

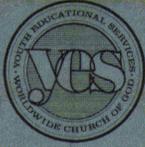
YOUTH



LEVEL 9

BIBLE

LESSONS



LESSON 8



Fundamental Doctrines of God's Church

FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINES OF GOD'S CHURCH

We learned in earlier lessons that the apostles of the New Testament Church of God proclaimed the Gospel of the Kingdom of God throughout many parts of the Roman Empire. Many who heard the Gospel believed it and were baptized. As a result, Churches were established and ministers were ordained to care for the rapidly expanding membership during these early years of the Church.

In this lesson, we will study the fundamental doctrines, or beliefs, of the early New Testament Church—the same doctrines which form the basis of the teachings of God's Church today.

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The message proclaimed to the world today by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, Christ's end-time apostle and Pastor General of the Worldwide Church of God, is the very same message that Jesus Christ and His apostles preached over 1,900 years ago. But what, exactly, is that message?

What was the message Jesus began preaching shortly after John the Baptist was put in prison? (Mark 1:14) _____

The word "gospel" means good news, or glad

ABOUT OUR COVER . . .

The fundamental doctrines of the early New Testament Church are being taught by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong in God's Church today.

YES Photo

tidings. During His three and one-half year ministry on earth, Jesus went about preaching the Gospel—the good news of the coming *Kingdom of God*.

The Kingdom of God is the world-ruling government that will be set up by Christ at His Second Coming. The Kingdom of God is also the Family of God into which we may be born. Those who become part of God's Family will rule over all nations under Christ. The whole world will then be at peace. There will be prosperity, happiness and joy for all.

Did Jesus send forth His apostles to preach that *same* Gospel (including all His teachings) to the world? (Mark 16:15) _____

(Matthew 28:19-20) _____

The book of Acts shows that the apostles did indeed preach the same message Christ brought—the good news of the coming Kingdom of God. Read and summarize the following verses which prove this fact.

(Acts 8:12) _____

(Acts 19:8) _____

(Acts 20:25) _____

(Acts 28:30-31) _____

Did Jesus prophesy that this same message would be preached at the time of the "end," the

time just before His Second Coming? (Matthew 24:14) _____

We are living in that time. Millions around the world hear and see the Gospel of the Kingdom of God proclaimed by God's Church today via radio, television and the printed word. The Gospel of the Kingdom is one of the first truths a person comes to understand when being called by God into His Church.

Now that we have an overview of the Gospel Jesus came to proclaim, let's learn about six of the fundamental doctrines that were taught by the apostles of the New Testament Church, and that are being taught by God's Church today. You will find these doctrines listed in Hebrews 6:1-2. Turn to these verses and write out the doctrines on the following lines.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____



Y.E.S. Photo

Human family members have the potential of being born into the Kingdom or Family of God.

5. _____
6. _____

In the remainder of this lesson, we will briefly study each of these doctrines and learn of their vital importance to the Christian way of life.

REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS

The Christian life must be built on a firm foundation. But many people do not understand how to begin. The common view held by many is that to become a Christian, one must simply "receive Christ," or just "accept Him" as a Savior. They believe you can come to God "just as you are" and "give your heart to the Lord." But that is not what God tells us in the Bible.

On the Day of Pentecost in A.D. 31, when God's Church began, the Apostle Peter preached a dynamic and inspired sermon. Thousands heard him explain how everyone is guilty of the death of Christ.

Realizing that they were sinners, what did the people ask Peter and the other apostles? (Acts 2:37) _____

What was Peter's answer? (Acts 2:38) _____

The first thing Peter told the people to do was to "repent"—to *change* the way they were living.

But what does one repent of? Sin! What is the biblical definition of sin? (I John 3:4) _____

Actions and deeds which are contrary to God's law are defined as sin. We commit *sin* when we break any of God's commandments.

Have all people sinned? (Romans 3:23) _____

What is the penalty of sin—of living contrary to God's law? (Romans 6:23) _____

All who have ever lived, except Christ, have sinned. Those who have *not* repented of their sins are, so to speak, on spiritual “death row” awaiting execution of a justly deserved penalty—eternal death! But God, in His great love and mercy, has provided a way to be forgiven and thus avoid paying that ultimate penalty.

What did the Apostle Paul say is God’s will for all mankind? (I Timothy 2:4) _____

Was this one reason why Christ came to earth? (John 3:16) _____

The Word, who existed eternally with God (John 1:1), became the human Jesus Christ (verse 14) and lived a sinless life. And He willingly paid the death penalty for all mankind.

The sinless Christ—the Creator God in the flesh—allowed Himself to be killed for us so we wouldn’t have to pay the penalty for our sins. He died in our place. But His sacrifice is applied to us only if we *repent* of our sins!

When a person repents, he is truly sorry for his sins. He does his best to *stop sinning* and begin living according to God’s law. A person who repents “changes direction.” He turns from the way of selfishness and greed to the way of give. He stops serving the lusts of his own flesh and begins to serve others.

When a person demonstrates his willingness to change, God applies the sacrifice of Christ on his behalf. He is then free from the penalty of his past sins. He is forgiven and his conscience is cleared.

Some people believe that if they punish or afflict themselves for sin, God will forgive them. But no amount of penance or any kind of human works can bring about the forgiveness of sin. There is no way a person can make up for his or her sins. Not even the sacrifices of the Old Testament could bring about the forgiveness of sin.

What did the Apostle Paul say about the

blood of bulls and goats? (Hebrews 10:4) _____

(Hebrews 9:9) _____

The sacrifices God required of ancient Israel were *reminders* of sin and pictured the future sacrifice of Christ who would die for the sins of all mankind (Hebrews 9:8-14; 10:1-4). These, or any other works, cannot forgive sin.

Only a repentant spirit will bring about God’s mercy and forgiveness. What kind of attitude does God look for? (Isaiah 66:2, last part of verse) _____

True repentance is not a temporary sorrow for sin. It is something much deeper. Godly repentance is a *permanent change* in the way



No amount of penance or human works can bring about God’s forgiveness of sin.

one has been living. It is a permanent change of direction—a total commitment to a new course from which there is no turning back.

True repentance is a complete about-face from disobedience toward God to obedience, love and cooperation with Him. It is the beginning of a new way of life, of putting God first in all things. Repentance is a necessary condition God requires for receiving the Holy Spirit and ultimately eternal life in His ruling Family!

FAITH TOWARD GOD

Faith is one of the most basic doctrines of the Bible and of God's Church. Faith, like repentance is also absolutely required for salvation.

But what is faith? To understand, let's review the example of Abraham, whom the Bible calls the father of the faithful (Romans 4:16).

God promised Abraham that he would be the "father of many nations" (Romans 4:17). But when Abraham and Sarah were old, they still did not have the child God had promised. Abraham *knew*, however, that God would fulfill His promise. Was this an example of faith? (Summarize Romans 4:19-21 on the lines below) _____

What is the definition of faith given by the Apostle Paul? (Hebrews 11:1) _____

Faith is belief that God will do what He has promised even though you can't, as yet, see the results. In Abraham's case, the fact that God had *promised* a son was all the proof Abraham needed that God would keep His word.

Noah is another outstanding example of faith. What does the Bible say about the faith of this patriarch? (Hebrews 11:7) _____

Noah showed his faith in God by building the ark God had commanded. Noah had trust and confidence that God would perform what He had *promised*. And Noah *proved* his faith by his works.

The Apostle Paul was an example of one who had faith. Paul demonstrated real faith in God while being taken to Rome as a prisoner. On the way, a violent storm nearly capsized the ship he was on. An angel appeared to Paul and told him that everyone would be safe. How did Paul demonstrate his faith? (Read Acts 27:22-25 and write out verse 25) _____

Paul *believed* God. He knew God would do what He had promised through his angel.

Hebrews 11, which is known as the "faith chapter," is filled with numerous examples of men and women of God in the Old Testament who had faith in God and demonstrated it by what they did. Be sure to read the entire eleventh chapter of Hebrews in connection with this section. You will find it very inspiring.

We can define faith, then, as simply *believing what God says!* Since God does not talk to us directly today, one who has faith believes that what God says in His inspired written Word—the Bible—is true.

The first human beings, Adam and Eve, are graphic examples of not having the faith we are talking about. They certainly knew God existed. They had *seen* Him (the Word who became Jesus Christ) and *talked* with Him. He had told them that if they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would surely die. But what did Adam and Eve do? (Genesis 3:6) _____

They did not believe God. Instead, they believed the lie told by Satan the devil. What did Satan, masquerading as a serpent, tell Eve? (Genesis 3:4) _____

These examples show that you either believe God or you don't—that you either have faith or you don't.

Those who have the faith described in the Bible believe that God exists. They believe that the Bible is His inspired Word, and they believe what is written there. And they believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who gave His life so that we might be forgiven of our sins.

THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS

When a person becomes convicted of his sins and determines to surrender to God in true repentance, how does he show it? It is through the ceremony of water *baptism*.

The word "baptism" comes from the Greek word *baptizo*, which literally means "to immerse." To baptize means "to plunge into" or "put into."

Before Jesus began His ministry, God commissioned the prophet John to administer the "baptism of repentance." What are we told about John's baptism? (Matthew 3:5-6) _____

What was John's message? (verse 11) _____

(Luke 1:77) _____

John was simply preaching *repentance from sin*. And he baptized those who truly repented of their sins. His message was preparing a people to receive and obey Christ when He began His ministry. John thus prepared the way for Christ's coming and His teachings.

Baptism, as it was performed by John and the early ministers of God, and as it is done today in God's Church, is an *outward sign* of inward repentance. And it pictures one's being washed and cleansed from past sins. After Christ's sacrifice, baptism took on further symbolic meaning, as we'll shortly see.

Was Jesus, even though He had no sins to

repent of, baptized by John? (Matthew 3:13)

Was He *immersed* in the river? (Verse 16)

Why was Jesus baptized? (Verse 15) _____

Did He set an example for us in all things? (I Peter 2:21) _____

Jesus was baptized in order to set an example for us to follow.

After His resurrection, what did Jesus commission His apostles to do as they preached the Gospel to the world? (Matthew 28:19) _____

What were Peter's instructions to the people after his sermon on the Day of Pentecost? (Acts 2:38) _____

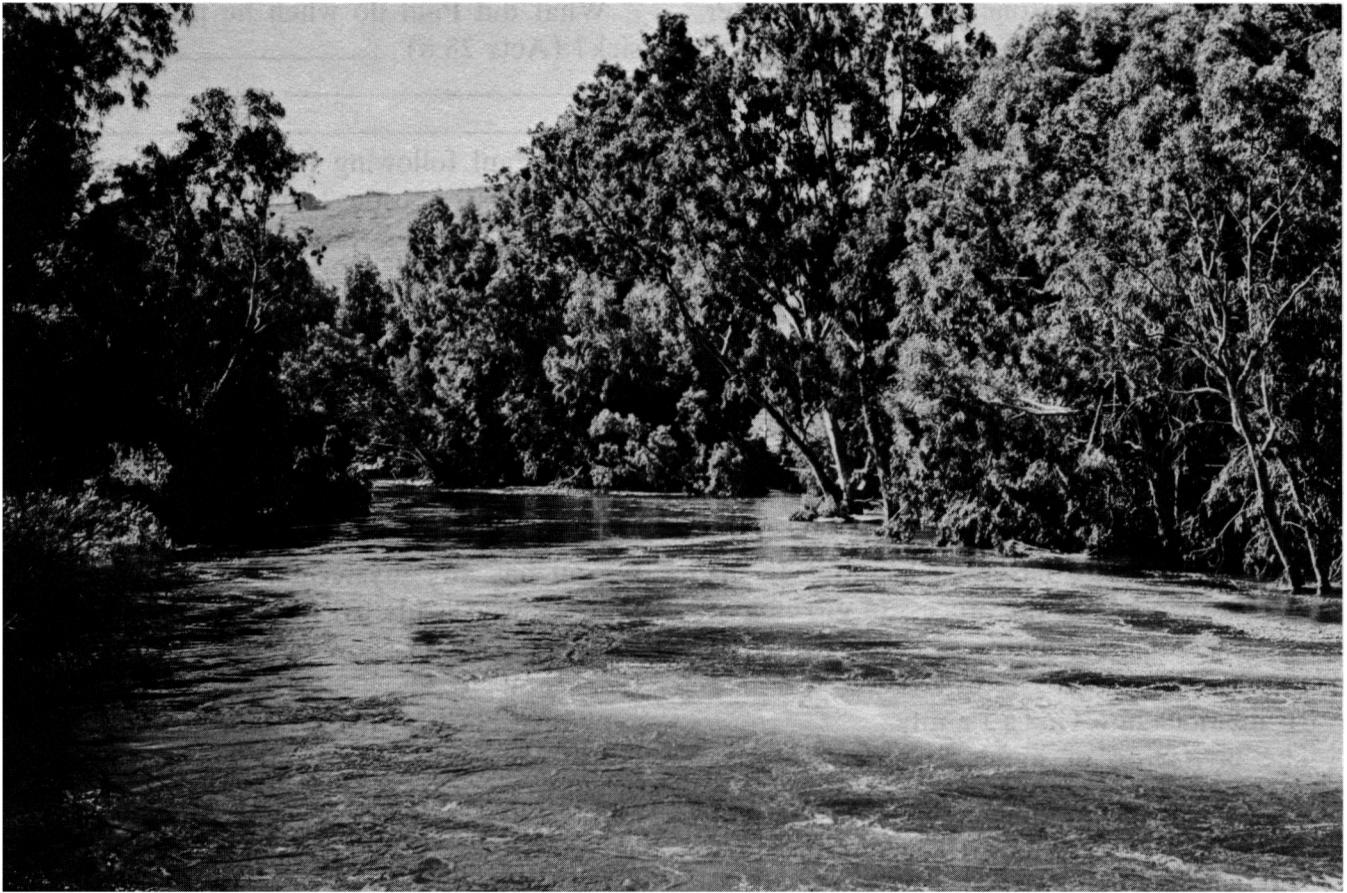
When one repents of his past sins and has faith in God and in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for his sins, he is ready to be baptized.

Because of the very serious meaning of baptism, it should not be taken lightly. Ministers of God's Church do not counsel a person for baptism until he or she is mature enough to set his or her course for life. A person should not be baptized until he is fully capable of being responsible for himself.

Even though you will not be baptized for several more years, it does not mean you cannot begin to understand the meaning of this important doctrine.

The deeply symbolic meaning attached to baptism after the death of Christ is revealed by Paul in Romans 6:1-5. Summarize the main points in these verses on the lines below. _____

Baptism—complete immersion in water—pictures the *death* and *burial* of Christ. Rising



YES Photo

The Jordan River in which the prophet John baptized Jesus Christ.

from the waters pictures His *resurrection* from the dead to spirit life. Baptism also pictures the *symbolic* death and burial of one's old sinful life, and his rising up out of a watery grave to begin living a new way of life—God's way.

Baptism is an outward symbol of one's repentance, as well as faith in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice. Baptism shows to God one's willingness and desire to permanently *bury* his old, sinful ways and begin living a new and different life in compliance with God's law.

There is another important baptism mentioned in the Bible, but it has nothing to do with water. What is this baptism? (I Corinthians 12:13, first part of verse) _____

This verse shows that the receiving of God's Holy Spirit puts one *into* the spiritual "body" of Christ, which is the Church of God. This immersion into the Church by the Holy Spirit

is termed by the Scriptures as "the baptism *with*," "the baptism *by*" or "the baptism *of* the Holy Spirit." When God gives a person His Spirit is revealed in the next basic doctrine.

LAYING ON OF HANDS

The doctrine of the "laying on of hands" is very important because it shows that God deals with mankind through fallible, imperfect human beings whom He chooses and sets apart for His service. Let's see how this teaching is applied in God's Church, as revealed in the Bible.

What did Peter say would happen after repentant believers are baptized? (Acts 2:38, last part of verse) _____

When a person whom God is calling turns from his former way to live God's way, he needs special help to be able to obey God. He needs the *spiritual* strength that comes only

from God. God gives one that strength after baptism. It is the Holy Spirit.

What did the apostles do for those who had been previously baptized? (Read Acts 8:14-17 and write out verse 17) _____

Another example of the laying on of hands for the receipt of the Holy Spirit is found in Acts 19:5-6.

God's ministers today follow these examples. After a person has been baptized by immersion in water, the minister lays his hands on the individual's head. He then asks God, through prayer, to give that person His Holy Spirit.

When one receives God's Spirit, a new spirit life begins. God-life has been begotten in his mind! He then begins the process of growing in spiritual character. Finally, at the resurrection of the dead at Christ's return, he is *born* as a spirit member into God's Family.

The laying on of hands ceremony is also performed when ordaining men and women to special service in God's Church.

How were the first deacons ordained? (Acts 6:6) _____

How were Paul and Barnabas ordained? (Acts 13:3) _____

In these examples we see God's will being carried out by His ministers praying and laying hands on the ones He had chosen. The laying on of hands symbolized and formally emphasized that *God*, not man, had set them apart and given them authority to perform a particular job.

So when a deacon, deaconess or minister is ordained, God's ministers today will lay hands on and pray over that individual.

A third application of the laying on of hands deals with illness. Did Christ lay hands on the sick when healing them? (Luke 4:40) _____

What did Paul do when he prayed for the sick? (Acts 28:8) _____

Was Paul following the instructions Christ had given His apostles? (Mark 16:18, last part of verse) _____

What else is a minister to do besides laying hands on and praying for the sick? (James 5:14) _____

No minister's hands are special or holy. No oil has any mysterious power. It is God Himself who heals us. But He has prescribed a physical act to show our faith and trust in Him, and to show our acceptance of the *authority* He has given His ministers as His representatives.

The doctrine of the laying on of hands is very relevant to God's Church today. God is actively working through human beings who are doing His Work. He has provided ministers to represent Him and to oversee the work of His Church, and has given them the spiritual authority necessary to carry out their jobs. The laying on of hands is the ceremony God has inspired to be used in the delegation and use of that authority.

RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

Perhaps the question most often asked since Adam and Eve has been: "What happens after we die?" Yes, what does happen?

Throughout human history, very few have ever known the truth. Most people have lived in superstition and darkness. They have been totally ignorant of what really happens after death. This is because they have been deceived by Satan the devil (Revelation 12:9). Satan has deceived them into believing that man has an immortal soul that goes to either heaven or an ever-burning hell at death.

But what does God reveal about the state of the dead? (Psalm 146:4) _____

(I Thessalonians 4:13-14) _____

Death is pictured as a sleep. When you go to sleep at night and wake up in the morning, it seems as if only a split second of time has elapsed. If you sleep soundly, you are totally unaware of the passing of time. So death—the complete cessation of life—can be compared to a deep sleep that lasts from the time one dies until the time he is resurrected.

In his sermon on the Day of Pentecost, what did Peter say about King David, who lived about 1,000 years before Christ? (Acts 2:29)



YES Photo

Death is compared in the Bible to a sleep from which the dead will awaken at their resurrection.

God's servants of past ages, including David, are all dead. But what will happen to David and all others who have received God's Holy Spirit and lived a righteous life? (I Corinthians 15:51-52) _____

And what will happen to the saints (spirit-begotten Christians) who are alive at the return of Christ? (I Thessalonians 4:17)

Both I Corinthians 15 and I Thessalonians 4 show that God will change the living saints from mortality to immortality at the resurrection. Eternal life will not be given to anyone until the resurrection at the Second Coming of Christ.

When Christ returns to earth at the sounding of the last trumpet, the dead in Christ will rise first. Then, a moment later, those who are alive will be changed into spirit, becoming the born-again Sons of God. Together they will rise to meet Christ in the clouds above the earth.

Where will Christ and the spirit-born saints go after their rendezvous in the air? (Read Zechariah 14:4-5 and summarize these verses)

Will the saints then rule with Christ on the earth? (Revelation 5:10) _____

(Revelation 20:6) _____

Unlike what many religions have taught, Christians will not float off to heaven to play on harps or to sit back in idleness, ease and luxury. They will be busy ruling and governing

the nations on earth for 1,000 years in the World Tomorrow. The entire world will then know the joy that comes from living God's way of life.

But as we learned in our Fall Festival Lesson, the first resurrection is not the end of God's plan for mankind. Will those who are not resurrected at the Second Coming of Christ remain dead forever, or will God also resurrect them at a later date? (Revelation 20:5, first sentence) _____

(Note that this sentence is actually a parenthetical statement inserted within verses 4-6, which deal with the *first* resurrection.)

What will occur after all these dead, who lived from Adam to the Second Coming of Christ, are raised to physical life? (Read Revelation 20:11-12 and summarize these verses) _____

This resurrection of billions of people is explained in more detail in Ezekiel 37:1-14, where God is speaking of ancient Israel as a *type* of all nations. Summarize the key points in these verses on the following lines. _____

The second resurrection is not a "second chance." The people in this resurrection lived under the deception of Satan the devil during their first lifetime. Most never even heard the name of Christ. And those who thought they knew God never really understood God's purpose for mankind and His way of life. They never had an opportunity to receive salvation.

These billions will be given a lifetime under the Government of God. They will have their opportunity to choose eternal life, live according to God's law and grow in His character.

Those who choose and follow God's way will be born into God's Family at the end of this period, which the Bible apparently indicates will last 100 years.

ETERNAL JUDGMENT

"Eternal judgment" is the last of the fundamental doctrines listed in Hebrews 6. Just what is this important teaching and how does it affect all who have ever lived, including those of us today?

When the Bible uses the word *judgment*, it does not exclusively mean the passing of a sentence or the giving of a reward. It also refers to a process, or a period during which on-going evaluation ("judging") takes place.

The Bible reveals that there are three separate judgment periods in which God offers salvation to mankind. And the end result of God's judgment of mankind will be *eternal*. For most it will be eternal life in God's Kingdom. But for a few, it will be eternal death. Let's briefly study these judgment periods.

Are members of God's Church now being judged by God? (I Peter 4:17, first part of verse) _____

God is not trying to save the world today. Now is simply not God's time for the vast majority of people to understand His truth. At this time God is offering salvation—eternal life in His Family—only to His Church, which is composed of those relatively few whom He has called to understand His truth.

Therefore, God is now in the process of *judging*, or evaluating, those in His Church. They are in the first period of judgment that began on the Day of Pentecost, A.D. 31. At Christ's Second Coming, they, as well as all the dead in Christ, will be given eternal life if they did their best to obey God and overcome spiritually with the help of the Holy Spirit. It is then that they will be given the *gift* of eternal life and *rewarded*—given positions of

responsibility—based upon their works in this life.

During the Millennium, the resurrected saints will rule on earth with Christ, helping Him judge the physical nations. Throughout this period, billions of human beings will be born. They will be given the opportunity to choose God’s way of life, receive God’s Holy Spirit, develop God’s character and be changed into spirit members of God’s Family. This is the second period of judgment referred to in the Bible.

Then, after the Millennium, all those who have lived and died, never having understood God’s way of life, will be resurrected back to physical life. What will then take place? (Revelation 20:12) _____

The “Great White Throne Judgment” period (verse 11) described here is the third judgment period mentioned in the Bible. It is the time when all those billions of mankind, who never understood God’s truth or even heard the name of Christ, will be given their chance to learn about God’s master plan of salvation. They will live and be judged daily by the Word of God, just as members of God’s Church are being judged today. They will be judged according to their works which they perform after having come to understand God’s true way.

God is not a stern, harsh monster who is interested only in condemning the wicked, as some believe. He is a loving and merciful God who is working out a plan here on earth. And that plan calls for billions of human beings to be born into His Family. It is God’s desire that *everyone* eventually become a spirit-born child of His! (I Timothy 2:4.)

When *final* judgment is passed, the verdict will indeed be eternal—*forever!* For most, it will be life forever in God’s Kingdom. But what will happen to those few who refuse to obey God? (Malachi 4:1) _____

When will this occur? (Revelation 20:14-15)

Those who chose the way of death during their judgment period, instead of God’s way to glorious eternal life, will be briefly resurrected to mortal life (the third resurrection) and sentenced to death in the lake of fire.

When this event takes place, everyone will have had his chance to be born into God’s Family. Everyone’s ultimate destiny will have been “fixed” eternally. It will be forever too late for those who—after receiving their chance for salvation—sinned *willfully* (Hebrews 10:26), thereby rejecting eternal life. Those who rejected God and His way must then reap the consequences of that decision—the *second death*, from which there will be no resurrection.

Where can we find a glimpse of what God has planned when the three judgment periods for mankind are complete? (Read Revelation 21:1-4 and summarize the key thoughts in these verses) _____

Those who enter God’s Family will dwell with God in the new Jerusalem on the new earth, where there will be no more sin, sorrow or death to mar eternal happiness.

You can have a part in the wonderful future God has in store for the obedient. It’s not too early for you to set your will to serve and obey God to the best of your ability. As you grow through your teen years and become a young adult, let the knowledge of these basic doctrines of God’s Church guide your life so you may become a member of His eternal Family!

EDITOR IN CHIEF: **Herbert W. Armstrong**

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BIBLE MEMORY
Chapter Recognition

Genesis 1/Creation
Genesis 2/Two Trees
Exodus 12/Passover
Exodus 20/Ten Commandments

Leviticus 11/Clean and Unclean Meats
Leviticus 23/Festivals of God
Proverbs 31/Virtuous Woman

CALCULATE THE DOCTRINES

Decipher the number codes below to find the names of the fundamental doctrines of God's Church listed in Hebrews 6. First, complete the addition, subtraction, multiplication and division problems. Then, use the letter/number line to find the answers. After completing all six math problems, on a separate sheet of paper write a short paragraph explaining each doctrine.

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