORTANT POINTS! These serve as an INDEX, too. Simple and effective. *All the material in the Lessons is written this way. USE* THE LARGE WORDS FOR THIS PURPOSE!

Lesson 2
Part I

Coming Kingdom Proclaimed by Prophets of Old

1. Does God intervene in world affairs without first revealing it to His prophets? Amos 3:7.

2. Hundreds of years ago did *ISAIAH*, the prophet, FORESEE a time when God shall establish His Kingdom here on earth? Isaiah 2:1-4. Is it pictured as being a LITERAL KINGDOM *ON EARTH?* Will there be "mountains" (gentile *nations*) in *heaven?* Will there be strife and war in that Kingdom as there is now among nations? Verse 4.

3. Is God's rule over this earth FORETOLD BY *DANIEL?* Daniel 2:36-45. Note verse 44 particularly. Will other kingdoms still be in existence when Christ *begins* to set up His rule? Verse 44. What will happen to them? Does all this indicate that Daniel knew that God's Kingdom would be a *real* kingdom with *power* over all the nations?

4. Did *DAVID* speak of God ruling over the earth? Psalm 67:4.

5. Did *MICAH* say God would establish His Kingdom *on the earth* in the future? Micah 4:1-5.

6. Where does *JEREMIAH* say the throne of this Kingdom will be located? Jeremiah 3:17.

7. Who did Isaiah prophesy will rule over the earth? Read Isaiah 11:1-4. Who is the "*stem* of Jesse"? Acts 13:22. Is it David? Then who is the rod or shoot? Verse 23. And who is the BRANCH that grows out of Jesse's roots? Jer. 23:5-6. Thus it is *DOUBLY PROVED* Christ will rule.

8. Did *Daniel* foresee a time when the *Saints* will be given rule over the earth in God's Kingdom along with Christ? Dan. 7:18, 21-22, 27.

9. From our study, don't we find that the Old Testament *prophets* and *evangelists* ALL AGREE in telling us that God will intervene in human affairs and establish His government—His Kingdom—here on earth under Christ? Does God's basic purpose ever change? Malachi 3:6; Heb. 13:8.

10. We have now seen that God, through many inspired Old Testament prophets, gave notice to the world of this coming marvelous event. But, in addition to this, did He also send Christ as a *special* MESSENGER to proclaim *in advance* this glorious happening to us? And has He even sent ADDITIONAL MESSENGERS to proclaim the GOOD NEWS or GOSPEL to *us* who live *IN THESE END TIMES?*

CHRIST—the Special Messenger

1. Was JESUS SENT WITH A MESSAGE? John 12:49; 14:24.

2. From *where* did Jesus come to this earth? John 3:13. *Who* sent Him? Verse 34.

3. To *whom* was He sent? John 1:11.

COMMENT: Christ was sent primarily to "His own" nation—the Jews—with His message of the Gospel CONCERNING THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. Later, however, He prophesied His disciples would *proclaim the MESSAGE TO THE WHOLE WORLD* (Mat. 24:14).

4. In the first sermon *to Gentiles*, Peter tells more which verifies what we have learned, and adds to our knowledge about this New Testament message. Read Acts 10:36-37 and answer these questions: (1) Who sent this word, or message? (2) To whom was it sent *first*—to Gentiles? (3) By whom was it preached? (4) Where was it published or preached? (5) Where did Christ begin preaching it? (6) When did this message first begin?

5. Read Mark 1:14-15. (1) WHEN did this Message begin? (2) Who preached it? (3) From WHERE did He begin preaching it? (4) WHAT WAS THE MESSAGE, sent from God, that He preached?

6. In Mark 1, compare verse 1 with verse 14. Is the gospel OF Jesus Christ the very gospel He preached?—the news of the coming of the Kingdom of God? It is *NOT PRIMARILY A MESSAGE ABOUT HIMSELF PERSONALLY.*

COMMENT: Few know "the gospel *of* Christ." PEOPLE TODAY are taught in the churches that the "gospel *of* Christ" concerns only the *events* in the life of Christ, and of His being their Savior. THEY ARE *NOT TOLD THE GOSPEL MESSAGE* HE BROUGHT—THE GOSPEL OF THE COMING KINGDOM!

7. What does the expression in Mark 1:15, "the Kingdom is *at hand*," mean? Remember, the gospel of the Kingdom which Jesus preached was NOT a message about restoring self-rule to the people in Palestine 2000 years ago. How do we know? Let's read on.

8. When the Jews *wanted* to make Jesus their king, what did He do? John 6:15. When the disciples asked if Jesus would restore the Kingdom then, what was His reply? Acts 1:6-7. Did Jesus deny the Kingdom would be of that age? Did He imply it would *OCCUR IN a future age—OUR AGE?* Mat. 24:3. (Recall that the Greek word for "world" means *age*—not earth.) Rather, the meaning of Mark 1:15 is that *the time is "at hand" for us to* REPENT *so we can qualify to enter the Kingdom.*

COMMENT: The word *"GOSPEL" MEANS "GOOD NEWS,"* or "Glad Tidings." You are now reading of the "Glad Tidings" of the Kingdom! God knows far more than *we* can realize, what a joyous place it will be! FOUR THINGS ARE NECESSARY TO CONSTITUTE A KINGDOM: (1) TERRITORY of a (2) KING or Ruler, over (3) SUBJECTS or citizens, with (4) LAWS and government. Therefore we might define the true Gospel as "the GOOD NEWS of the TERRITORY of a KING ruling over SUBJECTS with LAWS and government."

The *TRUE GOSPEL, THEREFORE, INCLUDES* the message *about* Christ who is the King—but it is *more* than that. Christ, when He comes, will become the Ruler over all nations. It includes the message of salvation, which means becoming a CITIZEN in the Kingdom (Eph. 2:19). God's LAWS will be the law of the land.

Apostles Continue the Message!

1. Did JESUS COMMAND HIS MINISTERS TO PREACH this same gospel? Luke 9:1-2. As the apostles went to the nations, were they to teach the SAME MESSAGE Jesus had taught them? Mat. 28:19-20.

2. Did *PHILIP*, the evangelist, preach the gospel of the Kingdom to the Gentile Samaritans? Acts 8:12.

3. Did *PAUL* preach the gospel of the Kingdom? Acts 19:8 and 14:22. Among the Gentiles in Ephesus, what gospel did Paul preach? Acts 20:25. What gospel did the Jews at Rome finally reject? Acts 28:23-28.

4. Following the Jews' rejection of the gospel, did Paul preach the SAME GOSPEL *to the Gentiles?* Verse 31. Then Paul preached ONLY *ONE* GOSPEL—the gospel of the Kingdom of God—to both Jews and Gentiles, didn't he?

5. Would *FALSE MINISTERS* attempt to preach *"DIFFERENT" GOSPELS*—other gospels instead of the true gospel of Christ? Galatians 1:6. How many gospels are right, besides the *one* which Paul preached? Gal. 1:8. Are these other gospels actually *perversions* of the gospel of the Kingdom

brought by Christ? Gal. 1:7.

6. Since there are *false ministers*, wouldn't they have to *PERVERT* Christ's message of the real territory, the rulers, the citizens, the laws, or the government of the Kingdom of God?

7. What gospel is to be preached and published TODAY? Mat. 24:14; Mark 13:10.

COMMENT: The preachers, as a whole, in these dark days do *not* preach the gospel of the imminent establishment of God's *personal* control over the earth and the preparation which we should make in view of this. Rather, their energies are occupied with the "Ecumenical Movement"—a movement of *men's* churches to band themselves together for mutual protection!

You have now seen that the gospel *message* is proclaimed from one end of your Bible to the other. It is not some idea of uninspired men, but has been proclaimed "by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21). It is the *world's last hope for peace!*

Let us *REJOICE* in this GOOD NEWS!

PEACE IS AHEAD! The next vital part of this lesson will reveal *when* Jesus Christ will return to set up the perfect *rule* or *Kingdom of God* on this earth. Let's understand this all-important question.

WHEN Will Christ Come?

THE agnostic or the atheist may ridicule the teachings of Jesus Christ. But he cannot deny that *Jesus came* over 1900 years ago!

It is one of the most conclusively *proved* facts of history.

Yet what few realize is that *Jesus promised*, "I WILL COME AGAIN!" (John 14:3).

At his ascension, the apostles were startled by the appearance of two divine messengers who said: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, *shall so come* in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

Here we have two angelic messengers sent direct from God to confirm the words of Jesus that He would come again. The *EARLY* inspired New Testament *CHURCH KNEW* Jesus *meant* what He said. They believed it. They taught it. But the world has lost it.

Gradually, says Gibbon in his famous history, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. 15, the fact that Jesus must come a SECOND TIME to intervene in world affairs was regarded as unnecessary. Within a century and a half after Christ it was treated as a profound allegory—as a fable of the Jews. Finally it was regarded as rank heresy and punishable by death. The *WORLD* still *RIDICULES THE IDEA!*

Which Idea is Right?

IN THIS FRIGHTENING AGE OF THE ATOM, some sober thought is once again being directed toward the possibility of divine intervention of Christ's return. Yet among those who realize that God alone can save humanity, there is utter confusion—there are literally hundreds of *human ideas* concocted to explain *when*, *how* and *why* Jesus will return.

The CHURCHES are IN CONFUSION and doubt. Most do not believe God will intervene, yet they are afraid that man will obliterate human life!

It is high time we realize WHEN Jesus will fulfill His promise, "I will come again!"

Outstanding among the hundreds of differing ideas are *THREE GENERAL CONCEPTS* about Christ's return.

Is the Church the Kingdom?

Certainly the *most deeply rooted* is the ASSUMPTION *that the* CHURCHES TODAY CONSTITUTE THE KINGDOM OF GOD and that Jesus Christ CAME the second time through the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Since Jesus declared in the gospel that He would return to rule, it is taught that Jesus committed to the apostles and their successors the right to rule and judge the nations.

From this concept developed the practice in the Middle Ages for the Church to rule over nations and to impose its will on the temporal rulers of this earth. THIS MADE THE CHURCH—which called itself the kingdom of God—a PART OF THIS WORLD, a part of this system of human rule. It *OVERLOOKS* the fact that Jesus said: "My Kingdom is not of this world"—this system (John 18:36).

This is the *age* of mortal human rule guided by the influence of Satan (Luke 4:5-6). Jesus' Kingdom is *NOT* OF THIS AGE. It is of the World Tomorrow—"the world to come" (Heb. 2:5).

When asked if He would restore the Kingdom at that time, Jesus replied to the apostles: "It is *not* for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be *witnesses* unto me . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:6-8).

Never did Christ command His apostles to RULE THE NATIONS *of this world. Instead, He* COMMANDED THEM *to witness and preach the gospel!*

Notice that the apostles were *not* to know the time of the establishment of the Kingdom, but they *were* to be filled with the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. The coming of the Holy Spirit could *not* have been the second coming of Jesus Christ. Instead, the apostles were impowered by the Holy Spirit to be wit-

nesses – of what? – of the resurrection and the gospel of the Kingdom. Jesus ordered the disciples to "teach all nations." He promised to be with them in Spirit until the *end* of this age – the end of this present world of human misrule (Mat. 28:19-20).

"And this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the *end come*," said Jesus (Mat. 24:14). The end of what? This *age*, this world order – *when Jesus will come again!* (Mat. 24:3).

Christ did not return to found the Kingdom in the days of the apostles. Instead, He ordered the gospel preached to *prepare* the world for His return – His INTERVENTION in human affairs to rule this world for 1000 years (Rev. 20:4).

After the Millennium

Another and more modern concept is the doctrine that Jesus will COME ONLY AFTER peace and harmony permeate the *earth* and all nations are in perfect accord! What *WOEFUL MISUNDERSTANDING* of world events and Bible prophecy!

The restoration of peace and harmony *follows* the intervention of Jesus Christ. Jesus is now in heaven. It is He "whom the heaven must receive *until the times of restitution*" (Acts 3:21).

When Jesus returns, "the ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly. The highways lie waste" (Isa. 33:7-8). The earth will be in chaos – not at peace – before He returns.

CHRIST DOES *NOT* COME AFTER A MILLENNIUM (1000 years) of perfect human rule. It is to *abolish human misrule* and establish the Kingdom – the rule – of God that Jesus returns a second time. Resurrected Christians "live and reign *with* Christ a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4, last part). If they reign *with* Christ, Christ must already have come *before* the 1000 years commence!

Before the Millennium!

The third general teaching is that CHRIST COMES *BEFORE* THE MILLENNIUM. THIS WAS THE DOCTRINE TAUGHT IN THE EARLY NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH BEFORE THE TRUTH WAS LOST! The early inspired apostolic Church knew that Christ was to come *before* the millennium.

The second coming of Christ is a vital part of the PLAN OF GOD. It is all through the Bible – Old and New Testaments. God has been declaring the end or conclusion of His plan "from the beginning" through His prophets and apostles. But the world has not heeded their message (Isa. 46:10).

Jesus made VERY PLAIN just before His ascension that He would return visibly *after a fixed sequence of events*. He gave an outline of these events to His disciples upon the Mount of Olives. You will find it recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21.

About sixty years later He gave the Revelation to John, giving a more elaborate and detailed account of world events that lead up to the Lord's day – the day of the Lord, the day when Christ returns. These separate outlines of the same events are analyzed in Mr. Armstrong's FREE booklet, "*The Key to the Book of Revelation*." Be sure to read it!

In Matthew 24:32-33 Jesus gave a PARABLE so that we might know the time of His return. Since Jesus put such stress upon watching and waiting lest that day come when we are not aware, it is high time that we *study* and GRASP the significance of the SECOND COMING OF CHRIST!

Lesson 2
Part II

When Will Christ Return?

1. Did the people in Jesus' day anticipate that the Kingdom of God would be established in their time? Luke 19:11. What did Jesus speak in final answer to this mistaken idea? Verse 12.

2. In this PARABLE who is THE NOBLEMAN mentioned in verse 12? What is the far country? Compare Matthew 25:13, 14 and 15 with the parable in Luke.

3. Will Christ receive a kingdom while away in heaven? Compare Luke 19:12 with Daniel 7:13-14. Doesn't this parable plainly cover the *present church age* AFTER *which Jesus returns* from the far country – heaven?

4. Is there a *duration of time* during which the servants must trade and increase their talents? Who are the servants in Luke's parable? Are Christians ever called servants? I Peter 2:16

5. WHAT DUTY MUST THE SERVANTS FULFILL before the end of this age and the second coming of Christ can occur? Mat. 24:14. Did Jesus promise to be with His Church in its preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom UNTIL THE END OF THIS AGE? Mat. 28:20.

COMMENT: Today, do the churches preach a gospel *about* Christ the *person* – and *not* the gospel message He came to preach? Their gospels are *not* the TRUE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD – Galations 1:6. What was Paul's gospel? Acts 28:31. Was it the *only* one he preached? Gal. 1:9.

The GOSPEL of the Kingdom must *yet* in these final days GO TO ALL NATIONS *BEFORE* THE END comes! Mat. 24:14.

6. Not long after the New Testament Church began, did FALSE TEACHERS arise proclaiming that the

day of Christ had already occurred? II Thes. 2:1-2. Did Paul reject the doctrine that Christ had already returned a second time? Verse 3.

7. Was there to occur a falling into error – an APOSTASY – at the close of the apostle's ministry, *and also before* Christ returns? Verse 3.

8. Did Jesus also speak of it as occurring *before* He returns? Compare Mat. 24:5 with Rev. 6:2.

Notice: Jesus used the horseman of Rev. 6:2 to symbolize the *false* ministers claiming to represent Him or to be ruling *in* His *place* over a great mother church. The *real* Christ comes on a *white* horse described in Rev. 19:11. Notice, too, that the apostasy marks only the beginning of a long sequence of events covering 1900 years and culminating in the return of Jesus Christ!

Jesus Gives a Warning!

1. Will the day of God's intervention and the second coming of Christ be universally expected? Matthew 24:36, 42, 44. Or will it COME AS A SURPRISE?

2. To what period in earth's history did Jesus compare His return? Mat. 24:37. Did the people before the *deluge* realize that God would intervene supernaturally? Do the people of today realize God will intervene in *our* day?

3. Will Christ come at the moment that we would suppose He should? Luke 12:40. Will we know the day and hour of His return? Mat. 25:13.

COMMENT: These utterances of Jesus have often been taken to mean that the *apostles* would not know the day or the hour, but that *we* in these last days can know it. This is NOT true! Notice: Did Peter ask Jesus if He meant *only* the apostles would be unable to know the hour or if HE meant all – even *us* today – would never know? Luke 12:41. What was Jesus' reply? Verses 42-43.

Is Jesus' WARNING especially for *our* generation – those who are living "when he cometh"? Notice Jesus' reply in Luke 12:43 again. Are the apostles alive today?

How plain that Jesus meant that *WE* would NOT KNOW THE DAY OR THE HOUR. That is why Jesus told us to WATCH WORLD EVENTS so we could know perhaps even to the exact year – so that we could be *ready* whenever He comes.

4. If we cannot know the day and hour, can we KNOW VERY NEAR the actual time of His return? Mat. 24:32-33. Had Jesus already given in this chapter the *SIGNS* of the times to which He referred?

5. Does God ever act in human affairs without first making KNOWN HIS PLAN of action? Amos 3:7 and Isaiah 46:10.

Isn't the *spreading of the gospel* of the Kingdom *before* the end of the age A PREPARATION for the time of Christ's return to rule the nations?

6. Some denominations and sects spread the doctrine that Christ is already here. Did Jesus warn that such ideas would be spread *before* He really returns? Mat. 24:26.

7. Would others, however, believe that it is far off in the future? II Peter 3:4 and Mat. 24:48. Are either of these right?

A Sequence of Events Tells!

1. Daniel gives a DEFINITE *SEQUENCE* OF EVENTS which must occur before Christ will return. Read Daniel, chapter 2, especially verse 44. Notice the *ORDER OF GENTILE WORLD KINGDOMS* described in verses 36 through 42.

2. During a *FINAL UNION OF 10 FASCIST NATIONS* in Europe, symbolized by the toes (Dan. 2:42), will the God of heaven set up a kingdom? Daniel 7:7, 17 and 18.

3. Will this kingdom be left to mortal men of yet another nation? Dan. 2:44. Or will Christ take this kingdom? Daniel 7:13, 14.

4. In the parable recorded in Luke's gospel, did Christ receive a kingdom? Luke 19:11, 12. Aren't these accounts dealing with only *one* kingdom, the Kingdom of God?

5. Jesus gives ANOTHER SEQUENCE OF EVENTS in Mark 13 and Luke 21. Before you proceed further, be sure you read both of these chapters. Now turn to Matthew 24. Does Jesus describe a *tremendous noise which will rend the air?* Mat. 24:30-31. Does Paul mention a *TRUMPET'S SOUND* at Christ's return? I Thes. 4:16.

6. Is this the time of the RESURRECTION? I Thes. 4:16-17. *Which* trump sounds when the resurrection occurs? I Cor. 15:52.

7. Now notice in Scripture what is to happen at the LAST TRUMP. Rev. 10:7 and 11:15. Is this the time of Jesus' return? of the resurrection? of the establishment of the Kingdom? This tells us *when* Jesus will return.

COMMENT: Many claim that the *last* trumpet, mentioned in I Cor. 15:52, is different from the seventh or last trump mentioned in Rev. 11:15. But notice that John was inspired to write that THE SEVENTH OR LAST TRUMP IS THE TIME OF THE RESURRECTION (Rev. 11:15-18).

John is describing the same momentous event as Paul in I Corinthians. Thus we see that CHRIST WILL RETURN AT THE MIGHTY BLAST OF A GREAT TRUMPET, which will be heard by all the earth and *all who understand* will *know* that Christ has come!

HOW Christ Will Return

1. Will Christ return in the SAME MANNER AS HE DEPARTED? Acts 1:11. How did Christ *depart?* Acts 1:9. Was He taken up in a cloud? Will He *return* in a cloud? What does Mat. 24:27, 30, say about this? Did He leave from the Mount of Olives (Mt. Olivet)? Acts 1:12.

2. What will HAPPEN IN THE DAY THAT HE COMES? Zech. 14:4. Will His feet stand upon the MOUNT OF OLIVES "in *that* day"? "Day" here refers to a very brief period of time—a 24-hour day. And who will appear with Him? Zechariah 14:5, last part.

3. Did Christ *VISIBLY* ascend from the Mount of Olives? Acts 1:9-11. Will *all see* Him coming? Rev. 1:7. Does this, then, say there will be a *secret rapture* of the saints from this earth?

COMMENT: When Jesus returns VISIBLY and in great glory (Mat. 25:31), He will travel *AS LIGHTNING* from east to west around the earth to gather the elect (Mat. 24:27). This is the only possible way by which every individual on a *round* earth could see Him.

John 14:19 is often misapplied in an attempt to prove that Jesus will come secretly and invisibly. This verse does NOT say that the world will NEVER see Jesus return. It says that the people then living—2000 years ago—would see Him no more because He went to heaven. He WILL be seen VISIBLY when He returns.

The expression, "and they also which pierced Him" (Rev. 1:7), refers not to the ONE Roman who literally pierced Jesus' side, or only to the Jews, but to the entire human family—YOU and ME! Our *sins* took His life (Zech. 12:10).

4. Note I Thes. 4:16-17. At what SIGNAL will Christ return? Will there be a *SOUND* to announce His coming or will He come *secretly?*

5. Does the word "we" which is mentioned in I Thes. 4:17 mean everyone or just the *saints*—those who will RISE to meet Christ at His coming? Will they be with Christ forever? Verse 17. Does I Cor. 15:51-52 verify the above points? Who is King of the saints? Rev. 15:3.

6. Do the *HOLY ANGELS* also come *WITH* Christ? Mark 8:38. When Christ came to the earth the first time, did He come with *power?* Or was He scourged, mocked, and abused? Isa. 50:6; John 19:1. Will His second coming be with POWER and GREAT GLORY? Mat. 24:30. Will ARMIES of angels follow Him? Rev. 19:14.

7. We now see that Christ and His armies of angels will descend in clouds and that the saints (the righteous—both dead and living) will rise to meet Him in the air. How is this MEETING ACCOMPLISHED? Mat. 24:27. As He and His angels travel *SWIFTLY* AROUND the EARTH, the SAINTS JOIN Him and remain *forever* with Him.

GENERAL SUMMARY

GOD HAS A PLAN! Through the prophets He has given a *fixed sequence of events* leading up to the RETURN OF CHRIST.

The MANNER of Christ's return has been WOEFULLY MISUNDERSTOOD. He comes VISIBLY to a God-rejecting world in order to enforce peace. He comes at the BEGINNING of the MILLENNIUM.

The *false doctrine* that the churches can bring about a millennium of peace *before* Christ comes is *utterly impossible.* World events prove it.

National leaders now realize that the only hope of saving our civilization from self-destruction is the formation of a strong WORLD GOVERNMENT. But all attempts at this encounter suspicion, distrust, and *hate.* The hard *fact* is that *MAN HAS CONSISTENTLY FAILED—and will continue to fail to attain this objective.*

HUMAN NATURE HAS NOT CHANGED. Men are still quite willing to spill the blood of their fellows to satisfy their *lust* and *greed.* Do the men of this world really know the WAY to *peace?* God Almighty says of sinful men in general: "The WAY of *peace* have they *not* known" (Romans 3:17). We hear a lot of sentimental platitudes about the hopes of achieving peace through the United Nations—but the pitiful *results* confirm Paul's inspired statement that *carnal men simply do not know the way to peace.*

The history of human woe cries out that in trying to govern himself man has been trying the impossible. It shows that within himself as he is *now* created, man has neither the PROPER *desire* nor the MENTAL *capacity* to master this world. The churches cannot reform this civilization. Christ must return to inaugurate the promised age of peace!

Why are men so in ignorance of this vital subject today?

Because they are in ignorance of the countless prophecies which clearly reveal that God has ordained that Christ shall *rule* this earth, teach men the *way to peace*, and show all men the right way to live. Your Bible shows that this is to occur after a definite series of events—and after man has had time to write a lesson in human suffering to show once and for all that man's *own* ways lead to *death* (Prov. 14:12).

The *WORLD IS UNHAPPY* today. Just look around the earth at the awful misery! Think of the great slaughter of human beings prophesied for the immediate future! Christ said, "I am come that they might have LIFE [here and hereafter], and that they might have it MORE ABUNDANTLY!" (John 10:10).

PEOPLE WILL BE HAPPY WHEN CHRIST RETURNS TO RULE. They will live ABUNDANTLY *happy* lives! *Under His guidance* the necessary changes will be made in mankind so all may attain these things. "Jesus [the Savior] shall *save* the people from their sins!" (Mat. 1:21).