

## APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

### Lesson 78

Memory Text: "Have I not chosen you twelve?" John 6:70

"Apostolic succession" is a phrase which means, "When the apostles died, other church leaders took their place and were used of God in the same way."

This is not true. The twelve apostles (Paul took the place of Judas) were the only Divinely inspired authorities of the Church.

It was easier for the early Church to follow a leader than to learn God's will by prayer. Their parents had followed Jesus and, when he died, the apostles. Many of the early Church did not have much schooling. If an educated Christian said something was true, the others supposed it must be so. Pretty soon, an opinion was repeated as Gospel Truth.

Do not only blame the leaders that error came into the Church. Every one of us is responsible for what we believe, and we should help others see what is true, too. Of course, we have Bibles and Bible helps, which the early Church did not have, but they had enough help so that they shouldn't have gotten away from Jesus' teachings.

There were some Greek Christians who liked what Jesus said, but they did not pay close attention to everything he said. In their Greek mythology, they had learned that people do not stop living when they die. And so, in spite of the Bible teaching that there is no knowledge or work in the dead condition, these Greek Christians said, "But there must be. This is what we were taught as children." Sure enough, the foolish church began teaching as fact that after death men are wonderfully happy if they were good in this life, and terribly tortured if they were

APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION  
Lesson 78



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. Who was Constantine?
2. Why did he want all Christians to agree?
3. Was he a true Christian?
4. Did he have a right to decide what was Christian Truth?
5. Did bishops of the Church, 300 years after Christ died, think they knew the Truth as well as the apostles?
6. Did these bishops think they were as important as the apostles?
7. Who was Arius?
8. What did he believe?
9. Did he agree with most of the Church Bishops?
10. What happened to Arius and his true beliefs?
11. Who is the Head of the Church?
12. Why did God permit error to get into the Church?
13. What is the difference between disciples and apostles?  
Luke 6:12,13

THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE  
Lesson 79

Memory Text: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."  
Isaiah 55:9

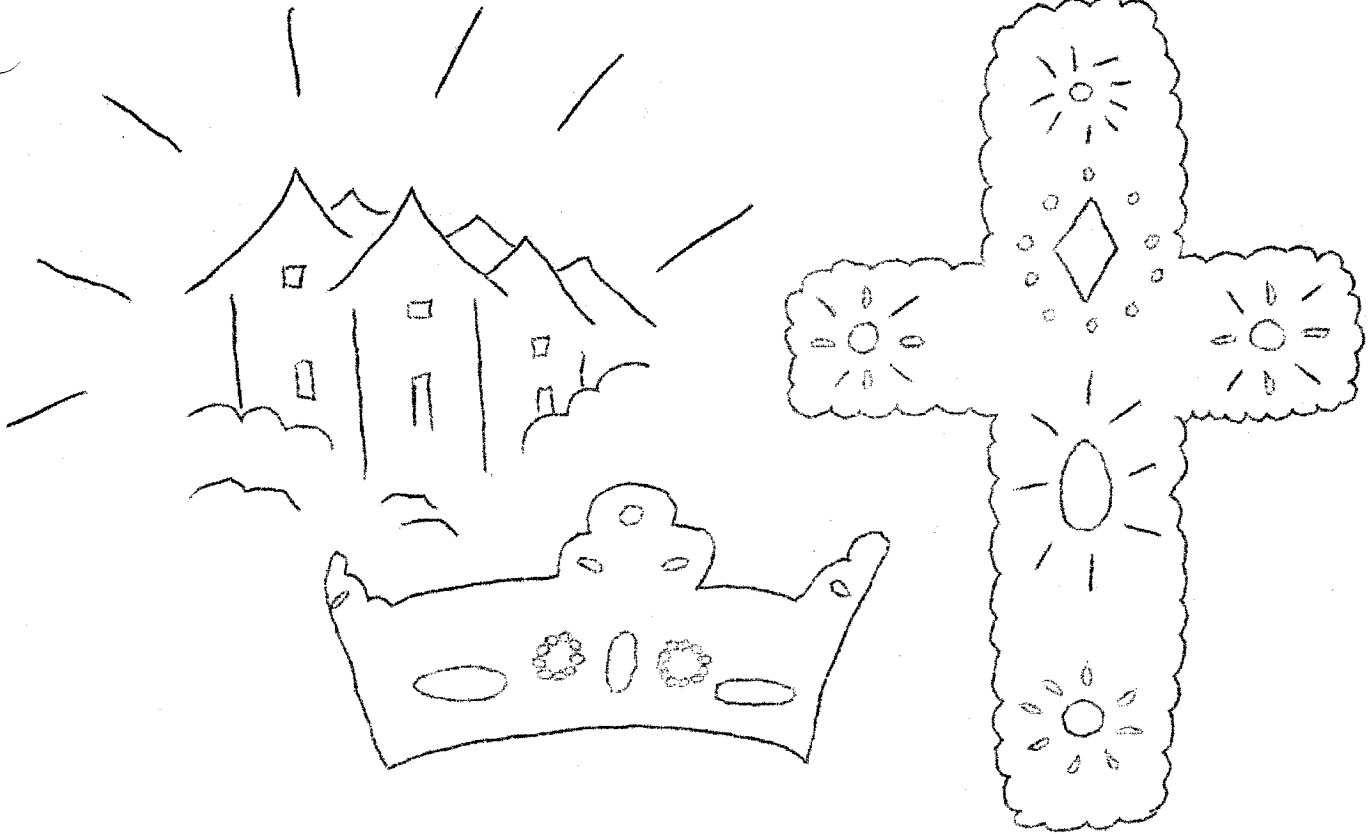
History books tell us that Charlemagne was a great and good emperor. He realized that knowledge and law and order are necessary in a perfect kingdom. What Charlemagne didn't know was that his empire was not God's kingdom, for which we pray. All of his schools of learning and courts of law were made by men and could not last forever or give perfect knowledge and justice.

When the pope of the Catholic church, Leo 111, crowned Charlemagne as ruler of the Holy Roman Empire, many people hoped that this would be the end of wars and that peace would come at last. With the help of the Church, wouldn't this government rule wonderfully all the kings and peoples of the earth?

No. The Bible tells us that we must understand when God wants certain things done. He has a special time to set up His wonderful kingdom. The "prince of this world," Satan, has to be bound so that King Jesus can rule in full power and great glory. Jesus and the true Church class, the 144,000 saints in glory, will be priests and kings in God's kingdom. In the meantime, it is very displeasing to God to have the churches of this world rule with the governments of this world.

Some people still look back to Charlemagne and believe that his reign began the great Millennium for which Jesus taught his followers to pray. How important it is to study the Bible carefully so that we may understand God's plans and timing!

"THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE"  
Lesson 79



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. Why didn't Charlemagne know God's plan? I Corinthians 1:26; Matthew 11:25
2. Are knowledge and law and order pleasing to God? 2 Peter 3:18; Proverbs 13:14; I Corinthians 14:40
3. Where in the Bible are we told to pray for God's kingdom?
4. Is it proper to want peace? 2 Thessalonians 3:16; Micah 4:3
5. How do you know that God has a special time for each part of His plan? Ecclesiastes 3:1
6. Are we supposed to work hard to help the governments and kings of this world? Matthew 22:21
7. How do you know that the thousand years beginning with Charlemagne was not the Millennial kingdom? Isaiah 35. Revelation 21:4

CRUSADES AND CRUSADERS  
Lesson 80

Memory Text: "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Ephesians 6:11

"The weapons of our warfare are not of the earth but mighty by God." Apparently the Crusaders forgot this scripture in II Corinthians 10:4. One of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:13) says, "Thou shalt not kill." Nowhere did Jesus teach his followers to kill.

Many Christians loved to visit the land where Jesus had lived and died. For years and years they made these journeys peacefully. Then the Turks captured Jesus' homeland, and they did not want the Christians to come there. They treated the Christians cruelly.

Jesus had taught (John 4:20-24) that how men worship is more important than where they worship. He refused to defend himself against his enemies even when he could easily have done so. Matthew 26:52,53. He even warned men that if they fought with a sword they should expect to die by a sword.

But the Crusaders forgot Jesus' teachings. Instead they listened to men. They listened to Peter the Hermit, who preached, "It is God's will that we fight for the Holy Land." They listened to Godfrey of Bouillon who said "The Catholic saint George is come to help us." A Christian named Bernard said, "These Crusaders are forgetting all about God. They are spending all their time quarreling with one another."

And so we learn many lessons from the Crusaders. We learn that the Christian armour is faith and love and hope. I Thessalonians 5:8. We learn that even hate is considered murder in God's sight (I John 3:15) and murder is a sin in God's law. Matthew 19:18. Finally, we learn that we must not follow the teachings of men, but of God. II Peter 2:1-3.

Parents' reference: W.T. 2249

CRUSADES AND CRUSADERS  
Lesson 80



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. Is fighting ever right?
2. If Jesus taught that fighting was wrong, why did God command the Israelites to go to battle? John 13:34
3. What is vengeance? Who does God say should take vengeance against wrongdoers? Hebrews 10:30
4. Is it important that Christians own the Holy Land?
5. Would you like to visit the Holy Land?
6. Were the Turks sincere?

CHRISTIAN MARTYRS  
Lesson 81

Memory Text: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."  
Matthew 7:21

Here and there were men who wanted to know God's plan. They were not satisfied with the plans of emperors or the words of priests or bishops or popes. They wanted to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. They knew that the lazy and proud popes and priests were not acting as good Christians should.

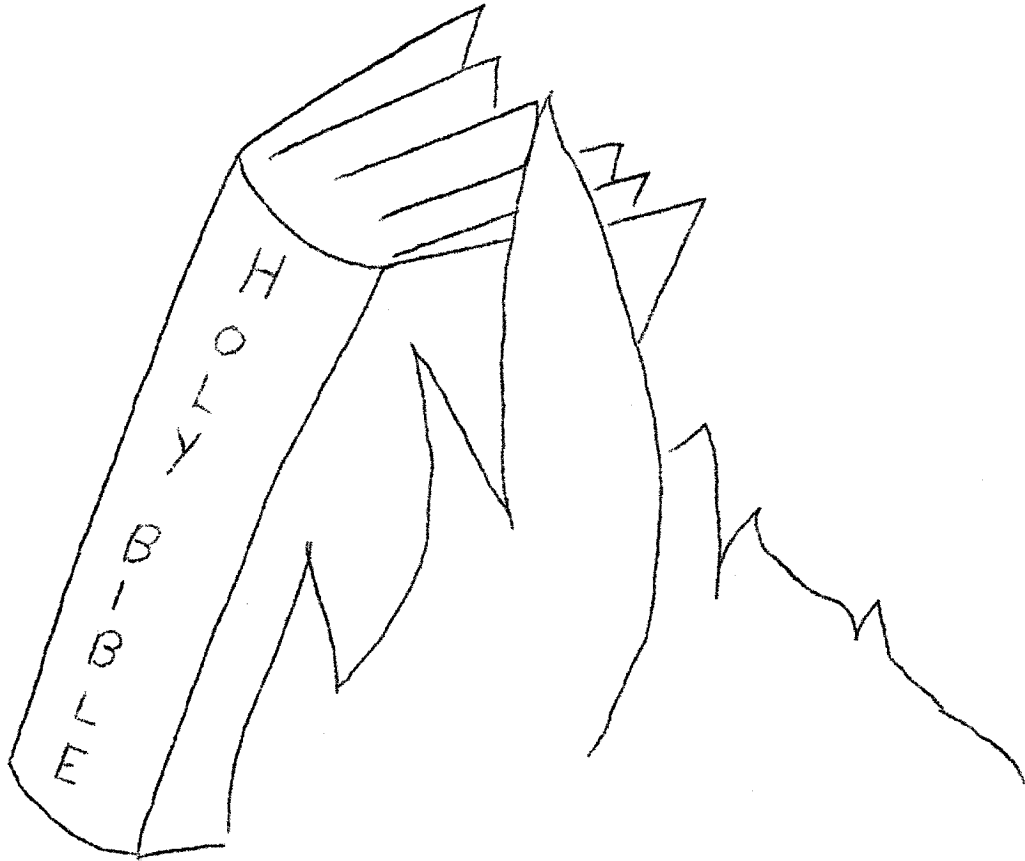
Wycliffe was one man who would not believe that God spoke only through the Pope. In fact, at one time in Wycliffe's life there were two popes. Both of them said that God could speak only through a pope, but they couldn't agree which pope.

One of the many people who agreed with Wycliffe was John Huss. They did not feel that the pope had a right to take tax money from the people. They admired men who lived simply and served the church faithfully. They looked at the wickedness of the pope and called him Antichrist, which means "against Christ."

John Huss was so sure he was right that he would rather die than change his mind. That is just what happened. His enemies burned him alive. The church at Rome hated Huss, but he had many friends who loved him. They, like Huss, loved liberty and hated wickedness. But they fought for their beliefs, and this was wrong. The Hussite Wars killed many people.

A man named Tyndale wanted to help others study God's Word. This way they could decide what God would have them do. They would not have to depend on their priests to tell them. Tyndale translated the Bible into words that could be easily understood. He, too, was killed for his efforts to serve God and the people.

CHRISTIAN MARTYRS  
Lesson 81



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. Could everyone read the Bible 500 years ago? Explain.
2. Are we supposed to hate popes?
3. How should we feel toward people who attend other churches?
4. Does it matter what church we attend?
5. Who translated the Bible you use?
6. Can you remember anyone else who was killed because he taught God's Word?

THE REFORMATION  
Lesson 82

Memory Text: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."  
II Timothy 2:15

Martin Luther was the head of a Catholic College which trained young men to be priests. He studied the writings of other priests. He studied the beliefs of the Church. But he did not study the Bible. He thought that his Catholic books explained the teachings of the Bible.

One day Luther saw a copy of the New Testament. He picked it up and read it. He was surprised that it was so easy to understand. In fact, there were certain scriptures that easily showed that the Catholic books were wrong.

Luther wrote to the Pope. Did the Pope know of these mistakes? Did the other priests know about them? Luther became excited, for he was eager to know God's truth.

The Pope was angry! How did anyone dare to criticize him? Hadn't God chosen him to be the chief religious ruler of the world? Wasn't the Apostle Peter the first pope, and didn't every pope take the place of Peter in God's church? Such were the teachings of the Catholic books. These were not the teachings of the Bible.

Martin Luther was told that he could no longer belong to the church. This monk who had tried so hard to please God was now removed from the Catholic church.

One of the errors which worried Luther was the doctrine of predestination. He could not believe that God decides ahead of time who will go to heaven and who will go to eternal torment, regardless of how a man lives.

Luther knew how many mistakes we all make, and he was

LUTHER, ZWINGLE, MELANCHTHON  
Lesson 82



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. Why didn't the Catholic books explain the Bible truths?
2. How would you feel and act if you didn't know if God was planning to send you to heaven or to eternal torment?
3. What is your hope if you die?
4. Explain the hope found in these scriptures?  
Revelation 21:4  
John 5:28,29  
John 3:16  
Isaiah 35:10  
Isaiah 25:8

TETZEL SELLING INDULGENCES  
Lesson 83

Memory Text: "My house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." Matthew 21:13

Johann Tetzel preached the power of the Catholic pope at Rome. He said, "You have friends in Purgatory, the fiery place where peoples' sins are burned away. There they are dead, suffering for the mistakes they made in life. The Pope has the power to release your friends from Purgatory. Give me money to give to the Pope. God will bless your gift by freeing your friend from Purgatory and its fiery flames."

It seems hard to believe that anyone would listen to Tetzel and his foolish words. But many sincere Christians felt, "Tetzel is a man of the Church, surely he must know." They said, "We are not educated and we do not understand. We had better do what he says. Surely we do not want our friends burning in Purgatory."

Tetzel had not been the first to think of this scheme. When the kings of this world and the popes worked closely together, they would decide what battles must be fought and they would all support these battles together. Sometimes a war would be fought so that the king would conquer more land for himself. Sometimes a war would be fought to strengthen the Catholic Church. The king would help the pope and the pope would help the King. Very few men are eager to go out on the battlefield to be killed. So the pope would encourage them in this way: "This is a holy war. You are fighting for God's will to be done. If you die on the field of battle, God will reward you by taking you straight to heaven. If you do not fight in this conflict, you will spend thousands of years in Purgatory, burning away your sins."

Murderers and thieves and other wicked men joined

TETZEL SELLING INDULGENCES  
Lesson 83



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. Place the following pronouncements in the order in which they occurred:
  - a. The Catholic Church will forgive all the sins you have committed if you give money to it.
  - b. The Catholic Church will forgive your future sins if you pay the money, now.
  - c. The Catholic Church will forgive all the sins you have committed if you die fighting for it.
  - d. The Catholic Church will forgive your friends in Purgatory and take them to heaven as soon as you pay the proper amount of money.
2. How are our sins really paid for?
3. What do we have to do to have our sins forgiven?
4. What was the name of the greatest reformer who taught "Faith in Jesus' sacrifice is the only way our sins can be forgiven"?
5. What is purgatory?
6. What is hell?
7. What is heaven?
8. Is anybody good enough for heaven?
9. Will everyone be in heaven in the kingdom?