

God's Eternal Plan: Lesson 1

Introduction

The Bible is a book that is very famous, and yet many people do not know a lot about it. It remains a best seller even in the twenty-first century, and many people try to guide their lives by its message. What is the Bible? Why is it so important? What is its message?

Why the Bible?

The Bible claims to be the written message of God to human beings to teach them regarding themselves, their condition, His work, and what He would have them to do (2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:20-21).

We understand that there is more to this world and to this universe than what we can see, hear, smell, taste, or touch, and that there is a power greater than ourselves out there. We can see the hand of a Creator in the splendor and complexity of the world around us (Romans 1:19-20), and we may wonder if this Creator has provided us with any other messages.

Men of old like Moses, David, and Isaiah were given messages by this Creator, and they spoke His message to Israel and other nations (2 Peter 1:20-21). In the first century CE, God took on the form of a man in His Son Jesus and taught us about God through His life, words, and deeds (John 1:1, 1:14, 1:18, 14:6-11). Jesus' messengers, the Apostles, later taught Jesus' message about His Kingdom and how people were to serve Him (Acts 2). The messages of the prophets, Jesus, and the Apostles were recorded in the books that now make up the Bible. As God's completed revelation to mankind, the Bible, also called the Scriptures, provide us with the ability to know about God and His work and how He would have us serve Jesus His Son and do His will (1 Corinthians 13:8-10, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 1 John 2:1-6).

What is the Bible?

The Bible is really a collection of 66 books. The first 39 books are called the Old Testament, and the last 27 are called the New Testament.

The Old Testament was written mostly in Hebrew with a few small sections of Aramaic between 1450 and 420 BCE. The New Testament was written in Greek between 48 and 96 CE.

Many people think that the Bible has been corrupted or has been translated too many times. These ideas are not true! The most popular English translations of the Bible are based on the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Thousands of portions of copies, and many full copies, of the Bible have been discovered, some dating back to the days of Jesus and immediately afterward. While there are some differences (called variants) among the copies, none of them significantly change any part of the message. We can have complete confidence that the Bible we have today accurately provides God's message to mankind just as it did thousands of years ago.

There are many different translations of the Bible out there, and it is easy to get confused as to which one to choose. We recommend an English Standard Version (ESV), New American Standard Bible (NASB), or a New King James Version (NKJV). These translations are very faithful to the original languages. If you have another version of the Bible, that is fine for now--you can understand the basic message and truths of God from them.

What does the Bible teach?

The basic message of the Bible is God's eternal plan (Ephesians 3:11). The Bible shows how this plan develops throughout time.

The Bible begins with the creation, man's first sin, the Flood, and God's choice of Abraham (covered in lesson 2). It continues with the story of Israel and their land (lesson 3), King David and God's promises for him and the future (lesson 4), the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus (lesson 5), the Apostles, the church, and the Kingdom (lesson 6), and Jesus' return and the eternal fate of mankind (lesson 7).

Questions for Lesson 1

1. What does the Bible claim to be?
 - a. A book of philosophy.
 - b. A history and science textbook.
 - c. A book with many good ideas.
 - d. God's message to mankind.

2. God spoke His message through the prophets, Jesus, and the Apostles.
True or False

3. The Bible has been translated too many times to be believed.
True or False

4. What is the basic message of the Bible?
 - a. God's eternal plan.
 - b. There is no basic message.
 - c. The history of Israel.
 - d. Morality.

5. Why do you think God decided to have His message written down?

God's Eternal Plan: Lesson 2

Creation to Abraham

Let's now begin looking at the Bible and learning about God's eternal plan!

Creation and Fall

The Bible begins with the story of creation. God speaks all things into existence over a six day period and rests on the seventh day.

On the sixth day, God made man and woman in His image (Genesis 1:26-27), which means that human beings have souls (cf. John 4:24). The first man and woman, Adam and Eve, lived in the Garden of Eden and enjoyed an unbroken relationship with God.

God had one rule for them: they were not to eat from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Eve was tempted and ate of that fruit, and gave also to her husband. Because of this disobedience, men and women were cursed with the sentence of death, were cast out of the Garden, and their relationship with God was broken by their sins.

God provided a message of hope even at this time-- a descendant of the woman would crush the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15), a work fulfilled by Jesus on the cross.

Bible passages: Genesis 1-3.

After the Fall

Sin spread quickly after Adam and Eve left the garden. Eve gave birth to Cain and Abel, and Cain killed Abel out of jealousy (Genesis 4).

Many generations of men passed and their sins increased to the point where God was sorry for having made man, and He resolved to destroy all mankind by a flood. Only Noah and his family were spared-- they built an ark and preserved some of every kind of animal. After the Flood, God made a covenant, or agreement, with all flesh, that He would never again destroy all life by a flood (Genesis 6-9).

After a few generations, all mankind lived together and spoke one language, and they decided to build a tower to heaven in Babylon to keep them together and make a name for themselves. God did not approve-- He confused their language and caused them all to scatter (Genesis 11).

Bible passages: Genesis 4-11.

Abraham

Man was now in a sorry condition. He had sinned against God, barely survived after the Flood, and now humans were scattered all over the earth, speaking different languages.

At this low point, God continues to unfold His plan. He chooses one man, Abram/Abraham, a resident of Ur in modern-day southern Iraq, and calls him to move to the land of Canaan. Abraham believes in God and is obedient to Him. Because of his faithfulness, God makes a covenant with Abraham. God will make Abraham a father of many nations. God will give the land of Canaan to his descendants and will be their God. Finally, through Abraham's descendant, Jesus of Nazareth, all the nations of the earth will be blessed.

God's plan will, from here on out, be accomplished through Abraham and his descendants. We will see how the plan continues in lesson 3!

Bible passages: Genesis 12-22, Romans 4, Galatians 3:16, James 2:14-26.

Questions for Lesson 2

1. According to the Bible, God created all things...
 - a. ...God did not create the world.
 - b. ...over billions of years.
 - c. ...in seven days.
 - d. ...over a long period of time.

2. The Bible teaches that the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that Adam and Eve ate was an apple.
True or False

3. Why did God decide to destroy all flesh with a flood?
 - a. He felt like it.
 - b. The great sin of mankind.
 - c. The Bible does not give a reason.
 - d. Satan tempted Him to do it.

4. God chose Abraham because of his faith and obedience.
True or False

5. Is man's condition, on his own, any better today than it was after the Fall, the Flood, and the Tower of Babel? Why or why not?

God's Eternal Plan: Lesson 3

Abraham to the Monarchy

We have seen God's eternal plan in the creation, through the fall of man, the Flood, and the promise in Abraham. Let us continue our investigation into God's plan!

The Patriarchs

Men like Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph are called the "patriarchs," the first men with whom God spoke and with whom He made covenants. We have already learned some things about Adam, Noah, and Abraham from lesson 2.

When Abraham was 100 and Sarah, his wife, was 90, they had a son named Isaac. God chose Isaac and made the same promises to him that He made to Abraham.

Isaac's younger son was named Jacob. Through various schemes Jacob obtained the birthright and blessings. God chose Jacob, whom He renamed Israel, and it would be the descendants of Israel's twelve sons who would be God's people, obtain the land of Canaan, and through whom Jesus Christ would come.

Two of Jacob's sons deserve mention here. Judah received the birthright and the promise that he would rule; Jesus would come from the tribe of Judah. Joseph was Jacob's favorite son, sold into slavery by his brothers, and who eventually ends up being second-in-command over the whole land of Egypt. During a severe famine, all of Jacob's family moves to Egypt under Joseph's care.

Bible Passages: Genesis 23-50

The Exodus

The Bible reveals that the Israelites, the descendants of Jacob, remained in the land of Egypt for about four hundred years (Genesis 15:13). During that time the family grew into a nation.

The Egyptians grew fearful of the Israelites' growing numbers and power, and enslaved them, put them to hard labor, and commanded that all Israelite male babies were to be killed.

One such baby was sent down the Nile River and was rescued by a princess in Pharaoh's (the Egyptian king) house. He was named Moses, and he grew up in the house of Pharaoh. He later fled to the land of Midian, to the east of Egypt, and God appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai. God chose Moses to lead His people Israel out of oppression in Egypt to the land He promised to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Moses returned to Egypt. God visited many plagues upon the Egyptians and ultimately overthrew the Egyptian army in the Red Sea. When the Israelites saw the plagues and the parting of the Red Sea, and how God had delivered them with a mighty hand, they then understood the great power of God.

Bible Passages: Exodus 1-15

The Wilderness

God then led Israel through the wilderness of Sinai and Midian for forty years. That "wilderness" is really an inhospitable desert, and even though God provided for all their needs, the Israelites constantly grumbled about their condition. God brought them to Mount Sinai where He made a covenant with them and gave them His laws as revealed in Exodus and Leviticus. The people continued to grumble, and God sentenced that entire generation to death in the wilderness, including Moses.

Bible Passages: Exodus 16-40, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

The Conquest and Judges

When the next generation grew up, God began to deliver the land of Canaan into the hands of Israel through Joshua. The Israelites destroyed many cities and moved into others. God had proven faithful to His promises to Abraham: Israel was His people, He was their God, He made a covenant with them, and now He had given them the land of Canaan.

Unfortunately, the Israelites proved less faithful to God. They did not finish the job of entirely obtaining the land, and they ended up serving the gods of the people of the land. For around three hundred or so years, God would raise up judges in the land to deliver the people from oppressors, and then the people would go right back and serve other gods again. It was not a good time for Israel.

Bible Passages: Joshua, Judges

Questions for Lesson 3

1. Jesus was a descendant of Jacob through Joseph.
True or False
2. Which of the following did God do to deliver Israel from Egypt?
 - a. He blinded all the Egyptians.
 - b. He parted the Red Sea for Israel to pass through.
 - c. He afflicted Egypt with plagues.
 - d. He sent lions against the Egyptians.
3. What happened to the generation of Israelites that wandered in the Wilderness?
 - a. They died in the Wilderness for their sin.
 - b. They returned to Egypt.
 - c. They entered the Promised Land.
 - d. God drowned them in the sea.
4. The Israelites faithfully conquered the whole land of Canaan.
True or False
5. Can you think of times today when God is faithful to people, but yet they still doubt Him and do not do what He says?

God's Eternal Plan: Lesson 4

David to the Second Temple

We have seen God's eternal plan and how God fulfilled many of His promises to Abraham through the people of Israel. Let us see how God's plan continues in Israel's history!

The United Monarchy

While the Israelites were in the land of Israel, things were not going well. The people were suffering at the hands of the Philistines, a foreign people in the land, and while judges like Eli and Samuel were faithful, Eli's and Samuel's sons were not. The people wanted a king like other nations had.

The first king of Israel was a man named Saul. Saul looked the part but was not faithful to God.

God then chose David, the youngest son of Jesse, a man of Judah. David is the one who killed Goliath, the Philistine giant. David was a man after God's own heart. God made a covenant with David, that the throne of his kingdom would remain forever (2 Samuel 7). Jesus Christ would be a descendant of David. David is also responsible for many of the psalms.

David's son Solomon came after him. Solomon was very wise and built the (first) Temple of God in Jerusalem. It is believed that Solomon wrote many of proverbs, the Preacher in Ecclesiastes, and is responsible for the Song of Solomon. Unfortunately, Solomon was not as faithful to God as his father was, and in the days of his son Rehoboam, the kingdom was divided.

Bible passages: 1-2 Samuel, 1 Kings 1-11, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles 1-9; Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon.

The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah

When the kingdoms divided in the days of Rehoboam, the ten northern tribes became the Kingdom of Israel, with Jeroboam as their king, while Rehoboam remained king of Judah and parts of Benjamin.

Jeroboam built two temples with golden calves in them in Israel. God considered that sinful, and the kingdom was taken from Jeroboam's son and given to another. Future kings of Israel, like Ahab, would be even more sinful. The northern kingdom always maintained those temples and statues, and because of their sins, God cast the northern kingdom into exile in Assyria around 722 BCE.

Some kings of Judah remained faithful to God, while other kings followed after Israel and served idols. Unfortunately, the sins of Judah multiplied, and God had Jerusalem and the Temple

destroyed by the hands of the Babylonians and cast the kingdom of Judah into exile in Babylon around 586 BCE.

Throughout this time, God sent messages to the people of Israel and Judah through prophets like Elijah, Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. These prophets warned the people of Israel and Judah that if they did not change their ways and serve God, God would bring destruction and ruin upon them. The people did not listen, and thus destruction came upon the people. Thankfully, the prophets' messages were not all doom and gloom: God also gave through them the promise that one day a king in the line of David would rule over God's people in peace and prosperity forever. These promises all pointed to Jesus and His Kingdom.

Bible passages: 1 Kings 12-22, 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles 10-36; Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Hosea, Amos, Micah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah.

The Exile and Return

The exiles of God's people were very traumatic events. Most of the Israelites of the northern ten tribes remained in exile and just became like the rest of the people in the lands in which they lived. Many of the Israelites of Judah (called Jews from now on), however, repented after they were exiled, and tried to remain faithful to God. Some of the exiles, like Daniel, Esther, and Nehemiah, became part of the governments of Babylon and Persia, and helped their people through their positions.

Around 539 BCE, Cyrus the Persian overthrew the Babylonian Empire, and allowed the Jews to return to their homeland in Judah. Many did and began the work of rebuilding the city. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah encouraged them to rebuild the Temple, and around 515 BCE, the (second) Temple was finished.

The Jews who returned had learned their lesson and no longer served other gods. Nevertheless, they remained under the authority of large empires-- the Babylonian empire, the Persian empire, and then the empires of the Greeks and later the Romans. The Jews eagerly looked forward to the fulfillment of the promises of the prophets regarding the future king, the Messiah, who would restore the fortunes of Israel.

Bible passages: Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther; Ezekiel, Daniel, Joel, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

Questions for Lesson 4

1. With which king did God make a covenant, promising that there would always be one of his descendants on the throne of his kingdom?
 - a. Solomon.
 - b. Rehoboam.
 - c. David.
 - d. Saul.

2. The people of Israel and Judah, more often than not, listened to the prophets.
True or False

3. Why did God exile Israel and Judah?
 - a. Because they sinned and served other gods.
 - b. He liked Assyria and Babylon more.
 - c. He was powerless before Assyria and Babylon.
 - d. Israel did not trust enough in Egypt.

4. Many Jews returned to Judah after the exile and rebuilt the Temple.
True or False

5. Israel's great sin was idolatry-- serving other gods along with making an image and calling it God. Do you think idolatry is a problem today? Why or why not?

God's Eternal Plan: Lesson 5

Jesus of Nazareth

We have seen how God's eternal plan developed through the Old Testament. Let us now consider the climax of that plan in the life of Jesus Christ!

Jesus of Nazareth

The prophets had foretold that in the days of the fourth empire God would establish a kingdom that would never end, ruled over by a king in the line of David, who would restore the fortunes of God's people. Expectations, therefore, were very high in the first centuries BCE and CE. And this is when Jesus of Nazareth enters the scene.

Bible passages: Isaiah 7; 9; 11, Daniel 2; 7.

His Birth

Jesus was born to Mary through the Holy Spirit according to the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14. He was not born into a wealthy family, but to a carpenter's family in the backwoods of Galilee, in northern Israel. His humble origins tell us much about Him and His purpose.

Bible passages: Matthew 1-2, Luke 1-2.

His Life

When Jesus was about thirty years old, He began to do the work of God His Father. After being baptized by John the Baptist, He began to preach good news to the people of Israel about the coming Kingdom of God.

Jesus performed many miracles to prove that He was of God and that the Kingdom was coming. He healed the sick, cast out demons, and was even able to raise the dead.

He spent most of His time teaching His twelve disciples and the multitudes of poor Israelites that would come to listen to Him. The twelve especially received lessons about the Kingdom that was coming, although they did not truly understand it until later.

Jesus did not have a good relationship with the religious authorities among the Jews of the day--the Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, and lawyers. Even though they often challenged Him, He always showed them God's truth, and prevailed.

Bible passages: Matthew 4-19, Mark 1-10, Luke 4-19, John 1-12.

His Death

In March or April of 30 CE, Jesus traveled to Jerusalem to observe the Jewish feast of the Passover. He had previously revealed to His disciples that He was going to be arrested, treated badly, and killed, and rise again on the third day. The disciples did not understand what He meant.

Jesus traveled to the Temple in Jerusalem often and taught the people there. The religious authorities were tired of His teachings and desired to have Him executed.

On the night of the Passover, one of Jesus' disciples, Judas Iscariot, betrayed Jesus into the hands of these religious authorities. After a show trial, He was handed over to the Roman authority, Pontius Pilate. Pilate agreed to the plans of the Jews, and Jesus was handed over to be scourged (lashed with a whip) and to be crucified (to hang upon a cross). Thus Jesus died, punished as a common criminal.

Bible passages: Isaiah 53, Matthew 20-27, Mark 11-15, Luke 20-23, John 13-19.

His Resurrection

If the story of Jesus ended here, it would not be very notable. Yet unlike everyone who has ever lived, Jesus rose from the dead through the power of God on the third day, never to die again.

He appeared to some of the women who followed Him and then also to His disciples. They could not believe that Jesus was raised from the dead!

Jesus then explained to them the nature of His Kingdom. God intended to restore the fortunes of His people, but it would not be as the Jews expected. The Kingdom would be spiritual, not physical, and people would gain freedom from bondage to Satan and sin, not the Romans. Jesus had died as the sacrifice for sin, as the prophets of old had seen, and He would now rule over heaven and earth.

Bible passages: Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20-21, 1 Corinthians 15.

Questions for Lesson 5

1. The Bible tells us that Jesus was born on December 25.
True or False
2. Why did Jesus teach and work miracles?
 - a. To gain great fame and renown.
 - b. To teach about the coming Kingdom.
 - c. To make a lot of money.
 - d. To seek and save the lost of Israel.
3. Why did Jesus die?
 - a. For everyone's sin.
 - b. To fulfill God's plan.
 - c. He sinned greatly.
 - d. Pilate wanted to anger the Jews.
4. On the third day after His death, Jesus was raised from the dead.
True or False
5. How does Jesus' death for you make you feel? How do you think you should respond to what God has done for you, if you believe that He has done these things?

God's Eternal Plan: Lesson 6

The Early Church

We have seen how Jesus fulfilled the prophecies regarding Him. Let us see how God's plan unfolds after His resurrection!

Jesus' Twelve Disciples/Apostles

While Jesus was alive on earth, He selected twelve men to be a special group of disciples. After He sent them out to teach and preach, they were called the twelve Apostles.

Jesus promised these twelve Apostles that He would grant them authority. They would proclaim the message of Jesus and His Kingdom to the people in power. He would give them the Holy Spirit who would guide them in their teaching and efforts.

For forty days after His resurrection, Jesus continued to teach His Apostles regarding Himself and the Kingdom. He then ascended to heaven to be with the Father and was given all authority in heaven and on earth.

Ten days later, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit fell upon the twelve Apostles, and they began speaking in languages they did not know. The Kingdom was being established.

Bible passages: Luke 6:12-16, Luke 9:1-6, John 14-16, Luke 24, John 20-21, Acts 1:1-2:13.

The Church Begins

On that day of Pentecost, Simon Peter, one of the Apostles, stood up and preached to the assembled Jews that God had made Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had crucified, both Lord and Christ (Messiah). On that day, 3,000 people believed, were immersed in water (baptized) for the remission of their sins, and became the first church. They gathered frequently, devoting themselves to learning from the Apostles, prayer, and spending time together, and the church continued to grow and grow.

It would not be long until the Jewish authorities wished to put an end to this. They warned the Apostles many times to stop preaching and teaching, but the Apostles refused to listen to them. One believer, Stephen, was brought before the Jewish council on false charges, and preached a message against the Jews. They stoned him for it, and many Jews began persecuting the church. The persecution worked against the Jews, however, because as the believers spread outside of Jerusalem, they took the message of Jesus with them. Churches were established in many towns and cities in Judea and surrounding regions.

Bible passages: Acts 2:14-8:40.

Jews and Gentiles

The message of Jesus Christ, often called the Gospel, was spreading. One of the believers' greatest opponents, Saul of Tarsus, saw a vision of the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus, and himself converted. The church grew mightily.

The Gospel only went to the Jews at the beginning. It was in God's plan for Jesus and the church, however, for the Gentiles (everyone who is not a Jew) to be given the opportunity to hear and believe also. Therefore, God sent Peter to Cornelius, a Roman army officer, and while Peter preached to Cornelius, the Holy Spirit came upon Cornelius and his friends, and Peter understood that God was calling the Gentiles also.

The message was now preached to both Jews and Gentiles. In the city of Antioch, believers began to be called Christians. Saul of Tarsus, who was now called Paul, began to go out and preach to Jews and Gentiles living in modern-day Turkey. Many heard and believed; others refused to believe and treated Paul harshly.

Some of the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem were not so sure about these Gentile Christians, and began to teach that the latter should follow the law of Moses. The Apostles, including Paul, met about this issue, and they understood from the prophets and the Holy Spirit that the Gentile believers should not be forced to follow the law of Moses. God had brought Jew and Gentile together into one body through the blood of Jesus Christ!

Bible passages: Acts 9-15, Galatians, Ephesians 2:11-18.

The Gospel Spreads

Paul made three other preaching trips, often called missionary journeys, preaching the Gospel everywhere he went. He and others went from modern-day Turkey over to Greece and Italy. Paul even preached in Rome!

Within forty years of Jesus' death and resurrection, the Gospel had spread throughout the Mediterranean world. There were churches of Christ in major cities from Judea to Italy. Paul and others had great concern for these churches, and they corresponded with many of them through letters. Many of these letters now make up part of the New Testament, and they teach us about Jesus, the Kingdom, the church, and how we are to live our lives and do God's will, both as individuals and as churches.

God's promise to Abraham was fulfilled. Through Jesus Christ, all the nations of the earth were blessed.

Bible passages: Acts 12-28, Romans through Jude.

Questions for Lesson 6

1. Jesus gave special authority to the twelve Apostles to set forth His message after His ascension.
True or False
2. What message did Peter preach on the day of Pentecost?
 - a. God made Jesus both Lord and Christ.
 - b. Give us your money to be saved.
 - c. All you need to do is believe to be saved.
 - d. Jesus died a criminal.
3. God allowed Gentiles to become Christians without having to follow the Law of Moses.
True or False
4. Where do we learn about Paul's messages to churches and people?
 - a. Letters (or Epistles).
 - b. The Old Testament.
 - c. The Gospels.
 - d. Revelation.
5. Do you think the Gospel of Christ is still important for us today? Why or why not?

God's Eternal Plan: Lesson 7

God's Plan, Present and Future

We have seen how God accomplished His eternal plan in the past. Let us now consider the present and future of God's eternal plan!

God's Plan Today

It has been almost two thousand years since the events in the New Testament took place. The Apostles and all the early Christians have long passed on.

Nevertheless, we have the testimony of the Apostles and their associates regarding the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and how to live in God's Kingdom revealed in the New Testament. Through that message we can learn about Jesus and His Kingdom just like the early Christians did in the first century.

The New Testament indicates that Jesus is still Lord, and His Kingdom remains and is growing on the earth in the form of the church (Matthew 28:18, Colossians 1:13, 18). We can learn everything we need to know about Jesus Christ and how to serve Him within the Bible (John 20:30-31, 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

We have faith that if we learn the message of Jesus Christ and serve Him just as the Christians of the first century did, we can share in the same faith, the same hope, and the same promises (Romans 8). God's plan, promoted within the church, is just as active today as it has ever been (Ephesians 3:10-11)!

God's Plan: The Final Phase

We have seen throughout the past six lessons how God has been faithful in fulfilling His promises and His plan. Since God has been faithful and remains faithful, we have every reason to believe that God will be faithful in accomplishing His final promises to mankind.

The Bible reveals that Jesus will return to earth in the same way that He left it (Acts 1:11). While we may not understand precisely how everything will take place in the end, the Scriptures provide us with a good idea of how it will occur.

On the final day, Jesus will return to earth. At that point, everyone will be resurrected from the dead and transformed for eternity. Jesus will then judge everyone on the basis of what they have done: those who did not believe in God and/or who disobeyed Him will be condemned to hell, while those who believed in God and obeyed Him will remain with God and Christ forever.

Jesus will restore the Kingdom back to His Father, and the present heavens and earth will be destroyed. God will then establish a new heavens and earth, full of righteousness and unimaginable glory, and the faithful will dwell there with God forever, suffering no more misery, pain, or evil.

God's plan has been fully made known, and God's revelation to man ends as it began. Man will again enjoy an unbroken relationship with God, just as Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden. The faithful will enjoy an eternity of glory with God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. May that day come quickly!

Bible passages: Matthew 24:36-25:41, Acts 17:30-31, Romans 2:5-10, Romans 8:17-23, 1 Corinthians 15, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:10, 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9, 2 Peter 3:1-12, Revelation 20:11-22:6.

We hope that you have been encouraged by our study of God's eternal plan!

Questions for Lesson 7

1. If we hear, believe, and obey the Gospel of Christ like people did in the first century, we can share in the same hope of salvation.
True or False
2. According to the Bible, when will Jesus return to the earth?
 - a. After the Tribulation.
 - b. On the final day, the day of Judgment.
 - c. He is not returning.
 - d. After the Rapture.
3. According to the Bible, which of the following will take place on the final day?
 - a. Glorification of believers.
 - b. The Judgment.
 - c. Condemnation of unbelievers.
 - d. The resurrection of the dead.
4. There is no such place as Hell.
True or False
5. In your own words, please briefly describe God's eternal plan as you have learned it in this course.