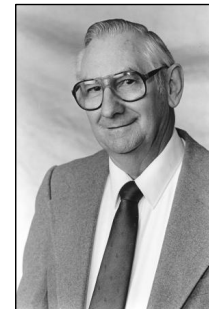




**The unabridged writings of Fred Morris,
Manna Publications**

The meaning of... GOD'S ETERNAL PLAN



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MANNA FOR ALL

To the reader: Have your Bible open as you study these notes. Remember that they have not been edited by the UK editorial team but are part of Fred's legacy of Bible teaching literature he wrote after his retirement to the USA in 1990. These notes also serve as the legacy of the late Jim Norman, Manna Publications UK, who checked and formatted and archived Fred's writings for him. Invite a friend to study with you. You will be blessed.



Unit 1.

GOD IN THREE PERSONS

God is Spirit. He has no substance or form (Deut 4:12). He is eternal, holy, righteous and just. Everything He does is perfect. God had no beginning and He has no end. It is not possible for God to do evil, or even look upon evil.

The Bible does not try to explain God. What we know of God He has Himself revealed to us. Jesus Christ came to reveal the eternal God (Heb 1:1; John 14:9). And the spirit of God teaches us the things of God.

God revealed Himself in three persons. At the creation God the Father spoke. He said, "Let there be light," and light flooded on the earth. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the eternal Word, was "with God...Through Him all things were made..." (John 1:1). At creation, the Spirit of God went out from the Father and "hovered over the waters," bringing order to the created matter (Gen 1:2). The Holy Spirit brings order to the lives of men and women who trust in God. He came out from the Father to teach and to guide us into all truth (John 16:12).

God is a person. He made men and women "in His image and likeness" (Gen 1:27). He created them spiritual and moral beings. The two sexes were created equal and without sin. Both men and women "express in a creaturely manner the characteristics of God." The God-likeness of our mortal beings is a mystery, but it is true.

THE WITNESS OF CREATION

Men seek to find the origin of the universe. They search its amazing physical properties. They seek knowledge in the wrong places because God has told us, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

Creation was the free act of a free God. Every part of creation tells us that God exists. All nature witnesses to His majesty and wisdom. The vastness of space tells us that His goodness and creativity are without limit. We cannot see the smallest creatures without the help of a powerful microscope. Every one of the billions of cells in our body is amazingly complex. God designed these tiny machines. He cares for each part of creation. What wisdom and abundance!

We see the order of nature and the seasons that come and go at God's command. He promised that they would (Gen 8:22). The sun never fails to rise in the morning or set at evening. This proves the sovereign power of God. God alone gives purpose and hope to life.

Without God, there is no reason to be born, to live on this earth, or to die. But life can have meaning and purpose. When we understand that God loves us and wants our love in return, our lives can have purpose and a hope (John 3:16). After this life is over, there are better things to come for those who love God.

"This is my Father's world: Oh, let me ne'er forget
That though the wrong seems oft so strong,
God is the Ruler yet.

This is my Father's world: The battle is not done;
Jesus who died will be satisfied,
And earth and heaven be one." - Maltbie Babcock (1858-1901)

THE GREATNESS OF DIVINE LOVE

"Even before the ages of time the Highest concerned Himself with your glory and with mine. God, the Almighty, even then had thoughts on me. On me, the worm of the earth, who have given Him so much trouble and labour with all my sins...Truly these are depths which the heart of every man despairs of being able to describe in words. Here we can only bow and worship, and lay our life at the feet of Him, the All-loving" (Erich Sauer, The Dawn of World Redemption).



TALK ABOUT

1. When will Jesus be satisfied (Isa 53:10-11)?
2. Why do men and women refuse to believe the gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Cor 4:4)?
3. When Christ comes again, who will be resurrected (Dan 12:2)?
4. What did Jesus say to the thief who repented (Luke 23:43)?
5. What happens to the human spirit when the body dies (Eccl 12:7)?

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Paul refers to this great event as “Christ handing the Kingdom over to the Father” after He has destroyed all dominion, authority and power of His enemies (1 Cor 15:24-25).

THE END IS JUST THE BEGINNING

For those who love the Lord Jesus, the end of this world is just the beginning of everlasting glory. They will be caught up into heaven to be forever with their Lord. “They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them...for the old order of things has passed away” (Rev 21:3-4).

Peter tells of the passing away of the old order of things. He wrote, “The day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare....But in keeping with His (God’s) promise we are looking forward to a new heavens and a new earth, the home of righteousness” (2 Peter 3:10-13).



TALK ABOUT

1. Will believers be judged for their sins (Rom 8:1)?

Unit 11.

WE WILL INHERIT THE KINGDOM

There will be joy and peace and everlasting wonder as we see our Saviour “as He is” (1 John 3:2). We will worship and serve our Lord forever to the glory of the Father.

The resurrected will join with the spirit to meet Christ, the Judge of all men. There is no such thing as the state of nothingness that some teach. The prophet declares, “Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt” (Dan 12:2).

Men and women, boys and girls who are ‘alive in Christ’ will inherit the Kingdom. Jesus will say to them, “Come, you who are blessed by My Father; taken your inheritance, the Kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world” (Matt 25:34).

New Testament writers refer to this as “Inheriting the promise” (Heb 6:12). They speak of the promise made to Abraham. These writers lift this promise out of the physical realm and make it spiritual. Paul wrote, “If you belong to Christ – if you are a citizen of God’s Kingdom – then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal 3:29). The ‘seed’ promised to Abraham and Sarah was Jesus Christ (Gal 3:16). If you are Christ’s, your inheritance is secure. It is “reserved in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:4 KJV; 2 Peter 3:13).

Every human being senses a great spirit who demands their worship. This sense of a superior being is found in every tribe and people group. God gave every person a spirit which enables them to know God. The animals don’t have spirit and they cannot know God.

All peoples fear this great, spirit being and sacrifice to him.

Only a fool says in his heart, “There is no God” (Psa 14:1).

When we know God as a person who loves us and believe that He sent Jesus Christ to die for our sins, we can have true happiness. All fear of God is taken away. Without God there can only be a life without meaning, a coffin and a grave.

God is the great law giver. He set everything in motion. He fashioned the natural laws that keep the earth and the planets in their orbits. He set the times and seasons in their order (Gen 8:22). Without God, everything would fall apart or destroy itself. And God planted a desire for order and justice in man’s heart. A moral code is fixed in man’s conscience so that he knows right from wrong. A person can sharpen or blunt his or her conscience by abuse or neglect (1 Tim 4:2).



TALK ABOUT

1. If God is Spirit, how can man know Him?
2. How should we worship Him (John 4:24)?
3. Does the Bible explain God? Why not?
4. What gives purpose and hope to life?

Unit 2.

GOD IS LOVE

God is love (John 4:16), and without Him there is no love in this world. God’s love is like an ever-flowing stream. It goes out from Him, touches the spirits of men and women and returns to Him in their worship.

God is a trinity of love. Augustine said, “If God is love, then there must be in Him a Lover, a Beloved and a Spirit of love...” Love goes out from the Lover; it always moves toward the Beloved One, and it binds the two together in a Spirit of love and unity.

WORSHIP THE LIVING GOD

God said to the people of Israel, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one....Fear the Lord your God, serve Him only...” (Deut 6:4, 13).

The nations worshipped many gods “the work of men’s hands.” Israel was commanded to worship the one true God, the Creator.

God made covenant with the people of Israel saying, "I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from Me there is no God...Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker..." (Isa 45:5-6, 9).

Seven hundred years later, God revealed Himself again as three persons. Jesus Christ came to John when he was baptizing men and women in the Jordan river. Jesus asked John to baptize Him. John baptized Jesus in the river.

At that very moment, when Jesus went up out of the water, John saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove out of heaven and settle on Jesus. And the Father's voice from heaven said, "This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17).

Jesus Christ, the Son, came to reveal the Father. Scripture says, "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son" (Heb 1:1).

Jesus Christ brought God's message to the world. His words of life were rejected and His own people. They gave Him up to the Romans to be killed. Jesus came and died to save mankind from sin (John 1:29). He was buried and rose again from the dead. After 40 days He ascended to heaven (Acts 1:11).



TALK ABOUT

1. What was God's plan in creating the heavens and the earth?
2. The nations worshipped many gods. Why?
3. To which nation did God reveal Himself?
4. Why did God send Jesus, the Son, to earth?
5. What did Jesus accomplish by His death (John 1:29)?

Unit 3.

GOD'S ETERNAL PLAN

Before He created the heavens and the earth, God had created the angels. He asked Job, "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation...and all the angels shouted for joy" (Job 38:4-7). The angels serve Him night and day, but God wanted more. He wanted intelligent beings who would love Him freely and share His love with others.

So, before time began, God planned for you and me. He had you and me on his heart. How wonderful God is!

God the Father loved the Son and, with the Holy Spirit, enjoyed eternal fellowship. But the great heart of God was not satisfied. Jesus spoke of this longing in God's heart when He prayed, "Father, I want those You have given Me to be with Me where I am, and to see My glory, the glory You have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24).

For His own pleasure God created men and women "in His likeness" (Gen 1:27). Adam and Eve were created righteous and without sin.

EVERY EYE WILL SEE HIM

The men and women boys and girls of all ages will be gathered, from righteous Abel to the very last person to be saved.

On that final Judgment Day all eyes will be fixed on the Messiah Christ. The aged apostle wrote, "Look, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of Him" (Rev 1:7, Zech 12:10). All who have not repented will mourn!

Jesus said that His coming would be spectacular (Matt 24:30-31). It would be seen universally, "As the lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man" (Matt 24:27).

God will open the eyes of all creation to see the victorious Christ coming to gather His own – dead eyes, living eyes, all will see the King. "All the nations of the earth" will see Him. Many believe this will happen at one and the same time (Matt 24:30). Some will rise to glory and some to everlasting shame!



TALK ABOUT

1. How did Jesus say He would come the second time (Matt 24:30-31)?
2. Who will come with Him?
3. Who will see Jesus when He comes again (Rev 1:7)?
4. Will there be time to repent and get ready to meet Him?

Unit 10.

MANY REFUSE TO BELIEVE

Many who saw Him when He walked on the earth refused to believe that He was indeed the Son of God, Israel's Messiah.

Jesus said to the Pharisees, "You will not see Me again until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord'." (Luke 13:35).

We all have two kinds of eyes, physical eyes and the eyes of our hearts or spiritual eyes. These Pharisees saw Him with their physical eyes, but a veil shrouded the eyes of their hearts (2 Cor 3:14-15). Some priests and leaders believed on Him. They saw Him with spiritual eyes and believed (Acts 6:7).

The Pharisees would see Christ again, but as their Judge. Those who rejected Him will see Him coming in His glory, but they will not share in it. Those who received Him in His humility will share in His glory and "they will be like Him."

CHRIST WILL HAND OVER THE KINGDOM

God will be glorified and Satan will be banished forever (Rev 20:10). God will be glorified in the Church, the Bride. Christ suffered and died for His Church. He will present her to the Father "a radiant Church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless" (Eph 5:27).

THEN THE END WILL COME

Satan is the great adversary of Christ and His Church. All who are saved and belong to Christ's Kingdom are constantly tempted and attacked by Satan and demons (1 Cor 5:5; 1 John 5:16). A foothold in your heart is all that Satan needs. Paul warns all believers not to give the devil an inch. We are told to stand "clothed with Christ," and with the power of His victory. Paul named different parts of armour to show this (Eph 6).

The end of this conflict is never in doubt. God is stronger than Satan and Christians are told to "resist the devil and he will flee" (James 4:7).

We must take the authority Christ gave us. We must use the power of His name to defeat Satan's schemes and to pull down his strongholds (Eph 6:10). Prayer is the weapon Satan fears most. The word of God turns him back. When Christ was tempted by Satan, He used the Word of God to defeat him.



TALK ABOUT

1. What commission did the Father give to the Son (Luke 19:10)?
2. When will Christ take His inheritance (Matt 24:30-31)?
3. What did Jesus tell His disciples (and we who love Him) to do (Matt 28:18-20)?
4. Are you busy doing that?
5. What more should Christians be doing?

Unit 9.

JESUS CHRIST WILL COME AGAIN

One day Jesus Christ will return to claim His Kingdom, the men and women of all ages who have believed. We will inherit with Him. Paul wrote, "Now if we are children (of God), then we are heirs, co-heirs with Christ..." (Rom 8:17).

When His Kingdom, the Christian Church, is complete, He will perfect it and present it to the Father (Eph 5:27; 1 Cor 15:24-28). It will be a radiant Church "without stain or wrinkle" caused by sin.

Christ will return in triumph and gather His people from the four corners of the earth and take them to heaven. He will judge all evil. Satan and his hosts and all who have rejected the Christ will be cast into hell (Rev 20:10).

He will come "in the clouds" with thousands of His angels (Matt 24:30-31). He will come with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God. "And the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive...will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever" (1 Thess 4:16-17).

Satan was, even then, a rebel spirit and banished from God's presence. God knew that His creation would fall into the hands of this evil tyrant. He knew men and women would become slaves to sin.

SETTLED IN THE COUNSELS OF HEAVEN

Before God created the heavens and the earth, He had settled the matter of man's salvation from sin and evil. Indeed, every person's name is written in "the Lamb's Book of Life" (Rev 13:8).

At the right time, God sent the Son, in the form of a man. He died to save the world from sin and evil. Christ was born in Bethlehem, in Judea, in the time of Herod. Luke pinpoints this moment in history for us (Luke 2:1-3). Jesus Christ came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

Before creation, God knew those who would believe in Christ and become His sons and daughters by faith in Jesus Christ (2 Cor 6:18; Eph 1:4). Before time began He promised them eternal life. In the ages of time, He would call them to Himself through the preaching of the gospel (Rom 10:10-15).

Paul wrote to Titus about the "hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time...He brought His word to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Saviour" (Titus 1:2-3; 2 Tim 1:9).

In heaven the eternal Son spoke to the Father: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You prepared for Me....Then I said, 'Here am I – I have come to do Your will O God'." (Heb 10:5-7).

The law with its sacrifices and offerings were not God's will or purpose. They were a stop-gap measure that pointed forward to Jesus Christ and His once-for-all sacrifice for sin (Heb 9:12).

From "before the ages" the mystery of the Christian Church was settled in heaven, but "kept hidden in God" (Eph 3:9). God would take some from every tribe and nation and make them His own people (Rev 7:9). God gave Paul the task to "make known to everyone the administration of this mystery," a mystery revealed to him by God's Spirit (Rom 16:25-27).



TALK ABOUT

1. Did God create the angels?
2. What did Jesus Christ come to earth to do (Luke 19:10)?
3. What is the hope of every Christian (Titus 1:2-3)?
4. Do you have this hope?
5. How can you be saved from your sins (Acts 16:31)?

Unit 4.

GOD PREPARED A KINGDOM

From eternity God prepared a Kingdom for His people. All who love Christ as their Saviour are born again into God's Kingdom. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "No one can see the Kingdom of God unless he is born again" (John 3:3).

Nicodemus did not understand Christ's words and asked, "How can a man be born when he is old?" Jesus answered, "No one can enter the Kingdom of God unless he is born of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:4-6). God gives a new-birth to everyone who believes. He does this by giving them His Spirit to live in them (Eph 1:13). He possesses them and marks them as God's children.

At the end of time Jesus Christ, the King of God's Kingdom, will say to those who love Him, "Come, you who are blessed by My Father; take your inheritance, the Kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world" (Matt 25:34). The Kingdom is a place where God rules. It is in heaven and in the hearts of His people, it is an eternal reality and will never pass away. Daniel had a vision of this truth and said, "the God of heaven will set up a Kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms (of men) and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever" (Dan 2:44).

FELLOWSHIP IN GOD'S KINGDOM

Jesus said to His disciples, "You are those who have stood by Me in My trials. And I confer on you a Kingdom...so that you may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom..." (Luke 22:28-30).

This brings us back to God's purpose in creating man. God made us for fellowship. He desires a close, personal relationship with the beings He created and all events move toward that goal.

From Genesis to Revelation, God reveals His purpose to redeem men and women from sin. He gave the Son this commission. This is the goal of the "eternal covenant" which Christ sealed with His own blood (Heb 13:20). In this life the "eternal covenant" equips us "with everything good for doing His will."

Before Jesus went back to heaven He gave the same commission to His followers. He said to them, "All authority in heaven and in earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations..." (Matt 28:18-19).

When this life is over, the same "eternal covenant" secures God's people a place in heaven. Peter said, "God the Father...in His great mercy...has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept (reserved, KJV) in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:3-5).

Just as life in Christ is our inheritance, so God is pleased to call those who love Jesus Christ His inheritance. But Israel sinned against the Lord and their

Satan does not want anyone to believe the gospel and join the Church, the body of Jesus Christ (Eph 2:13-16).

We must understand that the believer's struggle is against Satan and his evil forces, not those he uses. All creation struggles against the same evil forces (Rom 8:21). Paul said, "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil..." (Eph 6:12).

The wars we see and the struggle that goes on in our own hearts and all around us is inspired by Satan. It is a struggle between the Kingdom of Light and the kingdom of darkness (Col 1:13). The struggle will not end until Jesus Christ comes again (1 Thess 4:16-18).



TALK ABOUT

1. Paul set out the gospel he preached. Who preached the gospel first (Mark 1:15)?
2. What did Jesus say about Satan (John 8:44)?
3. When will the struggle against Satan and evil end (1 Thess 4:16-18)?
4. Are you ready?

Unit 8.

SATAN WAS CRUSHED AT THE CROSS

Jesus took on Himself a body of flesh "that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death – that is, the devil – and free those who all their lives were held in bondage by their fear of death" (Heb 2:14).

As He faced death on the cruel cross, Jesus said, "Now is the time for judgment on this world; now will the prince of this world be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself" (John 12:31-32).

Paul said Christ, in His death, "disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross" (Col 2:15).

Satan continues to come and go in the earth. He is "like a roaring lion," seeking men and women to destroy. He blinds them to the truth and captures their hearts (2 Cor 4:4). He works hard tempting men and women and accusing those who love God (Rev 12:10).

The world outside of Christ is under Satan's authority. He rules it through the evil world systems of men (2 Cor 4:3-4; Col 1:13). The Bible calls these evil world systems 'antichrist' and 'Babylon the Great' (2 Thess 2; Rev 18).

God's permits these evil world systems to continue because "He is very patient, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9, 15).

Jesus Christ was born of a woman (Gal 4:4), grew up as a man, told men and women the Good News of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:15) and died to save all who would receive His message. This is the theme of Paul's letter to the Christians in Corinth and to us (1 Cor 15:24-28).

Satan and his hosts fight to destroy Christ's Kingdom. Christ must reign until His enemies are destroyed. He will defeat all His enemies. Then He will hand the Kingdom back to the Father (1 Cor 15:24-28). When this is accomplished, the Father and the Son will be satisfied (Isa 53:10-11).



TALK ABOUT

1. What is "the gospel of Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 15:1-4)?
2. When did you first hear the gospel message?
3. Did you believe the gospel at that time?
4. Who tries to stop people hearing the gospel and believing?

Unit 7.

JESUS RETURNED TO THE FATHER

Jesus came to earth to show us the Father's love. He came to bring the gospel of God's Kingdom to men and women. We are to do the same. Jesus began His public ministry with the words, "The time has come, the Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news" (Mark 1:15).

He lived and died to rescue us from Satan's power and He promised His followers the Holy Spirit to be with them (Luke 24:45). "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you," Jesus told the disciples, "and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). God gives us the same Holy Spirit to fill our lives and give us the power to serve Him.

Jesus Christ, Son of God, lived among men. He lived a perfect life, without sin (Heb 4:15). He came to His own people but they did not receive Him (John 1:11). They gave Him up to be crucified on a Roman cross.

On the third day, Jesus Christ rose from the dead and returned to His home heaven (Acts 1:10-11). Before He left them, He told His disciples to continue to do what He had been doing, to live as He had lived. He gave them the "power and authority" of His name and sent them out to preach the Kingdom of God (Luke 9:1-2).

When Jesus went back to heaven, He left His disciples to carry on His work. He came to set up a Kingdom; He left them and us to proclaim it.

SATAN HAS NOT GIVEN UP THE FIGHT

Satan has not given up his desire to rule in the hearts of all men and women. If he cannot rule over them in this life, he seeks to destroy them. Jesus said of Satan, "He was a murderer from the beginning..." (John 8:34).

future hung in the balance. Moses pleaded with God, "Although this is a stiff-necked people, forgive our wickedness and our sin, and take us as Your inheritance" (Ex 34:9).

THE CONFLICT OF THE AGES

Before God created the heavens and the earth, Satan was an angel in heaven. Satan rebelled against God. He was proud and wanted to sit on God's throne. Many angels followed Satan and rebelled against God.

God is perfectly just. He cast Satan and the angels that followed this lawless being out of heaven. These "fallen angels" or demons serve Satan. Now Satan fights against God and against all those persons who believe in Him.

The Bible tells of fallen angels in two classes, those who are free and those who are bound. Satan, the prince-leader and the demons who are free comes and go in the earth (Matt 12:24). The wicked angles who are bound await final judgment (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). They are said to be "in prison."

Peter wrote, "Your enemy (Satan) prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

Satan came into the garden in Eden and tempted Adam and Eve to sin against God. They believed Satan's lies and rebelled against God's command. God put them out of the garden and set an angel with a flaming sword to stop them from entering it again (Gen 3:1-22).

The Father and the Son created man for their own enjoyment. God "walked and talked" with Adam before he sinned and Jesus Christ reigned over all. All the universe was at peace until that fateful day. Then Satan deceived the man and the woman and usurped Christ's reign in their hearts.



TALK ABOUT

1. Nicodemus asked Jesus, "How can a man be born again...? How would you answer him (John 3:1-8)?"
2. Who will live in God's Kingdom?
3. What did Jesus promise His disciples (Luke 22:28-30)?

Unit 5.

SATAN SCORES A HIT

God had made the man and his wife "a little lower than the angels" and put everything under their control (Psa 8:5-6). God said to Adam and Eve, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over....every living creature..." (Gen 1:28).

He gave the first man and woman a free will and a conscience to know right from wrong. They chose to listen to Satan's lies. The man and the woman were deceived and rebelled against their Creator. They disobeyed God's command and He put them out of the beautiful garden in Eden (Gen 3:1-7-24).

In a moment of time, they lost their dominion and rule. Their sin cut them off from God and evil powers took control of their lives. Satan had scored a direct hit on Adam, the 'head' of the human race. The perfect world God had created was thrown into darkness and flooded with evil.

But the Father had a plan. His love for the man and woman He created was from "before the creation of the world" and He promised One who would rescue man from the Evil One (Eph 1:4; Gal 1:4).

We were always in God's heart as the objects of His love. It was always in God's heart to redeem Adam's fallen race. In eternity God said to the Son, "I will make the nations Your inheritance and the ends of the earth Your possession" (Psa 2:8). Satan fights hard to stop God's plan. He wants to rule the nations. Satan struggles to keep control over the hearts of men.

In this age Satan is 'bound' and is limited in what he can do. Men and women can have the victory over Satan by faith in Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:57).

THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER

Long before God created the physical universe, the "heavens and the earth," there was conflict in the heavens. God did not explain the advent of evil or how or when this conflict between good and evil began. All we know is that moral evil infects our society and there are natural events that do harm to God's beautiful creation. Evil powers beyond our control kill and destroy.

Men fight and kill for power. God said there would be wars until the end of time. Jesus said, "When you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end (of the world) will not come right away...Nation will rise against nation...There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events, and great signs from heaven" (Luke 21:9-11).

God did not create the evil in this world, or the sorrow and suffering we see all around us. He created a perfect world.

The conflict came from outside this world and invaded the hearts of men and women who rejected God. Now God lets the evil run its course (Rom 1:20-32).

One day God will close this age. Peter said, "the heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire...But, in keeping with His (God's) promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness" (2 Peter 3:10-13).



TALK ABOUT

1. Where did the war between good and evil begin?
2. Do you know your enemy?
3. What did Jesus tell us to expect (Luke 21:9-11)?
4. What will happen to this world (2 Peter 3:10-13)?

5. Are you ready for that day?

6. Why did Jesus say, "Watch and be ready?"

Unit 6.

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

Paul set out the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ in his letter to the Christians at Corinth. He wrote, "Brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received...By this gospel you are saved..... (1 Cor 15:1-4).

1. You heard the gospel I preached to you. Paul preached the same gospel that Jesus Christ preached. He received this from the apostles who walked and talked with Jesus Christ.
2. Men and women must hear the gospel. God said, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23). Because all men and women have sinned, God wants all to hear the gospel: "that Christ died for our sins...that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day" and that God forgives all who believe in Him (John 5:24).
3. Those who receive the gospel must hold on to it or stand firm in the truth they have received. The Christian at Corinth heard the gospel, received it and stood firm on the truth of God's word.
4. The Christians at Corinth showed that they had faith in God. They held to the truth and obeyed God's word. Some hear the message but soon discard it. They do not run the race to the end.

THE SON CAME TO TAKE HIS INHERITANCE

The Father sent the Son to earth. The Son came to earth to secure His inheritance. His inheritance is a spiritual community. He reigns over His citizens in the Kingdom God is building.

Christ reigns over His Kingdom now, but it is not yet complete. His Kingdom is built with "living stones," men and women who

receive Him (1 Peter 2:5). They are His body, the Christian Church (Eph 5:30). His Kingdom is forever (John 18:36; Dan 2:44).

God the father sent the Son to restore His rule in the hearts of men and to rescue creation. For a short time, Jesus Christ was made flesh in order to do this. He became subject to the Father so that He might carry out a commission.

When the time was right, God sent forth the Son with this commission: To go into the world and preach the gospel. The gospel is the good news that God will forgive man's rebellion and sin for Christ's sake.

God said to the Son, "You are My Son; today I have become Your Father" (Heb 5:5). Christ said of Himself, "A body You prepared for Me...Here I am – it is written about Me in the scroll – I have come (into the world) to do Your will O God" (Psa 40:6-8; Heb 10:5-6).