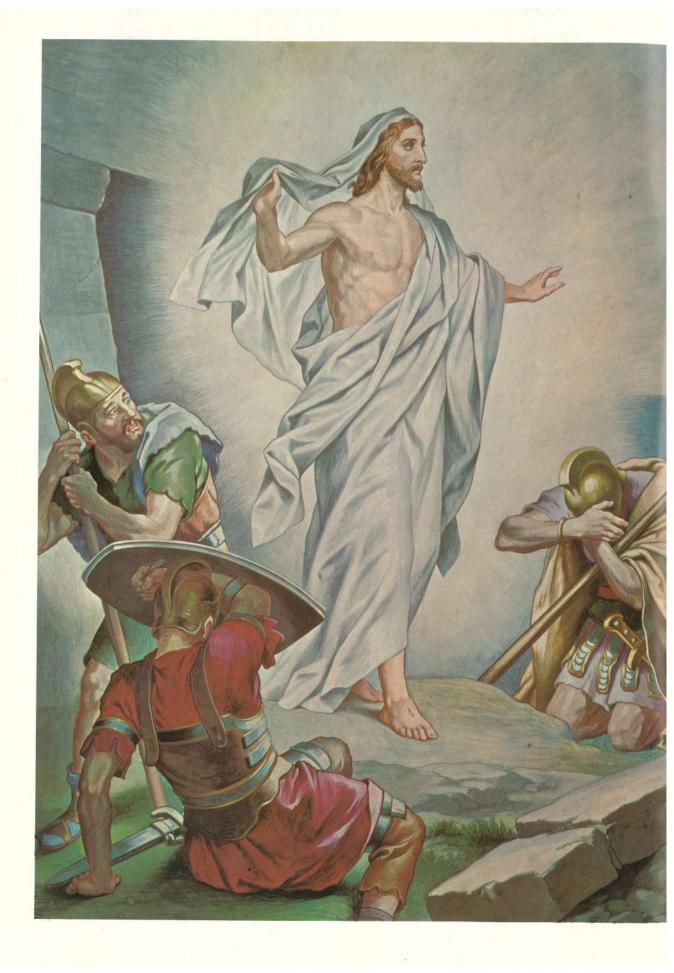
The Christian Age

Vísualized Bíble Study Series

Written by
Jule L. Miller
and
Texas H. Stevens

AN OBJECTIVE SURVEY OF THE BIBLE AND CHURCH HISTORY

Copyright 1969 Jule Miller



The Christian Age

PURPOSE OF THIS LESSON

To set forth the distinctive New Testament pattern of the one church Jesus established—To show how the church consists of every saved person on earth—To point out that the law of Christ's church is found only in the New Testament—To show that only members of Christ's church or family will be saved.

SYNOPSIS

Jesus' body was removed from the cross by friends and they buried him. On the third day He rose. After being seen several times by His disciples, Jesus told them that He would send the Holy Spirit upon them to guide them into all truth. The New Testament was written by the hands of the disciples as they were inspired by the Holy Spirit. The church of Christ began on the Day of Pentecost as Jesus promised, and the complete instructions for establishing local congregations is described in the New Testament. When men follow the New Testament completely, they will be Christians only.



1. YOU HAVE COME to a crucial point in your Bible study. The previous lessons have provided the background so that you might understand better "The Christian Age" in which we now live. Since this is a connected study, you will want to keep all of these full-color illustrated booklets for future reference.

Q. The ______ Age is a crucial point in your Bible study.

CHRISTIAN



2. MANY BIBLE REFERENCES appear in footnotes throughout these lessons. As you read these references you will find yourself becoming more and more familiar with the entire **Bible**.

Q. One becomes more familiar with the entire Bible as he ______ Bible references.

READS

PART 3	
THE	
CHRISTIAN AGE	4
FROM THE CROSS TO THE END OF TIME	

3. PART THREE, "The Christian Age" bears the name of Christ, who is its central theme. This age began just after Jesus'death and resurrection and will last until He comes again, then time shall be no more.

Q. The central _____ of the Christian Age is Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

THEME



4. THE JOHN NELSON FAMILY attends church services together regularly, worshipping God through Jesus Christ, as thousands have done each week for generations. To them this is both a duty and a sacred privilege. How did this practice get started? What is the meaning of it? And why is it still so important to Christians? These are some of the questions our present lesson will attempt to answer.

Q. To worship God regularly is both a and a sacred privilege.

DUTY

5. FIRST, LET US REVIEW what we have already studied. With this chart we recall the Patriarchal Age, the first period of Bible history. Beginning with Adam and the Creation, this age continued to the time when Moses led God's people through the Red Sea and into the wilderness where The Law was given.

Q. The Patriarchal Age continued to the time when _____ led God's people through the Red Sea.

MOSES

6. THEN WE STUDIED the Mosaic Age, the second period of **Bible** history. This age lasted from the giving of the **Law of Moses** on Mount Sinai until Christ died on the cross.

Q. The Law of Moses was given on Mount

SINAL

7. NOW LET US NOTICE from this chart the highlights of the Christian Age, the third and last Bible age. It began with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus and will end when He comes again. We will see GOD'S SPIRITUAL KINGDOM or CHURCH established; four things necessary to make up a kingdom; blessings within the CHURCH-KINGDOM; and finally, God's pattern for HIS CHURCH found only in the Bible: the beginning marks, unity in the ONE CHURCH, the organization, God's names for the redeemed, the rule of faith, the worship, the membership, and the mission of HIS CHURCH on earth. First, let us study about the establishment of THE CHURCH.

Q. The Christian Age will last until _____ comes again. CHRIST

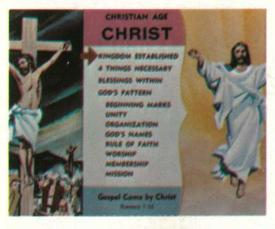
8. BEFORE JESUS DIED He told the disciples much about HIS CHURCH or KINGDOM which was soon to come. He taught them that the foundation of HIS CHURCH is the truth that He is the Son of God. On one occasion Jesus asked the disciples to tell Him who the people of the world thought He was. They answered, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elias; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the (Old Testament) prophets" (Matthew 16:13, 14). Then Jesus asked them, "But whom say ye that I am?"

Q. Jesus taught His _____ much about His church.

DISCIPLES

















9. PETER ANSWERED, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus praised Peter for accepting the evidence of God and not the opinions of men concerning His identity. Then He said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church . . ." (Matthew 16:18). From this passage some get the mistaken idea that THE CHURCH was built on Peter instead of Christ. However, the apostle Paul plainly taught, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid. which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11). Actually, the Greek word for "Peter" is masculine gender and the word for "rock" is feminine gender. Therefore, one cannot refer to the other. The rock upon which THE CHURCH is built is Jesus, the Son of God. This is the confession Peter had just made by divine revelation.

Q. Peter accepted the evidence of ___ rather than the opinions of men.

GOD

10. LATER, BUT BEFORE HIS CRUCIFIXON, Jesus told His disciples, "There be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9:1). Since John the Baptist was already dead when Jesus gave this promise, we know that John did not begin THE CHURCH, nor was he a member of it. We learn from this promise that THE CHURCH had not yet been established. Rather it was to come "with power" before some of these very disciples died.

1 Mark 6:14-29.

Q. John the Baptist died before the was established.

CHURCH

11. SOON AFTER MAKING THIS PROMISE, Jesus was crucified. On that same day Jesus' disciples removed His body from the cross and carefully laid it in the tomb of a friend. This had been prophesied about 750 years earlier by Isaiah. A huge stone sealed the tomb and Roman guards were stationed there lest someone should steal the body and claim that Jesus was raised from the dead.

John 19-38-42; Isaiah 53:9; Matthew 27:59-66.

Q. Roman _____ were stationed at Jesus' tomb.

GUARDS

12. BUT EVEN DEATH ITSELF could not hold God's Son. Early on Sunday morning the disciples found the tomb empty. The greatest event of all history had taken place. Christ broke the bonds of death to become our living Savior. Since Christ had foretold that He would rise from the dead, this great miracle proved Him to be the very Son of God. The fear of death has always plagued mankind, but Christ has opened the gates of death, and promised that all the dead shall be raised when He returns.

¹ Luke 24:1-7; ² Mark 8:31; ³ Romans 1:4; ⁴ Hebrews 2:14-15.

Q. Christ has promised to raise all the ____ when He returns.

DEAD

13. FOLLOWING HIS RESURRECTION, Jesus appeared frequently to His disciples and told them more about His approaching SPIRITUAL KING-DOM. He commissioned them to preach to the whole world that He had died for their sins. On Mount Olivet, just before His ascension, Jesus blessed the disciples and charged them to wait in Jerusalem for the coming of the Holy Spirit that they might receive special power to help them convince the world that the Savior had actually died for their sins.

1 Acts 1:1-8.

Q. Jesus commissioned His disciples to preach to the whole _____.

WORLD

14. SUDDENLY THE LORD began to ascend into heaven. They watched Him until He disappeared into the clouds. Heavenly messengers appeared and assured the apostles that some day Jesus would return. Having died for man's sin, Jesus ascended to heaven to sit at the right hand of Almighty God to rule and reign. All things were now ready for the coming of THE CHURCH or KINGDOM over which Jesus would rule as king. In keeping with Jesus' instruction, the apostles returned joyously to Jerusalem.

1 Acts 1:9-12.

Q. Jesus has ascended to _____ to sit at the right hand of God.

HEAVEN

15. TEN DAYS AFTER THE ASCENSION, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, accompanied by the sound from heaven like a violent wind which filled the whole building. Forked tongues, like fire, were seen on each of them. Filled with the Holy Spirit, the apostles began to speak miraculously in different languages which they had never studied. Thousands of Jews from all over the world were visiting in Jerusalem for the day of the Jewish feast of Pentecost.

1 Acts 1:12-14; Acts 2:1-4. 2 Acts 2:6.

Q. Through the Holy Spirit the apostles spoke in _____ which they had never studied.

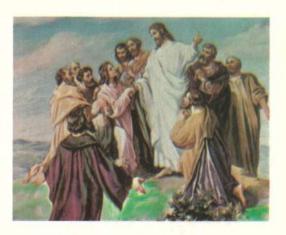
LANGUAGES

16. AS NEWS OF THESE MIRACLES spread, thousands of the Jews visiting in Jerusalem began crowding together. They were amazed that they could hear and understand each in his own language. Peter gained the crowd's attention and told them about Christ, the promised Messiah, a descendant of David and a teacher approved of God; how He was wrongfully put to death, but was raised from the dead; that He ascended to heaven where He is now exalted at the right hand of God as both Lord and Christ. Three thousand were turned from Judaism to Christ and were baptized for the remission of sins as God added them to THE CHURCH. So it was that THE CHURCH or KINGDOM had its beginning with great power as Jesus had promised only ten days earlier.

1 Acts 2:5-47.

Q. The day the church began 3000 Jews turned from _____ to Christ.

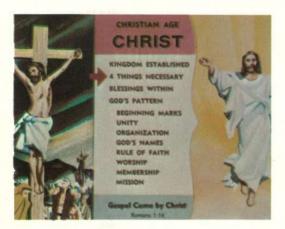
JUDAISM

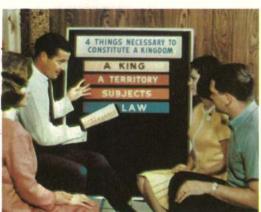


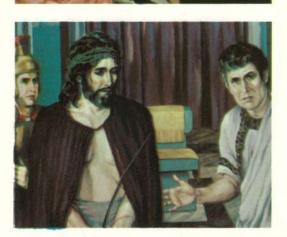














17. FOUR THINGS are necessary to the existence of any kingdom, whether it be physical or spiritual. Since we have seen how THE LORD'S KINGDOM began, we can now learn whether it is a physical or spiritual kingdom by considering these four vital components. A kingdom founded on physical bases is a physical kingdom but CHRIST'S CHURCH founded on spiritual bases is a spiritual kingdom.

Q. At least _____ things are necessary before any kingdom can exist.

FOUR

18. JOHN NELSON, who is a Christian, takes every opportunity to study with others about the SPIRITUAL KINGDOM of which he is a member. He points out to his friends the four things necessary to constitute a kingdom: there must be a king, a territory, subjects and a law. No kingdom, not even the Lord's, could exist if any one of these is missing. But Jesus taught that all of these components in HIS KINGDOM are of a spiritual nature.

Q. The four basic components of Jesus'
Kingdom are _____ in nature. SPIRITUAL

19. WHEN THE JEWS had delivered Jesus to Pilate to be crucified, Jesus explained, "My Kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). The TRUE CHURCH was to be a SPIRITUAL KINGDOM having no earthly head or headquarters. Rather, CHRIST'S CHURCH would have a spiritual head, spiritual territory, spiritual subjects and a spiritual law.

Q. The true church was to have no head or headquarters.

EARTHLY

20. LET US LEARN, one at a time, about these spiritual components making up CHRIST'S CHURCH. Who does the Bible say is the head or king of this SPIRITUAL KINGDOM?

Q. Christ's spiritual kingdom does have a _____ or king.

HEAD

21. WE RECALL what the angel Gabriel said to Mary when he announced that Jesus would be born: "He shall reign over the House of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:33). Jesus Christ is still the absolute monarch over the SPIRITUAL NATION of God's people today."

1 1 Corinthians 15:25, 26.

Q. The angel had told Mary that Jesus would _____ over His Kingdom.

REIGN



22. WHAT TERRITORY IS INCLUDED in this KINGDOM? Since Jesus said, "My Kingdom is not of this world," (John 18:36) we conclude that His rule does not involve the control of **land** areas. Where, then, does Jesus rule?

Q. The Kingdom of Christ does not consist of _____ areas.

LAND



23. THIS QUESTION CANNOT BE ANSWERED by pointing to a spot on the globe. Since Jesus said, "The Kingdom of God is within you," (Luke 17:21), we know that His rule is within the hearts of men wherever they may be. The territory of HIS KINGDOM, then, is a Spiritual territory and cannot be determined by geographical areas or political boundaries. THE KINGDOM OF GOD or THE CHURCH is anywhere men fully give their allegiance to Christ. God would like to rule in the hearts of all people.

Q. Christ rules in the _____ of His people.

HEARTS

24. BUT WHO ARE THE SUBJECTS in GOD'S KINGDOM? Since the KINGDOM OF GOD and the kingdom of Satan are both universal, every living person is a subject in one or the other.

Q. Every person is a ______ of either the Kingdom of God or the kingdom of Satan.

SUBJECT

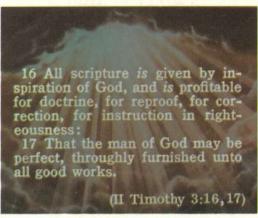












dom are those from among all nations who submit their spirits in complete obedience to Jesus as their King and Master. The same God who has made all nations and races recognizes as valid only one religion for all. The apostles were continually converting people from Judaism as well as other religions that they might serve the Lord in the one body, THE CHURCH. This indicates that God requires every man, regardless of race, to be united and to serve Christ as Master in HIS ONE KINGDOM, THE CHURCH, for which Jesus gave His life.¹

1 Philippians 2:9-11.

Q. The apostles converted people from other _____ that they might be subjects of Christ's spiritual kingdom.

RELIGIONS

26. FINALLY, JOHN NELSON ASKS, "What body of law governs the citizens of GOD'S SPIRITUAL KINGDOM? Has God left man free to legislate his own church rules? When different groups of men write their own religious laws, is not this the cause of the religious factions, divisions and denominations?"

Q. Citizens must be governed by a body of _____.

LAW

27. GOD HAS FURNISHED the New Testament as His exclusive law for citizens of CHRIST'S KING-DOM. The apostle Paul refers to it as the Law of the Spirit of life. Since God's Word is truth, that which disagrees with the Bible is false. The New Testament teaches that the basic reason for following the Law of Christ is our love for Christ. In the apostles' day, all people who submitted through love to God's laws as revealed in the New Testament were united with the apostles in the ONE CHURCH.

1 Ephesians 4:4.

Q. The exclusive law for the citizens of Christ's Kingdom is the _____ Testament.

NEW

28. CONCERNING THE LAW OF GOD, the apostle Paul said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). Since the Bible is complete and sufficient, we readily understand that religious traditions and man-made religious laws not only are unnecessary but are strictly forbidden.

1 2 Timothy 4:1-4.

Q. Man-made religious laws and traditions not only are unnecessary but are strictly _____ by the Scriptures.

FORBIDDEN

29. LIKE SENTRIES GUARDING GOD'S precious law, numerous passages throughout the Bible warn man not to tamper with God's written word. Though using different words, all these passages give the same warning.

Q. Numerous passages warn men not to with God's written word.

TAMPER

HOLY BIBLE

30. ALL THESE WARNINGS say, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you" (Deuteronomy 4:2). The same warning is repeated in Proverbs 30:6 and in Revelation 22:18, 19. But in spite of God's grave warning not to "add to" or "take from" the Bible, many have gone contrary to His teaching and accepted the religious laws and traditions conceived, written and spoken by mere men. This attitude is the soil from which present day denominationalism and division have sprung.

1 Matthew 15:8, 9.

Q. God warns man not to "add to" or "take from" the _____.

BIBLE

31. REMEMBER THAT CHRIST'S KINGDOM, THE CHURCH, consists of Christ as king, the heart of every Christian as the territory, every obedient believer as a subject and the New Testament as the only source of spiritual authority. We can readily see that CHRIST'S KINGDOM is not "of this world" but, is spiritual in nature.

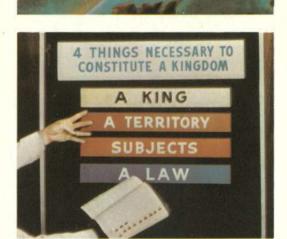
Q. Our only source of spiritual _____
is the New Testament.

AUTHORITY

32. SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS within the KING-DOM OF CHRIST can be enjoyed only by those within HIS KINGDOM. Everyone realizes that a citizen of any kingdom enjoys certain privileges which are denied to an alien.

Q. Certain privileges of a kingdom are enjoyed by a _____ of that kingdom.

CITIZEN

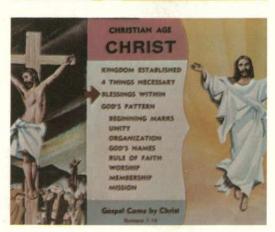


shall not add unto the which I command you,

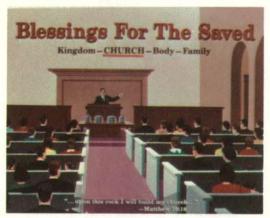
neither shall ye diminish ought

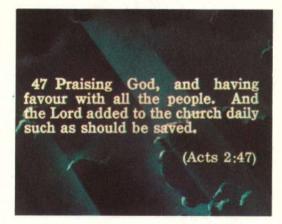
from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.

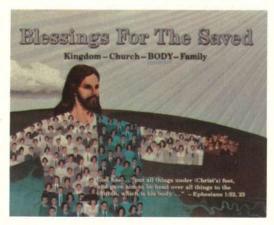
word which











33. BLESSINGS FOR THE SAVED are related in the New Testament to certain Bible terms for God's people. The Bible refers to God's people by terms such as "THE KINGDOM," "THE CHURCH," "THE BODY," and "THE FAMILY." Different terms are used to stress different aspects but all of them emphasize God's blessings for the saved. For example, the Bible uses the term "Kingdom." Christ is the Spiritual King. The apostle Paul wrote of this in Colossians 1:13, 14, "(God) hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Forgiveness of sins through Jesus' blood delivers one from the power of darkness and translates him into the KINGDOM OF GOD. Those within THE KINGDOM may continually enjoy the forgiveness of sin and other spiritual blessings found only in God's Son.

Q. God's people are referred to by different ______ in the New Testament.

TERMS

34. THIS KINGDOM is also called "THE CHURCH". The original Greek word for "church" means "those called out", "an assembly" or "congregation". God calls us to be separated from the world and to be bound together with others in spiritual union. Christ is the builder in keeping with His promise, "... Upon this rock I will build my church..." (Matthew 16:18). From the day THE CHURCH was first established, God has been adding to HIS CHURCH all those who are saved by Jesus' blood.

Q. God adds all the saved to His ______. CHURCH

35. THE EARLY CHRISTIANS were "Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). At the same time a person is cleansed of all past sin through Jesus' blood, God also numbers him among His children in THE CHURCH. Therefore it is false to believe a person can first be saved and then later become a member of THE CHURCH, GOD'S FAMILY.

Q. At the same time a person is _____, he becomes a member of the church.

SAVED

36. THE CHURCH OR KINGDOM is also referred to as the "BODY OF CHRIST". In comparing THE CHURCH to the physical body, we realize that, while there are many members, there can be only one head for the one body. Ephesians 1:22, 23 declares that God has "... put all things under Christ's feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body ..." Also, just as the blood in our physical bodies protects us against disease and brings healing to wounds, the blood of Jesus is present in HIS SPIRITUAL BODY, THE CHURCH, to cleanse and heal our souls continually. While salvation comes only through Jesus, He has ordained that all those who receive this blessing are members of HIS BODY, THE CHURCH.

Q. The body of Christ is composed of many members but only ____ Head.

37. JUST BEFORE PAUL made his tearful departure from the elders of the Ephesian church, he warned them, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord, which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). Since Christ purchased THE CHURCH with His own blood, a person must be in THE CHURCH and remain faithful to Christ in order to enjoy the blessing of salvation which comes only through Jesus' blood.

Q. Christ purchased the _____ with His own blood.

CHURCH

38. THE CHURCH IS SPOKEN OF as "God's Family" or "household" for it consists of those who have been born again and are therefore children of God. The apostle Paul has said, ". . . We are children of God: and if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:16, 17). In this SPIRITUAL FAMILY Christ is the "elder brother" and God is the only Father. This is one reason why Jesus said, "Call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven" (Matthew 23:9). Only those who are born again are heirs of eternal life. Those outside God's CHURCH-FAMILY are still lost in sin.

Q. To be a child of God one must be _____ again.

BORN

39. AS JOHN NELSON THOUGHTFULLY considers the blessings God has reserved for those in His CHURCH-KINGDOM he wants to be able to identify GOD'S CHURCH on earth today that he and his friends can enjoy these divine blessings. John has learned, just as thousands of others, that God has recorded the only perfect and complete description of CHRIST'S CHURCH in the pages of the New Testament.

Q. By examining the New Testament one can _____ God's Church on earth.

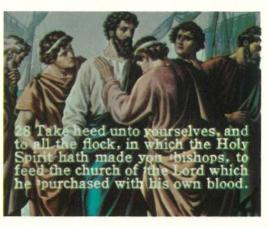
IDENTIFY

40. DURING THE FIRST CENTURY of THE CHURCH, God was guiding inspired writers by the Holy Spirit to record accurately all of His instructions for His children. God had promised that there would be no end to CHRIST'S CHURCH. Therefore He provided protection from religious error through the Bible. God expected His children throughout all generations to conform to this same divine pattern. As these inspired writings appeared one by one, THE EARLY CHURCH appealed to them as final religious authority.2 The New Testament Scriptures containing God's perfect pattern for THE CHURCH were completed and circulated among the congregations hundreds of years before the invention of modern printing methods.

1 2 Peter 1:15, 16, 21; 2 Colossians 4:16.

Q. The New Testament contains God's perfect ______ for the church.

PATTERN

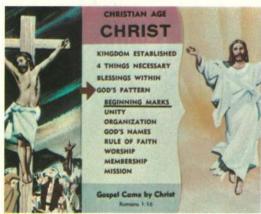


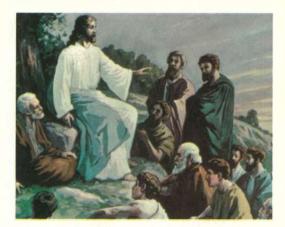














41. EVEN BACK IN MOSES' DAY, centuries before THE CHURCH, God's word was final authority. Just as God warned Moses to follow His divine plan in building the Old Testament Tabernacle, He expects us today to follow His divine pattern given in the New Testament for HIS CHURCH. Anywhere in the world a group of people conform to God's blueprint for THE CHURCH, this group must be identified not as a new denomination but the ORIGINAL CHURCH of Jesus Christ.

1 Hebrews 8:5, 6.

Q.	God	expect	ts	man	today	to	follow	His
div	ine p	oattern	fo	r the				

CHURCH

42. GOD'S PATTERN FOR THE CHURCH includes all of the distinctive features which it had in the days of the apostles, just as Christ established it. First, let us consider the beginning marks, truths about the origin of THE CHURCH which no other institution can claim successfully. Who founded THE CHURCH? Where was it founded? And when? The New Testament reveals the answers completely.

Q. Christ established His Church in the days of the ______.

APOSTLES

43. ONE DISTINGUISHING MARK OF THE CHURCH'S beginning is the fact that Jesus Himself is the founder. We remember that He made this promise when He told the apostles, "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18). Jesus kept His promise and established HIS CHURCH. The price that He paid was His own blood. The first members of THE CHURCH were the apostles and the 3,000 Jews baptized on the Day of Pentecost. Those who truly love God do not want to found another church but are content with THE CHURCH just as Jesus first gave it to man. It does make a difference to which church we belong.

1 Acts 2:41, 42.

Q. The first members of the Church were the _____ and the 3,000 baptized on Pentecost.

APOSTLES

44. THROUGH THE YEARS various world religions and denominational churches have begun in various cities of the world. The LORD'S CHURCH, however, began in the city of Jerusalem early in the first century just as God's prophets of old had foretold. Before long many Christians were forced to flee Jerusalem because of persecution. Everywhere they went they established THE CHURCH patterned after the original Jerusalem CHURCH. Is it not possible today to begin a congregation in your community after the same original pattern revealed in the New Testament?

1 Isaiah 2:2, 3; Daniel 2:44.

Q. God's _____ had foretold that the Church would begin in Jerusalem.

PROPHETS

45. ANOTHER MARK OF THE TRUE CHURCH'S beginning is that the risen Christ was its only head. After raising Jesus from the dead, "God gave Him to be head over all things to the church..." (Ephesians 1:22). As surely as Jesus is the only Savior, He also is the only head of THE CHURCH. God has made no provision for any man or group of men on earth to head CHRIST'S CHURCH.

1 Ephesians 5:23.

Q. God exalted Christ as the only _____ of the church.

HEAD

46. THE LORD'S CHURCH can be identified by the way it began. Its beginning is marked by distinctive truths which do not apply to any other religious institution. Christ was the founder; the place was Jerusalem; the time, about 33 A.D.; and the Head of THE CHURCH was Christ.

Q. The Lord's church can be by considering how it began.

IDENTIFIED

47. UNITY, WITH ALL the followers of Christ in one religious body, characterized THE EARLY CHURCH and is still the divine pattern for THE CHURCH today. Though difficult to imagine, still it is true that there were no differing denominations then as there are now. The New Testament shows conclusively that the apostles and other Christians belonged to the same CHURCH.

1 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13.

Q. The apostles and all other _ belonged to the same church.

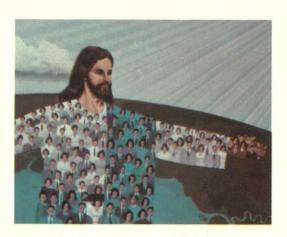
CHRISTIANS

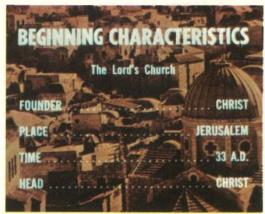
48. IN THE FIRST CENTURY the gospel spread throughout the Roman Empire. Some disciples were scattered by persecution and others journeyed by choice, but they all spread the good news of Christ wherever they went. Soon Christians were meeting together as congregations in Corinth, Ephesus, Thessalonica and many other prominent cities. It was these local groups to which the apostle Paul referred when he wrote, "The churches of Christ salute you" (Romans 16:16). All of these congregations believed and practiced the same doctrine. They did not wear different religious names. These individual groups, regardless of location, were united in love and faith and together they constituted the ONE CHURCH on earth.2

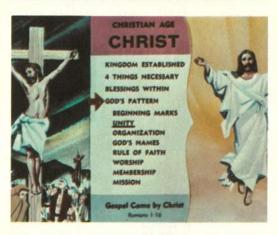
Acts 8:1, 4; Romans 15:19-21; #1 Corinthians 16:1, 1 Corinthians 1:10.

Q. In the days of the apostles individual groups of Christians in various locations all believed and practiced the same

DOCTRINE



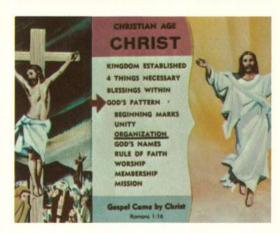














49. AS JESUS WAS FACING THE CROSS He prayed diligently that all believers remain united in Him. Pleading with God, He said, "Father... I pray for them... That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:1-21). Jesus expects every child of God, so long as the earth exists, to be together in HIS CHURCH.

Q. Jesus prayed diligently that all remain united.

BELIEVERS

50. THE LORD HAD WARNED the Jews that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand (Mark 3:24). This is true of Christ's Kingdom, THE CHURCH. Jesus also said, "There shall be one fold, and one shepherd" (John 10:16). During the first century all Christians were in one sheepfold with Christ as the one Shepherd. But, somehow, today there are more than 250 religious bodies with their many faiths, various baptisms and conflicting doctrines. Although every denomination teaches some truth and accomplishes some good, is not modern religious division in direct contradiction to Jesus' prayer for unity?

Q. Modern religious _____ contradict Jesus' prayer for unity.

DIVISIONS

51. ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH according to God's pattern is also clearly defined in the New Testament. Throughout the world today Christians are organizing local churches true to the Bible pattern simply by following the directions God has given in the Scriptures. But what are these divine directions?

Q. Local churches true to the Bible pattern can be organized today by ______God's directions in the Scriptures.

FOLLOWING

52. FIRST, THE BIBLE CLEARLY TEACHES that Jesus Christ is head of THE CHURCH.¹ Second, we learn that a congregation, when completely and scripturally organized, consists of elders, deacons, teachers, preachers and the other members.² According to the Bible no one was ever given an exalted position above anyone else, but all were to live as brothers and sisters in GOD'S FAMILY.³ However, each of these special servants rendered a special service within the congregation.

1 Colossians 1:18; 2 Ephesians 4:11, 12; 3 1 Peter 4:8-11; 5:1-5.

Q. The Bible teaches that no one Christian should be given an _____ position above the others.

EXALTED

53. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT a local church was to be organized under a group of elders, never just one. Only qualified men were to be appointed as elders. This was the position of greatest responsibility in a congregation.2 The New Testament refers to elders as "pastors," "over-seers" and "bishops".3 These are not titles but words describing the various qualifications of elders and types of service they render. God did not then, nor does He now, authorize the use of religious titles or special clothing to elevate these men above any other member.4 The elders were appointed to rule only in their own congregation in keeping with God's laws and to be responsible for every member. In turn, all members were instructed to obey their elders (Hebrews 13:17).

¹ Acts 14:23; ² 1 Timothy 3; ³ 1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20:17, 28; ⁴ Matthew 23:1-12.

Q. God has not authorized Christians to use religious _____ or special clothing.

TITLES

54. DEACONS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH served under their elders and assisted in many areas of work in order that the elders might have more time to care for the spiritual needs of the members. This picture depicts a deacon bringing aid to a widow and her children. According to the list of qualifications for deacons in 1 Timothy 3, only dedicated Christians could serve in this position.

1 Acts 6:1-7.

Q. I Timothy 3 lists the ___ for deacons.

QUALIFICATIONS

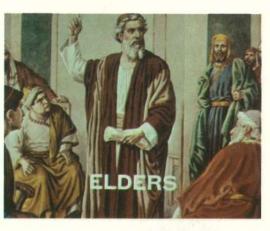
55. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, preachers were to preach the Word of God. As bearers of good news, they were called "evangelists". God nowhere has authorized the use of special clothing or religious titles such as "Reverend" or "Pastor" to exalt preachers above their fellow members. The word "Reverend" in the Bible describes only the name of God. The only difference between Christians is in function or work. Since elders are directly responsible to God for everything taught the members, a preacher also serves under the local elders (Acts 20:28). The elders are warned by God's Word against false teachers and preachers.²

¹ Psalms 111:9; ² Acts 20:29-31; Titus 1:9-11. **O.** Preachers are called _______ be-

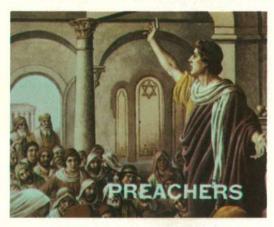
cause they are bearers of good news. EVANGELISTS 56. BIBLE TEACHERS in the local church also were responsible to their own elders. However, the Lord urged every Christian to become a teacher of the Bible (Hebrews 5:12). The Bible tells us that members of THE EARLY CHURCH "... went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). Since all the members shared their knowledge of Christ with others, the EARLY CHURCH grew very rapidly. God expects Christians today to follow their example.

Q. God expects all Christians to _____ their knowledge of Christ.

SHARE

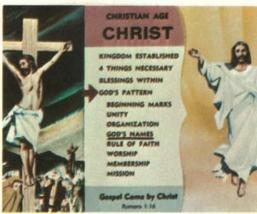


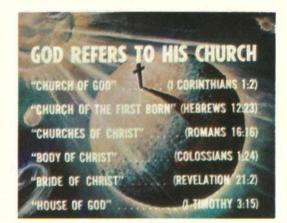


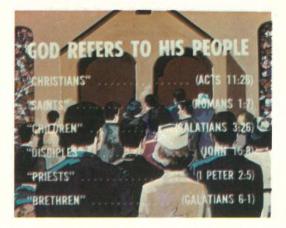












57. REMEMBER THAT GOD has given a pattern for organizing THE CHURCH exactly as He wants it organized. Jesus Christ is the only Head of THE CHURCH both in heaven and on earth. Therefore, heaven is the only headquarters for CHRIST'S CHURCH. Each local church is instructed to appoint elders who are directly responsible to God for the soul of every deacon, teacher, preacher, and member. God expects every saved person to work in a local congregation of Christians organized according to the divine pattern (Acts 9:26-28). No Christian can quit THE CHURCH and still be acceptable to God.

Q. God expects every saved person to work in a local ______. CONGREGATION

58. GOD'S NAMES FOR HIS CHURCH and her members were selected by God Himself. Most people are surprised to learn that God never chose one exclusive name for HIS CHURCH. However, when the Scriptures refer to THE CHURCH, God has chosen descriptive phrases which set forth some of the most distinctive characteristics of THE CHURCH.

Q. God has not chosen one exclusive _____ for His church.

NAME

59. GOD REFERS TO HIS CHURCH as: "church of God", "church of the firstborn", "churches of Christ", "body of Christ, "bride of Christ", and "house of God". Notice that these phrases are not denominational names. They do not refer to different churches but to God's one SPIRITUAL KING-DOM. Notice again that each of these **Bible** expressions glorifies God and His Son. Therefore, God has chosen these expressions to refer to HIS CHURCH.

Q. New Testament expressions referring to the church _____ God and His Son.

GLORIFY

60. GOD REFERS TO HIS PEOPLE as: "Christians", "saints", "children", "disciples", "priests", and "brethren". The name "Christian" marks one as being owned by Christ. Every Christian is a "saint" for his sins have been forgiven; he is a "child of God" for he is born again² he is a "disciple" because he continues to learn and follow his Lord; he is a "priest" empowered to worship and serve God directly through Christ, his High Priest; he and his fellow-Christians are called "brethren" because they are all children of the same heavenly Father. Those who follow God's pattern will respect, appreciate and use terms in keeping with God's choices rather than modern denominational names.

¹ 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; ² 1 Peter 1:22, 23; Galatians 3:26, 27; ³ Acts 11:19-21, 26; ⁴ 1 Peter 2:5; ⁵ Hebrews 2:10, 11; 1 Peter 2:17; 1 John 3:13-15.

Q. When a person is born again he may be truly called a _____ of God.

CHILD

61. THE RULE OF FAITH FOR GOD'S CHURCH is another important part of the divine pattern. Centuries before the various denominational creeds appeared, God established an exclusive rule of faith for His people. Early Christians were guided only by the teachings of Christ and His apostles now recorded in the New Testament.

Galatians 1:6-9.

Q. God's rule of faith was given centuries before the various denominational appeared.

CREEDS

62. IN THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER, the importance of the Word of God as the rule of faith can be seen clearly. Jesus said, "The seed is the Word of God" (Luke 8:11). So, THE TRUE CHURCH can exist only where Christians follow the Word of God, the pure seed of THE KINGDOM. The New Testament is the only rule of faith God has ordained for His people.²

¹ Mathew 13:3-23; ² 2 Timothy 3:16-4:4.

Q. The Word of God is the pure _____ of the kingdom.

SEED

63. WORSHIP HAS ALWAYS BEEN a vital matter in the eyes of God. Did you know that God has actually told us how He wishes to be worshipped by His people, THE CHURCH? Christians today should worship Him according to the same pattern of worship He ordained for the EARLY CHURCH as prescribed in the New Testament. Since the literal meaning of the verb "worship", is "to adore", Christians must worship in God's way showing their deep love and sincere adoration for their Creator. The Bible clearly shows that in each Bible age God set forth specific avenues of worship for His people during that age.

1 John 4:24.

Q. In the eyes of God ______ is a vital matter.

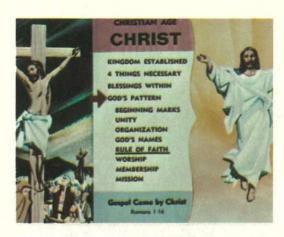
WORSHIP

64. FOR EXAMPLE, WE SAW in the Patriarchal Age that Adam's sons, Cain and Abel, were to worship by offering a blood sacrifice. Abel offered a lamb as God commanded and was blessed. Cain attempted to offer a substitute of his own choosing rather than to comply with God's choice. But God had no respect either for Cain or his offering.

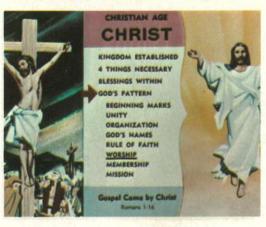
1 Genesis 4:1-8; Hebrews 11:4.

Q. Cain did not comply with God's _ when he tried to worship.

CHOICE

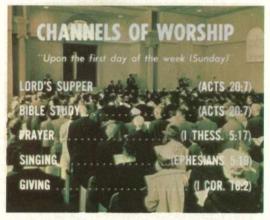
















65. IN THE MOSAIC AGE we recall the account of two priests, Nadab and Abihu, who attempted to worship God by burning incense. However, God considered them disrespectful because they offered in worship something other than that which He had commanded. Instead of using the fire that God had ordained, they substituted a "strange fire" and as a result were burned to death by fire from heaven. True love and adoration for God will express themselves in obedience to His will and respect for His choices in worship.

¹ Leviticus 10:1-3; ² John 14:15.

Q.	True	love	and	adoration	for	God	wil
ex	press	them	selve	s in		to	His
wil	I.						

OBEDIENCE

66. GOD HAS ALSO PROVIDED channels of public worship for our Christian Age: the Lord's Supper, Bible study, prayer, singing and giving. Since God, Himself, has chosen these media of congregational worship through which man may express his love to God, He will not accept man's substitutes. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Let us examine each of God's avenues of worship.

Q.	God	will	not	accept	man's	
_	ir	now r	ship.			SUBSTITUTES

67. JUST BEFORE HIS DEATH, while He was eating with His disciples, Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. Giving them unleavened bread to eat, symbolic of His body, and the fruit of the vine to drink, symbolic of His blood, Jesus lovingly requested, "This do in remembrance of me." After THE CHURCH was established, the disciples, following the Lord's pattern, met for worship every Sunday and partook of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7). History also shows that this was the practice of the early Christians until men changed the practice centuries later.

1 Luke 22:19 20.

Q. The early disciples partook of the Lord's _____ every Sunday.

SUPPER

68. THEREFORE TODAY THE LORD'S SUPPER

should be observed by every Christian every Sunday. While eating the bread and drinking the fruit of the vine, the Christian remembers the body of Christ and His precious blood shed for our sins. Those who are conforming to **God's pattern**, will continue to honor the will of Christ by communing with Him and fellow Christians every Sunday through this memorial feast (1 Cor. 11:20-29).

1 1 Corinthians 11:23-29.

Q. While partaking of the Lord's Supper the Christian remembers the body and precious ______ of Jesus.

BLOOD

69. BIBLE STUDY, through reading, preaching and teaching the Word, has also been ordained of God as a channel of public worship. Through the Bible, the inspired Word, God speaks to man. This act of worship honors God by drawing attention to His divine message. Surely this should be a time of reverence and deep respect for the voice of God. The true Christian also studies the Bible daily.

1 Acts 20:7; 2 1 Corinthians 14:37.

Q. God speaks to man today through His _____ Word, the Bible.

INSPIRED

70. PRAYER IS ANOTHER IMPORTANT PART of Christian worship through which Christians come to God with their thanksgiving, needs and requests for others. During prayer we should realize we are actually talking to God. Since Jesus is the only Mediator between God and man, only the prayers offered in Jesus' name fulfill God's pattern (1 Timothy 2:5). In addition to praying together in worship services, Christians pray often every day.

¹ Philippians 4:6-7; ² Philippians 1:3-4.

Q. Prayer should be offered in Jesus' name since He is the only ______ between God and Man.

MEDIATOR

71. THE LORD HAS CHOSEN SINGING as the type of music He desires in Christian worship. As Christians sing, the spiritual thoughts of the hymns are to flow from heart to heart and upward to the Lord (Colossians 3:16). Spiritual singing not only praises God and honors His choice but also brings comfort, peace, and inspiration to the hearts of the worshippers. Even while going about their daily tasks, many Christians find great joy and comfort in singing hymns of praise.

Q. Spiritual singing both praises God and honors His _____ of the type of music He desires in Christian worship.

CHOICE

72. GOD'S PATTERN FOR LORD'S DAY worship also includes the privilege of giving back to the Lord a substantial portion of the prosperity He has so richly given to us. Every true Christian feels deeply indebted to God not only for salvation but for every material blessing. Therefore, the Christian is moved to give liberally and joyfully. He knows his weekly offering is one way to prove his love for God as well as to help others hear the good news of Christ and find salvation.²

1 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2; 2 2 Corinthians 8:6-9; 9:6, 7.

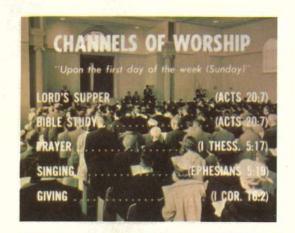
Q. The Christian's weekly offering is one proof of his _____ for God.





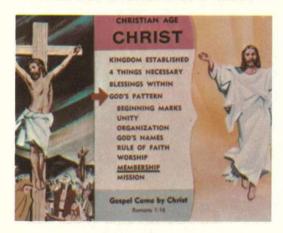






23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)
24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:
25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

(Hebrews 10:23-25)





73. REMEMBER THAT THESE CHANNELS of worship have been provided by the Lord Himself: the Lord's Supper, Bible study, prayer, singing and giving. Surely every person who truly wishes to worship and honor the Lord will do so in the way God, Himself, has chosen.

Q. God has provided channels of for His people.

WORSHIP

74. "LET US HOLD FAST the profession of our faith, without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24, 25). Whenever the local CHURCH assembles, every Christian should be present if at all possible. No true lover of God will ever be absent by choice from any worship assembly.

Q. No true Christian will be _____ by choice when his local church assembles.

ABSENT

75. MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS or terms of entrance into GOD'S SPIRITUAL KINGDOM are clearly defined in the New Testament. The religious group which conforms today to God's divine pattern will require neither more nor less than the Scriptures teach. How does one become a Christian, a member of CHRIST'S CHURCH? Every Christian should be able to answer this question in keeping with God's teaching in the New Testament.

Q. The New Testament clearly defines how one may become a _____ of Christ's church.

MEMBER

76. JOHN NELSON DEMONSTRATES ONE of many good ways to help others understand how they, too, can become members of CHRIST'S KINGDOM. He stresses the necessity of faith as the foundation for all obedience to Christ. Saving faith will be strong enough to lead into repentance of sins, confession of faith in Christ and baptism into Christ. Those who surrender themselves fully to Christ, through these channels of submission to His will, have the assurance that God, Himself, forgives their sins and adds them to HIS CHURCH (Acts 2:47). Only through the grace and love of God can anyone be saved.

Q. True obedience to Christ must be founded on ______.

FAITH

77. "FAITH IN CHRIST" is the basic requirement for all who would be saved and therefore enjoy the blessings of CHRIST'S CHURCH. The gospel, which reveals God's plan of salvation, is God's power to save, but only to those who truly believe (Romans 1:16). Only overwhelming faith in Christ Jesus can lead a person into full conversion through complete surrender to the will of Christ.²

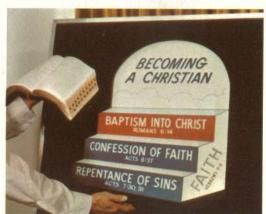
1 John 8:24; 2 Galatians 3:26, 27.

Q. Full conversion to Christ involves complete ______ to His will. SURRENDER









78. REPENTANCE IS A NATURAL OUTGROWTH

of faith in Christ. When one believes that God in love gave His only begotten Son to die for his sins, he experiences sorrow for his own sin and a determination to please God. Repentance involves a sincere decision to turn away from sin and to turn to God in willing obedience regardless of the cost. Since man leaves God in disobedience he must return to God in obedience. Through repentance we move closer to God.

1 2 Corinthians 7:10; 2 Romans 6:17, 18; 3 Luke 24:47.

Q. In repentance a person must decide to turn away from ____ and turn to God.

SIN

79. "... WITH THE MOUTH confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9, 10). True faith and sincere repentance will motivate one to confess publicly his firm belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. In this confession he also implies his complete allegiance to Christ as his new Master.

1 1 Timothy 6:12.

Q. When one confesses Christ he is

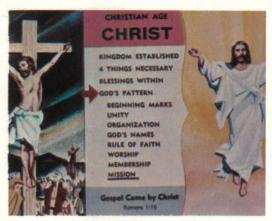
Q. When one confesses Christ he is actually pledging ______ to Him. ALLEGIANCE

80. THE TOP STEP, "Baptism into Christ" is red, to remind us that our sins can be washed away only by the blood of Christ. Baptism, also, is an outgrowth of faith. For baptism to be valid, one must believe **before** baptism that Jesus' blood can save him and believe **after** baptism that the blood has saved him.²

1 Hebrews 9:12-14; 2 Acts 8:36, 37; Romans 6:3-4, 17-18.

Q. As a person is being baptized, he must have faith that the _____ of Jesus will wash away sins.

BLOOD







81. FINALLY, WHAT IS THE MISSION or purpose for CHRIST'S CHURCH on the earth? Since Jesus gave His life for THE CHURCH, her mission must be one so distinctive, so high and so holy that it could never have been accomplished by any other organization.

Q. Jesus knew that the _____ was very important because He gave His life for it.

CHURCH

82. THE TRUE MISSION of THE CHURCH can be seen in Paul's vision of a man from Macedonia pleading, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." Paul answered this plea by carrying to them the good news of Christ's sacrifice for sin that they might be saved from their sins and live eternally with God. This is the mission which only THE CHURCH can fulfill. Every Christian must do his part in spreading the gospel throughout the world.

¹ Acts 16:8-10; ² Matthew 28:19, 20; ³ Acts 8:4.

Q. Only the church can perform the mission to prepare man that he might _____ eternally with God.

LIVE

83. GOD'S PATTERN for each local CHURCH includes: its worship, creed, rule of faith, unity, organization, names and mission. If a person should find himself in a community where Christians are not already meeting according to God's pattern, he could easily begin a TRUE CHURCH by following the New Testament even if he is limited to his own family. This would not be a new denomination but simply THE CHURCH of the Bible as it has continued since the days of the apostles.

Q. A person can begin a true church only by ______ the New Testament. FOLLOWING

84. WE CLOSE with this significant thought. Just after the apostles had seen Jesus ascend through the clouds to return to His Father, an angel of the Lord promised them that He would come again. The apostle John later said, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him." In His love and mercy God has made provision for everyone's salvation through Christ and HIS CHURCH. During the present Christian Age each of us must choose where he will spend eternity. If we are unprepared for heaven when Christ returns we can blame only ourselves.

 1 Acts 1:10, 11; 2 Revelation 1:7; 3 Revelation 1:5, 6; 4 2 Corinthians 5:10; 5 Hebrews 2:3.

Q. One must ______ in this life where he will spend eternity.

CHOOSE