

The Complete School of the Bible Manual

Published by:
Paul E. Paino Ministries
P.O. Box 12205 • Fort Wayne, IN 46863

THIS CHRISTIAN EDUCATIONAL TOOL IS DEDICATED...

For as long as I can remember, my father, Dr. Paul E. Paino, was committed to the next generation. He is known across the country in evangelical circles as the “Sunday School Fanatic”!

This manual is the result of the passion Dad had for providing biblical instruction for children of all ages. The concept of developing a concise program whereby a child could be exposed to the Scripture in a way that would be relevant to this age is demonstrated in the material that is here presented.

Due to modern technology, twelve volumes and thousands of pages have been formatted into CDs that can be held in your hand and easily accessible around the world!

Although Dad accessed Heaven in 2005, his vision and passion for this project lives on. I am sure that this latest step in making this material available around the world joys his heart.

It is only appropriate to acknowledge those who have worked steadfastly to provide this new vehicle of sharing this material. Ann Liechty, Carol Kutzner, Alice Baxter, and Curt Monk have labored immensely to complete this challenge. It has not been without difficulties, but they have refused to give in until the work was done...and they have succeeded!

Our prayer is that, as you use this material, you will be anointed by the Holy Spirit to touch the lives of those who hear it, for eternity.

**Dr. Paul C. Paino
General Overseer-CMI**

Table of Contents

Introduction	ix
Section 1: Welcome to Our Ministry Team	1
To Our Co-Laborers in the Work of the Ministry.....	3
Our Calling.....	5
Our Charge	9
My Commitment.....	13
My Credibility	15
My Goals	17
Section 2: Personnel Job Descriptions.....	19
Using the Personnel Job Descriptions	21
School of the Bible Flowchart	23
Primary Department Flowchart.....	25
Administrator.....	27
Class Coordinator.....	29
Teacher.....	33
Musician	39
Worker.....	41
Secretary	43
Four Things Every Teacher Must Know	47
Three Requirements for Every Teacher.....	51
Responsibilities of a School of the Bible Worker	53

Section 3: Student Profiles	57
Understanding Your Students.....	59
A Profile of First Grade Students.....	61
Children of the '90's.....	65
Why Do We Lose So Many of Our Children to the World?.....	69
Do Not Send Them Away.....	77
Why Unsaved People Do Not Come to Church.....	81
The Importance of Repentance.....	85
 Section 4: Sensational Sunday School Sessions	 91
The Importance of Scheduling Your Class.....	93
Class Schedule	95
Preparation for Class	97
Singing with Joy.....	99
Offering and Prayer.....	101
Teaching with Purpose.....	103
Story-telling to Touch Hearts.....	105
Scripture Memorization.....	107
Catechism in Doctrine	109
 Section 5: Life-related Stories.....	 111
Using Life-related Stories.....	113
The Story of Thomas á Kempis	115
The Holy Spirit Translates.....	117
The Story of W. Stillman Martin.....	119
The Story of the Mayflower.....	121

The Story of Jerry McAuley	123
The Story of Jonas Miller, M.D.	125
The Story of George Müller	127
The Story of John Newton.....	129
The Story of Origen	131
The Story of Perpetua.....	133
The Story of Evan Roberts	135
The Story of C.H. Spurgeon.....	137
The Story of Young Billy Sunday.....	139
The Story of Graham Truscott	141
The Story of Debbie Truscott	143
The Story of Booker T. Washington.....	145
Section 6: Promotions.....	147
The Importance of Promotions	149
Link Up with Jesus	151
Fuel the Flame.....	177
Fall Fun Festival	195
Unlock the Treasure.....	209
Section 7: Catechism in Doctrine.....	221
Introduction to Catechism in Doctrine.....	223
Who Is Satan?.....	225
What Are Angels.....	227
What Is a Priest?.....	229
How Does God Speak to Us Today?.....	231

What Is the Difference Between People and Animals?	233
What Is the Difference Between People and Angels?.....	235
Who Wrote the Bible?.....	237
What Is the Trinity?.....	239
What Is God Like?	241
Section 8: Lessons	243
Lesson 1: He Shall Be a Prophet.....	245
God can speak to us, even when we are very young.	
Lesson 2: A King Is Chosen.....	249
God sometimes allows us to get what we want, but His way is always the best.	
Lesson 3: I Did It My Way.....	253
Pride is extremely dangerous, and it causes us to lose God's presence and power in our lives.	
Lesson 4: Best Friends	257
When we are in a covenant relationship with God, He makes us able to make real covenants with other believers.	
Lesson 5: He Is Too Small	261
God is not impressed with our appearance or natural abilities, but He is impressed with faith and character.	
Lesson 6: David's Training for Reigning	265
God prepares us for future battles with smaller ones, and trains us through adversities in life.	
Lesson 7: The Courage of Jonathan.....	269
If you have a right spirit, God will help you do great things for His glory.	
Lesson 8: Goliath of Gath	273
Wisdom is looking at things from God's point of view, and faith acts on what is realized in wisdom.	
Lesson 9: Dave In the Cave.....	279
In times of adversity, we grow, and develop lasting and true friendships with faithful people.	

Lesson 10: Love Your Enemies	283
One great evidence of real Christianity is our response to people who do us wrong.	
Lesson 11: I Rejoice At Thy Word.....	287
King David lived a wonderful and successful life, because he loved God, and he loved God's Word.	
Lesson 12: Do Not Give Up.....	293
One way to handle discouragement is to realize that our hardest times are often just before our greatest victories.	
Lesson 13: David's Mighty Men.....	299
Every great leader in God needs a team of skilled and courageous helpers to achieve his potential.	
Lesson 14: Mephibosheth.....	305
If we go to heaven and live with God forever, it will be because of our relationship with Jesus Christ as a child of God, and not because of our works.	
Lesson 15: Prince Absalom.....	309
It is very important to maintain good communication with our parents, and to be submitted to them.	
Lesson 16: A Christian World View.....	315
We should diligently establish a Christian world view in our minds, even when we are young, for our character and behavior are greatly affected by our world view.	
Lesson 17: Trick or Treat.....	321
Halloween is a pagan holiday, based on non-biblical principles, and should not be observed by Christians.	
Lesson 18: A Wedding At Cana.....	327
Obedience to Jesus will make the difference in life between merely existing and truly living.	
Lesson 19: The Woman At the Well.....	331
Jesus loves the most hopeless sinners, and wants to lead them to God.	
Lesson 20: Troubled Waters.....	335
Jesus is able to heal any physical disease or injury. He is the Great Physician.	
Lesson 21: Walking On the Sea.....	341
Faith means keeping our eyes on Jesus and seeing His purposes in the storms of life.	

Lesson 22: Thank You, Jesus.....	347
It is very important to give thanks to the Lord for everything He has done for us.	
Lesson 23: What Is a Missionary?.....	353
We need to understand, appreciate, and support missionaries of the Christian faith, who are going into all the world with the Gospel.	
Lesson 24: Christmas Is for Christians.....	359
Christmas is a time to celebrate and remember God's greatest gift to mankind -- Jesus.	
Lesson 25: Wise Men Still Seek Him.....	365
Wise men still seek Him.	
Lesson 26: Created In His Image	371
Self-acceptance comes from knowing that God made us in His image for an eternal purpose.	
Lesson 27: Created to Praise Him.....	377
God created mankind for His honor and pleasure. Praise to God is an excellent activity for people.	
Lesson 28: John's Baptism.....	381
John's baptism was a baptism to show repentance for sin, but Christian baptism is the sign of our covenant with God.	
Lesson 29: The Profit-Minded Prophet.....	385
God is able to speak to us in many ways, and is not limited to the laws of nature.	
Lesson 30: Joshua's Call To Leadership.....	391
The way to be a leader in God's kingdom is to be a servant.	
Lesson 31: The Wisdom Of Rahab	397
Rahab responded correctly to her fear of the God of Israel by acting in faith and trust.	
Lesson 32: The Salvation Of Rahab.....	401
Rahab is a clear picture of salvation. We are saved by grace through faith.	
Lesson 33: The Walls Came Tumbling Down.....	407
God wants to teach us to obey Him without question or doubt, and He is able to work supernaturally to bring about His will in our lives.	

Lesson 34: Defeat At Ai.....	411
Sin has consequences, and our sin can affect those around us as well as ourselves.	
Lesson 35: Joshua and the Gibeonites.....	417
We must pray and study God's Word, so that we will not be deceived by the devil.	
Lesson 36: Raining Rocks.....	423
When God tells His people to do a job, He will help them do it, even if it takes moving the world.	
Lesson 37: Old Caleb	429
Life is an exciting adventure when you live with faith in God 429	
Lesson 38: Joshua and Jesus.....	435
Joshua's life was a picture of the life of Jesus, just as ours should be.	
Lesson 39: Palm Sunday	441
The people of Jerusalem accepted Jesus when they thought that He would establish a natural kingdom; but, they later rejected Him.	
Lesson 40: Glorify Thy Name.....	447
Jesus came to earth to give His life for the sins of the whole world, to redeem from sin all those who would believe on Him.	
Lesson 41: The First Sunday Night Service.....	453
Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to His disciples that first Easter Sunday. He is alive forevermore.	
Lesson 42: Jesus Is Coming Again.....	459
Jesus is coming to earth again, and we need to be ready to meet Him.	
Lesson 43: Samson's Special Gift	465
God gives different gifts and abilities to different people, according to the needs that He knows they will face in life.	
Lesson 44: Samson Brings Down the House.....	471
Temptations are designed by Satan to lure us away from God.	
Lesson 45: A Praying Mother.....	477
God gave us the prophet, Samuel, because of the faithful and diligent prayers of his mother, Hannah.	
Lesson 46: Be Ye Kind	481
We must learn to guard our hearts, and be careful not to hurt one another with thoughtless or coarse words.	

Lesson 47: Love Accepted.....	485
God is more interested in a personal relationship with us than He is in our service for Him.	
Lesson 48: Stop the Storm.....	489
Faith in Jesus is the key to responding to the storms in life.	
Lesson 49: The Day Of Pentecost.....	495
Jesus wants to baptize every believer in the Holy Ghost, in much the same way He did on the day of Pentecost.	
Lesson 50: What Is a Father?	501
Our natural fathers are called by God to do in our natural lives many of the things our Heavenly Father does.	
Lesson 51: The Calling Of Gideon.....	507
God calls the people He chooses for special jogs, and we should be quick to listen and trust Him.	
Section 9: Activity Pages.....	513

Introduction

The following comments and suggestions are presented to help you better utilize The Complete School of the Bible Manual.

1. The curriculum for grades 1 through 8 contains 51 lessons per grade level. There is no lesson for the 52nd week of the year. This is "Switch Week," when students are promoted from one class to the next. Due to the time involved in moving students to their new classes, we recommend using this class session to welcome the new students, to introduce teachers and workers and to acquaint students with how the class will operate.

The curriculum for grades 9 through 12 contains 52 lessons per grade level and includes an outline for "Switch Week."

2. The curriculum has been designed to be very flexible. It works equally well in graded and non-graded settings. (In a "graded" program, there is a separate class for each grade level. In a "non-graded" program, two or more grade levels are combined to make one class.)

If you operate a graded program, rotate the lessons in each class on a one-year cycle. At the end of the year, students are promoted to the next grade level and will be exposed to a new set of lessons.

If you operate a non-graded program, you can receive the full benefit of the curriculum without any reorganization of your Sunday School. Simply rotate the lessons in each class on a one-, two-, three-, or four-year cycle. For example, if students in grades one through three meet in the same class, you would rotate the lessons on a three-year cycle. The first year you use the curriculum, teach the lessons in Volume 1; the second year, lessons from Volume 2; the third year, lessons from Volume 3. Then, in the fourth year, begin again with the lessons in Volume 1.

3. The curriculum is designed to run from July through June. The starting date for Lesson 1 is the first Sunday in July. If you are implementing the curriculum at another time during the year, simply count forward from the first Sunday in July to determine the beginning lesson. For example, if you implement the curriculum on the first Sunday in January, you would begin with Lesson 26.
4. Easter lessons should be moved in your manual to begin two weeks prior to Easter Sunday. There should be three Easter lessons for grades 1 through 8.
5. You may need to adjust the lessons for other special days (Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day, Christmas, etc.) depending upon how these holidays fall in the current calendar.
6. There is no established schedule for using the life-related stories. Simply insert them into lessons where you feel they are appropriate. It is helpful to repeat the life-related stories during the year to reinforce the lessons they teach.

7. It is recommended that each teacher receive a copy of this volume, including all the instructional materials in sections one through seven. This will help each teacher to be well-informed and prepared for their responsibilities in the classroom.
8. The lesson outlines in section eight are not designed to be read in class. Teachers should use the outlines to prepare their own presentation. The curriculum manual should not be brought into the classroom and should never be used in front of the class. Instead, use the Bible as you teach. It is important that the students be aware you are teaching from God's Word and not from a manual!

Section 1

**Welcome
To Our
Ministry
Team**

To Our Co-Laborers in the Work of the Ministry

Welcome to the ministry team of the School of the Bible. To be effective leaders and ministers of the Gospel, it is important to understand these basic principles:

- CALLING:** Who we are in relation to where God has placed us in teaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- CHARGE:** Our response to the call of God on our lives.
- COMMITMENT:** Our resolve to give our whole heart to obeying that charge.
- CREDIBILITY:** Our personal and ethical qualifications to fulfill our assigned task "as unto the Lord."

We are grateful for your faithfulness in working with us, and we are committed to the task of equipping you as God enables us.

Please read and study this material carefully; fill in the blanks; and sign your name.

Our Calling

All Christians are called to be separate from the world -- to be God's people in a God-rejecting culture. We are called to be worshippers whose goal is to please God, rather than heathens who live to please themselves. (Isaiah 43:21) We are called to be God's children, His servants, His disciples, His dwelling, His bride, His body. Jesus called us the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world." God has called us to communicate the ethics and the essence of the kingdom of God in our lifestyle and love for people.

The Greek word for "church" is "ecclesia," which means "called-out ones." The root word is "klesis," a "calling or invitation." God has set us apart to live in this world unto Him and for Him, with a view to eternity with Him. God has assigned to us a specific purpose and responsibility in the work of the harvest of souls.

As God's church we are called and commissioned, both individually and corporately. Each of us must know God personally and individually and be accountable to Him as servants. We are also called together as members of a functioning corporate body. This is a practical reality. We are "partakers together" and "co-laborers with Christ." We submit to one another in the fear of the Lord, knowing that none of us has it all or sees the whole picture. God gives us special gifts to be used for building up the whole group. Each of us has weaknesses and strengths, and we need to be interdependent upon one another.

The calling of a teacher is clearly set forth in scripture as a specific commission to chosen, mature believers. This calling is not based on our ambition, but on God's sovereign choice. It is not based on our ability, for God will enable us to do the task He has appointed us to do for Him. Not all of us are called to a full-time pastoral or apostolic ministry, but our calling is just as real to the Lord. We need to recognize that our calling is from God, confirmed through apostolic authority (pastoral leadership) and by the evidence of a supernatural ability to do it well as we "grow in grace."

To serve in any calling is a wonderful privilege, and we need to recognize from God's Word that it is:

A HIGH CALLING.

"...this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:13-14)

A HOLY CALLING.

God "...hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace...." (2 Timothy 1:9)

A HEAVENLY CALLING.

Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was faithful to him that appointed him,...." (Hebrews 3:1-2)

A HOPEFUL CALLING.

Paul's prayer:

"That...God...may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation...the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe,...." (Ephesians 1:17-19)

A HUMBLE CALLING.

"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:...that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus...." (1 Corinthians 1:26, 29-30)

Humility is the deep awareness of our constant need for God's strength and help in life's situations. People who are "gifted" with special abilities or intellect in some areas are tempted to trust in their natural talent. When they do, they become ineffective in the work of the ministry, because they are operating in the realm and resources of the flesh.

Questions To Be Considered As We Pursue A Teaching Ministry In The Local Church

Did God call me to teach?

If you believe God has called you to teach, then do it "as unto the Lord." Do not faint because of fear, weariness, or hurt feelings. Realize you are where God wants you to be; He has placed you there; and He has equipped you for the task. If you are not where God wants you to be, He will start working in you to put you where He wants you to be.

What group am I called to teach?

God has been preparing you to minister to a certain age group. Seek His direction through prayer, fasting, scripture, and counseling of your pastor. Be ready to serve. Let God open the door for you. Do not try to force it open yourself. God is responsible for the breadth of your ministry. You are responsible for the depth of it. As nearly as possible, focus on the group God has given to you and give them your heart.

Has the pastoral leadership confirmed this calling and agreed to oversee this work?

Any ministry to the flock of God must be yielded to and under the authority of the pastor of the flock. God will bear witness to your calling through the pastoral leadership of the church.

Am I called as a part of this local assembly of believers?

If you believe you have been called, then be faithful to your church and your pastor; cultivate and nurture an unshakable love for them.

Am I a team player?

When it is beneficial to the group, am I willing to step back and let someone else take a more dominant role and lead?

What part of the work am I specifically called of God to perform?

When your work is identified, then strive for excellence in it. Do it *"heartily as unto the Lord, and not unto men;...."* (Colossians 3:23)

Our Charge

Teaching is a vital part of the Great Commission to believers. We are commanded to teach all "nations" ("ethnos" -- people groups) about the Christian walk and witness. The word "teach," used by Jesus in His charge to His disciples in Matthew 28:19, is actually the word "matheteuo," which means "disciple, to enroll as a scholar." Our commission is to communicate and distribute information, to mold lives, to inform, and to inspire. We are called to teach and train disciples.

As teachers, we have the privilege of working with and for the pastor to strengthen the work of the gospel in this city, and to bless families by imparting Christian values to their children. We also see ourselves as workers with the parents, encouraging them in their role as the primary spiritual influence in the lives of their children.

In order to educate children effectively, there are several biblical principles we need to remember:

A child's life is molded and affected most by what he is exposed to every day.

In Deuteronomy 6:6-9, God, through Moses, instructed the Israelites to teach their children diligently the things of God throughout the day, and to have many reminders of spiritual truths in their homes and throughout their culture.

When the Sunday School first started in America, many Christian leaders had strong reservations about the whole program, because they were concerned that parents would tend to leave the spiritual training of their children to the Sunday School and neglect spiritual training at home. To be effective, you must inspire and influence beyond the one hour teaching session, lead children to a daily walk with God, and help impart vision to parents for daily family devotions, Christian music, and a spiritual atmosphere at home.

A good teacher will inspire more than inform.

The joy of the Lord is more caught than taught. If you have measles and teach all day on mumps, what will you be most likely to impart?

Most of the effort of a good teacher is outside the classroom.

Some of the activities teachers should pursue outside of the classroom include:

- Prayer;
- Preparation;
- Personal visitation;
- Practice (music, skits, etc.);
- Persistent Bible study;
- Purity in lifestyle as an example.

Teams are more effective than individual efforts.

"Two {are} better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him {that is} alone when he falleth; for {he hath} not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm {alone}? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken."

(Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

We are soldiers under authority.

Our purpose is to complement and strengthen the vision of this local church. We must always encourage loyalty to the church and honor to the pastor. God will give direction for the church to the pastor. It is our responsibility to support the pastor in the vision God has given to him.

Our purpose is to change lives by stimulating children with a sense of vision and destiny.

Our message is not only, "I can go to heaven when I die," but also that "God made me for a special purpose: to bless Him in my life and worship; to help other Christians; and to win lost people to Jesus."

The charge to Joshua was to love the Word.

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

(Joshua 1:8)

Paul's charge to Timothy:

- Stir up the gift of God within you. (2 Timothy 1:6-7)

God gave us spiritual enablements, but it is up to us to focus on and stimulate those gifts, because *"...God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."*

- Be a good soldier in God's army. (2 Timothy 2:4)

Do not get entangled with the affairs of this life. Be a good businessman or worker, but do not let vocational or recreational pursuits control your life to the point that you are too "tied up" to serve the Lord.

- Flee youthful lusts. (2 Timothy 2:22)

Do not just avoid sexual temptation, run from it. Try not to expose yourself to anything that will arouse your mind to lustful thoughts.

- Pray for those in authority over you. (1 Timothy 2:1-2)

- Make a supreme effort to show yourself approved unto God. (2 Timothy 2:15)

If you are a hard worker, you will not be ashamed. A teacher who is a faithful worker will rightly divide the Word of God.

- Avoid fables, and shun profane and vain babbling. (1 Timothy 1:4, 2 Timothy 2:16)

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,...." (Psalms 111:10) and so secular material has no wisdom to impart. Avoid worldly, fabricated heroes and stories. Communicate wisdom and understanding through Bible stories and characters, life experiences, and true-to-life stories. The purpose of secularized education is to create a perspective in children's minds that man is an end unto himself, and that God is unimportant

in the overall scheme of life. Our purpose is to communicate the truth that God is the center of our life, our hope, our purpose, and our daily walk.

- There are three basic character goals to keep in mind when you teach: (1 Timothy 1:5)

(1) Charity -- selfless love -- out of a pure heart, which is a heart that is not polluted with selfishness and willfulness.

(2) A good conscience, which is a spirit that is sensitive to motives or actions that are not pleasing to God.

(3) Unfeigned faith. This is honest faith that is not just "faith in the faith message," but wholehearted trust in God, even when we do not understand the process. Job said, *"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:...."* (Job 13:15)

I have carefully and prayerfully read this charge, and I receive it as from the Lord. I will diligently seek to fulfill the calling and obey the charge as God gives the grace to me to do it.

Comments: _____

My Commitment

1. I will pray faithfully for the class, as I take the responsibility, as from the Lord, very seriously. Without His anointing and supernatural help, I realize I cannot be effective.
2. I will be faithful to attend at least 48 classes per year. I will arrive in the room 30 minutes before starting time to greet the students and prepare for the meeting.
3. I will be diligent to prepare myself and the lesson ahead of time.
4. I am committed to the pastor and to his vision for the church. I am a soldier under authority and a reliable member of the ministry team of this local church.
5. I will faithfully attend at least two regular services here every week, in addition to attending the Sunday School hour.
6. I am a tither. I will give the first tenth of all my income to this local church in obedience to the Lord and as a reminder that I belong to the Lord Jesus Christ.
7. I am committed to winning the lost to Jesus Christ and to teaching and training my students to remain true to God as long as they live.
8. I will regularly visit the families of the students to whom I am assigned, especially those families with special needs.
9. I regard myself as being a member of a ministry team. If I see a special problem, I will help, if I can; or, I will notify those in leadership who are qualified to minister to the need.
10. I will reach out promptly to those in my charge who are absent or hurting.
11. I will be regular in my personal and family devotions to keep my heart and house in order and my focus on the things of God.
12. As a teacher, I am eager to receive training and instruction. I trust God to build my character and skills through the insights of those He has placed over me in this ministry.
13. When misunderstandings or interpersonal conflicts arise, I will go to the person with whom I have a problem and privately and quickly make every effort to restore a good relationship. I purpose to avoid being any part of gossip or backbiting, either as a listener or a giver of negative talk about a fellow Christian.

14. I am committed to growing in the pursuit of excellence in my work for the Lord. I will seek training when I have the opportunity, and will be the best I can be at my assigned tasks.

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave wither thou goest.” (Ecclesiastes 9:10)

Comments: _____

Signature _____ Date: _____

My Credibility

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Birthdate: _____ Check One: Male Female

Marital Status: _____ Ages of Children: _____

Employer: _____ Work Phone: _____

1. When were you born again? _____

2. Did you experience genuine repentance and faith toward God? _____

3. When were you baptized in water? _____

4. When did you receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit? _____

5. As a Spirit-filled believer, do you pray in tongues? _____

6. Do you read the Bible and pray daily? _____

7. What is your primary vocation? _____

8. What specific skills have you developed that could benefit a Sunday School program?

9. Have you ever been convicted of any crime (other than driving or parking violations)?

Do you have a criminal record? If so, please explain on the reverse side. _____

10. What education or degrees do you have? _____

11. How long have you tithed consistently to this local church? _____

12. Are you willing to receive instruction/correction from the pastors or supervisors? _____

13. Do you know of any personal difficulty or problem that might hinder you from being effective in the work of this ministry to children? _____

My Goals As a Worker In the School of the Bible

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Section 2

Personnel Job Descriptions

Using the Personnel Job Descriptions

This manual is designed to provide instructions and helps in order to assist churches and schools in developing an effective Bible training program. The charts and lists included in this section are intended to be guidelines. Only in rare circumstances can they be duplicated exactly. The absolutes are all in the Bible. Biblical principles will work in any culture or time.

We strongly encourage developing ministry teams, rather than having a single teacher in the class. Every Bible class should have at least two members on the teaching team, even if the class is small. A team is able to generate more excitement, pray more effectively, and minister more comprehensively than one person. This is a biblical principle. Two are indeed better than one.

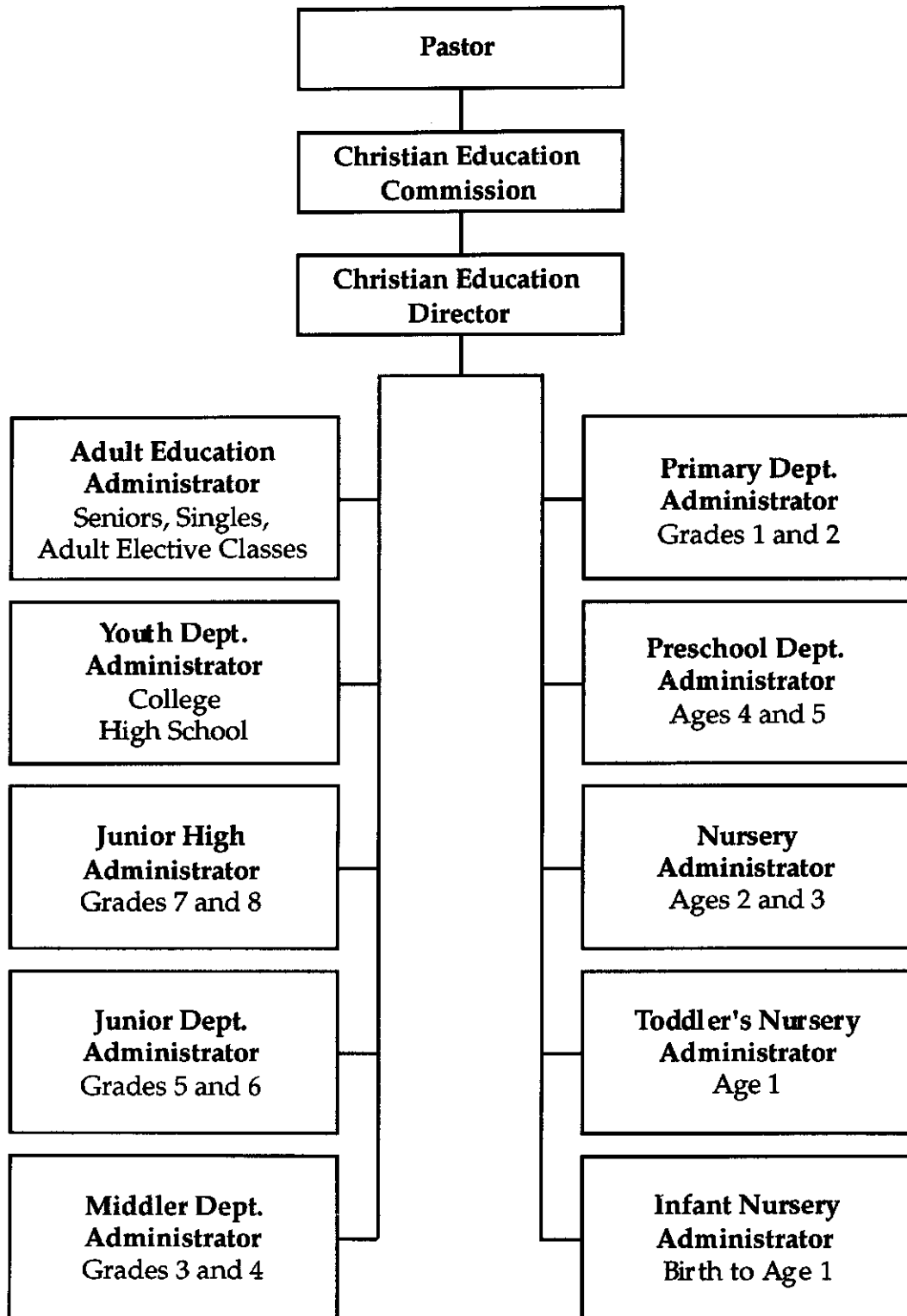
The job descriptions in this section define the responsibilities of the members of an effective ministry team. Sometimes, it may be necessary for a few people to fulfill several responsibilities in the class. However, as the class grows, these responsibilities can be delegated to new leaders as they join the ministry team.

It is also important to establish a clear line of authority in the School of the Bible.

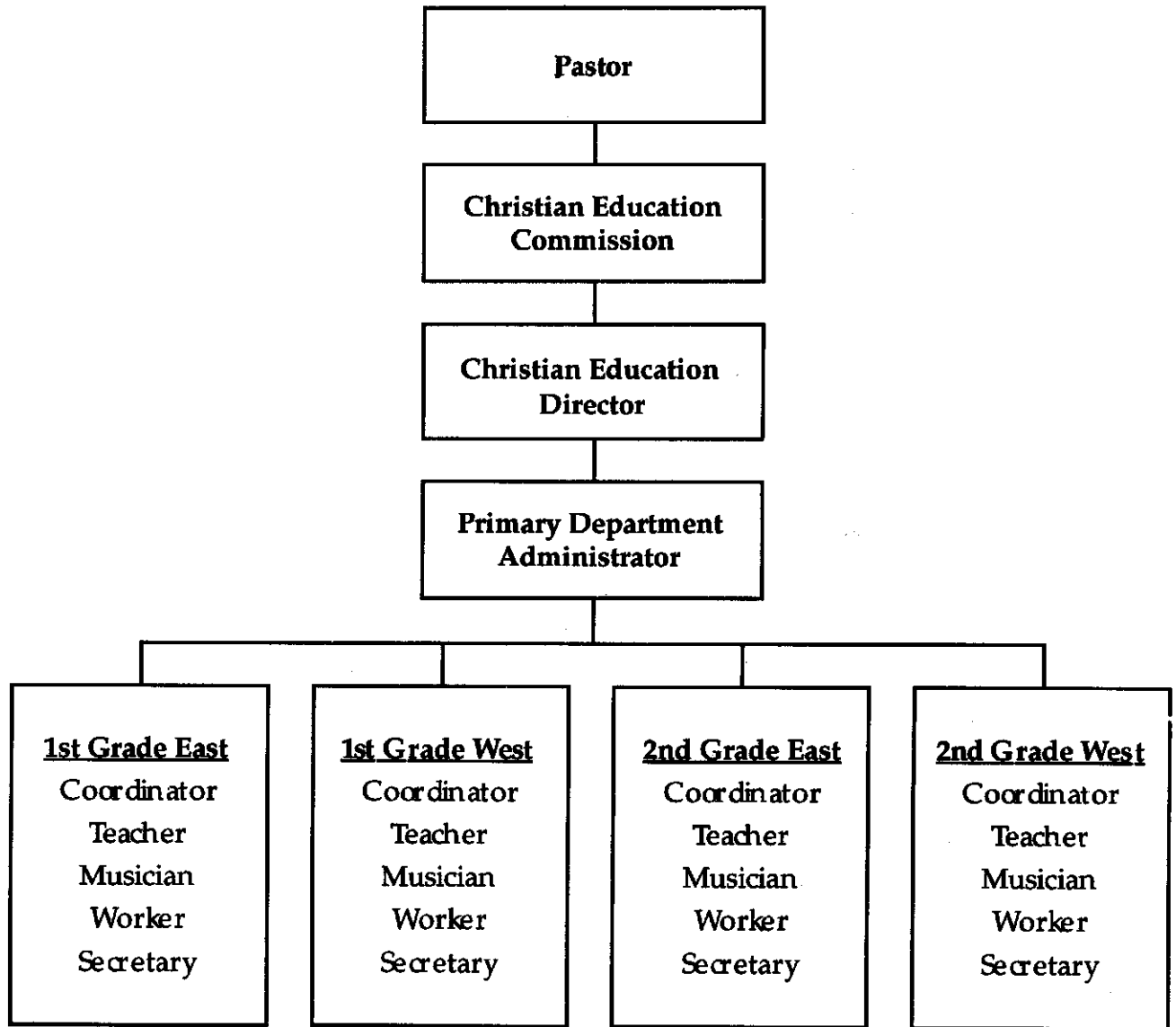
Confusion reigns when there is more than one person thinking they are in charge. The larger the body, the more responsibility needs to be delegated, and the more authority needs to be established on multiple levels. Everyone needs to know to whom they answer, and who has the responsibility to make the final decisions. The pastor is clearly the leader, and needs to have people under his direction who will take the responsibility for creating order and discipline in each class. Then, when there is a difference of opinion, these people graciously defer to him as the leader. One of the most important lessons we learn in Christian ministry is that we must have servants' hearts in order to make it work. Ambition and politics destroy the effectiveness of any ministry team.

Each of us in the family of God has a job to do. We need enough information to do it well. We also need to be a part of something that is bigger than we are; and we need help and encouragement along the way. This section is a tool for Christian leaders to help develop the specific program that will best meet the needs of the people.

School of the Bible Flowchart



Primary Department Flowchart



Administrator (Department Head) Job Description

The Administrator is responsible for the overall function of a department consisting of several classes. In order to achieve an effective and fruitful team ministry, Class Coordinators and Teachers will be under the supervision and guidance of the Administrator, with a view of strengthening the families and the general ministry of the local church.

A. Supervision.

1. Oversee the Class Coordinators.
2. Make certain that a leader for every class is present.
3. Encourage the workers to be punctual, neatly and appropriately dressed, and friendly.
4. Be in the hall 30 minutes before the classes begin to greet the teachers and students as they arrive.
5. Check around to see if there are any physical problems with the building which need to be corrected before the class begins. (Roof leaks, electrical problems, etc.)
6. Be sensitive to the needs of your teachers. Encourage and pray for any of them who are experiencing personal hardships.
7. Know each class team and be ready to step in and oversee a class if the Coordinator's post has not been filled.
8. Make sure the records are being handled correctly, and that the offerings are going to the department secretary with correct designations.
9. Take an active role in promotions and help stimulate interest and growth in the classes.

B. Teacher Training.

1. Conduct regular training sessions for your teaching teams, either as a department, or in conjunction with other departments.
2. Make every member of the group aware of the specific teaching goals of the class, both long and short term.
3. Share your ideas for improving the classes, and listen to the ideas of the Class Coordinators and Teachers with respect and appreciation.
4. Encourage friendship and fellowship among the people in your department.
5. Discuss available, new materials and teaching aids, and continually promote creativity, excitement, and the best audio-visual materials you can use.
6. Minister to the Class Coordinators under your supervision. Visit them as they visit those in their charge. Pray for and with them.

C. Discipline.

1. Be aware of any major discipline problems in the classes.
2. Be ready to handle any special discipline with which the Coordinator needs help.
3. If a child, who has become disruptive in class, is brought to you for correction, make every effort to locate at least one of the child's parents before attempting to discipline the child yourself.
4. NEVER spank or strike a child. Leave that up to the parents. Use physical restraint only if the child is a physical threat to someone. If a child is a consistent source of disruption to his class, you may find it necessary to suspend him. But, realize that disruptive anti-social behavior is a sure indication of severe personal and spiritual problems. Make sure that child is visited several times at home by teachers or others who are competent to minister to families, unless the family declines the offer of help.

Class Coordinator

(Class Leader)
Job Description

The Class Coordinator is directly responsible to the department Administrator. While having the primary responsibility for the class, the Coordinator serves as the leader of the teaching team in each classroom of the School of the Bible.

A. Attend Special Meetings of Leaders.

1. Keep informed on current developments and programs that relate to your class.
2. Share ideas and information with other Coordinators.
3. Receive information, encouragement, and ideas from the Christian Education Director, Pastor, or Administrator.
4. Pray with the other members of the teaching team.
5. Plan for the expansion and improvement of the School of the Bible ministry.

B. Supervise Training of the Teaching Team.

1. Class council meetings.
 - a. Conduct a special meeting with all of your workers at least once each quarter.
 - b. Discuss ideas for improvements in the class.
 - c. Share information from the Coordinators' meetings that is relevant to your team.
 - d. Discuss long- and short-term goals for the class.
 - e. Discuss and try to resolve any problems encountered in the class. Resolve any interpersonal conflicts quickly.
 - f. These meetings could be conducted in one of the homes with fellowship or a shared meal.
2. Assign responsibilities for each class session at least 10 days in advance.
 - a. Require each worker to report on the assignment plans and make sure each segment coordinates with the class theme.
 - b. Have each worker obtain and prepare props and teaching aids ahead of time.

3. Lead the group in goal-setting.
 - a. Attendance goals.
 - b. Offering goals.
 - c. Spiritual goals.
 - d. Visitation goals.
4. Lesson objectives.
 - a. "Quarterly objectives": Outline what you want to communicate for the quarter.
 - b. "Unit" objectives (usually 4 weeks).
 - c. Weekly aim (theme for this session).
5. Work with the team to plan special events, parties, field trips, service projects, etc.
 - a. Make specific assignments and divide responsibilities.
 - b. Fill out and submit the activity form to the Christian Education Director.
6. Lead the team in prayer before the class begins each Sunday.

C. Help Nurture the Spiritual Well-Being of Each Member of the Class.

1. Know the students personally, and be sensitive to their emotional and spiritual needs.
2. Be prepared to counsel on a one-to-one basis, if needed.
3. Set a godly example in your personal lifestyle and disposition.

D. Supervise the Care of the Classroom.

1. Never use tape, thumbtacks or nails on the walls or tape on windows. Use stick-tack.
2. In rooms with drop ceilings, light-weight objects may be hung from the ceiling grids.
3. Remove outdated decorations.
4. Turn off lights after class.
5. Make sure trash is picked up and put in the wastebasket.
6. Report maintenance problems to the Christian Education office.
7. Erase the chalkboards. Never use water on a chalkboard.
8. Arrange the chairs neatly.

E. Storage Cabinet.

1. Clean out the storage cabinet frequently.
2. Do not store food in the room or cabinet. It will draw all sorts of insects.
3. Be conscious of any fire hazard or clutter.

F. Classroom Discipline Problems.

1. The Class Coordinator is responsible for handling any normal discipline problems in the class with patience and consideration for the well-being of the group.
 - a. Never discipline a student with ridicule.
 - b. Never strike a student.
 - c. Convey love and acceptance while trying to determine the reason for the uncooperative or harmful behavior.
 - d. If possible, take a disruptive student aside and try to determine the nature of the problem. Be careful not to convey rejection by saying, "You are a bad child," or "I do not know what I am going to do with you."
 - e. Never leave a student standing or sitting alone in the hall.
2. Severe discipline problems should be referred to the child's father or mother if they are available.
 - a. If the respective parent is not in the building, the Administrator should handle the problem.
 - b. The Administrator should call the parents as quickly as possible.
 - c. The Administrator should give the child some personal attention and seek to discover the real problem behind the behavior, so he can minister to the need.

G. Coordinate and Lead the Visitation Program.

1. Assign a few of the students to each worker on the team.
2. Have each worker keep in touch with and continue to encourage each student assigned to them.
 - a. Birthday cards.
 - b. Phone calls.
 - c. Visits in the home.
 - d. Regular prayer for each one.

3. Organize regular visitations to the students.
 - a. Select a specific day, and get brief written reports.
 - b. Go with a new worker to show them how to make an effective home visit.
 - c. Make visitation an integral part of the Sunday School ministry program.
4. Be aware of absentees.
 - a. Contact missing students on a regular basis by writing, phone calls, and visitation.
 - b. If a student has been absent for more than 6 weeks, and every effort has been made to encourage them to return, contact your Administrator for approval to remove the name from the rolls.
 - c. No name should be removed without the Administrator's approval. It is the Coordinators' responsibility to keep track of extended absentees and not allow them to remain on the records, if they have not indicated that they will be returning soon.
 - d. Keep a record of the name, address, and phone number of each student whose name has been deleted and contact each one again within 3 months.

Teacher

Job Description

A. Communicate the Word of God to the Hearts and Spirits of Your Students. This Involves:

1. Planning:

a. Think ahead.

b. What response do I want to stimulate in their hearts this week?

(1) What do I want them to know?

(2) What do I want them to feel?

(3) What do I want them to do?

c. Suggested goals:

(1) Cultivate gratefulness to God as Creator, Provider, and Protector.

(2) Lead to repentance by awareness of sin, grace, faith.

(3) Combat the "me-centered" mentality of humanism and teach the joy of giving, serving, and preferring one another.

(4) Combat the temporal values system with an awareness of the second coming of Jesus, heaven, hell, eternity, and the judgment seat of Christ.

d. Biblical goals (from 2 Peter 1:5-7 in order):

(1) Faith.

(2) Virtue (character).

(3) Knowledge.

(4) Self-control.

(5) Godliness.

(6) Brotherly kindness.

(7) Charity (selfless love).

e. What are the curriculum goals this year?

2. Preparation: This involves work through the week, preparing your heart as well as your mind.

a. Read the lesson materials you have and all the related scriptures early in the week.

b. Incorporate scriptures and materials from the lesson into your daily devotions through the week.

c. Create an introduction that will stimulate curiosity and interest.

- d. Know the material thoroughly. Practice by discussing or even presenting the material to your family.
- e. Look for, or make, props, pictures, or other visual aids which will captivate their interest and reinforce the message.
- f. Prepare an introduction, main body, and a definite conclusion that will stimulate your students toward the lesson goal.

3. Prayer:

- a. Prepare your spirit as a servant of God. Become sensitive to the will of God and be led by the Spirit.
- b. Pray every day for each of your students by name, and for the needs in their lives of which you are aware.
- c. Learn from your students what their specific needs are, and let them know you are praying about those needs.
- d. Keep notes about prayer needs.
- e. In praying, privately and before the class:
 - (1) Always begin with thanksgiving. *"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise"* (Psalms 100:4)
 - (2) Pray to the Father in Jesus' name.
 - (3) Bless the Lord, and honor His name.
 - (4) Create a focus on His will, His kingdom, His purposes, and His pleasure.
 - (5) Make specific petitions for healing, provision, and spiritual growth based on His Word and purposes.
 - (6) Ask for His forgiveness for wrong attitudes and deeds and pray for overcoming grace as you come with a grateful and humble spirit. Do not recite prayers. Talk to God. Pray in the Spirit. Pray audibly whenever possible and have set times to pray.

Jesus gave a MODEL prayer to His disciples, not to recite, but to emulate. Here is a similar model:

"Heavenly Father, thank You for loving us and for sending Your only Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins. We love You, and appreciate all the wonderful things You have done in our lives. Thank You for bringing us together as a group to study Your Word and learn Your ways. Thank You for Jason, Sarah, Joey, ... and for providing godly parents and a good church where we can worship You. Dear Lord, help us to understand more clearly what You are doing in our lives and what You want us to do with every precious day You give us to live. Teach us to grow in Your love by loving and serving one another; and, today, let every one of us know, without a doubt, that we are born again, changed, and walking with the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord. Help us to realize every day that Jesus is

coming soon; and anoint us to worship You in everything we do. In Jesus' name. Amen."

- (7) Start your day by reading the Bible and praying.
- (8) Include prayer at mealtimes and family devotions.
- (9) Pray together and minister to one another as a teaching team before the class.
- (10) Teach the children to pray for each other, or for a leader who has a serious need.

4. Personality:

- a. Communicate the Word with joy, conviction, and confidence. NEVER read a book other than a Bible to the students.
- b. Look at the students and be sensitive to their responses.
- c. Call the students by name often and encourage them to ask questions. They are more important than your presentation.

5. Persuasiveness:

- a. Know what this church believes.
- b. Be able to overcome the mental roadblocks that have been established in the students' minds by the world.

6. Punctuality: Arrive 30 minutes early, so you can quiet your spirit and help greet the students.

B. Share the Responsibility for Instruction in at Least One of These Teaching Segments:

1. Bible story.
2. Object lesson.
3. Life-related story.
4. Scripture memorization.

C. Learn to Use a Variety of Teaching Techniques and Aids Effectively:

1. Animate your lecture with body language, illustrations, props, and questions.
2. Flannelgraph.
3. Overhead transparency projector.
4. Video cassette.

5. Puppets.
6. Skits with costumes and props.
7. Chalk drawings.
8. Songs that tell or emphasize the story.

D. Learn the Material in Advance:

1. NEVER read a story or carry a quarterly.
2. Do not try to show pictures from a book to a class. Books were made to be used by individuals, not groups.

E. Carry and Read Only a Bible:

1. Make the Bible visible.
2. Encourage the students to bring their Bibles with them and read them.
3. Always teach a lesson or tell a story in your own words.

F. Pray Daily for the Students and for the Sunday Class Session.

G. Greet the Students. Make Them Feel Welcome and Loved.

H. Be Sensitive to Special Needs and Problems.

I. Honor the Class Coordinator as the Team Leader. Give that Leader Your Full Support and Cooperation.

J. Be Ready to Substitute for the Class Coordinator When Called Upon to Do So.

K. Attend at Least 48 Sunday School Sessions Each Year.

L. Be a Faithful Tither to this Local Church.

M. Attend at Least Two Other Regular Services at this Church Each Week to Strengthen Your Own Spirit.

N. Participate in the Visitation Ministry Program for Your Class. Realize That the Students' Parents Are Very Important to the Success of Your Ministry.

O. Attend Meetings and Training Sessions for the Sunday School Workers as Provided, to Develop and Enhance Your Skills and Team Spirit.

P. Be Supportive of the Overall Vision and Ministry of the Church.

1. Always be aware that we need each other.
2. The goal of a true servant is to make others successful.

Q. Be an Example of Christian Purity and Love.

1. Live the lifestyle you teach to your students.
2. Be quick to forgive and resolve offenses and misunderstandings, especially with brothers and sisters in the church.

R. Always Contribute to the Offering, In Order to Set an Example.

S. Teach the Use of Offering Envelopes.

T. DO NOT USE SECULAR MATERIAL, Such As:

1. Secular music lyrics.
2. Secular films (even though they may seem so "nice").
3. Secular books. Expose the students to Christian heroes and stories which put God in the proper perspective.

U. Be Careful to Put Nothing on the Walls Except in Designated Areas.

V. Help Keep the Room and Closets Clean.

W. Turn Out the Lights When You Leave.

Musician

Job Description

A. Strengthen the Message and Impact of the Class Session with Good, Appropriate Music.

1. Planning:

- a. Work with the Song Leader and Teacher prayerfully in choosing songs which will flow with and reinforce the objectives of the lessons.
- b. Know the lesson plan and have the song list several days in advance of Sunday.
- c. Keep looking for new songs which are biblical and fun to sing, particularly action songs.
- d. Refer to the song list in the manual.

2. Preparation:

- a. Make sure you know the correct keys and chord progressions for the songs. You may need to consult one of the senior musicians during the week.
- b. Practice the songs. Get some coaching if necessary.
- c. Practice the songs with the Song Leader.

3. Prayer:

- a. Prepare your spirit as a servant of God.
- b. Become sensitive to the will of God and be led by the Spirit.

4. Playing:

- a. Adjust your instrumental volume to the size of the room and the size and age of the group.
- b. For 10 or 12 first graders, you need to play softly.
- c. Do not play with your back to the Song Leader or group, especially if you play the guitar.
- d. Play with skill and anointing.

B. Support the Teaching Team with Your Presence and Help During the Entire Class Time.

1. Be ready to play at other times during the class as needed for an altar call, special song, etc.
2. Smile.

C. If You Must Be Absent, Contact a Substitute During the Week and Notify the Class Coordinator.

1. Be sure the substitute is approved by the Administrator and Class Coordinator.
2. Make sure the Coordinator has the phone number of at least one substitute available in the event an unforeseen circumstance keeps you out of the class.

D. Honor the Class Coordinator as the Team Leader by Giving Him or Her Your Full Support and Cooperation.**E. Attend at Least 48 Sunday School Sessions Each Year.****F. Be a Faithful Tither to this Local Church.****G. Attend at Least Two Other Regular Services at this Church Each Week to Build Up Your Own Spirit.****H. Be Supportive of the Overall Vision and Ministry of this Church.**

1. Always be aware that we need each other, and that the goal of a true servant is to make others successful.
2. We are a team!

I. Be an Example of Christian Purity and Love.

1. Live the lifestyle you teach others to live.
2. Be quick to forgive and resolve offenses and misunderstandings, especially with brothers and sisters in the church.

Worker
(Assistant)
Job Description

The general worker, one of the most flexible member of the teaching staff, is an assistant to the Class Coordinator, the Secretary, and the Teacher. This worker may be in training for a teaching ministry, or may be one who has a vision for the program, but does not feel called to carry the full responsibility as the leader. As an assistant, the general worker functions in the "ministry of helps," mentioned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12.

A. Assist the Secretary.

1. Know the records procedures, and be able to handle the work when needed.
2. Help with attendance, offering, etc.
3. Assist the Coordinator and Teachers. Be available and willing to teach and to assist with special promotions and events.

B. Help Maintain Discipline in the Class with Firm but Loving Sensitivity, in the Event of Any Disruptions.

C. Participate in the Visitation Program.

D. Attend the Training Sessions and Planning Meetings Scheduled.

E. Be Active in Praying for the Class, the Individual Students, and for the Ministry Team.

F. Relate Personally to the Students Whenever Possible.

G. Come 30 Minutes Before the Class Begins; Stay Through the Dismissal Time; Participate in the Singing, Praying, and Activities; and Support Each of the Team Members.

H. If You Must Be Absent, Notify the Class Coordinator as Soon as Possible.

I. Honor the Class Coordinator as the Team Leader.

J. Attend at Least 48 Sunday School Sessions Each Year.

K. Be a Faithful Tither to this Local Church.

L. Attend at Least Two Other Regular Services at this Church Each Week to Build Up Your Own Spirit.

M. Be Supportive of the Overall Vision and Ministry of the Church.

1. Always be aware that we need each other, and the goal of a true servant is to make others successful.
2. We are a team!

N. Be an Example of Christian Purity and Love.

1. Live the lifestyle you teach others to live.
2. Be quick to forgive and resolve offenses and misunderstandings, especially with brothers and sisters in the church.

Secretary

Job Description

A. Greet Each Student and Help Create an Atmosphere of Love and Joy in the House of the Lord.

1. Learn each student's name as quickly as possible, and use that name often.
2. Always recognize visitors and show a special interest in them.
3. Make name tags for the students.
4. Collect the tags at the end of the class and use them again every Sunday.
5. Introduce each new student to a worker.
6. Help make the students feel special about themselves.
7. Keep track of birthdays and, before the session, inform the Class Coordinator of current ones. Send cards to students with birthdays the following week.
8. Keep a list of absentees for visitation, cards, and calls.

B. Keep Accurate Records of Each Class Session.

1. Attendance.
 - a. Use the computer attendance sheet; mark a black letter "P" for present and a red "A" for absent.
 - b. For a new student who has just become a regular attender, fill out the blue change sheet with the class and department, the student's name, address, telephone number, birthday, parents' names and previous dates attended. A student is a "regular" when he or she has attended at least three times in a consistent manner, e.g., once a month for several months, every other Sunday, etc. Place a blue sheet inside the attendance sheet when finished.
 - c. Fill out or update a yellow form with the visitor's name, address, telephone number, birthday, parents' names, and date attending. Continue to record the dates attended on this sheet until the visitor becomes a regular. Keep the yellow form in the file box with the white permanent cards.
 - d. Total the number of class members and visitors and record it at the bottom of the computer attendance sheet.

- e. Take the completed attendance folder and offering envelope to the Divisional Secretary's office and check it over with the Secretary.
- f. Be sure you have a permanent information card for each student on your attendance sheet.

2. Offering.

- a. The secretary is responsible for counting the School of the Bible offering and putting it in the envelope provided.
- b. Record the total amount for the day on the envelope.
- c. Record the total attendance on the envelope.
- d. Keep any specially designated offerings separate, and turn them in to the Divisional Secretary with a note of explanation.
- e. Take the completed attendance folder and offering envelope to the Divisional Secretary's office, and check it over with the Secretary.

3. Maintenance record keeping.

- a. Always check the computer visitation sheet for correct information. There may be a change of address or telephone number.
- b. If a student tells you of a change of address or telephone number, fill out the blue change sheet, put it inside your attendance sheet, and turn it in to the Divisional Secretary.
- c. Keep the visitation sheet each week for reference.
- d. Keep the birthday sheet, which you will receive monthly. Fill in any birthdays not listed, and report them on a blue change sheet.
- e. Be sure to have a white permanent information card for each student on your computer attendance sheet, and keep it in your file box. Do not forget to fill out a card for a visitor who becomes a regular attender. (Discard the yellow form used for visitors.)

4. Other records.

- a. During some promotions, records may be kept on separate forms relating to memory work, recruiting, or points for special efforts.
- b. Occasionally, you may need some assistance from another worker to keep these extra records straight.
- c. If an instruction sheet is delivered with additional paperwork, keep it in your attendance folder during the promotion and follow the instructions on the page.

C. Follow-Up.

1. Prepare welcome cards for new students.
 - a. Cards may be obtained from the Audio-Visual Room.
 - b. Include a little personal note. Be sure to sign your name and grade level. Do not just write, "Secretary."
 - c. Address the cards.
 - d. Take the cards to the Audio-Visual Room to be mailed.
2. Absentee follow-up.
 - a. One Sunday missed: send a "miss you" postcard.
 - b. Two Sundays missed: give the student's name and phone number to a Teacher or to the Class Coordinator, so a phone call may be made that week.
 - c. Three Sundays missed: make sure the student is visited by a Teacher or by the Coordinator.
3. Decision Cards.
 - a. These cards are available in the Audio-Visual Room.
 - b. Fill out one card for each student who responds to the salvation appeal in a class session, and turn it in to the Administrator.
 - c. Put the date and the student's name on the "Spiritual Life" form.
4. The books should be turned in to the Divisional Secretary no later than 30 minutes after the beginning of class.

Four Things Every Teacher Must Know

I. A Teacher Must Know the Student.

A. Background.

1. In what church was the student trained?
2. What is the student's cultural heritage?
3. What is the student's birth order?

B. Environment.

1. In what kind of neighborhood does the student live?
2. What school does the student attend?
3. What kind of television programs is the student permitted to watch?

C. Spiritual condition.

1. Is the student born again?
2. Has the student received the baptism in the Holy Spirit?

D. Comprehension ability.

E. Interest level.

F. Personality Problems.

1. Is the student shy, introverted, or antisocial?

2. Is the student belligerent or irritable?

3. Is the student hyperactive?

G. Family situation.

1. In what kind of home does the student live?
2. Are the student's parents divorced, separated, constantly fighting, or devoted to each other?
3. Does the family have devotions together?
4. Is the family addicted to television?
5. Are the student's parents Christians?

H. How can a teacher learn about the students?

1. There are books available which explain characteristics of children at every age level. Go to the bookstore or library for general information.
2. Study carefully the material in your manual concerning your students' development.
3. Acquaint yourself with the student. Call him by name.
4. Pray specifically for each student under your charge.

II. A Teacher Must Know Himself. Before Teaching, Ask Yourself:

- A. Am I tired or irritable?
- B. Am I discouraged? "*David encouraged himself in the LORD....*" (1 Samuel 30:6)
- C. Am I prepared -- really prepared?
- D. Am I enthusiastic?
- E. Am I friendly?
- F. Have I prayed about this class session?
- G. Are there conditions and stresses in my own life that can adversely affect my function in the class?
- H. Am I able to overlook problems and concentrate on the task at hand?
- I. Do I really believe in what I am doing today?
- J. Do I have a positive attitude?

III. A Teacher Must Know the Lesson.

- A. Start preparing well in advance of the day of the class.
- B. NEVER read your lesson or story to the class.
- C. Follow a simple outline. Present specific thoughts.

D. Use visual aids. Students will remember far more when the idea is reinforced by what they see.

E. Use illustrations.

1. From the Bible.
2. From your own life.
3. From the lives of others.
4. From Christian literature.
5. From nature.
6. Allegories.

F. Ask questions.

G. Leave the students with a desire for more. Do not overdo singing or any one segment.

H. Be sure the lesson relates to the pupils on their level. Do the insights you are sharing affect the situations they are facing in their lives?

IV. A Teacher Must Know the Overall Church Program.

A. See yourself as part of the whole ministry team.

B. Be faithful to the other programs and functions of the church. Attend the other services.

C. Stay in your class when the other members of the team are ministering. Your presence is helpful and encouraging.

- D. Share in the promotion of special days and general activities.
- E. Make church announcements in your class.

Adapted from Your Sunday School Can Grow by Dr. Paul E. Paino.

Three Requirements for Every Teacher

The Bible has a great deal to say about teachers. Teaching is one of the special types of ministries that Christ Himself has placed in the church as a "gift." Read carefully the following scripture portion (Ephesians 4:11-16):

11 "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;"

12 "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:"

13 "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:"

14 That we {henceforth} be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, {and} cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;"

15 "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, {even} Christ:"

16 "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

We discover from these beautiful verses that the Lord places teachers in the church for the following purposes:

- To Perfect the Saints.
- To Accomplish the Work of the Ministry.
- To Build Up the Body of Christ.
- To Help the Church Come Into a Unity of Faith.
- To Give Knowledge About the Son of God.
- To Exemplify a Godly Lifestyle.
- To Establish Us in Doctrine.
- To Prove the Love of God.
- To Help Believers Fit Into the Body of Christ.

The Work of the Teacher Is Important. God Demands That Every Teacher Have:

A Call. (1 Corinthians 12:26-28)

God calls people to be teachers and workers. The gifts and callings of God are without repentance. Once we are called, we do not have an option. God requires a called teacher to teach.

Compassion. (Matthew 9:36-38)

"But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, 'The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.'"

The Master Teacher was moved with compassion. Jesus cared. Jesus wept. Jesus was concerned, because He loved people. He had something to give that would meet their needs. Every teacher needs to have the motivation and conviction that what he has is greatly needed by the people.

When we genuinely give our heart to the Lord Jesus Christ, it naturally translates into a love for people. In loving Jesus, we please him; we become like Him; and our motivations become more and more like His. Jesus was motivated by a supreme devotion to the Father, and by a selfless love for people. He was the consummate servant: He did nothing out of a motivation for self-gratification or self-glory.

Courage. (Joshua 1:1-16)

God spoke words of encouragement to Joshua, and told him "to be of good

courage." The path to courage is to focus on God's Word and on what God has done, rather than focus on our abilities or accomplishments.

Compassion and courage go naturally together. The Apostle John said, *"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear,..."* (1 John 4:18) Fear relates to the apprehension over potential loss. When we are a true servant and focus on the needs of others instead of ourselves, we are set free from fear and can boldly proclaim the Word of God. Daniel said, *"...the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits."* (Daniel 11:32) It takes courage to lead a class and bear the burden of ministering faithfully week after week.

Every teacher must know that he has a call from God, and not just a desire to be in front of people. He must have a genuine compassion for people and a passion for souls, and not just a desire to succeed in a ministry. Every teacher must also have the courage to do what needs to be done in the work, or he will give up when there are difficulties or conflicts.

Adapted from Your Sunday School Can Grow by Dr. Paul E. Paino.

Responsibilities of a School of the Bible Worker

As a teacher in the School of the Bible, you are taking an active part in the ministry of your church. In a sense, you are a minister yourself, serving in the ministry of "perfecting (maturing) the saints." (Ephesians 4:12) As a School of the Bible teacher or worker, you are assisting the professional, ministerial staff in preparing believers to cope with this "present world." (2 Timothy 4:10) The success of a local church is not only dependent upon its pastors, but also upon every saint who is actively doing his part in the ministry of reaching others with the gospel.

What activity is more important than teaching the Word of God? The ministry of teaching is one of the most important jobs in the church. For this reason, every effort has been made to choose individuals who will conscientiously teach God's truths to every person who enters the classroom. Our greatest joy must be in sharing God's Word. Your ministry in the classroom must never be a "burden." Evaluate carefully the potential of each student. Remember that someone needs to share the love of Jesus with them. Also, remember that true ministry is impossible with human strength and wisdom alone: you need God's anointing and grace. Pray for God's anointing, and make it a habit to pray for those to whom you minister.

Responsibilities of a Teacher or Class Worker in the School of the Bible:

Be an Example.

Develop deep-rooted convictions directly from God's Word and live by them. Remember that you are an example to the young believers.

Be Faithful to the Public Services of the Church.

A teacher should be willing to attend all the services of his home church: Sunday morning, Sunday evening worship and the midweek service. As a leader in the church program, you need to be strengthened in your spirit by worship and the preaching of the Word. You also set an example by showing that you are excited about the vision you share with others.

Be a Tither.

The tithe (the first tenth of all our financial increase) is an important mark of God's ownership and one of the first principles of Christian ethics. When we hold back from God, we cannot expect anointing or blessing on our lives, and it shows up in our ministry. Tithing strengthens our commitment to the Lord and to the local church. It also helps to develop the mind-set of a servant rather than a "consumer."

Be Loyal to the Pastor and to the Church Program.

This does not mean that the teacher has to believe everything the pastor believes, or even agree fully with everything the church does. It does mean, that as long as there is no conflict with the scriptures, the teacher should be willing to cooperate with the desires of leadership and be loyal to the pastor, as he presents the program under God's direction.

The most important qualification for fellowship is loyalty. Loyalty means, "I am for you and committed to your success; and, if I have a problem with you, I will go to you first and not discuss it with others behind your back." A "murmurer" is one who voices his complaints to people who are not responsible for the decision. Instead of helping, this only creates confusion and unrest.

Be Faithful to the Class.

The teacher needs to be in his class regularly. Of course, there naturally will be times when absence will occur. Irregular attendance indicates a lack of concern for the spiritual condition of the class. Even the youngest of students can sense your concern for their spiritual needs. Show faithfulness by being prompt, prepared, patient, and pliable. Your attitude of faithfulness will make the difference.

Be Willing to Seek Lost Souls.

Use your class to lead people to Christ. Do not just tell sweet stories. Seek to transform lives. Know how to lead a student to Christ, and plan to give your

students a chance to commit their lives to the Lord.

Be Willing to Become a Member of the Church.

Membership in the local church reflects your commitment to that work. Every teacher should have his ties deeply rooted in the local body in which he teaches.

Be regular in attending the Teacher/Coordinator meetings when they are scheduled. These meetings are designed to help the School of the Bible grow. It is a time of prayer and organization for the class you teach.

Be Willing to Visit Absentees.

Every student in the class must be visited at least once each quarter (13 weeks), and those who miss more than one Sunday should be visited as soon as possible. We are concerned about attendance, because we care about the individual and his spiritual growth.

An apparent lack of concern among church leaders can be a major factor in a student's denial or rejection of the Lord in his personal life. Who knows how history may have been altered if a Sunday School teacher had been more effective in reaching out to Adolf Hitler, Charles Manson, or Madalyn Murray O'Hair?

Be Properly Dressed.

Each worker should be dressed in a manner that is appropriate to the occasion. When we are ministering the Word of God to God's children, we are in a place of honor, and should also demonstrate a

spirit that honors those who have come to grow in God.

Ten Qualifications for a School of the Bible Worker:

1. Love God supremely.
2. Love people and be concerned with the spiritual needs of the community.
3. Develop a pleasant personality.
4. Have a real desire to work for the Lord.
5. Do not be easily discouraged.
6. Be a good follower as well as a capable leader.
7. Believe in the absolute necessity of personal salvation through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.
8. Have a sincere desire to serve Christ in the church.
9. Have clear spiritual perception.
10. Be willing to sacrifice time, money, comfort, and energy for the work of the Lord.

Section 3

Student Profiles

Understanding Your Students

In order to minister effectively to any group, it is imperative that you have a working knowledge of the people you teach. Their individual circumstance and personality will affect their response to you and your ministry. Please read this material carefully as you prepare your heart to minister in any capacity to some of the most important people in the world: our children.

We are concerned that you have a working knowledge of your students in a number of ways. Young people are complex. There are some principles that apply to children at specific age levels, and some that we can all relate to no matter what our age. There are also many variables that distinguish each one as unique, with special potentials, needs, and

distinct problems. We are created body, soul, and spirit. Each part of our being is affected by our heritage, environment, and a vast array of cultural and social factors, which affect our responses and reactions.

The profiles which follow describe a child's development at different ages. The more you understand about each child, the more effectively you will be able to handle his fears, misconceptions, and behavioral problems. These profiles will give you some general insights. You will also need to become familiar with such factors as family background, birth order, school influences, television habits, and family and personal devotional life. In doing so, you will have important resources available to minister to your students.

A Profile of Second Grade Students

Physical Development

1. Second grade students are growing unevenly and may be awkward. Be patient and quick to encourage them.
2. Their fine muscles are still being developed. It is best to avoid detailed craft work and activities that require fine motor skills.
3. They tend to be restless, with short attention spans. In addition, second graders usually have a large sugar intake, may have a lack of firm discipline, and probably have a high-impact, fast-paced television diet. To keep their attention, you must keep things moving. Limit class segments to eight minutes or less.
4. They are easily fatigued. Their bodies are still growing, their diet usually contains large amounts of sugar and fat, and they may not be getting enough exercise. As much as possible, alternate active and relaxed times in the class schedule.
5. Second graders like to be doers. It is hard for them to sit and just listen for very long. Give them active things to do during the class time.
6. They should be somewhat talkative. Give the students opportunities to respond and encourage them to share their thoughts.

Intellectual Development

1. Second grade students are still learning to read. Be sensitive to each student's reading level. Have them read simple things as a group. Do not have students read solo, unless they volunteer.
2. They are in the process of developing their vocabularies. Be sure to explain words carefully and use words and phrases that are easily understood.
3. They are not able to think in analogies or abstract concepts. Focus on the basics, and keep your explanations simple and straightforward.
4. Second graders have keen senses, and love to handle things. Use sight, touch, and even taste, when possible.
5. They are very curious. Encourage questions and deal with them patiently.
6. They have good memories. Challenge the students to memorize larger portions of scripture.
7. They have keen imaginations. Stimulate their imaginations. Let them act things out and talk. Teach students the difference between fantasy and vision.

Vision relates to hope and faith. Without a (spiritual) vision, people perish -- become wild and undisciplined. Children need to be

stimulated toward a healthy imagination. To "pretend" and play is a major part of their development. They are able to begin to understand that there is a supernatural realm in God's creation, and that angels and demons are real.

Fantasy is a satanic counterfeit of vision. Fantasy focuses on inaccessible and impossible dreams, which exalt the dreamer and feed the selfish ego tendencies of the sin nature. There is much emphasis on "power" and self-glory. Today, there is an avalanche of fantasy material ready to pour into the minds of children through television, humanistic books, and movies. The characters seem to be "good" and "so cute;" but, the message is demonic. Fantasy opens the mind to the occult, and often leads to confusion, rebellion, depression, and suicide.

Social Development

1. Second grade students have a great need for security. Teach them to trust in God, their parents, and the church.
2. They love appreciation and affection. Praise them, and give hugs to them often.
3. They are living in a peer-oriented culture. Teach them to relate to adults and to children of different age levels with respect and kindness.
4. They should enjoy talking. Encourage talking in turn. Draw out the reclusive students, and listen

attentively to what the students have to say.

5. Second graders tend to be selfish. Teach them to share with others, to develop a servant's heart, and to be excited about blessing others.
6. They are very concerned about fairness, and it can be hard for them to take turns. Teach the students it is more important to give and to prefer others than to be selfish. The focus on "rights" has come from the world, and not from the Lord.
7. They still respect authority, although, at this point, the respect may be eroding. Encourage and teach about respectful attitudes. Live worthy of respect yourself, by showing respect for others.
8. They prefer their own pals and tend to reject or react negatively to members of the opposite sex. Teach students to relate to the opposite sex with respect and kindness, as friends.
9. They are concerned about being a winner and being at the top. Teach them the Christian ethic of being servants. Contrast the beatitudes with the world's concept of who is "blessed."

Spiritual Development

1. Second graders know the difference between right and wrong. Stimulate and encourage a healthy conscience.
2. They can know God and relate to spiritual things. Teach them to pray

and to worship God. Also, teach them about the gifts of the Spirit and other important doctrines.

3. They are curious about death. Help them understand about heaven, hell, and eternity.
4. They can understand sin, faith, and repentance. Lead your students to genuine salvation.

Note: It is important to understand the difference between genuine salvation and religious conversion.

Religious conversion is an act of the mind and/or the emotions. A child raised in a Christian culture, which also teaches Santa Claus and other "cute" myths, tends to mix the images and messages in his mind, and to think of God as a Santa. When he hears about God's love and desire to give to him, and about heaven, he will tend to think, "Sure. Why not?" He may learn the language and the motions, and "accept" Jesus as part of

his cultural background and weekly obligations, without genuine repentance from sin and without making a covenant with God. He may notice in his teen years that there is not much difference between him and the spirit he observes in the world, and decide that Christianity is "kid's stuff," like the Easter Bunny and Santa's elves.

Genuine salvation is a work of the Spirit. It involves both faith and repentance. The Holy Spirit moves on the person's spirit and also the conscience, and "convince of sin," while stirring in the heart the revelation of God's love and His holiness. We respond to the completed work of Christ on the cross with gratefulness and humility, recognizing our desperate need for forgiveness and healing. We respond to the covenant initiated by the shedding of His blood for us, by giving our lives to Him and receiving Him both as Savior and Lord.

Children of the '90's

What is Happening to Children in America Today?
What is an Effective Teaching Strategy for Sunday School Ministry?

A. Education and Entertainment in America Today.

1. This is the most entertained generation in history: the "couch-potato-kid" culture.
2. "Sesame Street" has revolutionized education.
 - a. Quick, creative, colorful. The programs feature a rapid succession of clever, elaborate, and brilliantly entertaining segments of material with a strong humanistic bias.
 - b. To be "secular," the presentation does not have to be blatantly "anti-God." It must only exclude God. Any philosophy that excludes God is, in effect, working against a Christian world view. All education shapes values and morals. There is no such thing as a religiously neutral education.
 - c. The result is:
 - (1) American children are not easily impressed with a flannelgraph lesson or paper maché puppets.
 - (2) They have an even shorter attention span than previous generations.
 - (3) They tend to be more focused on their "rights" and less responsive to authority figures.
 - (4) They tend to be "hyperactive." In 1900 the average American consumed an average of 2 pounds of processed sugar per year. Today, our average consumption is 200 pounds per year.
 - (5) They tend to see God as less exciting than the world.

B. What Secular Education Cannot Do.

1. Television and movies cannot respond personally to the children. "Sesame Street" is strictly a one-way street.
2. They cannot hug, reciprocate, or show personal interest in their special events.
3. Secular educators and entertainers cannot give life a worthwhile purpose or clear direction. (This goes without saying. If you are not going anywhere, it does not matter how you get there.)
4. The "secular" world cannot operate in spiritual giftings and discernment by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Note: It is possible for some to operate in the satanic counterfeit, such as demon-induced psychic powers, "e.s.p.," or other aspects of witchcraft. Some "churched" children, who have had a lack of exposure to the power of the Holy Spirit, have been attracted to the occult world because of the spiritual void in their lives.

5. Secular education has no answer for basic life questions: "Where did I come from?" "Why am I here?" "Where am I going when I die?" "Does life really matter?" "Who am I?"
6. A secular education does not strengthen the family relationship. In fact, the more secular our perspective on life, the weaker our family ties become. Therefore, a secular education cannot make children emotionally or spiritually secure.
7. By excluding God from their thinking, the secular culture diminishes the basis for vision in life, and inadvertently contributes to the epidemic of teen suicide. "*Where (there is) no vision, the people perish.*" (Proverbs 29:18)

C. Keys to an Effective Sunday School in the '90's.

1. Do not monologue; dialogue.
 - a. Your effectiveness is limited when you use only the straight lecture method: "You listen; I talk." The idea that "children should be seen and not heard" is not going to be relevant today.
 - b. Get them involved in the dynamics of the lesson. As a one-way communicator, you cannot compete with the world system. If you effectively interact with them and relate personally, you have a strong advantage.
2. Be sensitive to special needs.
 - a. A child who will not sit quietly and obey has a problem -- usually at home.
 - b. He does not need to be humiliated in front of his peers.
 - c. He needs private attention, and his parents probably need ministry of some kind, too.
3. Be creative and open to new ideas and exciting ways of presenting the concepts which children need to grasp.
 - a. Dialogue is better than a monologue.
 - b. A 2- or 3-person presentation is better than a solo act.
 - c. Generally, a video is better than a filmstrip.
 - d. Children need a lot of visual stimulation, as well as audible, tangible, and spiritual stimulation.

4. Do not underestimate children.
 - a. They can memorize, even if they cannot yet read.
 - b. They can perceive things in their spirits before all their mental perception comes into play.
 - c. Expose them to the Word of God.
5. Work with parents.
 - a. Get to know the parents.
 - b. Work to make them feel that they are a part of the team, along with you.
 - c. Help them in their goal of training their children properly.
 - d. Encourage parents to memorize the verses, along with their children. This is essential for parents of pre-readers. Otherwise, the children are limited to learning only a few partial verses a month.
 - e. Give parents suggestions for family devotions which are related to the lessons. Make sure you have devotions with your own family; and, share ideas, preferably with an occasional take-home letter.
 - f. If the parents are unsaved, see their child as a key to winning the parents to the Lord.
 - g. Appeal to the parents' natural sense of responsibility. Help them see that, in order to effectively rear children and ensure their survival in these times, they need God's anointing and help.
 - h. To be secure, children desperately need two parents who love each other and who are responsive to God's authority.
6. Provide incentives and rewards for achievement. Be creative. Recognize your students' successes, and acknowledge their accomplishments and special skills.
7. Let kids have fun.
 - a. Have fun with them.
 - b. Smile.
 - c. Let them see that you enjoy the Lord and life in Christ.
 - d. Teach them to "delight themselves in the Lord," and not just in things.

8. Avoid being too simplistic.
 - a. Many people who were raised in Sunday School programs have the impression that the gospel is juvenile, or "kid's stuff," because they heard the stories of Noah and the ark and Daniel in the lion's den over and over again, without much depth or application.
 - b. Children can comprehend more in their spirits than you may realize. Include less familiar illustrations in your lessons; present your material in creative ways; and emphasize the spiritual truths in each lesson. Your excitement about the Word and the lesson will be contagious.
9. Remember that children have been exposed to a lot of humanistic philosophy, which makes them the center of their world.
 - a. With that kind of mind-set, it is possible for them to "accept Jesus into their lives," along with a pack of Muppets, Ninja Turtles, and power fantasy characters. We need to emphasize the concept of Jesus as the center of our lives, and repentance and faith as essentials to Christianity.
 - b. The children of today have been overexposed to the occult and to fantasy heroes, and it is not their fault. Let us expose them to the Holy Spirit and to Christian heroes.

Why Do We Lose So Many of Our Children to the World?

Some knowledgeable Christian leaders have estimated that in our evangelical and full-gospel churches, 85% of the children raised in Sunday School turn away from the church of their parents and find the world more enticing. It is time for us to take an honest, hard look at our methods and priorities and seek God for biblical answers.

Why could Joshua say, in Joshua 24:15, *"As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD,"* and we cannot? In Joshua's day and culture, the family was strongly the center of society and the life of individuals. By divine mandate, there was less exposure to heathen culture. Moses had conveyed the message from the Lord that the Israelites were not to allow their children to mix with the ungodly people of the land, in order to keep them from the influence of idolatry.

Today, our children have been exposed to far more evil than preceding generations.

The average child today watches 5 or 6 hours of television a day, and it is usually all secular. We need to understand that, although there are Christian programmers and networks, the purpose of secular media leaders is not only to entertain, but also to promote a mind-set and lifestyle that is Godless in perspective and ungodly in practice. Even the highly acclaimed educational television industry is blatantly promoting values and attitudes, which openly oppose Christianity. Not only does

the secular media waste so much time, but the commercial format is also designed to create covetousness as a way of life, and to mold us into "consumers", instead of servants.

The family is portrayed as "any group of people living together," and fathers are mocked as idiots. They are literally "turning the hearts of children from the fathers," as well as promoting witchcraft, immorality, drunkenness, and rebellion. How can a Christian father expose his son to 25,000 beer commercials in the context of sports worship, and then be surprised if the boy is attracted to alcohol as a teenager?

Parents would be far more disciplined about what they allow into their homes and minds, if they were fully aware of the deliberate motives of some powerful media leaders to effect major social change and literally destroy the family and the church. One hour a week of Sunday School, and a little family devotional in the morning, cannot compete with the attraction of endless hours of thrills, cartoons, and entertainment, which promise power illusions and pleasure at the flip of a dial.

"I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes...." (Psalms 101:3)

Today, one philosophy strongly promoted in education is that children need to be exposed to evil so they will reject it and know how to deal with it. This is a false concept. The more you

expose anyone to evil, the more they are attracted to it.

The only biblical way to conquer evil is to focus on good and be drawn to it.

"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."
(Romans 12:21)

You do not win the battle over temptation by focusing on it and struggling with it. You gain victory over temptation when you live for God, obey

His commandments, and pursue good on a daily basis. The key is found in Galatians 5:16:

"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

Our culture promotes ungodly heroes.

Heroes are very important to children. Who were the heroes in America 30 years

<p>How Can We Develop a Taste for Spiritual Things?</p>	<p>How Are Carnal Appetites Developed?</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lead the students to genuine conversion through repentance and faith. 2. Be excited about the Word, godly character, and serving others. 3. Promote good, melodious music. 4. Read about and discuss the godly heroes of the Bible. 5. Teach the children, by example, to "delight themselves in the Lord" and to really enjoy praise and worship. 6. Help the family make God an integral part of daily life. 7. Make a covenant to put God first in your life, and be committed to three church services a week. 8. Make prayer exciting by documenting answers to prayer. 9. Become skilled in areas of service. Study about God and godly people. 10. Honor parents, pastors, and other leaders as God's servants for our benefit, and pray for them. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teach the doctrine of evolution and the basic goodness of man. 2. Focus on physical characteristics, appearance, and entertainment. 3. Allow sensual and carnal music. 4. Keep up with new movies, TV stars, and music idols. 5. Separate "fun" times from "spiritual" times, and treat church attendance as drudgery. 6. Try to take care of all the "spiritual stuff" at church. 7. Practice going to church only when you have time and when it is convenient in your schedule. 8. Try to work things out by talking or meditating. 9. Study drugs, rock music, and sex to create a mental focus on them. 10. Be critical of authority figures, and let your children hear you complain about them.

ago? The Lone Ranger, Roy Rogers, Davy Crockett. Today, children idolize a neurotic Batman, mutant turtles, sodomite rock stars, and a host of occult-based cartoon characters. Christian parents and church leaders need to be familiar not only with Bible heroes and villains, but also with the biographies of great Christians.

Most of our children develop a stronger taste for the world, than for the things of the Spirit.

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6)

This does not say, "Include some Christian training in your family life, and, after the children sow their wild oats in some years of rebellion, they will come back to the Lord when they become adults."

The word "train" comes from a Hebrew word, which means to "touch the palate." When a baby is learning to eat solid food, the mother starts putting some food on her finger, touching the roof of the baby's mouth and causing it to swallow. The analogy relates to taste. The verse really means, "Cultivate a taste for spiritual things in the heart of your child, and as he grows he will not be attracted to the inferior things of the secular world." *"Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good." (Psalms 34:8)*

It is not enough to expose children to part of the Bible message, and then encourage them to "make a decision." Our goal is to impart a thirst for spiritual things, which will continue to motivate them to seek God. A good teacher will

inspire his students to be a lifelong learner. You can be excited about teaching; but, you have not really taught until the children catch your vision. Anyone can get children to recite a prayer. Our goal is to teach them to become praying people. Anyone can recite verses; but, a great teacher inspires others to love the Word and to make it part of their lives.

In our zeal to promote love and gratefulness to God, and to encourage children to accept Christ, we have neglected repentance from sin – a necessary biblical foundation for genuine conversion.

"Repent, and be baptized ..." (Acts 2:38)

"Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 3:2)

"And others ... save with fear." (Jude 23)

One hundred years ago, William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, said, "I fear that the day will come when men will preach heaven without hell, a crown without a cross, blessing without suffering, and salvation without repentance."

"Others save with fear." When we emphasize the love of God and unconditional security, the response of some is, "God really loves me. How can I do anything less than give Him my all?" Unfortunately, others will respond with, "God loves me; so, I am going to heaven. I can sin and get away with it." In our fear of overemphasizing the fear of the Lord, lest we be labeled "legalistic," we have

overbalanced the scale and lost the sense of awe for a holy God.

Many people who were "raised in Sunday School" seem to have a mocking disregard for the great eternal Judge of the universe. Let us be conscious of that delicate balance of truth: the God of everlasting compassion is a "consuming fire." It was God's love that sent Christ to the cross; and it was His holiness that demanded the death penalty for sin.

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."
(Galatians 6:7)

While it is the goodness of God that brings men to repentance, (Romans 2:4) it is also because of *"the fear of the LORD men depart from evil."* (Proverbs 16:6) The fear of the Lord is not a negative thing. In fact, there are at least 31 benefits listed in scripture which result from the fear of the Lord. It is not a harsh, dark, negative aspect of faith, but rather a *"fountain of life."* (Proverbs 14:27) The fear of the Lord is the awareness that nothing is hidden from Him, and that all of our actions will be judged by a perfect and holy God. It is the understanding that we are "sure our sins will find us out," and that "God is no respecter of persons." We also need to understand that God never changes. We serve the same God that Noah and Abraham served. If we are not careful, we can overemphasize the passive aspects of grace and allow the impression that God is more like Santa Claus, than the holy God of the Bible.

Our message has often been, "Just accept Jesus into your heart."

We base that on an idea taken from Revelation 3:20, *"Behold I stand at the door and knock,..."* which, in context, has nothing to do with salvation. It is Christ's message to the church about spiritual communion. The message of accepting Jesus was important to the Jews, who understood sin, redemption, and covenant; but, their problem was that they did not accept Jesus as the Messiah they were looking for who would fulfill the covenant.

In our Christian culture, we have no problem accepting Jesus as our Savior; but, we tend to have a humanistic mind-set, which rejects His right to lordship. To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ is not to decide to accept His genuineness, but to acknowledge His ownership. *"The devils believe and tremble,"* (James 2:19) but they do not give themselves to Him.

The Bible does not tell us to "accept Jesus into our hearts." In fact, it says "We are accepted in the Beloved." (Ephesians 1:6) He is the one who accepts us into His heart, as we repent and believe. Many young people can get the false impression that Jesus is meekly "waiting patiently in line" in order to persuade us to allow Him an audience at our discretion. We accept Him into our life, to reside alongside our other beliefs, friends, affections, and habits.

In genuine conversion WE become part of HIS life. We are accepted and adopted, and we become part of His world, His domain, His body, and His army. He is the center of it all, and we become excited about pleasing and glorifying Him. In trying to make the gospel so appealing that

all we have to do is accept Jesus, we have produced many who see Jesus as another source of their pleasure, happiness, and success. Humanism makes self the center of our world and allows for religion, as long as it is not a "radical" transfer of affection and allegiance from self to Jesus.

To "accept Jesus into our heart" is not bad or untrue, but be aware of what an unregenerate mind can do with that concept, especially when there is no emphasis on sin or repentance. Remember that our children have been strongly influenced by humanism, which centers life in self and rejects accountability and authority.

The Bible calls us to "make disciples" -- to challenge the self-willed child of the '90's to "deny self," and to take up his cross daily and follow Christ. There are thousands of people in the world today, who are doing their own self-willed thing, and who at one time accepted Jesus in their heart; but, they never really grieved and repented over their sin, and never surrendered their life to Him as Lord.

We have brought sensual music into the church in an effort to attract the youth and to be "relevant."

We have swallowed the line that "all young people like sensual music," and that "it does not matter what style of music you use, as long as it says something." But music is, in and of itself, a language and a powerful communication medium. Music can touch the spirit, move the soul, and stimulate the flesh.

It is important to evaluate music on the basis of principle, and not label any "singing star" or group as ungodly, or evil.

Indeed, part of the problem is that sincere artists are resorting to sensual styles and secular methods in order to imitate the world and thereby reach people. We do not want to judge anyone's motives, especially if they are in Christian work. But we must evaluate the music and look at the fruit of the ministry. What is the long-term effect of a given type of music on the listeners? Do they tend to be mighty in spirit? Are they soul winners? Do they derive their pleasure from the music alone, or is there a genuine joy of the Lord and spiritual power expressed through their music?

Here are a few things to consider in the evaluation of music in the church.

- Taste in music is developed by exposure. Not all teenagers enjoy screaming "head-bangers" costumed in spandex, chains, and Revlon.
- Some styles are carnal, and they draw undue sensual attention to the singer. Breathless vocalizations, "bedroom eyes," and lewd dress are being tolerated in the name of "relevance;" but, what does it produce in the hearts?
- The argument that "it sells" is the doctrine of Balaam. Market share is not a biblical criteria for validity in the ministry.
- Is there an inordinate effort to imitate the sounds and appearance of the secular and satanic world of music, or is the singer responding to the Spirit in making a joyful noise unto the Lord?
- Test the spirit of the music and of the musician. Is there a smile on his face? Is there a message being communicated? Is the music a vehicle

for the Word that will move the heart, or is the music a vehicle for the musician to draw attention and admiration to himself?

- Our goal is to do all we can in order to expose youth to godly music and to cultivate a taste for spiritual things.

The Sunday School movement in America has largely ignored its greatest potential resource: parents.

The family is God's primary means for training youth. Unless parents have a vision for daily devotions, Christian music and programs, and a Christ-centered lifestyle, the little scriptural knowledge we can convey on Sunday morning will continue to be overwhelmed by a flood of secular, sensual, and satanic influences -- through movies, television, secular education, and carnal friends. Our task is to inspire young people to live a Christian lifestyle and walk daily with God, and to influence the parents to reinforce the message of God's Word during the week.

Children can memorize many times more scripture than we have expected; but, they need help from the family to do it, especially young children who do not read. Parents need to memorize along with them. When educators adopt such a philosophy, even kindergarten students memorize and quote chapters of the Bible, not just segments of verses.

To reach and influence the children of the '90's effectively, we must develop a working relationship with those parents who at least care enough to send their children to Sunday School, even if they do not bring them. We need to visit, motivate, encourage, and use written

communications to get them to work with us as co-laborers with Christ, and let them know that we are supporting them in the minds and hearts of their children.

Many Christian families do not have a strong conviction about speaking negatively about other believers.

There are many warnings and reminders in the Bible about our tendency to speak critically about each other. James 4:11 says, "*Speak not evil one of another, brethren.*" The word for "speak evil" is "katalaleo," which means "negative speaking." When we are offended or disagree, it is our nature to complain, or murmur, to people we trust. It is the most natural thing in the world to discuss the sermon or leaders in the church with our spouse. Unfortunately, many children hear these discussions, and then develop the impression that the church is "full of hypocrites," and, "you cannot trust the pastor." Many parents have tossed around their complaints in the car or at home for years; and then, they have wondered why their children were so attracted to the bar crowd, or to their secular friends.

We need to encourage each other to believe and speak the best of one another. If there are misunderstandings or conflicts, go to the person with whom we have the problem and resolve it quickly and quietly. We need to be aware of the subtle effect our grumbling has on little ears.

We cling to outdated methods and materials.

We must realize that we are in a battle for the minds and affections of children. We are up against a world system which

has at its disposal incredible, innovative, sophisticated technology, with massive budgets and manpower, producing an alluring enticement to sensuality, humanistic values, and the occult. We need to know that we have the Holy Spirit, God's love, and His creative power.

Let us be intense in our planning, preparation, and presentation of the message of a better hope, a better lifestyle, and a purpose for living through the Lord Jesus Christ. You cannot compete with the occult powers of He-man or Jem with a one-dimensional flannelgraph lesson; but, when you have an innovative, colorful, team-oriented program combined with agape love and genuine enthusiasm, along with the operation of spiritual gifts and sensitivity to their real need, you can compete with the "darkness" crowd. They have the illusion of power; we have God's power. We are in a war, and we can no longer get by without the anointing and creative skill.

The Sunday School can lapse into a routine of singing and lesson presentations, and neglect visitation and personal relationships, which are essential for effective training.

The purpose for dividing the youth department into small classes is not

limited to communicating the message on different levels. Nor is it limited to giving an opportunity for several people to teach in front of groups. Our purpose is to divide into small groups, so that there can be a more intimate and personal level of ministry to the young people. If a School of the Bible teacher sees his "ministry" as merely talking in front of a class, he does not understand ministry. Ministry means meeting needs, whatever they are.

A teacher who never visits the students, or rarely telephones them, is like a pastor who only preaches sermons and has no personal contact with the people. Children need to relate to godly adult leaders, who show that they care for them personally. They need to hear their name, and they need a listening ear, a hug, and a little present that says, "You are very special to me. Here is how you can see God's love, because I am showing you that I love you." Children, who get only a classroom diet of lessons, seldom stay long in the church. Each of us needs to feel loved, appreciated, and needed.

Do Not Send Them Away

"Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat." (Mark 6:36)

We find one of the greatest Sunday School lessons in this chapter. There are several things that every worker needs to learn from these verses:

"The day was now far spent"

(Mark 6:35)

When we look at the signs about us, we must be aware that the "day of grace" is indeed far spent. The night of God's judgment and tribulation is upon the world. We do not have a guarantee of a tomorrow for laboring in the harvest, so we must have an urgency of spirit as we relate to the work of soul winning. Jesus was stirred by the lack of time to work, and we should be as well.

"This is a desert place...."

(Mark 6:35)

Men and women are looking for something to satisfy their spiritual thirst and hunger for reality. People are flocking to the illusion of drugs and to the deceptions of cults, because they do not have the reality or hope that only Jesus Christ can bring. Young people see the phoniness, emptiness, and hopelessness of their predecessors; but, they do not know where to turn. Water is a "type" of life, and relates to the refreshing of God's Word and His presence in our life. When

we live apart from God, we dry up in every area of life. Life becomes merely existence. *"The rebellious dwell in a dry land."* (Psalms 68:6)

"Send them away."

(Mark 6:36)

The only answer the disciples had for the multitude was to send them someplace else. They could not meet the need of the people who came to them. Unfortunately, many churches are in the same condition. People come for help with spiritual problems and resulting emotional and physical troubles, and the church sends them off to secular agencies and unsaved "professionals."

When the disciples came to Jesus, they discovered that He had the answer. When we are in touch with the Master, we can meet the needs of people, because we are His servants and ambassadors. Through Christ we have the supply. The legitimate church is a "storehouse" which can meet the needs. That is what ministry is all about: find a need and fill it.

"Jesus saw much people."

(Mark 6:34)

It is possible for us to be with thousands of people and never really SEE them. We can overlook their real problems and individual needs. God's people need spiritual perception. Jesus told His disciples to *"look on the fields, for they are white already unto harvest."* (John 4:35) They were waiting for some

astounding event to initiate their ministry, or for some great public appeal for their services, but Jesus told them to LOOK. He was telling them that people are ready to hear and respond; and, if you are perceptive, you will know it.

Jesus "...was moved with compassion...."

(Mark 6:34)

The great heart of God was moved with compassion, because the people were scattered. God is by nature a Father and a Gatherer. Jesus was concerned for the people in their need. Today, there is a dearth in the land. Sin is scattering families by divorce and churches by division, and too many church leaders still work mechanically through their programs and politics. Notice that Jesus was moved by the scattered, hurting people. He had compassion, and it motivated Him to give to them whatever they needed.

"He began to teach them many things..."

(Mark 6:34)

Jesus was a teacher. Probably the greatest need in the lives of the people was a teacher, and they were hungry for the truth. Every Sunday School teacher has a tremendous responsibility to teach the truth. Truth is not just a set of ideas; but, it is also the expression of the person of Jesus Christ. *"I am the way, the TRUTH, and the life...."* (John 14:6) We are not just the ministers of the sayings of Jesus, but we are also *"the ministers of Christ...."* (1 Corinthians 4:1) We give Jesus to people. A key element in the ministry team of an effective church is God-conscious teachers,

who give themselves to the spiritual ministry of teaching.

"Give ye them to eat."

(Mark 6:37)

Jesus placed the responsibility on His followers. "YOU give them something to eat." In John 21:15, Jesus asked Peter, *"...lovest thou me? ... Feed my lambs."* Jesus saw a direct correlation between Peter's love for Him and his ministry to hungry people. "If you love me, you will bless my children."

If you and I love the Lord, we will give the world the "Bread of Life."

"...and they sat down in ranks by hundreds and by fifties."

(Mark 6:40)

It is interesting to note that Jesus separated the people into "departments," and then gave each disciple responsibility over a group. They all had a part in the ministry, and none of them was omitted.

A good Sunday School program makes it possible for every worker to have a valid and fruitful ministry. If all of us do our part and minister to our own group, the hungry multitude will be fed. "We are workers together with God."

"...He blessed and brake the loaves...."

(Mark 6:41)

Jesus gave the bread to the disciples. By the Spirit, He took what was available and made it enough to meet the need. We need to be sure that what we are feeding

people is from the Lord, and not from our own imagination, or something we gleaned from the world's "wisdom." Jesus blessed the bread and He gave it to the disciples. We need to remember that if we have any good thing to give, it was given to us by the Lord. *"Freely ye have received, freely give."* (Matthew 10:8)

"...and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments"

(Mark 6:43)

When God is our source, He is able to supply more than enough to meet our need. He is also a God of order, and He wants nothing wasted. By multiplying the supply beyond the need, He made an opportunity for the disciples to serve as custodians. A teacher's work is not finished when the class has gone. He needs to be responsible for some maintenance and physical preparation as well.

The scripture makes it clear that the whole multitude was filled. Jesus more than met the need. He is the answer! He is the Bread of Life and the Water of Life. He is preparing us, as His disciples, to distribute the abundant life in Christ to the hungry multitude waiting to hear. Do not send them away. Feed them.

Why Unsaved People Do Not Come to Church

Jesus Christ said, "Go ye into all the world...." (Mark 16:15) He instructed us to "fish" for men. It is our responsibility to compel others to come in and hear the Word. We are commissioned by God to be His witnesses to a lost world; to go where men are; to reach; and to teach.

The motivating drive of Christians should be to win unsaved people to Jesus. We can only win men if we contact them where they are. If we are indifferent to soul winning, we will deteriorate into a religious club, instead of into God's mighty army. We must develop a passion to obey the Lord in His Great Commission.

We are not called to sit back and "hold the fort" until Jesus comes. We are called to be laborers in the harvest, to "occupy" until He comes. Here are some of the reasons unsaved people do not come to church. As we evaluate these reasons, it is clear that much of the blame is ours; and that, if we will respond to the Great Commission, many more people will come to Jesus and discover that He gives "life...more abundantly." (John 10:10)

They are not invited.

Very few of us invite people to church. We invite friends to our home. We invite neighbors to social functions. We invite people to PTA meetings, sports events, or shopping trips; but, how often do we invite unchurched neighbors or co-workers to church? Each year, one out of every five Americans changes residence. Many of them stay home on Sunday, because no Christians have shown an

interest by inviting them to their church services.

They are not welcomed.

It is very difficult for the average outsider to "break in" to the average church group. Most churches are very "close knit." It is good to be close friends with fellow church members; but, if we become exclusive, we miss the blessing of reaching out and growing personally.

We have a natural tendency to like "sameness" -- the same pew, the same songs, the same faces. Often, people who are different (foreigners, people from a different social standing, people with more needs than qualities to offer) are not enthusiastically welcomed in a church.

It is interesting that Jesus spoke of judging "church" people as dividing sheep from goats (Matthew 25:32-33), and the criteria for His evaluation is based on our response to various kinds of hurting, needy people. One major focus of Jesus is our response to the "new guy." "I was a stranger, and you took me in." (Matthew 25:35) A great mark of spiritual maturity is our ability to genuinely welcome new people into our lives; to make new friends; and to love the stranger.

They are embarrassed.

We often embarrass people, who come to church or to a class for the first time, by the way we introduce them or insist that they stand or talk. We need to be sensitive

there is an exodus from Christian churches to the Mormon religion, because the Mormons are perceived to have a stronger emphasis on family values and relationships. People are hungry for that. "Teach me how to get my marriage healed, and how to handle my rebellious teenager. That is what I really need."

They do not feel that they are loved.

Do we really love outsiders? Too often, we are critical of the unsaved, instead of loving them enough to lead them to the Word of God and to the church. When we are willing to invite and welcome the lost, regardless of their weaknesses, our churches will be filled. Men are hungry for Christ. There is no other real answer to the basic needs and problems in their lives.

to their personal response to that. Most people like to be welcomed and blessed by individuals in one-on-one conversation, as in a greeting time, or after the service. However, they are very uncomfortable about being put "on display" in front of a group of people whom they do not know.

They are not made aware of the presence of Christ.

If we are not careful, we can spend a lot of time in non-essentials and over-emphasize our programs, instead of the Lord. People today are hungry for reality. They need to see Jesus and hear the Word of God. They do not need more activity. They need a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

They are not attracted.

What is our reputation in the community? Are we known as "The First Church of the Hatfields and McCoys?" Are we seen as a bickering, feuding fellowship, or are we "known by our love?" It is important that Christians do not talk about internal problems with outsiders. The unreached have no desire to become a part of a group which forces them to take sides on issues.

It is also important to keep the building as attractive as possible. If visitors see dirty floors, an unkempt lawn, or a unclean restroom, they will tend to react negatively. The way we care for physical things does reflect the way we feel about ourselves and about our God.

We would also do well to examine our mannerisms carefully and our "worship calisthenics." We are often guilty of doing

things because of habit rather than participating in praise and worship as a true reflection of the heart.

They see too much hypocrisy.

How many times do we ignore people all year, and then invite them to attend church when there is a contest or special program? People often react negatively to Christians when they think they are wanted as a number; or, because we need their money. They also look at our own lives, and sometimes they see our preoccupation with seeking after the same temporal values for which they are seeking.

They do not see us excited about the Lord.

One Christian family was relocated to a new city, and visited a full-gospel church similar in doctrine to the one they had left. Their comment was, "It was a nice church. The preaching was good, and the people were friendly; but, most of them sat in the back pews during the service. We were near the front in a sea of empty seats. We felt self-conscious, and decided that, if they were not excited about being there, we would not be either. We settled on another church down the road."

They do not see that the church can meet their needs.

Sometimes the church becomes too focused on programs and gives the impression that it needs people to meet the needs of the church. Instead, we need to show the world that the church has answers for real problems. In some areas,

The Importance of Repentance

One of the basic motivations among genuinely born-again Christians is the desire to lead people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Heaven is so wonderful; God is so good; and hell is so horrible that we want everyone we know to be saved. We grieve over every soul who dies without knowing God. We agree that it is possible for people to become religious and not really have a spiritual new birth. How do we lead people to a genuine, supernatural, "new creature" experience that will result in a life lived in service and worship to God? How do we influence them to become disciples of the Lord?

Jesus spoke of people in the judgment who will say, "*Lord, ... have we not ... in thy name done many wonderful works?*" (Matthew 7:22-23) and He will say, "*I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*" (Matthew 7:23) There are many people who think they are going to heaven; but, they are not. They call Jesus "Lord," but they "work iniquity." In our sincere desire to see people saved, perhaps we have become too eager to persuade them to "make a confession of faith." We have brought a large number of people into the church who think they have a guaranteed ticket to heaven, because they "believed;" when all they really have done is to assent intellectually to the validity of Christ's messianic claims. Biblically, that is not enough. The Apostle James said,

"Thou believest that here is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." (James 2:19)

God's purpose in the earth is not to create people to populate heaven. His purpose is to have a covenant people, who will live and reign with Him forever. The Bible never says that our part is only to accept Jesus. In fact, it says that He accepts us into His life. (Ephesians 1:6) There are many people who are converts to Christianity; and yet they are not living for Christ. These people have not understood their need for genuine repentance, and live their lives as if to say, "I do not love God; but, I have accepted Jesus into my heart, and I am going to heaven. I am saved by grace, and my works have nothing to do with it. So, I am going to live the way I please and enjoy the world while I am here."

The Apostle Jude warned that ungodly men turn "*the grace of God into lasciviousness....*" (Jude 4) In other words, they would say, "since grace is only unmerited favor, then I can sin and get away with it. God loves me. Therefore, I do not need to fear God."

When Charles Finney preached during the Great Awakening revival in America in the 19th century, he often preached on the fiery judgment of God. He preached that hell is hot and sin is dirty. People went forward to the "mourner's bench," often weeping and wailing as the message was finished. They were under strong conviction, and anxious to be relieved of their burden of guilt. Often, Brother Finney refused to give the altar call, saying, "if you are really sincere, think about it another day, and I will pray with you tomorrow." Historians note that over

85% of his thousands of converts became faithful church members, and served the Lord the rest of their lives. Compare that with the statistic that only 5% of Billy Graham's converts become members of local churches. When asked, "What would you do if you had it to do all over again?" Dr. Graham replied, "I would focus my energies on training leaders, as Jesus did, and not just on mass meetings."

Is it wrong to say, "accept Jesus into your life?" No, not really. That is part of it. But, if that is our only emphasis, it can be dangerous. In recent decades, mercy and love have been emphasized to the point where some have preached and taught an "easy-believism" message. They have made it as easy as possible for people to "make a decision for Christ," and have diluted or eliminated repentance and covenant.

Notice in scripture that Jesus addressed the particular needs of the people to whom He was speaking. When a rich young ruler asked Jesus for the key to eternal life, Jesus said, "give your money away," because that was his problem. He knew who God was, and the principles of covenant with Him, but he loved his money, and that was his only hindrance to following Christ.

What was the basic need of the people in Jesus' time? The Jews had the scripture, and they believed it. They understood the principles of God's lordship and His covenant. They were looking for their Messiah. The one great national problem they had was accepting Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah. The rest was already understood. To say to a modern member of a Christian, but humanistic, culture, that "all you need to do is to accept Jesus" would be the equivalent of telling anyone

that the way to be saved forever is to give away all your money. Today, we should probably say to orthodox Jews that they need to accept Jesus into their lives. In our "Christian" culture, where Jesus is accepted by most people as God's Son -- the baby in the manger -- we have many people willing to accept Him as Savior; but, they have not repented of their sins or surrendered their lives to Him as Lord.

Today, many people in our humanistically-dominated society are "consumers." They live for themselves and for what they can get. They are "their own person." If that person is taught "just to accept Jesus and go to heaven," he probably will accept Jesus as part of his life; and then he will go on living for himself, with the sense that he does not need to repent, because everything will turn out all right for him.

Yes, there will be those who will be genuinely born again when they hear the message of God's love, and many others will take advantage of the "offer." Jude taught that for different people, you need a different approach.

"And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling (them) out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." (Jude 22-23)

Many people will never experience true conversion until they understand the fear of the Lord.

The first word of the gospel is "repent," or "turn from sin." God's purpose is covenant, not converts. He is seeking worshippers, (John 4:23) not acceptance. Jesus died to redeem us from our sinful lifestyle, not just from hell. (1 Peter 1:18) In

genuine Christianity, we do not accept Jesus into our lifestyle. Religion is often the practice of living for self during the week, and then making some time for God on Sunday. The other days are for making money, watching TV, and worshipping sports or soaps. Jesus is seen as a gentle Santa, wanting desperately to give us happiness, standing on the perimeter of our lives, "waiting patiently in line."

God is not a gentle Santa. He is still seeking a covenant people. Most people in America will "accept Jesus," mentally or historically. Most anyone would be willing to accept Jesus as their Savior, in order to accept the free gift of eternal life. But Jesus said,

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23)

In other words, "deny self and become part of the body of Christ, finding your identity in Him and His purposes." We all want a Savior, but do we want a Lord?

Teach a gospel message to any church group and then ask, "who among you would like to be assured of a place in heaven, and would like to avoid hell?" No one wants to go to hell; and yet, Jesus said that most people are going there. When you tell people, "God loves you so much that He sent Jesus to die in your place so you can go to heaven," you are speaking truth. But consider that there are many in our "me-centered" culture who will interpret that to say, "Yes, I believe that I am very important, and that God is waiting eagerly to give me a ticket to heaven." They may accept the deal, especially if there is little emphasis on repentance or turning from their sin to serve God. Is there a legitimate spiritual

birth if there is no conviction by the Holy Spirit, genuine grief over sin, or surrender to Christ's Lordship?

John said,

"As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:" (John 1:12)

First of all, he is speaking specifically of the Jews, who, as a nation of God's people, rejected Christ as the Messiah sent by God. Only those who received Him had the potential to become the sons of God. Note that it does not say, "As many as received Him were the sons of God." Jesus taught us that, in order to receive the benefit from the ministry of any prophet, you first had to receive the prophet. (Matthew 10:41) Unless you acknowledge in your heart that Jesus is both Lord and Christ, your repentance will mean nothing. Secondly, to receive Christ as Lord must be more than just an act of the mind or will, because we can be born again only as God works in our spirit, and the mind and will are part of the soul. To receive Jesus Christ as Lord, you must genuinely repent from sin and turn to God. You cannot continue to "be your own person" and also become the "new creation" God wants you to be.

When you are leading an individual or group to Jesus Christ, look for and encourage genuine repentance. Is God dealing with them about their sin, and do they want to be free? The problem with most people is that we often want to be set free from the consequences of sin, but not free from sin. Our nation is working desperately for a medical cure for the disease of AIDS, and we are not crying out against the promiscuous immorality that is spreading it. We are reacting nationally

to the symptom, and refusing to address the cause. It was much the same with the Jews in Jesus' day. The Jews wanted a messiah who would set them free from Rome; but, Jesus came to set them free from sin. They wanted Him to conquer Caesar, but He came to conquer Satan.

Religion is a function of the soul -- mind, will, and emotion -- but genuine Christianity is a relationship with God through the spirit -- "...and they that worship him must worship {him} in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24)

Many people are led to accept Jesus emotionally or intellectually; but, that is not saving faith. It can produce good feelings about God, or stimulate hope; but, that is not saving faith. One approach to evangelism is to teach young people "just to accept Jesus," and afterward, when the converts have fears, doubts, and confusion in their lives, reassure them repeatedly that they are saved. But the Apostle Paul said,

"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1)

As a result of true repentance and faith, we will have peace if we have really been born again and have been genuinely justified by a supernatural work of God's grace. We will have a "witness of the Spirit" that we are the sons of God. When a "convert" does not have that peace or witness, we should check his foundation, rather than merely try to "treat the symptoms" and convince him he is saved. Was there repentance? Was there a genuine response of faith to God in the spirit? Was there a supernatural new birth? **There are numerous accounts in**

scripture of people who thought they were in right relationship with God; but, they were not. People who were right with God always knew it; and their works were a testimony to their profession of faith. (James 2:18)

If there is doubt, fear, and rebellion in our converts, perhaps we should not be too quick to minister assurance of their salvation before we check the foundation. The epistle to the Hebrews lists six "foundation stones" in chapter six. They are:

- Repentance from dead works;
- Faith toward God;
- Baptisms;
- Laying on of hands;
- Resurrection from the dead;
- Eternal judgment.

The Hebrew Christians were repeating these basics; and they were encouraged to "go on unto maturity" instead of getting saved repeatedly. Today, many people, who do not have a biblical foundation in their lives, are trying to go on to maturity.

Genuine faith will produce obedience and works. When we lead people to genuine faith in Christ, they will not just use God for "fire insurance;" they will be changed. They not only accept Christ as their Savior, but also as their Lord -- the owner, the one who has the right to make the final decisions. As we "*confess with our mouth the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved*" (Romans 9:9) (brought to wholeness, healed, made right). The more we affirm and acknowledge His authority in our lives, the more we will walk in

victory. Sin is the result of our self-centered motivations, as we focus too much on the temporal aspects of life and neglect the spiritual. Sin is always an "I" problem. **Faith is a focus on God and His purposes.**

Genuine salvation involves a spiritual birth by the Spirit of God. There is always conviction for sin and a drawing by the Holy Ghost. Faith stirs in our hearts, and draws us to trust God with our lives, our goals, our dreams, and even our money. We make a covenant with God and seal it with obedience in water baptism. If we are genuinely born again, we would naturally have a desire to hear His Word and love His people. *"Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."* (1 John 4:7) Religion causes people to conform to expectations. True Christianity is a **supernatural transformation**, not a reformation or a conformation. If our lives and lifestyles are unchanged, then we should examine ourselves, whether we are in the faith. (2 Corinthians 13:5)

What is our **Great Commission**?

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...." (Matthew 28:19-20)

What are the actions commanded? **"Go.... teach.... baptize.... teach."** Certainly there is a place for evangelism. Win souls, and lead them to seal that covenant in submission to God in water baptism. Then *"teach them to do what I have commanded you."* Instruct them. Build their character. Teach them to live godly lives in an ungodly world. As we nurture and train young people, they will naturally become positive witnesses to the goodness of God. People who are genuinely saved and living for God in harmony with one another will be the world's most powerful witness that the Bible message is true.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13:35)

Section 4

Sensational Sunday School Sessions

The Importance of Scheduling Your Class

Please read this section very carefully! If you are going to be a successful teacher and enjoy an efficient class, it will be necessary for you to schedule the activity of the class.

If you are given an hour to teach the class, take advantage of every single moment. A suggested time schedule follows on the next page. In developing this schedule, both the age and attention span of your students were taken into account. If you will discipline yourself to follow the schedule, you will be able to accomplish all the goals for the class session; keep your students' attention; and minister effectively to all in the class.

There are many advantages to scheduling your class:

1. It makes it easier for you to prepare for the class.
2. It helps you cover much more information in the allotted time.
3. It keeps the class moving and maintains the interest of the students.
4. It allows the leader of the class to involve others in helping with the class. This is one of the greatest advantages of having a schedule. When used effectively, it will help build a strong ministry team. It is also
5. A well-scheduled class will minimize discipline problems.
6. Keeping a schedule will protect the teacher from spending too much time in one area of class activity.

an excellent way to train and involve new workers. To many people, the responsibility for teaching for an entire hour in Sunday School is overwhelming and intimidating. However, helping with a 5-minute segment of the class is much more appealing. Gradually involve new workers in the class. Invite them to lead the song service, or help with the memory verse, or receive the offering. Encourage them to get acquainted with the students and learn how the class operates by observing the class for a week or two before they actually minister. Then, as their familiarity and confidence builds, assign new or expanded responsibilities to them. Before you know it, you will have trained another worker for the School of the Bible!

It is very important to acquaint yourself with all of the suggestions given in this section. Become familiar with each segment of the class and how it is to operate. In so doing, you will become the very best teacher you can be!

Second Grade Sunday School Class Schedule

- 8:35 a.m. Team Prayer, Greet Students, Student Crafts.
- 9:05 a.m. Song Service.
- 9:12 a.m. Offering.
Announcements, Birthdays, Promotions.
- 9:20 a.m. Bible Lesson.
- 9:28 a.m. Life-related Story, Object Lesson or Project.
- 9:36 a.m. Scripture Memorization.
- 9:42 a.m. Catechism in Doctrine.
- 9:50 a.m. Song
- 9:55 a.m. Prayer and Closing.
- 10:00 a.m. Dismiss to Parents.

Preparation for Class

1. Pray for the class each day during the week as you **plan early** for your part of the class presentation.
2. On Saturday night, go to bed early to get **rested** and refreshed. Be prepared to give your very best to the Lord and to your class.
3. Arrive in the classroom **30 minutes** before the class is scheduled to begin.
4. **Pray** with your co-workers. Be especially aware of any specific needs or problems which may need ministry before the students begin to arrive. Be honest with one another. If you are "not with it;" or, if you are going through a personal struggle which will affect your ministry, ask others to pray for you.
5. **Share** together concerning the plans of each member of the team for the day. Make sure your themes and songs flow together.
6. Review the **memory verse** together. Every adult on the team should memorize the scripture verse before the class begins.
7. **Greet** the students as they arrive, and have some kind of activity or craft prepared to occupy their time while they are waiting. You may want to let them work on the activity sheet for the lessons. Gently motivate them to come early by making it a rewarding time.
8. Be **sensitive** to any child who arrives with a heavy heart. Pay attention to special problems and to things you might overhear.
9. If you see a child who is having difficulty settling down, do not feel aggravated that he might disrupt your presentation. Remember that a disruptive child usually indicates a need for special attention and ministry. He is not a fleshly interruption to your nice program. **He is the primary reason you are there.** The greatest ministry is that which can meet the greatest needs and heal the greatest hurts.
10. Prepare the room; prepare your hearts; prepare the team; and then **start on time.**

Singing with Joy

Goal: To create an atmosphere of joy and to prepare young hearts to receive the Word of God.

Focus: Lively, active songs.

Time Limit: 8 Minutes.

1. We sing to develop a focus on the Lord. Make sure your songs have a valid biblical message, as well as a happy tune and rhythm.
2. Remember to use songs the students enjoy, rather than songs that best relate to you. Slow, quiet songs should be rare for young classes.
3. Always go through the actions with them. Lead with joy and enthusiasm. Get the students involved. Have them move around with marching, jumping, and other actions.
4. Coordinate the songs with the lesson each week. You are working as a team in order to communicate a central truth with songs, Bible study, stories, and prayer. Use different songs each week.
5. See that the musician gets a list of all the songs for the day and knows the keys and chord progressions ahead of time. Make sure the musician knows the songs you want to sing.
6. If you have times when you have no musician available, soundtracks for a variety of song selections can be made and held in reserve.
7. To teach new songs, sing the song over several times for the class, and reinforce the message with a few words of introduction or a related scripture reference. It also helps to have related actions, or even a few pictures for a visual aid.
8. Generally, it is best to begin with lively, happy songs, and reserve any devotional, slow song for the end. It may also be appropriate to use a song to reinforce or conclude another segment of the class. Be sure the song is directly related to the lesson, and not just something to "fill in" or kill time.

Offering and Prayer

Time Limit: 7 Minutes.

The Offering Time.

1. It is important that young people learn the joy and importance of giving. Make the offering a joyful time in the class. Teach them to rejoice in giving to the Lord's work.
2. Set the **example**. Always contribute something to the offering yourself.
3. Let different students have the privilege of collecting the offering.
4. If you are receiving an offering for a missionary, talk about the work the missionary is doing for the Lord; and let the children share in the excitement of the ministry.
5. Occasionally, it is acceptable to let the boys compete against the girls, in raising money for missions.
6. Try to think of a way to receive the offering which will add variety and relate to the mission or to the lesson.
 - a. Example: If the offering is for Mexico, try to get a piñata or a sombrero to hold the offering.
 - b. If the lesson is on Joash, try to get some kind of chest to use to hold the offering.

Prayer Time.

1. Make prayer time meaningful by first giving an opportunity for reports and praise concerning answered prayer.
2. When prayer requests relate to students, workers, or their immediate families, make sure someone writes down the requests and asks each student during the week concerning the need they mentioned.
3. If there are several prayer requests, lead the prayer yourself. Do not embarrass a student who might forget one of the needs.

4. If you have a small class, have each student, at different times, pray a short prayer. Each student can include a prayer of thanksgiving, as well as a petition that is on his or her heart. Note any major need that is indicated, such as "God, help my parents to stay together;" and bring it to the attention of someone qualified to minister to that need.
5. Try to include each student's name in your prayer in some way. Ideally, you should know something about each of them, so that you can pray for them and not embarrass them.
 - a. Pray, "Lord, we pray that you will heal Jason's grandmother..."
 - b. Do not pray, "Lord, help Angela to conquer her mean temper;" or, "God, help Lisa with her bed-wetting." Pray that God will help Angela and Lisa with their problems.
6. Teach the children to talk to God in prayer. Let them know that God answers prayer. Whenever possible, show them the results of prayer.
7. Do not recite prayers. Teach the Lord's prayer to the children as a model of a good prayer.

Teaching with Purpose

- Goal:** To communicate the Word of God with skill and excitement.
- Focus:** One major biblical principle concerning doctrine or Christian character.
- Time Limit:** 8 Minutes.

Key Principles of Good Teaching.

1. Always know the story well, and tell it in your own words. Never read a Bible lesson to your students.
2. Memorize key names, numbers, and facts.
3. Use some kind of visual aid, such as flannelgraph, overhead, large drawings, charts, puppets, filmstrip, costume, drama, or video.
4. Relate to the students personally by asking them about facts they should know. Never say, "Who knows the answer to..." Instead, say, "Billy, who was the..." Make it a goal to use as many of their names as possible during the lesson. Remember that names are very important. Calling on specific students will:
 - a. Draw them into the lesson by anticipating that a question may be directed at them.
 - b. Avoid the answers being monopolized by a few outgoing students.
 - c. Draw out the shy member of the class, and make him feel that he is a part of it.
 - d. Make each student feel special.
 - e. Help you learn their names.
5. As you tell the Bible story, watch the students. Look them in the eye and be sensitive to their response. The temptation will be to preach to them, or to be more concerned about your lesson and delivery than about the people you are teaching. There is a difference between preaching and teaching. A good teacher will make each member of the class feel a part of the lesson presentation.

6. Always keep in mind that, behind every name and set of facts in the Bible, there is a lesson in life and character. Focus on the character strengths and weaknesses that resulted in the conflict or rewards, and show that God is always just and consistent as our judge and heavenly Father.
7. Never embarrass a student. If you are aware that there is only one student who is not born again, why have an "altar call?" Instead, why not purpose to visit the child and perhaps his family, and lead him to the Lord at home; or, talk to him at another time? Never teach a group something that applies only to one if you can minister to that person alone.
8. To receive the respect of those you teach, show respect for them as individuals. Show appreciation for their attendance and cooperation, and let them know that you see them as very special people. Also, encourage them to honor their parents and their pastor at all times.

Story-telling to Touch Hearts

- Goal:** To reinforce the central theme of the lesson with a related story.
- Focus:** A true or true-to-life story that will help create a focus on God and on godly heroes.
- Time Limit:** 8 Minutes.

Key Principles of Good Story-Telling.

1. Always know the story well, and tell it in your own words.
2. Memorize key names, numbers, and facts.
3. Whenever possible, use some kind of visual aid, such as flannelgraph, overhead, large drawings, charts, puppets, filmstrip, costume, drama, or video.
4. Instead of relying on fiction, use stories that are true. Use biographies of great Christians to illustrate the lesson and stimulate interest in godly heroes.
5. Research the geographic and cultural setting of the story. Paint a picture with words which will keep the students interested and stimulate their imaginations.
6. Be animated and expressive in telling the story. You may even want to enlist a teaching team member to help you act out a part of it; or, ask one or two of the students to help.
7. Make sure that your students can draw a definite biblical conclusion from the story you are telling.

Scripture Memorization

- Goal:** “Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” (Psalms 119:11)
- Focus:** Memorize key verses of scripture in order to implant the message in the hearts of students.
- Time Limit:** 8 Minutes.

Key Principles of Scripture Memorization.

1. Many students have a far greater capacity for memorization than we have recognized in the past. Do not make it too easy, or it will not be a challenge to them.
2. It is highly recommended that you try to motivate the parents to memorize the passages at home along with the children. This will greatly increase the children’s capacity to retain scripture, and it could be a great encouragement to families in their home devotions.
3. One tool in memorization is to focus on and understand the concept communicated by the verse. It is easier to memorize by visualizing the verse, rather than by trying to recite a group of words by rote.
4. Talk through the verse; explain the meaning of each major word; and review the overall meaning of the verse.
5. Whenever possible, use visual aids to reinforce the idea in their minds.
6. Repeat the verse often. Then, say it at least in one other way, in your own words. Look up the reference in several other translations, and read them to amplify the meaning.
7. Have the students repeat the verse several times as a group. You may also want to call on a few individuals to recite it.
8. Quiz them on the concepts and key words.
9. Have them meditate a few moments on the verse; that is, to visualize the verse being applied to their own lives and situations.

10. Ask for testimonies that might relate to the principle idea in the verse.

Catechism in Doctrine

- Goal:** To build a foundation of wisdom and understanding of the Word of God, *“line upon line, precept upon precept.”*
- Focus:** A clear and concise answer to a basic question on Scriptural truth.
- Time Limit:** 8 Minutes.
- Catechism:** One of the Greek words in the Bible for “teach” is *“katechéo,”* which means *“to sound down into the ear; to indoctrinate.”* Our word “catechism” means *“to teach systematically with questions and answers.”*

Key Principles of Youth Catechism.

1. Familiarize yourself with the list of catechism questions included in this manual for this specific grade level. The objective is to systematically communicate a balanced perspective on the essential truths of God’s Word, according to the vision of the pastor and the leadership of your local church.
2. It is important that we all “speak the same thing.” Probably, all of us believe in the basics, as expressed in the “Apostle’s Creed;” but, we will have some different ideas on less critical issues, especially if we have come from different Christian backgrounds. **Do not deliberately teach something which you know will be contradicted in the pulpit.** Even if you feel you are more accurate in your eschatology or hermeneutics, do not create confusion. Be a servant, and let the children hear a harmonious sound from their different authorities.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and {that} there be no divisions among you; but {that} ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” (1 Corinthians 1:10)

3. Read the question aloud carefully and deliberately. You may want to read it again, or repeat the thought several times during the discussion. You may also wish to ask for a volunteer to explain his answer; but, be careful not to embarrass him or ignore his erroneous concepts, and thus give tacit approval. Usually, he will be “partly right,” or “close.”

4. Do your homework. Look up scripture references ahead of time in several translations, and know how to answer misinformed students. This will be more critical as you deal with older classes, especially if they have come from different backgrounds. Try to anticipate the areas where questions will be the most likely to arise in their minds, and explain them with scripture in your presentation.
5. If you have questions on a doctrinal topic that you are to present, contact one of the pastors well in advance of the class. A phone consultation will usually be adequate to clarify the position of your local church and give added insights on the topic.
6. Review related questions and answers from previous weeks in order to refresh the students' memories and help build a solid base in their spiritual foundation of truth.
7. Try to think of some kind of visual aid to strengthen their memories. For reading students, at least write the question on a chalkboard or poster, and then add a brief summary of the answer.
8. Each Administrator will be encouraged to review the concepts periodically with the class, or with individual students in order to reinforce the importance of learning basic truths. At the end of the class year, a quiz will be given to the students on the questions assigned to the teaching team for the year.

Section 5

Life-related Stories

Using Life-related Stories

These stories are to be used to supplement the lessons in the Complete School of the Bible Manual. Since neither series has to be used every week, they can be alternated with the catechism lessons. They will add color and interest to the lessons and should have a greater impact on the students than fabricated stories.

This series is not a compilation of the "best," or "greatest" in Christian history. Many of the accounts are from the lives of "everyday" people, who may not have achieved anything spectacular in life, but who did have a particular experience which illustrated an important lesson. Many people are included, because they happen to be known by the writer. Other stories come from the well-documented biographies of famous people.

We want to promote Christian heroes. All of us tend to emulate the people we focus on, and the secular world is busy promoting the popularity and success of many vain, shallow people, whose lives bear little resemblance to Jesus-Christ. When we do speak of ungodly people, we want to put them into the proper context. We not only want to know their public image and success, but also to be aware of their personal disasters and the moral failures which led to their wrong philosophies and choices.

Some of the stories come from the lives of people who were not Christians at all. As we read the Bible, we see a very comprehensive mix of people, ranging

from a sanctified saint to a surly scoundrel. We learn wisdom from both the heroes and the villains of history. We can profit by understanding both winners and losers. The key is the word *understanding*.

We have avoided trying to create another "Who's Who" in Christianity, because the topic is so subjective.

This is a collection of teaching illustrations from the lives of people. Some of them are notable, great leaders, and some are quite ordinary. The most lauded and visible people are not necessarily the most fruitful. When we get to heaven, all of us will probably be surprised to see that the greatest rewards and highest honors go to faithful "nobodies," while the rich and famous of today may have lesser positions. We seek to glean illustrations from the lives of a variety of people. We want to understand the factors that have resulted in a joyful, fruitful life for others, so that we might apply those same principles in our lives.

This collection should also serve as a model for the teacher. Each teacher can glean some stories from his own experiences, or from the experiences of people he knows. Those Christians who are in the habit of witnessing to the lost and reaching out to people will tend to have many more good stories than anyone else. Use stories you know and try to focus on real people and true stories. This takes more research and effort than fictional stories, but it is far more effective.

The Story of Thomas á Kempis

Thomas Haemmerlein was born in 1380 in the town of Kempen, on the Rhine River in Germany. His father was a poor man. Young Thomas was studious and quiet, and seemed to have a heart for God from an early age. Apparently he never developed a taste for the luxuries of life, because he quickly chose the simple life of the monastery.

He lived for ninety-one years. He lived simply and quietly. Thomas never sought to make a name for himself, yet he is remembered in history as a good man, while almost all the people of his age have been long forgotten.

Today, we look back to those dark ages and shudder at the ignorance and suffering that prevailed. There were many men who chose the strict discipline and self-denial of the monasteries in an effort to appease the guilt of their own conscience, and to somehow earn the favor of God. We recognize that Jesus did not call his disciples to shut themselves off from civilization into dark cells of loneliness, but to "go into the world and preach the gospel." Jesus did not insist that His followers become celibate or to make vows of poverty, either. Indeed, God wants most of His servants to marry and have Christian families, and He does not place greater rewards on people simply because they are poor.

Some of the monks and religious leaders of the dark ages were involved in various vices and secret sins. But there were some that were genuine in their quest for God's presence, and their desire for true holiness.

From the writings and teachings of Thomas á Kempis (or "Thomas from the town of Kempen"), we catch glimpses of his heart, which seemed to burn with a desire for God. We examine his writings in the perfect lamp of God's Word, and discover a treasury of rich spiritual insights that reflected the purity of His Lord Jesus Christ. Thomas á Kempis wrote "Imitation of Christ," and this work became one of the most influential pieces of literature in history, next to the Bible itself. It includes such gems of wisdom as:

"He who knows himself well becomes vile in his own sight, and can take no delight in the praises of men."

"Learned men are apt to wish to make a display of their learning, and to be spoken of as talented."

"It is vanity to seek honors, and to strive for high positions."

"Strive, therefore, to withdraw your heart from the love of visible things, and to transfer your affections to things invisible; for if you follow your sensual inclinations, you will stain your conscience and lose the grace of God."

"The Bible ought always to be read with the assistance of the same Spirit by whose agency it was written."

"If you keep up the habit of retiring for prayer, you will find it sweet; but if it is irregularly done, a distaste for it will be the result."

"A spiritually minded man puts the care of his own soul before all other

concerns. And he who diligently attends to himself is easily silent about others."

"God walks with the simple; He reveals Himself to the lowly; He gives

understanding to little ones; He discloses His meaning to pure minds, and hides His grace from the curious and proud."

The Holy Spirit Translates

The missionaries in Northern Ghana were involved in discussion over the proper way to translate the name of Jesus into Dagbani. It was understandable that the Bible Society wanted the missionaries to refrain from using the name *Yisa*, because that is the name used by the Muslims for the "son of Mary," who was a "prophet" but not the "Son of God". On the other hand, the African Christians did not want to change and start using the English name for Jesus. They loved the name *Yisa* and knew it means the One whom they knew to be the Son of God and their Lord and Savior.

Something that happened at Trinity Tabernacle, Baytown, Texas, thousands of miles away, settled the problem.

W. Franklin McCorkle has spent most of his time since 1952 with the Dagomba tribe, whose language is Dagbani. He taught in Bible school, beginning in 1952, and until 1968 the students were taught in the Dagbani language. McCorkle has also proven his expertise in the Dagbani language in other ways. He translated into that language the books of Daniel and Revelation as well as various songs, Bible school lesson materials, and similar material. He does all his village preaching in the Dagbani language, and needs no interpreter to repeat it in the vernacular for the village people. They say to interpreters, "You do not have to repeat his words, for we understand what the white man says. He speaks our language, like us."

Missionary McCorkle and his wife were attending revival services at Trinity Tabernacle, where Rev. W. S. Graham was

pastoring. One night, as the missionary was kneeling in prayer by the front row of seats, suddenly he heard a familiar language -- Dagbani.

Turning, McCorkle saw a young woman of the church, Shirley Young (now Mrs. Stanley Holzaepfel), standing with her hands raised and her eyes closed and saying, "Yisa Masia, Yisa Masia, Oh N Yisa Masia, Yisa, Yisa," meaning "Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, Oh, my Jesus Christ, Jesus, Jesus," and other praises to the Lord in Dagbani.

According to McCorkle, not only were the words clear and distinct, but the intonation was of the kind that showed devotion and worship. The young woman continued for several minutes worshipping the Lord and calling Him the Son of God, "Naawun' Bia." It was affirmed that she had never heard the language in her life. She was speaking in tongues under the anointing of the Holy Ghost. This was a supernatural "gift of tongues" mentioned by Paul in I Corinthians 12.

The next day, Franklin McCorkle wrote his fellow missionary H. S. Lehmann in Ghana, who was also doing translation work, and told him, "If 'Yisa' is good enough for the Holy Spirit to use, let us continue using it also in our Dagbani language work". And this has been done.

From "Spoken by the Spirit"
by Ralph W. Harris
© 1973
Used by Permission

The Story of W. Stillman Martin

W. Stillman Martin was a preacher and a songwriter who ministered many years ago. He had a wife and one son. They all loved the Lord. In 1904, when Rev. Martin's son was nine years old, the family was visiting in New York City. Brother Martin was asked to preach for a local church, and he agreed to do so. But Mrs. Martin, who was not in good health, took a turn for the worse the morning he was scheduled to speak. Rev. Martin was just about to go and notify the people at the church that he would be unable to come, when his son said, "Father, don't you think that if God wanted you to preach today, He will take care of mother while you're away?"

Rev. Martin felt embarrassed for his lack of faith, and realized that the boy was right. He knew God had called him to preach, and he knew that God was well able to take care of his family. It was a fruitful message, for several people received salvation that day through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

When Mrs. Martin heard her son's declaration of faith that morning, she was moved, and felt inspired to write a poem.

When her husband arrived at the place they were staying, the boy handed him the sheet of paper with the poem. Mr. Martin read the words, and realized that this was a great message which should be set to music. He went to the organ, and began to sing the words with a new melody. Soon, he had written out the song which would be a source of comfort and encouragement to millions of people around the world for many years to come:

"Be not dismayed whate're betide,

God will take care of you.

Beneath His wings of love abide,

God will take care of you.

God will take care of you.

Through every day,

O're all the way.

God will take care of you.

God will take care of you."

The Story of the Mayflower

When King James became the king of England in 1603, the nation was in great religious turmoil. England was controlled by the Church of England, led by a group of powerful bishops who had little interest in seeking God. There were two groups in England who were spiritually alive: the *Puritans*, who sought to influence the church by staying in it, and the *Separatists*, who felt that the church was too corrupt, so they had their own worship services. The church, working with the crown, initiated persecution against the born-again believers, even having some executed. Christians who wanted to worship in spirit often lost their jobs.

By 1620, a group of Separatists decided that the only hope for freedom would be to emigrate to the New World, and establish a Christian community in America where they could worship freely. Pastor John Robinson and Elder William Brewster were the principle leaders of this courageous church who decided to follow the example of Abraham.

The congregation numbered over 600. After seeking financing, it was decided that only a third of the group could go, because they only had the use of two ships: the *Speedwell*, and the *Mayflower*. Pastor Robinson would stay in England, while William Brewster would be the acting pastor in America. Eventually, only the *Mayflower* was able to make the voyage, and many of the 102 passengers who made the crossing were "strangers" who were motivated by financial gain.

For 66 days, the brave pilgrims sat in the hold of the 70-ton *Mayflower*, suffering the dark, smelly, and depressing

room, barely the size of a volleyball court. They subsisted on dried pork and other cheap foods they were able to obtain, and endured the rocking of the ship and constant storms at sea. They also endured the harassment of the sailors, who saw Christianity as a joke. One seaman was especially cruel. He delighted in mocking the believers, and in laughing when they became seasick. He told them how much he looked forward to sewing their corpses in shrouds and feeding them to the sharks. At the peak of his sport of tormenting, the sailor suddenly took ill, and died with a mysterious fever. He was the one who was fed to the sharks. After that, the other sailors treated their guests with much more respect. The only other death recorded on the trip was that of William Butten, a non-Christian who refused his daily ration of lemon juice and succumbed to scurvy.

Another man almost drowned when he refused to stay below deck. He was washed overboard in the storm, and was saved from the bitterly cold waters only by a miracle. One day, in a violent storm, the large cross beam supporting the main mast broke, and was sagging. The Christians prayed, and suddenly Mr. Brewster remembered that he had a large screw for his printing press. They rigged it to the beam, and it worked to hold it together.

Finally, they landed in Cape Cod, and began a Christian covenant community. The "Mayflower Compact," their legal agreement for a Christian democratic government, was part of the basis for the eventual structure of the nation that would become, a century and a half later, the United States of America.

The Story of Jerry McAuley

Jeremiah McAuley was born in Ireland in 1839. He did not have the privilege of growing up in a Christian home. In fact, his father was a notorious counterfeiter. When Jerry was a young boy, his dad left town suddenly. The law was after him. He did not see the old man again. Jerry's mother was unable to provide for her children, so it was decided that Jerry should go to America, to live with his older sister and her family in New York.

Without the guidance of a good father, and now without the care of a kind mother, Jerry began to look to the streets for fulfillment. He was drawn to the artificial family of the street gangs. There he found what seemed like a measure of acceptance, and a sense of belonging. But it was an unhappy life, for they preyed upon other people, and were drawn deeper and deeper into wickedness. Jerry was caught up in a life of stealing, and his crimes became more and more serious.

Eventually, Jerry was arrested, and sentenced to fifteen years in Sing Sing Prison. While in prison, he began to read the Bible. He felt remorse and guilt because of all the people he had hurt, but he did not know what to do about it. He read the Bible through completely twice. Then, a woman evangelist came to the prison and preached salvation. Jerry was ready. He quickly repented with a flood of tears, and gave his heart and life to the Lord Jesus Christ.

After that, Jerry was such a cooperative prisoner that he was released after serving only seven of the fifteen years he had been sentenced. He rejoiced, for he was free -- not only from prison, but free from the sin that had bound him even more surely in its grasp. He soon found honest work, and became part of a Bible believing church. He also fell in love, and married a fine Christian woman.

In 1872, Jerry and his wife started the Water Street Mission in the heart of the worst part of New York City. He did not have a college degree, but he could certainly relate to the down and out that inhabited the streets with which he was so familiar. He frequently gave his own testimony, and moved many a drunk, prostitute, and thief to the Lord Jesus Christ. He readily dispensed the hope and love that God had so freely given to him. It was dangerous, and not financially rewarding, but the joy that he and his faithful wife shared was delightful.

The mission accepted anyone, regardless of how they looked or smelled. The meetings at the mission were characterized by joyful singing, fervent preaching, and the accompanying shouts of praise and joy to the Lord. Many thousands of hurting people heard the gospel at the Water Street Mission, and many responded to the altar calls. Jerry McAuley died in 1884, but his influence continues to this day through the ministry he began so long ago.

The Story of Jonas Miller, M.D.

Several factors tended to prejudice Jonas Miller, M.D. against what was happening in the first Pentecostal meeting he attended. Having grown up in an Amish home, he was not used to the informal atmosphere. Besides, the evangelist was a woman preacher, and women have no part in the public services of the Amish. However, he attended the service at the church where Harry Collier was pastor, partly out of curiosity, and also at the suggestion of a patient. Miller had to admit, however, he had never before been in a service where there was so much joy and freedom of worship.

The manifestation of the glossolalia Dr. Miller heard during the altar service was particularly obnoxious. He considered it gibberish and noted that many of those so speaking were women. He commented to his associate, Mr. Mennon Yoder, that they were probably people who were unhappy at home and were giving vent to suppressed emotions.

Dr. Miller and his friend at first vowed never to return, but they decided to attend once more because there was to be prayer for the sick. He had heard about this, but had never witnessed it. With his medical mind at work, he positioned himself to watch the prayer line and make an objective diagnosis of each case as the person walked by.

Miller was extremely critical of what was happening as he noted that none of the people had been examined by a physician either before or after they passed through the line. He was particularly perturbed when a woman with congestive heart disease fell as she was prayed for. He arose to offer his services, but they were

refused. To his relief, the woman finally revived and walked away without assistance.

Going back to his seat, just as he passed a small man who was standing with both hands raised, the doctor heard the man speaking in German. Since Dr. Miller had been raised in a German-speaking home, he understood when the man said in quiet tones, "Almighty God, we love You, we praise You, we will follow You." He repeated the phrase a number of times.

Jonas Miller stood transfixed, for the night before he had said to his friend, "Should I ever hear a man speak a language I could understand when he did not know what he was saying, I would believe that this was of God." God had honored his honesty.

Walking to his seat, the doctor bowed his head and prayed: "Lord, if I have been wrong, it was with honesty; so, if this is really from You, please let this man come to where I am so I can talk to him."

As he raised his head after praying, the man who had spoken in German stood before him, shook his hand, and said, "God bless you."

"What is your name?" Dr. Miller asked.

"They calls me Cap'n Green," the man replied.

Dr. Miller found also that he was of Scotch-Irish descent, and that he worked with a pick and shovel for the railroad. He went on to ask if he could speak any language besides English.

The little man slapped his knee and said, "Cap'n, they say I don't even know that very good. I ain't never gone to school but two weeks in my life. My daddy died, and I had to help raise my brothers and sisters."

Dr. Miller spent weeks studying the Pentecostal experience. When he met a

man who had been a terrible sinner, but was now a faithful member of the church, he believed. He also became filled with the Holy Spirit, and went on to pioneer five churches in his lifetime.

from "Spoken by the Spirit"
by Ralph W. Harris © 1973
Used by permission.

The Story of George Müller

George Müller was born in Prussia in 1805. His father was a wealthy tax collector who decided to teach his young son the value of money by giving him large sums with the order that he was not to spend any of it. Apparently, this was a dumb idea. George spent it wildly, and merely tried to falsify the records. He was often discovered, but continued his sin. On the day of his mother's funeral he was drinking and gambling in a pub. When he was 16, his father left him at home to study and to collect some of the taxes. He took the tax money and went to Brunswick, where he went to an expensive hotel and spent it lavishly on wickedness.

When his money ran out, he continued to charge for hotel bills, and landed in prison for a month. He was often punished by his father, but continued to live a wild, selfish life of sin. In an effort to turn over a new leaf, he went to Bible school. But even there, he lived an immoral life, along with most of the other ministry students. Finally, he befriended an godly student named Beta who took him to a home prayer meeting where he gave his heart to the Lord and was genuinely saved. From then on, he loved to spend time with God in prayer. George Müller is remembered today as a great man of prayer.

George moved to England, hoping to get support from the London Missionary Society as a missionary to the Orient, but he was rejected. He preached the gospel wherever he had the opportunity, and in 1834 settled in Bristol, where he became a pastor. He supported his family by charging rent for the pews in the church services, but felt convicted about charging

people to attend church, and decided to live by faith and trust God to move on people's hearts to give freely. His heart was moved by the hundreds of children who had to work long hours in factories or coal mines, either because they were very poor or because they were orphaned and would starve to death if they did not work. Children who worked in the coal mines would struggle all day digging in the dangerous mine shafts, filling their lungs with coal dust, and receiving severe beatings if the foremen thought they were not working hard enough. George and his wife started sharing bread with hungry children, and soon would have 50 or 60 orphans at their door every morning.

When he shared his desire to help the starving children, the people in the church opposed the idea. They were doing well to take care of their own children, and felt that he should give all his time to pastoring them. But God led him to a time of intense prayer, and people in the town began to bring him supplies, furniture, food, and money. He began with an orphanage for 30 girls, and it soon expanded to three homes for 97 children.

In his lifetime, George Müller established five homes for the needy and destitute. Many of these people would have died, or turned to a life of crime to survive, because there were no government relief agencies or programs as we have today. But Mr. Müller's desire was primarily to show people the power of prayer. He took special joy in asking only God for provision, and in seeing God bountifully and miraculously provide for their daily needs. In an outstanding way, George Müller was a great man of faith.

The Story of John Newton

"Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me." We are all familiar with these words, but what kind of man wrote them, and why did he call himself a "wretch?"

This song was written by John Newton, an English sailor who was best remembered as a slave trader in the 1700's who later became a preacher. He was born the son of a sea captain in 1725. His mother was a godly woman who diligently taught her only child, pouring the Word of God into his life while his father was out to sea most of the time. She had him reading at the age of 3, and learning Latin as a 6-year-old.

Two weeks before John's seventh birthday his sweet but sickly mother died, and his father did not return from the sea until the next year. Soon after his return he married again, but this stepmother was nothing like his mother. She generally neglected him, and finally sent him off to boarding school, where he was under the teaching of a harsh and inept teacher who almost destroyed his spirit.

As John grew he became increasingly influenced by other children who had little adult care, and he became more and more rebellious. Several times he very narrowly escaped death, and each time was reminded that God must have a special purpose for him. But invariably he would get caught up in mischief and forget the serious lesson God was teaching him about life.

As a teenager he went to sea, but soon became known as a troublemaker; and he was constantly in trouble. He entered the British navy, where he was arrested and

severely beaten and imprisoned for desertion. He eventually joined a slave-trader who lived off the coast of Africa. He became extremely ill, and was left in the care of his master's African wife, who for some reason took an extreme disliking to him.

He suffered for months, lying on a grass mat almost totally neglected. The woman would occasionally let him eat the scraps off her plate, even though there was food in abundance on the table. He found that he often had to dig up roots and eat them raw to survive. Because of his father's reputation among sailing men, he was eventually given a chance to go back to England. While still a young man, he became a slave trader himself.

As he had been a very unpopular young man because of his wickedness, so he was an unpopular captain. One night during a storm he was drunk, and fell into the sea. Instead of swimming out to rescue him, his men threw a harpoon into him and pulled him back into the ship. He survived, but walked with a limp the rest of his life. It was a constant reminder of the "wretch" he had been for so much of his life.

But through it all, the influence of his mother in those intense early years of training stayed with him. He knew better, and would often weep and feel sorry for his sins. He went through a period where he renounced all pleasure and fasted often. He became extremely religious, doing the things he thought he should do to keep from going to hell. But he kept falling back into sin, because that was what was in his heart.

At the age of 25, John Newton repented of his sins and began to walk with the Lord. But unfortunately he kept on with the vile business of slavery for five more years. Finally he surrendered his life fully

to the Lord, and began to pursue the gospel ministry. He became a fruitful and effective preacher, who never forgot that he had been saved from a wretched life by God's amazing grace.

The Story of Origen

During the days of the early church, many thousands of Christians were tortured and executed by the Roman Empire, and often by the direct order of the emperor himself. Many vain and wicked men ruled, and the empire was the last of the world empires. There were ten major periods of persecution against Christians under various Roman emperors, over a period of about one hundred years.

During the second century, it was a matter of great concern to pagan leaders that Christianity was flourishing and the heathen temples were becoming deserted. One day, a good man named Leonidus was arrested for the crime of believing in Jesus. He was an honest and kind man, but there was great hatred against Christians among the ungodly of the land who resented those who lived a pure life. Satan was also at work, stirring up the selfish hearts of his children of darkness against those who walked in the light.

Leonidus had a seventeen-year-old son named Origen, who was also fully committed to Christ. When the authorities came to take Leonidus, Origen wanted to stand by his father's side and make a stand for the gospel. But his mother, realizing what was about to happen, hid his clothes, so he was embarrassed to appear. He had to stay at home while his father was quickly tried and condemned. But he sent a message to his father, saying, "Take heed to yourself, that you turn not your thought and purpose for our sake." Leonidus steadfastly refused to renounce his faith in Christ, and was executed as a public example.

The emperor had all of the property and wealth of Leonidus confiscated, and his family was left in abject poverty. The teenage Origen was left with the responsibility to care for his mother and six younger brothers. But he was a sharp young man, who had a reputation as a fine, dedicated Christian. He started a little school, and many families decided to place their children under his care, to be influenced by this good young man.

For many years, Origen taught the Christian faith, and served as a leader in the church. He won many people to the Lord, and honored the memory of his martyred father with integrity and a fruitful life. He served his Lord by helping other people, and he was widely known as a good and loving man. He was the greatest Bible teacher of Alexandria, Egypt.

When Origen was 64 years old, he was arrested for his faith, and thrown into a dark, cold, insect-infested dungeon. He was chained, and his feet were put in stocks for several days. He was tortured for days, and threatened repeatedly with fire and other means of intimidation. The authorities were unable to break his spirit because of his commitment to Christ. He knew that the riches of Christ and the joys of heaven were too valuable to lose for the sake of a moment's respite from pain.

His tormentors were ordered to make his death as painful and as lingering as possible. But when the emperor Decius died, and his successor, Gallus, began a war with the Goths, they lost interest in the Christians, and Origen was set free. He went to Tyre, where he died at the age of sixty-nine.

The Story of Perpetua

In the year 192 A.D., Severus became the emperor of Rome. When he became deathly ill, a Christian helped him recover his health. He therefore became favorable toward Christians in general. But there were still many in the empire who hated Christians, and were angry at the great growth of the faith in the world.

Many who professed faith in Jesus Christ were burned, imprisoned, cut apart with swords, beheaded, or thrown to the wild beasts. It seemed quite acceptable for courts to execute people for the "crime" of believing in Christ, since the empire was officially pagan and was forced to deify the emperor. Irenaeus, the godly Bishop of Lyons, wrote a popular tract about heresy, and the emperor resented his fame. He had the preacher beheaded in 202 A.D.

The persecution extended even to Africa. This was the home of Perpetua, a lovely young wife and mother who loved the Lord. She was arrested for being a Christian at the age of 26. Her father, who loved her deeply, went to her prison cell and begged her to renounce Christianity in order to save her life. She loved her father; but she loved God more, and refused to give up her faith in Christ. Her father became so angry that he beat her severely, and refused to see her for several days.

In the meantime, some new believers were baptized in the prison, and a fervent prayer meeting continued in the midst of the danger. Perpetua was carried before the pro-consul Minutius, and commanded to sacrifice to the idols. When she refused, she was placed in a dark, isolated dungeon, and her baby was taken from her. Her father again came to try to talk her into

surrendering her will to the pagans, but she was steadfast, and said, "God's will must be done."

At her trial, she continued to show great courage and faithfulness to the gospel, in spite of her father's pleadings and her baby's cries. They tried to convince her that they were kind and reasonable, while this Christianity was a dangerous form of fanaticism. Still, she considered the joys of heaven far more precious than her own life, and she refused to deny her Lord. She was taken back to prison, where she and several others awaited torture and execution. Among the condemned Christians was another fine lady named Felicitas.

Some days later, a group of believers were led to an amphitheater. Satur, Saturninus, and Revocatus were forced to run between lines of hunters, who lashed them severely with weapons, to the delight of the pagan crowd of spectators. Perpetua and Felicitas were then put in the arena with a hungry lion. The beast attacked and seriously wounded them both. Then an executioner came and slew them both with his sword. Revocatus and Satur were also put to the sword, and Saturninus was beheaded. Secundulus was taken, wounded, back to the prison, where he died.

If you were put on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you? Is your faith strong enough to withstand persecution, or the threat of torture and death? Do you fear man, or God? Throughout history, millions of Christians have been martyred for their faith. In fact, many are being killed in the nations of the world daily.

The Story of Evan Roberts

Evan Roberts was born in 1878 in Wales. Wales is a small nation that is a part of Great Britain, along with England and Scotland. People and things that relate to Wales are referred to as Welsh. Shortly after the turn of the twentieth century, there was a great Pentecostal move of the Spirit, known as the great Welsh revival, and Evan Roberts was considered the primary leader of this famous event.

Evan Roberts was a miner and blacksmith who had a deep longing for revival. Great Britain had, during her long history, experienced periods of spiritual renewal and national zeal for God. The great expansion of the British Empire was due largely to God's hand of blessing on the land because of spiritual fervor and national prayer. More than once, England had been miraculously saved from the powerful Spanish naval forces, because God responded to national prayer and repentance.

But Britain was now almost spiritually dead. Taverns and crime abounded, and the churches were nearly empty. Evan prayed diligently for revival in his homeland. When he was 26, he quit his mining job and went to Bible school. For eleven years he prayed for revival. With a handful of people, he would hold all-night prayer meetings every Friday. For years, he was faithful in these prayer meetings, but nothing happened.

Then, in the fall of 1903, the Holy Spirit moved on him to go back to his home town. He went to the Methodist church and gave his testimony. God began to

move in the meeting, and a great revival broke out that was to last more than a year. There was very little preaching, but the meetings would last for many hours, or even days at a time. There would be singing in the Spirit, spontaneous praise, healings, and other amazing supernatural manifestations. Sinners who walked into the church would fall immediately to the floor, sobbing in repentance. Churches all around filled up and overflowed with anointed revival. At the same time, taverns began to close down for lack of business.

Drunkards by the hundreds quit drinking. Prostitutes were saved. Whole towns were mightily converted. It was noted that people crossing the bridge into the county where they were praying were smitten by the power of God, and fall off their horses and onto their knees, crying out to God. God was moving by His Spirit. People came from all around. This revival influenced many people to seek the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and helped to launch Pentecostal revivals in other nations, such as the United States.

But the great Welsh revival died out after that glorious year of 1904. For many people, life went back to business as usual. Evan Roberts, with his prayers answered, seemed to ease up on his prayer life, and nothing else notable occurred in his lifetime, although he lived another 50 years. Today, the Prince of Wales is most known for his marriage troubles, and the royal family consults astrologers instead of the Holy Spirit. But if another praying Evan Roberts comes along again, there may yet be another great Welsh revival.

The Story of C. H. Spurgeon

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was born in England in 1835. He started preaching when he was 16. By the time he was twenty-five years old, he had built the famous Metropolitan Tabernacle, which could seat 5,000 people. But there was never enough room to contain all the people who wanted to hear him. He was called for many years the "prince of preachers." Members of royalty and other dignitaries attended his church, along with many washerwomen and factory workers.

Wherever he went, the crowds came. He was not only a gifted and brilliant speaker, he was a man who demonstrated a passion for souls. His sermons were transcribed by various secretaries, so that there are volumes of his sermons still widely used today, even though he died a century ago (1892). Everywhere he went, he was winning people to the Lord. To the lady at the bakery, he would ask, "Have you tried the Bread of Life?" To the carpenter he passed by, he might call out, "Don't build your life on the sand. Build on the Rock!"

One day the great preacher was called to visit an old and poor woman. He stepped into the musty dark shack and felt great pity for the poor woman who had lived for so many years in such dire poverty. She was clad in worn and faded garments, and seldom had enough simple food to eat. Now, she lay on her bed, barely able to move around, and entirely unable to afford a doctor's care.

As the pastor was preparing to pray for the poor woman, he noticed a piece of paper pinned to the wall. The walls were

nearly bare, so it was noticeable, even in the dim light. He looked closely at the document, and his eyes opened wide with surprise. He turned to the lady and said, "Madam, do you know how to read?" She replied, "No, sir. I have had to work all my life, and I was never able to go to school."

He said, "Tell me about this document on the wall."

She replied, "I worked for many years as a housekeeper for a wealthy man in town. He had no wife or family, and kept to himself. As he was dying, he called me to his bedside. He wrote something on that piece of paper, and gave it to me. I have treasured that note, because it was kind of him to give me recognition for the years of service I gave him."

Spurgeon said, "Madam, the paper you have on your wall is a check for a very large sum of money. For years, you have lived in poverty, and have had great wealth available to you, just for the asking. You could have had lived in the finest house in London, and eaten the finest foods in the land, but you never read the note."

The next Sunday, Pastor Spurgeon related the story to the thousands in his congregation, reminding them that they have great power and opportunity in the name of Jesus. As believers, we are told to pray in His name, and to believe that our Heavenly Father has provided great blessing, healing, and strength through the blood of Jesus Christ. We have not, because we ask not.

The Story of Young Billy Sunday

Billy Sunday never saw his father. He was born in Iowa on November 19, 1862, and his father died from pneumonia one month later while serving in the Civil War. Billy's mother was left with three young sons to raise, without the help of the provider. In addition, it fell to her to raise another orphaned group of children in addition to her own. Needless to say, they struggled in dire poverty.

Billy's mother finally gave him up to an orphanage when he was ten years old. He had little formal education, although he was able to attend some high school classes. When he was fourteen years old, he applied for the job of school janitor. He had to keep the floors clean, but in the cold Iowa winter, it was most important to keep the furnaces stoked with coal. His salary was a hefty \$25.00 per month. One day he picked up his paycheck, and went to the local bank to cash it. The teller inadvertently gave him \$40.00. A friend advised him to keep the money. He did, and bought a new suit with the extra income.

He became a professional baseball player, and joined the Chicago White Sox. In Chicago, he heard the gospel at a street meeting sponsored by the Pacific Garden Mission. As a new Christian, he prayed and sought the Lord for direction for his life. The Lord reminded him of the \$15 he had taken, and that he owed the bank the money plus the interest. He struggled with the idea for several years. He had enough money, but the bank was unaware of the error, and he was embarrassed to admit his lack of honesty. Finally, he wrote to the bank, explaining the situation, and enclosed enough money to cover the difference with interest. When it was

done, a great sense of peace came over his soul; and from that day, Billy Sunday was faithful to be completely honest with money.

In 1897, Billy was traded to Pittsburgh, but he went back to Chicago to preach in the off season. In 1890, he turned down an offer of \$500 per month to play for Philadelphia, and took a job preaching for the Chicago YMCA for \$83 per month.

Not only did Billy learn honesty, but he also learned to work hard. Because he had to work to support his family as a boy, he practiced good work habits throughout his life. Whether it was scrubbing floors or preaching to 20,000 people in a great stadium, he did everything with all his might, "heartily, as unto the Lord." He was famous for his zeal and energetic sermon delivery. He was one of America's most popular preachers. He preached to 100 million people in 39 years. Billy Sunday and Billy Graham are considered by many to be the most influential preachers of the twentieth century.

One Indiana woman, who sat under his ministry as a young girl, said, "You could not take your eyes off that man. He would get worked up preaching and stand on top of the pulpit and take off his coat. Then he'd pull off his necktie. Pretty soon he'd pull off his shirt without missing a word, and preach in his undershirt."

In 1920, Billy established a thriving Christian resort on Winona Lake in Indiana, and it became his home base. The Billy Sunday Tabernacle seated 7,500 people, and it featured the sawdust floor for which he was famous. Billy Sunday died in 1935.

The Story of Graham Truscott

Graham Truscott is a "Kiwi." He is from the land of New Zealand, a large island nation located north of the island continent of Australia. New Zealand is a nation where the sheep vastly outnumber the people, and where God has raised up some dedicated Bible teachers. As a youth, Graham was aggressive and energetic. He worked hard to develop himself, and was an outstanding scholar. He was a member of New Zealand's Olympic swimming team, and a great clarinet player. He was the leader of his own dance band, and planned to become wealthy with his skills and personality.

Graham was not raised in a Christian home, and did not bother himself with going to church. Church to him seemed to be a rather boring place where hopeless people went to think about heaven. But one day he went to a church, because he heard that an attractive young lady was to sing there. The Lord began to move in his heart, and he was soon a born-again Christian. He began to pursue his new faith with zeal, and quickly grew in the Word. In church, he met a beautiful blonde named Pamela, and while still very young they were married and happily served the Lord together.

They felt a strong call to the mission field in India, but were rejected by the mission board of their church because they were too young and had no experience in the ministry. As they sought the Lord in prayer, the conviction became stronger than ever in their hearts, and before the ship sailed to India, a man came to them gave them enough money for their passage.

When the Truscotts arrived in India with almost no money and no contacts, they confronted great hardships. They knew none of the many languages of India, and were treated as a threat and an enemy by the people who were controlled by the Hindu religion. India is a land of great poverty. In India, there are over 500 people per square mile. (In America, we have 57 people per square mile of land.) India grows plenty of food, and has much cattle, but the religion of Hinduism forbids the killing of animals, because of their belief in reincarnation -- that the spirits of their ancestors come back as animals. In the early months of struggle, the Truscotts found the rejection hard to take. They had never lived in poverty, and now found themselves sweeping the dirt floor of their hut and struggling to find a banana for baby Steven. When Pamela would walk to the river for water, she would try to talk with one of the women. Sometimes an Indian woman would spit in her face and turn away. Graham and Pamela became even more earnest in their prayers. But instead of asking for God to defend them or give them more food, they asked the Lord to give them a deep love for the people of India.

God answered their prayer, and soon the people began to respond to the love they saw from these foreign strangers. In Poona, India, where mission societies had sent missionaries for 100 years with not a single convert to Christianity, a church began to grow. In 18 years, the Truscotts established 9 new churches, and a Bible school to train preachers and church workers. Today these churches are all growing under the leadership of native pastors.

The Story of Debbie Truscott

In the late 1950's, a very young couple from the nation of New Zealand felt the call of God to the mission field of India, but they found no missions organization to send or support them. With simple faith in God, they sailed for India anyway. For several years they endured great hardships as pioneer missionaries, but God blessed their faithfulness, and in 18 years they started nine full-gospel Bible-believing churches, in a land that is the world's center of pagan anti-Christian religion.

During those years in India, the Truscotts had to send their 4 children to boarding school in another part of the country for 10 months out of the year, but they determined that all of them would become strong Christians, good scholars, athletes, and musicians. Remarkably, all of their children grew strong in the Lord and in these areas.

In 1975 they moved to San Diego, California as a family, and started a church in 1978 in La Jolla, an elite residential area of San Diego on the Pacific coast. Today, that church is also thriving, even after a tragic loss in 1985.

Debbie Truscott, their oldest daughter, a stunningly attractive and dedicated Christian, was killed by the negligence of a young man who was drunk. At 24, she was a faithful part of the ministry team. She was a worshipper, Bible teacher, missionary, and registered nurse. When her brothers needed help in starting their karate and fitness gym, she taught their aerobics classes for them, and was considered one of the best exercise leaders

in California. She gave herself to others, and was preparing a missionary trip back to India when her life was taken because a young man wanted to "party" and drive his truck while intoxicated.

While she lingered in a coma for two weeks, Christians around the world were praying diligently for her, yet she slipped away from this life at what seemed to be just the beginning of a joyful and fruitful life of serving others. Why did God allow this tragedy? Why did God not heal her and raise her up out of the hospital bed?

We do not understand all the answers, but we know that through such tragedies, we are all drawn closer to God, and we learn to stand together in unity. We learn compassion, and we are all reminded that none of us has a guarantee of a tomorrow, so we should live each day ready to meet the Lord. We also are strengthened in our resolve to oppose sin, and particularly support lawmakers who are tough against those who are so irresponsible that they are willing to risk the lives of others while they drink and drive. As is often the case, the judge who heard the case of the man who killed Debbie gave him a "slap on the wrist" non-punishment, thus freeing him to kill again, and diminishing the ability of law enforcers to prevent such things from reoccurring.

The Truscotts know that Debbie is in heaven, and with faith in God they continue to serve the Lord. At this writing they are in the process of turning that church over to the church staff and returning to India, to minister to the people that they love.

The Story of Booker T. Washington

Booker was born in 1858 or 1859 (he was not sure), the son of a slave woman and a white man he never met. He seemed to have no advantages or potential in life, yet he would rise to achieve greatness in spite of the adversity.

As a boy, Booker knew only hardship. He did not play. He was forced to work all day as soon as he was able. His mother was a praying Negro slave who loved Jesus, and prayed for freedom. But she had little time for her children, because of her duties as a Virginia plantation cook. The children slept on a dirt floor, usually without enough rags to cover themselves. They had no stove. A cooking fire in the yard was all they could use. Booker never had a bed, or ate from a table. Of course, school was out of the question. Slaves were to work, not read books.

When Booker was 7 or 8 years old, Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring that slavery was abolished in America. His mother kissed each child, and told them they were free. He now had a stepfather, and the family moved to West Virginia. Booker was put to work in a salt mine, where he worked from 4:00 in the morning until late at night.

Booker longed for an education. One day someone gave him a Webster's speller, and someone else found a dictionary for him. He was finally allowed to go to school, if it did not hinder his work at the mine. He had no last name, so during roll call, he gave the name Booker T. Washington.

Later, in the pursuit of learning, Booker walked 500 miles to attend Hampton Normal and Agricultural School in South Carolina. At first he was not allowed in, but he persisted, and stayed three years. He studied many things, including the Bible. While there, the public speaking teacher tutored him, and he became a skilled speaker.

He returned to Malden, West Virginia, where he opened a school for black working children to study at night. But he was asked to return to Hampton to teach at the college. From there, he was selected to be the director of a new Negro college in Tuskegee, Alabama.

Under his skilled leadership, the college grew rapidly. He started with only an old barn, hen house, cabin, and kitchen. He called it the "barnyard college." But people all around helped out. He also eloquently appealed to William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, Andrew Carnegie, and others, who donated large grants to the school. Roosevelt himself served on the board of directors, and became a close friend.

In 1893, Washington addressed the National Education Association, and also an international council on Christian workers in Atlanta. His goal was to educate black people, and lift them to achieve and excel academically and socially as he had. His school became known as the renowned Tuskegee Institute, which carried on the rich heritage of the man who rose from a hopeless life, by the grace of God, to excellence and honor.

Section 6

Promotions

The Importance of Promotions

Promotions are used in the School of the Bible as a tool, which allows us to excite and motivate our young people to grow in the things of the Lord.

All of us are motivated by rewards. Many companies offer bonus and incentive plans, and even prizes, because they have learned the effectiveness of good promotions. Contests are held regularly in order to entice us to buy a product or to try some new service. The cost of the prize never exceeds the benefit received by the sponsor.

Our children are sold things through promotions at school, on television, and by a variety of sources. If we are going to compete for their attention among these promotions, we must be willing to utilize our resources in order to offer our children a healthy alternative.

Promotions have been used in Sunday School programs throughout the country for years. Although many promotions have, admittedly, gotten out of hand, the vast majority of them benefited the kingdom of God. What is the price of a soul? Is a hamburger too much? Is a trip to summer camp too little? There is no price too high. We must be good stewards of God's money and spend it in such a way that we have the greatest impact on the lives of those He wants us to touch. God does want to reach our young people. He cares for them, and so should we.

Because of our love for our children and our desire to offer them the kinds of incentives necessary to motivate them to

do greater things, we are involved in several promotions throughout the year. Certainly, we would hope that our children would be spiritual enough not to need such motivations to spur them into action. However, we cannot expect them to be any more motivated than we are.

As adults, we demand stimuli all the time. To come to church, many need some special, high-priced speaker or singer. To participate or serve, we need to be recognized and seen for our service. Many, but not all, need constant motivation to do greater things for God.

Along the way, motivation becomes less for the sake of the prize on earth and more for the prize that God has promised us in heaven. Please help us motivate our young people so that, when they are adults, they will need less stimulation and will be filled with more anticipation for the great things God has in store for their lives.

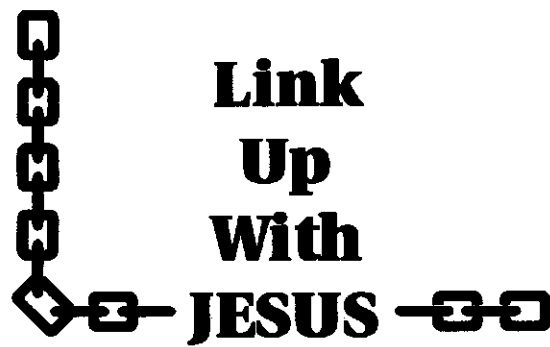
Our promotions are designed to motivate our young people to attend both church and the School of the Bible on a regular basis; to bring their Bibles with them; to bring their tithes and offerings faithfully; to bring their friends to Sunday School on a regular basis; to learn the importance of giving to the needy through participating in the church's emergency food pantry program; and to study and to memorize God's Word.

With these goals in mind, we have designed a set of programs which we plan to promote each year. These programs are

explained on the following pages. They are subject to change and revision; but, the concept of the programs and the basic time of the year during which they will be promoted will remain somewhat constant.

Each class is encouraged to use internal promotions in order to motivate the students to become greater participants in God's work. Bible memory verse contests, attendance awards, and special projects all add to the overall effectiveness of our

program. Special events, such as Christmas and Easter parties, are also encouraged. The church will also hold a "Hallelujah Party" near Halloween in order to provide an alternative to "Trick or Treating" for the children of the church. Change Sunday, when students are promoted to the next grade, is another time to plan special activities in order to say good-bye to one group of students and to welcome the new.



**Link
Up
With
JESUS**

The "Link Up with Jesus" promotion is designed to encourage students to memorize Bible verses and to increase the attendance in the Sunday School. The spiritual emphasis of this contest is upon hiding God's Word in our hearts. As we memorize His Word, we "link up" with Him and create a bond that cannot be broken.

This promotion is conducted in the first quarter, and is designed to run for six weeks. Students earn points for attendance, bringing their Bibles, memorizing scripture from prepared lists, and bringing friends to Sunday School.

One of the six Sundays of this promotion is designated as "Bonus Sunday." On this day, students who bring five or more items for the church's emergency food pantry will receive five bonus points. Note: If your church does not have an emergency food pantry, substitute another activity for Bonus Sunday.

Each point the students earn is represented by a link in a paper chain. The more points a student earns, the longer his or her chain becomes.

The links in the chains are made from colored strips of paper. A supply of links will be provided for each classroom. There is a different link for every category in which a student earns points (see samples which follow). Chains should be hung around the room to emphasize the students' accomplishments.

At the end of the promotion, students will receive a prize, based upon the number of links they have in their chain. Every student will receive a prize of some kind. Seven levels of prizes are available. In addition, the five students with the longest chains will receive a special grand prize. A prize will also be awarded to the class which accumulates the highest number of links.

Select prizes of increasing value, and list them on the "Prize List" (see sample which follows). A Grand Prize will also need to be selected for the top five finishers, and a special treat arranged for the winning class (perhaps a pizza party or a trip to an amusement park).

Three weeks prior to the beginning of the promotion, prepared lists of Bible verses will be sent home with the students. These lists will also be mailed to the parents, along with a letter explaining

the promotion and asking them to help their child(ren) memorize the verses.

Midway through the promotion, have the students with the largest number of links in their chains parade through the sanctuary in order to show the congregation what they are accomplishing.

Specific Instructions:

At the beginning of the promotion, write each student's name on a 3" x 5" card. Attach the links of each student's chain to their name card. Affix the name cards to the wall (use Sticky Tack!) or bulletin board in order to display the chains.

A Point Chart must be maintained for every student. Keep these charts in the Secretary's folder.

On the Point Chart, mark the "address" (e.g., Psalms 23:1) of every verse the student is able to recite. Then, write that same address on two links and add them to the student's chain. Use your best judgment in listening to the verses. If students know the verses, but stumble over a few words, give them credit. Be

prepared for some students to learn several verses per week!

To record attendance, write the date the student is present in the appropriate box on the Point Chart, and write their name and the date on one link. Add the link to their chain.

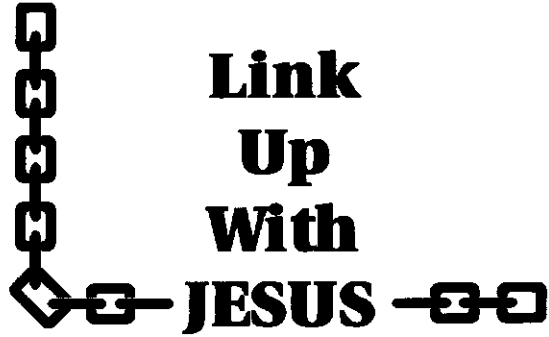
When a student brings his or her Bible, record the date in the appropriate section of the Point Chart, complete the information on the "Brought a Bible" link, and add it to the chain.

When a student brings a friend, record the friend's name on the Point Chart, complete six "Brought a Visitor" links, and add them to the chain.

If a student brings five or more food items for the church's emergency food pantry on the appointed day, place an "X" in the "Qualified for Bonus Points?" box on the Point Chart, and add five links to his or her chain.

If you need additional space to record verses or visitors on a student's Point Chart, attach a second sheet to the original sheet for that student.

**YOU
CAN**



CONTEST BEGINS:	CONTEST ENDS:

**“Link Up With Jesus”
By Earning Links On Your Chain.**

Bring a Friend to Sunday School <small>Must be someone who has not attended in the last 3 months.</small>	Earn 6 Links
Memorize a Scripture	Earn 2 Links
Attend Sunday School	Earn 1 Link
Bring Your Bible to Sunday School	Earn 1 Link
BONUS SUNDAY: _____	
Earn 5 Links When You Bring 5 Food Items To Help Us Minister To Those Who Are In Need.	

7 Levels Of Prizes Are Available
At The End Of The Contest,
You May Select One Prize From The Prize List.
The Top Five Students Will Receive Grand Prizes.



**Link
Up
With**

PRIZE LIST

JESUS

LEVEL #1 24 Links	
LEVEL #2 36 Links	
LEVEL #3 52 Links	
LEVEL #4 70 Links	
LEVEL #5 100 Links	
LEVEL #6 150 Links	
LEVEL #7 200 Links	
Grand Prize Top 5 Students	

Christ Commands Us

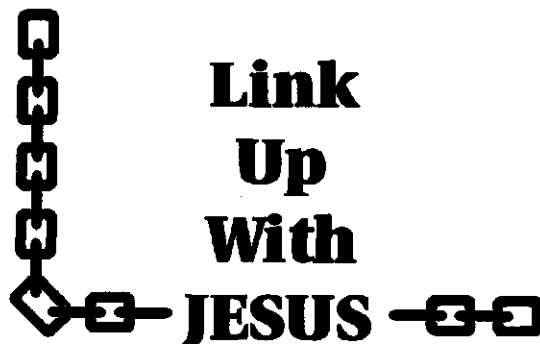
"... Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Matt. 25:40

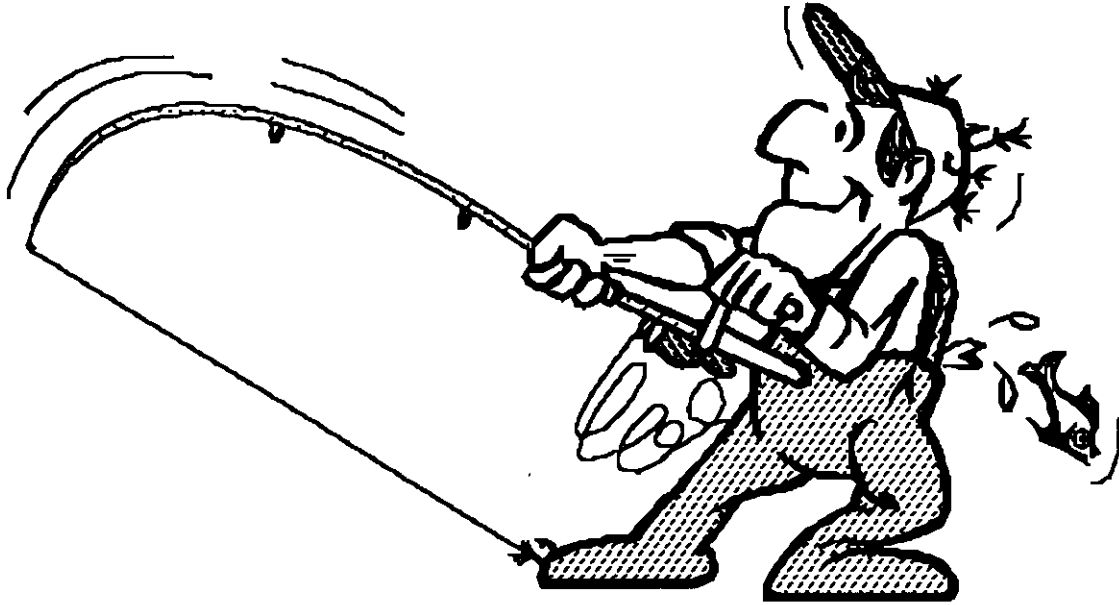
We can fulfill the command of our Lord by ministering to those who are in need.




Bring a minimum of 5 grocery items on _____ to your Sunday School classroom, and you will receive 5 links for your chain. You can "Link up with Jesus" and help us reach out to others.



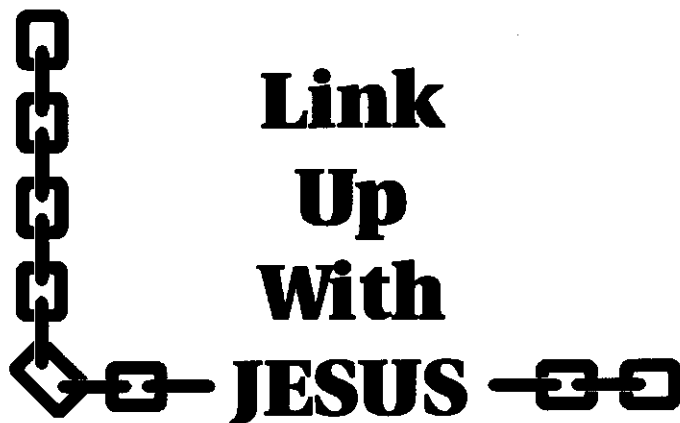
You can't catch fish unless you have the right bait



Spend time this week learning God's Word so you can have the "Right Bait" to catch the biggest fish of all: a person who needs to know Jesus.

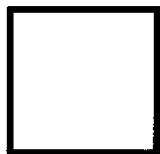

**Link
Up
With
JESUS**

You can earn valuable prizes by learning God's Word and by bringing your friends to Sunday School. Start today, and together we can become "fishers of men".

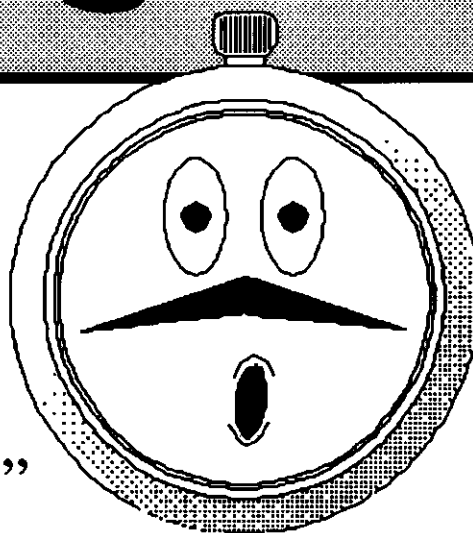


**Time is
getting short**

There Are Only



Weeks Left
In The
“Link Up With Jesus”
Promotion!



**Remember To Bring A Friend And
Learn Your Memory Verses.
Together We Can “Link Up With Jesus”**



**Link
Up
With
JESUS**

NAME _____

CLASS _____

Point Chart

Memory Verses Learned

Record the verse "address," below.
Award 2 links per verse.

Attendance

Record the dates in attendance, below. Award 1 link.

--	--	--	--	--	--

Brought the Bible

Record the dates a Bible was brought, below. Award 1 link.

--	--	--	--	--	--

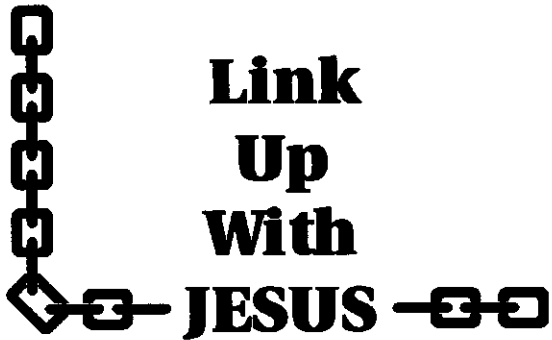
Brought a Friend

Record the name(s) of the friends, below. Award 6 links.

--	--	--	--	--	--

Qualified for Bonus Points?

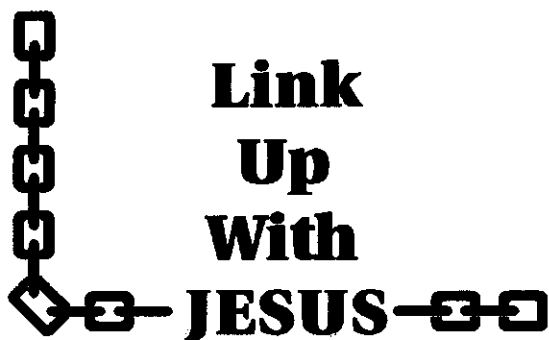
Award 5 links.



Memory Verses List #1

- Gen. 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
- Gen. 1:3 And God said, Let there be light.
- Gen. 1:27 God created man in his own image.
- Gen. 6:8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.
- Ex. 3:14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM.
- Ex. 6:11 Let the children of Israel go out of this land.
- Ex. 14:13 Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.
- Ex. 15:2 The Lord is my strength and song.
- Ex. 20:13 Thou shalt not kill.
- Ex. 35:5 Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord.
- Lev. 9:23 And the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people.
- Lev. 19:17 Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart.
- Lev. 20:26 Ye shall be holy unto Me: for I the Lord, am holy.
- Num. 10:35 Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered.
- Deut. 6:5 Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart.

- Matt. 1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS.
- Matt. 1:21 ...for he shall save his people from their sins.
- Matt. 3:2 Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
- Matt 5:44 Love your enemies, bless them that curse you.
- Matt. 5:44 ...do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.
- Matt 6:33 Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.
- Matt. 7:7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you.
- Matt. 9:38 Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.
- Matt. 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden.
- Matt. 18:20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.
- Matt. 19:14 But Jesus said, Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.
- Matt. 22:37 Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.
- Mark 12:29 Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord.
- Mark 16:15 He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.
- Mark 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.



Memory Verses List #2

- Deut. 7:6 For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God.
- Joshua 24:14 Fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth.
- Joshua 24:15 But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.
- 2 Sam. 7:13 I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.
- 1 Chron. 16:29 Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name.
- 2 Chron. 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray,
- 2 Chron. 7:14 And seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways;
- 2 Chron. 7:14 Then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.
- Psalms 2:12 Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.
- Psalms 4:3 The LORD will hear when I call unto him.
- Psalms 5:8 Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies.
- Psalms 7:1 O LORD, my God, in thee do I put my trust.
- Psalms 9:2 I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name.
- Psalms 16:1 Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust.

- Psalms 18:3 I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised.
- Luke 19:10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.
- John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.
- John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.
- John 3:16 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
- John 6:35 He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.
- John 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.
- John 11:25 He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.
- Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.
- Acts 20:35 It is more blessed to give than to receive.
- Romans 1:17 The just shall live by faith.
- Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.
- Romans 8:1 There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.
- Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.
- 1 Cor. 14:33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.
- Eph. 4:26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.
- Eph. 5:6 Let no man deceive you with vain words.



Link
Up
With

JESUS

Brought a Visitor

Name _____

Date _____



Link
Up
With

JESUS

Brought a Visitor

Name _____

Date _____



Link
Up
With

JESUS

Brought a Visitor

Name _____

Date _____



Link
Up
With

JESUS

Brought a Visitor

Name _____

Date _____



Link
Up
With

JESUS

Brought a Visitor

Name _____

Date _____



Link
Up
With

JESUS

Brought a Visitor

Name _____

Date _____



**Link
Up
With
JESUS**

Verse: _____

Name _____

Date _____



**Link
Up
With
JESUS**

Verse: _____

Name _____

Date _____



**Link
Up
With
JESUS**

Verse: _____

Name _____

Date _____



**Link
Up
With
JESUS**

Verse: _____

Name _____

Date _____



**Link
Up
With
JESUS**

Verse: _____

Name _____

Date _____

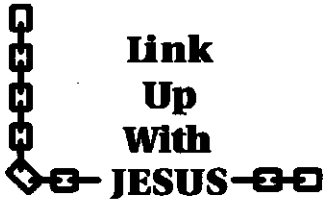


**Link
Up
With
JESUS**

Verse: _____

Name _____

Date _____



Attendance

Name _____

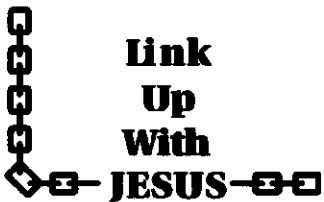
Date _____



Attendance

Name _____

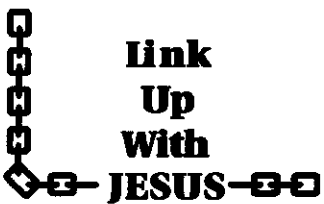
Date _____



Attendance

Name _____

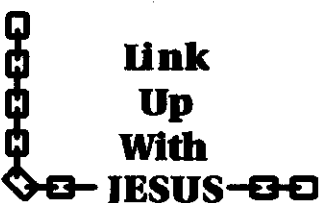
Date _____



Attendance

Name _____

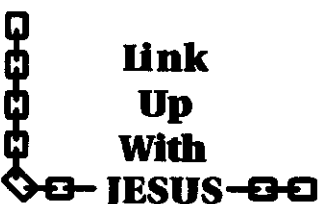
Date _____



Attendance

Name _____

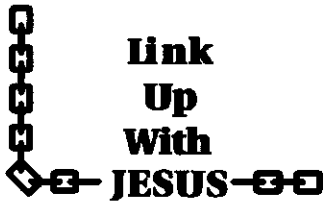
Date _____



Attendance

Name _____

Date _____



Brought a Bible

Name _____

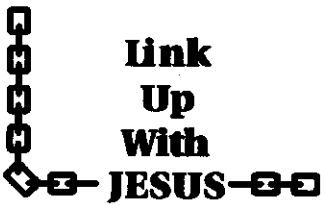
Date _____



Brought a Bible

Name _____

Date _____



Brought a Bible

Name _____

Date _____



Brought a Bible

Name _____

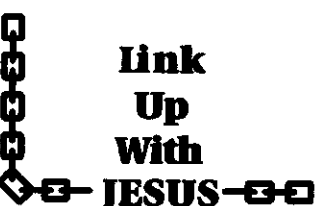
Date _____



Brought a Bible

Name _____

Date _____



Brought a Bible

Name _____

Date _____



Fuel the Flame

The "Fuel the Flame" promotion is centered around the Day of Pentecost. The students "fuel" the flame by bringing their friends to Sunday School. Reaching out to others is the heart of the work of the Holy Spirit. When we emphasize the importance of sharing Christ with others and invite them to church where God can touch their lives, young people will respond to the spiritual aspects of this program.

This promotion is designed to be conducted for six weeks, during the second quarter. When possible, it will include the special days of Easter, Pentecost Sunday, and Mothers' Day. Because Easter falls on a different Sunday each year, it may not always be possible to include all three special days in this promotion. Including Mothers' Day in this promotion gives a parent, or a close relative, an opportunity to become acquainted with the Sunday School.

As an incentive, points are awarded to the students for attendance, for memorizing Bible verses, and for bringing their Bibles, their offerings, and their mothers to Sunday School.

To reach the first goal, each student is required to bring at least two people to Sunday School. Additional points will be awarded to the students as they bring other friends, and they will be advanced to higher goal levels.

The prize for each goal level is a discount on the fees for one week at summer camp. Students who earn a total of 55 points will qualify for a discount of \$25.00 on their camp fees for one week. Those who earn 80 points will receive a \$50.00 discount, and those who accumulate a total of 120 points will qualify to have their camp fees for one week paid in full.

In addition to these awards, the five students who earn the highest number of points overall will receive an all-expense-paid trip to an amusement park.

During the six weeks of this "Fuel the Flame" promotion, flyers will be distributed to all of the students. Each flyer will contain a different message. Four of the flyers will be mailed to the students' parents, asking for their cooperation. Announcements will also be made from the pulpit and in the church newsletter.

Each week, the children will be encouraged to fill in their "Flame Thermometer." As the promotion progresses, letters will be sent to the top 10 students and, in the last weeks, to the top 20 students in order to encourage them to continue to bring their friends to church.

"Fuel the Flame" has proved to be a successful promotion. It has effectively increased Sunday School attendance, and it has had a positive, spiritual impact on the lives of the students. For children who otherwise may not be able to attend camp,

it provides a way for them to earn their camp fees.

Each week, a Point Tally sheet is completed to record the points earned by each student during that week. Points for attendance will be awarded to each student in the class. Each week, these Point Tally Sheets and your attendance record must be taken to the Department Secretary.

You may also use a Re-Cap Sheet to keep a running total of the points earned

by the students in your class. Keep this Re-Cap Sheet in your Secretary's folder.

After you complete the Weekly Report form, it should be taken to the Department Secretary.

The Flame Thermometers must be filled in each week by the students with red crayons or markers. Please post these forms on a bulletin board or in another conspicuous place.

Fuel the Flame

CONTEST BEGINS:	CONTEST ENDS:

Catch the Spirit of Pentecost

Help Us "Fuel the Flame" by Reaching Out and Sharing the Word of God with the World.

YOU RECEIVE POINTS FOR THE FOLLOWING

Bringing Your Bible:	1	Bringing a Friend, 2nd Time:	15
Attendance:	2	Bringing a Friend, 3rd Time +:	5
Bringing an Offering:	2	Bringing Your Mother,	
Memorizing a Bible Verse:	2	Grandmother, Guardian	
Bringing a Friend, 1st Time:	10	on Mother's Day:	10

(Visitors who have attended during the last 6 months do not qualify.)

P R I Z E S	GOAL #1 PRIZE When You Earn 55 Points	
	GOAL #2 PRIZE When You Earn 80 Points	
	GOAL #3 PRIZE When You Earn 120 Points	
	GRAND PRIZE The 5 Students Who Earn the Most Points	

Fuel  *the Flame*

**Who Can
I Invite?**

Friends from School

Relatives

Neighborhood Friends

The Children of Your Parents' Friends

Friends from Outside Activities:

Scouting

Athletics

Camp Programs

Clubs

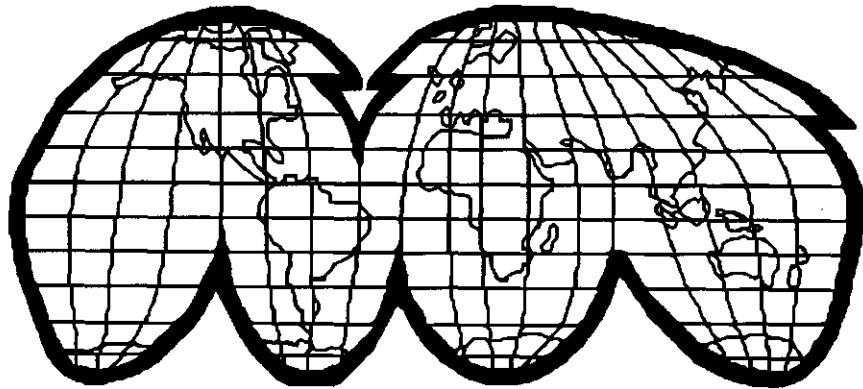


Anyone in the world who needs to know Jesus as their Savior.

List below the names of people you plan to invite. Pray daily over the list. Bring the list to church with you next week, so the entire class may pray for your list.

Fuel *Flame*

Why Save the World?



**Without Christ Our Friends Will Not Be With
Us in Heaven.**

Without Christ There Is NO Forgiveness Of Sins.

Without Christ There Is No True Joy.

Without Christ All Of Us Will Perish.

You can make a difference by reaching out to your friends and inviting them to church. Talk to one person today. Tell them you want them to go with you to a great place on Sunday morning. Christ has called each of us to share Him with our friends. Talk to someone today!

Fuel *the Flame*

Invite A Friend To Sunday School, And You Could Earn:

**GRAND
PRIZE**

**For the 5 Students
With The Highest
Point Totals**

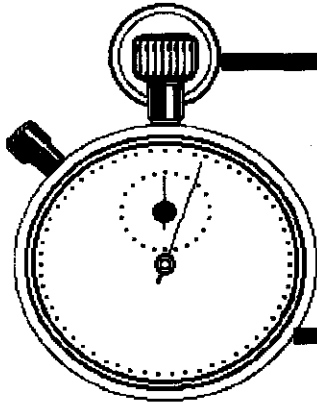
**Students Earning
120 Total
Points Receive:**

**Students Earning
80-119 Total
Points Receive:**

**Students Earning
55-79 Total
Points Receive:**

**Invite a Friend Today and Help Us
Fuel the Flame!**

Fuel *the Flame*



**TIME IS
RUNNING OUT!**

**Bring a Friend, or Two,
to Sunday School
Next Week
And Help Us "Fuel the Flame"**

Show Your Friends the Way to Jesus.
Bring Them to Sunday School!



Fuel *the Flame*



Mother's Day

Bring your Mother, Grandmother, or Guardian to Sunday School on Mother's Day and receive 10 bonus points in our "Fuel the Flame" promotion.

Honor Your Mother On This Very
Special Mother's Day.

Mothers are invited to attend the entire hour of Sunday School, or they may choose to attend the Morning Bible Study in the Sanctuary. Only one mother, grandmother, or guardian may be registered per student. A mother with more than one child in the promotion may register in all necessary classes and then attend the class of her choice.



Fuel the Flame

Point Tally

Name _____

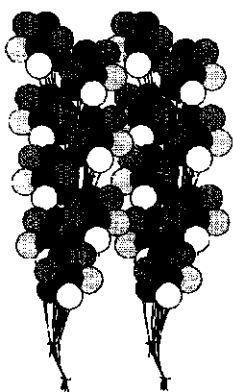
Class _____

Week #	1	2	3	4	5	6
Attendance 2 Points						
Bringing An Offering 2 Points						
Bible Memorization 2 Points						
Bringing A Bible 1 Point						
Bringing A Friend (1st Time) 10 Points						
Bringing A Friend (2nd Time) 15 Points						
Bringing A Friend (Addnl Times) 5 Points						
Bringing Mother on Mother's Day 10 Points						
Total Points For The Week						
Grand Total						

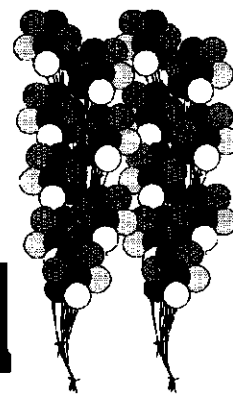
Fuel *the Flame*

Re-Cap Sheet

Name	Wk #1	Wk #2	Wk #3	Wk #4	Wk #5	Wk #6	Grand Total



Fall Fun Festival



The Fall Fun Festival is a very popular promotion, which is scheduled during the third quarter, usually in September. A variety of games, rides, contests, and concessions make this event a good one for the entire church family.

Prior to the Festival, a six-week promotion will be conducted in which children will be given an opportunity to earn tickets which can be used for the rides, games and various activities. Tickets are awarded for bringing friends: 10; for attendance: 2; bringing a Bible: 1; and memorizing the Bible verse: 1. Tickets will also be given for bringing food items for the church's emergency food pantry.

The Secretary of each class is responsible for keeping a record of the points each student earns each week. To help eliminate lost tickets, they will be distributed to the students at the ticket booth on the day of the Festival.

Each class will be responsible for operating a booth at the Festival. Booths may include games and contests such as:

- Bean bag toss;
- Basketball shoot;
- Cookie walk;

- Ring toss;
- Face painting;
- Fishing: player drops a line over a "wall," and a prize is attached to the line;
- Duck pond: player selects a plastic duck from a tub of water. Each duck is worth a prize.

Use your creativity in selecting the game for your booth. Make it fun and challenging, but not so difficult that students cannot "win." Everyone will receive a prize. Consolation prizes will be given to those who do not complete the game successfully. Prizes of higher value will be awarded to game "winners."

In addition to the booths operated by each class, arrangements can be made for rides, dunk tank, moon walk, etc. Concessions operated by one of the classes (perhaps the high school department) should also be available. A first-aid station, portable restrooms, and a booth for purchasing additional tickets (at a nominal charge) should be included.

The purpose of this promotion is to provide a fun day of fellowship for families. In doing this, we hope to acquaint others with our program, and

encourage other children and parents to join us in the School of the Bible.

Specific Instructions:

Each "point" a student earns is worth one ticket for the Fall Fun Festival. Tickets will be distributed to students at the ticket booth when they arrive for the Festival.

Secretaries will record the points each student earns on the Weekly Point Chart. Totals from this form will then be transferred to the "Re-Cap Sheet."

The Re-Cap Sheets will be used to determine the number of tickets to be awarded to each student. Keep these forms in the Secretary's folder, and double-check them for accuracy.

Fall Fun Festival

Contest begins: _____

The Fall Fun Festival will be held: _____

Earn Tickets For The Festival By:

Attending Sunday School: 3 tickets, Bringing Your Bible: 2 tickets,
 Bringing an Offering: 2 tickets, Memorizing a Bible Verse: 2 tickets,
 Bringing a food item for those in need: 2 tickets,
 Bringing a friend: 10 tickets)

(Friends who have attended Sunday School during the last 4 months, do not qualify.)

Games

Food

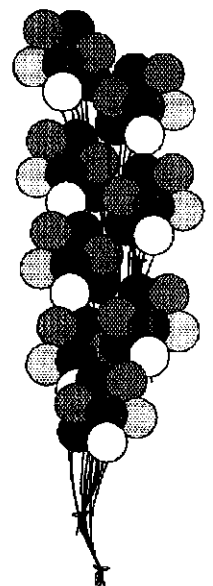
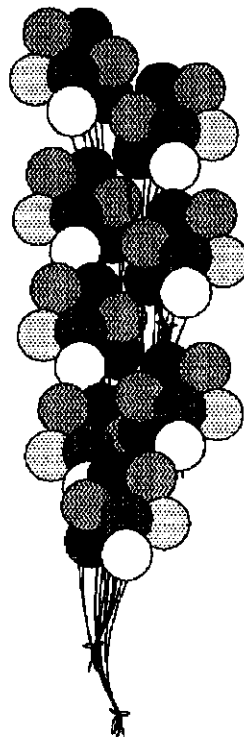
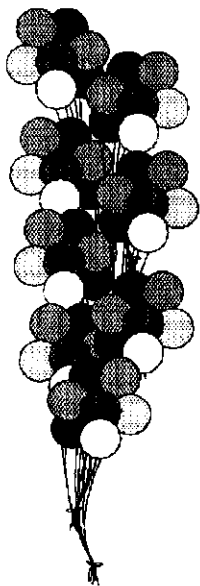
Prizes

Dunk

Tank

Rides

Music



Tickets will be distributed to the students at the Festival.

Students will receive certificates each week, showing the number of tickets earned.



**GET
EXCITED**

**The
"FALL FUN FESTIVAL"**

Date:

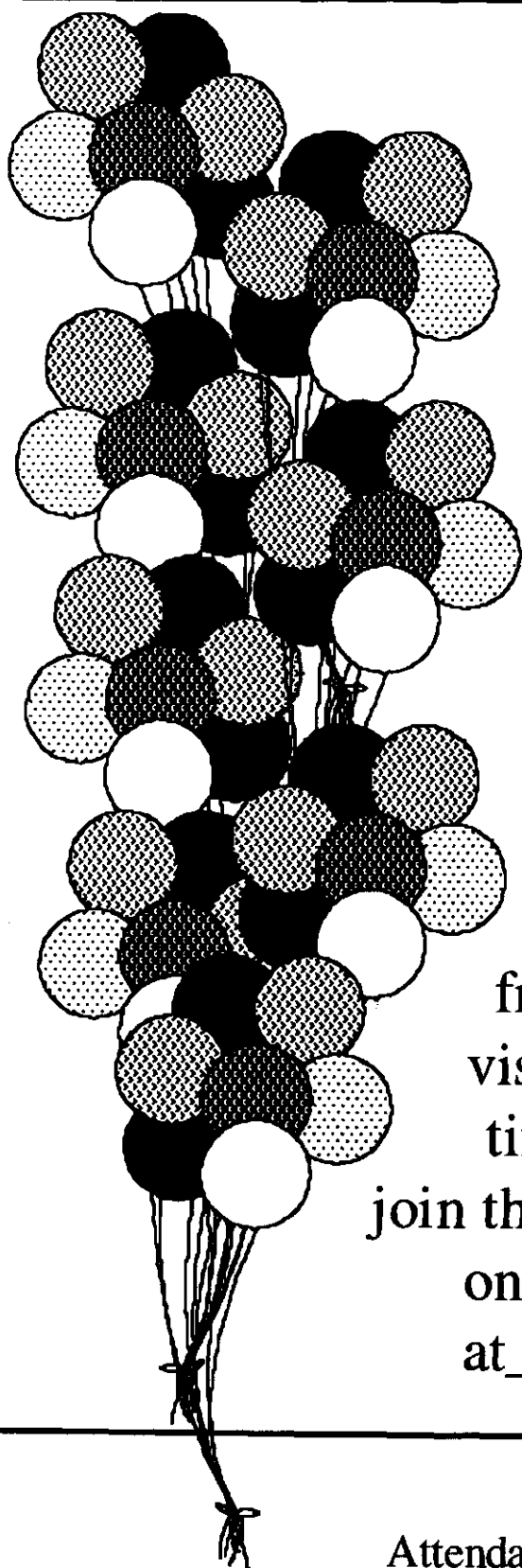
Time:

Place:



*Earn All the Tickets You Can
by Attending Sunday School!
Bring a Friend and Earn Extra Points!*

**GAMES PRIZES
MOONWALK
DUNK TANK
FOOD FUN**

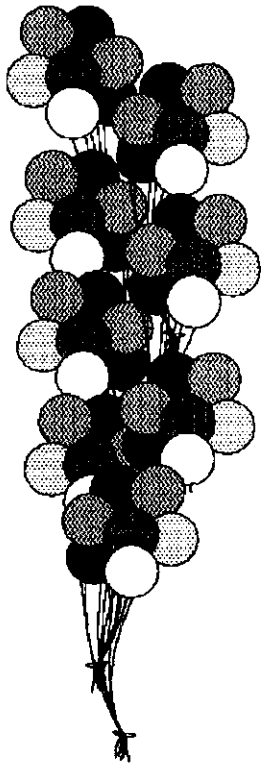


Only Weeks to go in the Fall Fun Festival Contest

Remember to bring your friends -- especially first-time visitors -- and join us for a great time in Sunday School. Then, join the fun at The Fall Fun Festival

on _____
at _____

Points are awarded for:
Attendance • Memorizing Bible Verses
Bringing Your Bible • Bringing an Offering • Bringing a Visitor
Bringing a Food Item for Those in Need.



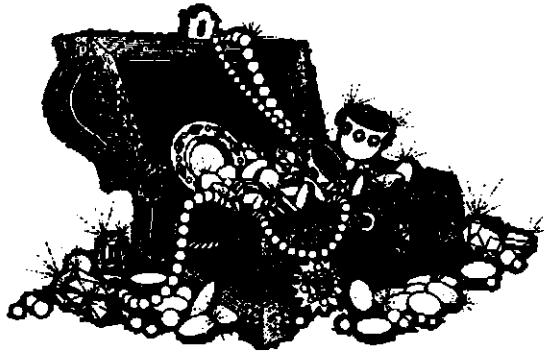
Fall Fun Festival Ticket Certificate

(Name)

*Has Earned a Total of _____ Tickets
for the Fall Fun Festival*

Class Secretary

Have your printer print this form "2-up" (2 forms per page).



Unlock The Treasure

Christ is truly the "key" to "Unlocking the Treasure." In this promotion, we want to increase attendance in the School of the Bible and emphasize to the students that Jesus is the key to unlocking vast treasures in our lives -- and not just material ones. We want to encourage students to reach out and witness to their friends, so that they, too, may experience the "treasures" Jesus has to offer.

This promotion is held during the fourth quarter, and runs for six weeks. As in other promotions, points are awarded to the students for their attendance; for bringing their Bible and offerings; for learning their memory verse; for bringing friends; and for contributing food items to the church's emergency food pantry.

Every time a student accumulates 40 points, he or she is awarded a special coin, which is worth 1 gift. A variety of gifts will be available, from which students may choose. Gifts should be displayed in a convenient, central location for the students to see. Some gifts will be worth 1 coin; others worth 2 coins; and some worth 3 coins. Students may elect to use the coin(s) they earn, or save them for a prize of higher value.

At the end of the promotion, the student in each class with the highest

number of points over 200, will receive a special, bonus gift and will be given an opportunity to unlock a treasure chest, filled with gifts valued at over \$200.

Only students who have earned a minimum of 200 points will qualify for this honor. If more than one student in the class earns 200 points or more, the student with the highest point total will be the one who qualifies.

During this promotion, the total number of points earned by each student will not be displayed or announced. It is acceptable to let the students know how many points they have earned from week to week. However, their total points should not be revealed, especially during the last week of the promotion.

At the end of the promotion, the top winner from each class will be given a key. Only one of the keys will open the treasure chest of prizes. **IMPORTANT:** because we do not want to award the grand prize based on "luck" or chance, the student who earned the most points will be given the key which opens the chest. Only the person who distributes the keys will know in advance the name of the grand prize winner. Everyone else will discover who the grand prize winner is when the students try their keys in the lock on the

treasure chest. It will add a bit of excitement and suspense if you have the grand prize winner try his or her key last.

During the course of this promotion, it is good to take the treasure chest of prizes into every classroom and display it briefly, as an incentive for the students. Flyers will also be distributed in the classes, and letters and flyers will be mailed to the parents of students, asking for their help and encouragement.

Specific Instructions:

Each Secretary will have a Weekly Point Chart on which to record the points each student earns. A supply of coins will also be distributed to every class. Additional coins will be available in the Audio-Visual Room. Every time students

accumulate 40 points, they will be given one of the coins. Be sure to sign the coins before you distribute them. Coins without signatures cannot be redeemed.

For example: when a student earns a total of 40 points, he or she will be given one coin. When the point total reaches 80 points, he or she will be given a second coin, etc. It is up to the student to decide whether to redeem the coin for a prize, or save it and try to earn a prize of greater value.

Re-Cap sheets will also be included in the Secretary's folder. Record on this sheet the total number of points each student earns each week. This will help you to determine when students qualify to receive a coin.

YOU CAN Unlock The



Treasure

Beginning: _____ **and Ending:** _____

How Can You Earn Points?

- Attend Sunday School: 5 points • Bring Your Bible: 2 points
- Bring an Offering: 2 points • Learn the Bible Verse: 5 points
- Bring a Food Item for Those in Need: 5 points
- Bring a Friend: 20 points

.....

For every 40 points you earn, you will receive a "Gold Coin."

Coins can be redeemed for prizes.

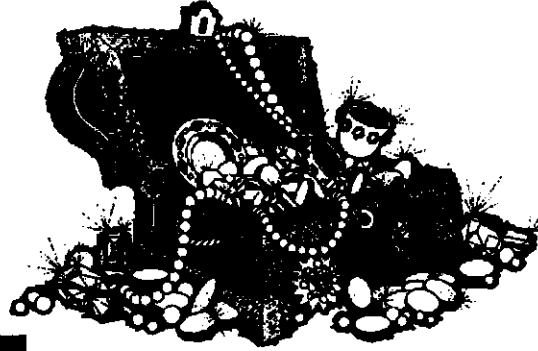
The student in each class, who earns the most points over 200, will win a special prize and will be given a key which may open the Treasure Chest.

The Treasure Chest contains prizes valued at over \$_____.

The student whose key opens the Treasure Chest, will win its contents!

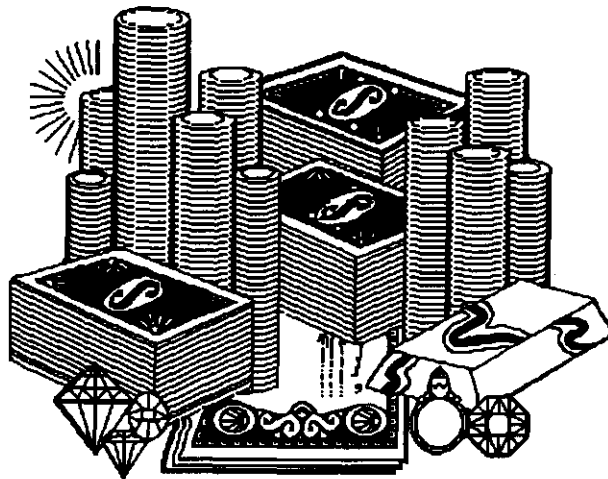
Invite Your Friends to Sunday School!

Unlock The



Treasure

What Treasure is Inside the Chest?

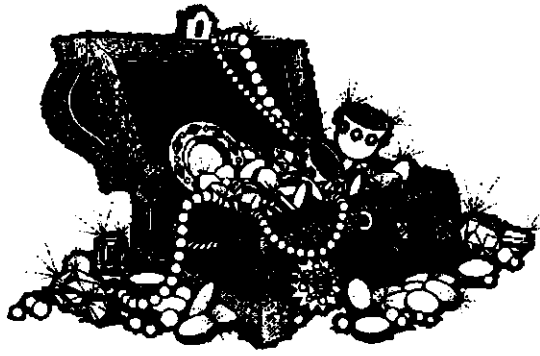


God says that He is worth more than Silver or Gold, and we are to treasure Him above all earthly riches!

You have the opportunity to win an earthly treasure, while helping others to find the treasure of knowing Jesus. Bring a friend to Sunday School between _____ and _____ and earn the opportunity to open the chest and claim the prize.



Unlock The



Re-Cap Sheet

Treasure

Class:

Name	Wk #1	Wk #2	Wk #3	Wk #4	Wk #5	Wk #6	Misc.	TOTAL

Section 7

Catechism In Doctrine

Introduction to Catechism in Doctrine

"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." (I Timothy 4:16)

Jesus said, *"Take heed what ye hear..."* (Mark 4:24) Be careful about what you allow to enter your mind, because it will affect your heart. We are living in a day that is characterized by the deception Jesus warned about in Matthew 24. Our young people are being taught the doctrine of secular humanism, which leads to rebellion, pride, hedonism, and self-destruction.

The purpose of this material is to help stimulate a focus on truth that will change lives. Truth is not just a set of ideas. No one person has all the right answers to every detail of theological thought. Each of us sees *"through a glass darkly,"* (1 Corinthians 13:12) particularly when it comes to our eschatology. It is important that we respect one another in our pursuit of truth. As orthodox Christian teachers, we agree on the essential basics that are expressed in the "Apostle's Creed." Beyond that, we have different perspectives and insights concerning the particular matters of interest relative to Bible history and application. Our purpose is to present basic concepts that will stimulate an interest in young people to seek after wisdom, not to present our views as the final word on doctrine.

Truth is not a set of concepts: truth is the Person of Jesus Christ. When we know the Truth (Jesus), the truth will set us free. Freedom is not the right to do whatever

we want, but is the power to do what we should.

God's Word includes a curriculum guide for all education. It outlines the priorities that should be the basis for every training program. (I Peter 1) The first objective of a wise teacher is **faith**. We are to define and stimulate a focus on God and His purposes in the earth. Before we can train anyone, we must know that he has been supernaturally born again by God's grace through faith. Unless he is born again, he cannot possibly see the Kingdom of God (spiritual reality). (John 3:3)

The second priority is character training. Peter said, *"Add to your faith virtue."* Virtue is the positive influence that flows out of a life that is whole, and transformed by the power and love of God. After he has been led to a personal relationship with God, he needs *"instruction in righteousness."* (II Timothy 3:16) He needs lessons that will teach him to live well, not just to make a living.

Notice that **knowledge** is third on God's list of priorities, not first, as is the agenda of the secular world of educators. In a secularized education, faith and virtue are eliminated by the state, with the erroneous belief that knowledge apart from faith can bring man to wholeness and fulfillment in life. But knowledge without the balancing perspective of faith results in pride and rebellion. *"Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up."* (I Corinthians 8:1)

These lessons emphasize doctrine that stimulates wisdom, which begins with the

fear of the Lord. (Proverbs 9:10) There is a focus on creation, grace, spiritual gifts, accountability, and eschatology. When young people are taught that they are not a cosmic accident, but an eternal soul designed by a loving Heavenly Father, they will tend to be more responsive to other authorities. They will be more likely to have an attitude of gratitude, and a heart for the things of God.

Our goal is not simply to increase our knowledge, but also to hear those things which will have the greatest possible benefit for our lives: things that will still have value ten thousand years from now.

We do not want simply to learn facts about Jesus, but we want God's abiding presence in our lives. We want to know Jesus. As the Apostle Peter said, "*Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*" (II Peter 3:18) In other words, humble yourself and receive more of God's enabling power and strength, and get to know Jesus more personally and intimately.

We pray that these lessons will stir your faith, encourage your heart, and stimulate your desire to search the Word of God with joy as we anticipate the return of our Lord Jesus Christ to the earth.

Who is Satan?

“Satan” is another name for the devil, an angel who rebelled against God and who works to try to keep us from serving God.

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:” (1 Peter 5:8)

Satan is a wicked angel, who was the worship leader in heaven thousands of years ago. His real name was “Lucifer,” which means “light-bearer.” He became proud of his beauty and musical skills and decided that he wanted to “be like God.” He caused one third of the angels to fall with him in his rebellion. They were all cast out of heaven.

“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell....” (Isaiah 14:12-15)

Some Bible scholars have suggested that, since there were three archangels mentioned in the Bible, perhaps the angels under the leadership of Lucifer were the ones most likely to follow him in his rebellion against God.

God prepared an eternal lake of fire for Satan and his angels; but, now, they work

in the world to deceive and turn people away from the Lord who loves them.

In the Garden of Eden, Satan worked through a beautiful serpent to deceive Eve into disobeying God. He convinced her that she would not really die if she ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. He lied. Disobedience to God is called sin; and sin separates us from our loving Heavenly Father, because God is holy and just. Satan is called “the father of lies,” “the deceiver,” “the accuser of the brethren,” “that old dragon,” and other descriptive names in the Bible. The name “Satan” means “accuser,” or “adversary.” Since we have an enemy, we are reminded of our need to stay close to God, where we are safe.

The devil is an enemy; but, many people are deceived by him, because he appeals to their pride and selfishness. He convinces people that they can be free by rejecting the authority of parents, teachers, and God. He is a liar. Freedom comes by obeying God and those in authority. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they thought they would be free to do as they pleased. Instead, they were cast out of the beautiful garden, and death began.

What Are Angels?

Angels are spirit beings, which God created before the world began to work for Him as His messengers and servants.

God *"maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire...."* (Psalms 104:4)

Before God created the physical world, He had a "host" of millions of spirits that He created to be His servants. The Greek word for angel is "angelos," which means, "messenger." There are different kinds of angels, who do different jobs. We see angels in the Bible accounts fighting wars, praising and worshipping God, and giving messages to men as God's servants. Angels have different ranks and degrees of power.

The greatest messenger angel is the archangel, Gabriel.

The greatest worshipping angel was the angel, Lucifer, ("Light-bearer"). However, he became proud of his beauty and was cast out of heaven. He is now the leader of the fallen, wicked angels who assist him in his rebellion against God's kingdom of light. We believe that these fallen angels are the principalities and powers of spiritual darkness, who work to corrupt people today.

The greatest warrior angel is named, "Michael." Warrior angels are sent by God to fight against demonic powers and human evils in response to the prayers of the believers on the earth.

The Bible tells us about different kinds of angels, such as "seraphim" and "cherubim." Only the seraphim are pictured with wings, but this is prophetic language. Remember, they are spirits, not physical creatures. No warrior or messenger angel mentioned in the Bible had wings; but, that is how artists like to picture them. Angels are not male or female. Apparently, they could take on the appearance of either when they make an appearance to men. Sometimes, angels will appear as people and help people without ever making their identity known.

"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."
(Hebrews 13:2)

There are millions of angels; but, there are no more today than there were 5,000 or 6,000 years ago. They cannot reproduce themselves. When Lucifer (Satan) fell from heaven, he attracted one third of the angels to his side, and they were cast out with him. That means that, for every evil angel working in the earth, there are two good angels. Besides, God has all power, and the demons are subject to His authority.

As long as we are under God's protective authority, we are very safe, because demons cannot control our minds.

"....he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked

one toucheth him not." (1 John 5:18)

What is a Priest?

A priest is a person who represents the people before God. He helps them to know and to obey God.

"...the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:"
(Hebrews 9:6-7)

There were three major spiritual offices in the Old Testament:

1. Prophet: Also called a "seer," or one who is able to hear clearly from God and speak to the people for the Lord.

2. Priest: One who represents the people before God. He would intercede and offer the sacrifices for them. He was also involved in worship and in the care of the temple.

3. King: One who rules the people with authority given by God.

It was very important that no one man take any more than one of these offices, because only Jesus Christ was to fulfill all of these leadership positions. That is why it was so serious for King Saul and King Uzziah to usurp the role of the priest.

Jesus is the Great **Prophet**:

"The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst

of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;"
(Deuteronomy 18:15)

Jesus is the Great **High Priest**:

"...Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec...."
(Hebrews 5:6)

"Wherefore, holy brethren.... consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; Who was faithful to him that appointed him...." (Hebrews 3:1-2)

Jesus is the Great **King**:

"And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." (Revelation 19:16)

Each of these leaders had a great responsibility to be close to God and give himself to prayer. God wanted the people of Israel under Moses to be a nation of priests, to reach out to all nations as God's servants; but, they rejected that. One of the twelve tribes was chosen instead: the descendants of Levi. Moses and Aaron came from that tribe. The Levites took care of the tabernacle, and the priests and high priests administered the sacrifices for the people. Aaron was the first high priest

from the Levitical order. The third book of the Bible, Leviticus, focuses on the laws and responsibilities of the priests of Levi.

Jesus was from the tribe of Judah. He is the High Priest of a new covenant, which is eternal. Under the old covenant, the high priest would offer the blood of a perfect lamb on the "mercy seat" of the ark in the holy of holies once a year. This blood sacrifice would atone, or cover, the sins of the people for one year. But, Jesus

came, and He became both the perfect sacrificial Lamb and the priest who would offer the blood on the mercy seat of God's throne. This sacrifice would not only cover the sins of those who are part of the covenant, but would also wash them away forever.

How Does God Speak to Us Today?

God speaks to us today through His Word, the Bible, and He uses preachers and other teachers to help make it clear to us.

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son....” (Hebrews 1:1)

Since Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden because of their sin, God has been giving people opportunities to be restored to fellowship with Him. God revealed Himself in different ways. He showed men His power through miracles. He spoke to the people through angels and, especially, through prophets. Prophets were men and women who were especially anointed by the Holy Spirit to hear from God and to tell the people what God said to them.

The greatest revelation of God to man is Jesus Christ. Jesus said, *“He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.”* (John 14:9) Jesus showed us what God is like. God is holy and just, and that is why Jesus died on the cross for our sins. God could not just overlook our sin without the death penalty; the price had to be paid. God is love, and Jesus showed us that love by giving His life on the cross for us.

God can also speak directly to us. God is not off at the north pole or on some other planet. He is able to speak into our lives and apply the truths of His Word to our

situations. Here are some ways God can speak to us today:

1. Through The Bible (2 Timothy 3:16)

The Bible is God’s Holy Word. The Bible deals with every human situation, and the Holy Spirit is able to “quicken” our hearts and make a scripture verse or passage come alive. We can know that, while all of God’s Word is true, God can speak a specific word to us as we read it. It is important to read the Bible every day.

2. Through Preachers and Teachers (Amos 3:7, Ephesians 4:11)

God has anointed some people to be proclaimers of the Word. God gives direction to them, and they tell the congregation what they are hearing from God through preaching, teaching, or prophesying.

3. Through Parents (Proverbs 4:1-4)

Sometimes God gives insights and wisdom to our parents for us. He wants to teach us to listen and to learn from those He has placed in authority over us. Proverbs teaches us to learn wisdom (God’s point of view) from our parents.

4. Through Gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:7-12)

At times, God uses sensitive Christians to communicate a "word of knowledge" or a "word of wisdom" to others. We do not always have the information or wisdom we need; but, God will use believers to tell us what we need to hear. God wants to teach us to depend on His Holy Spirit and on one another as brothers and sisters.

5. Through Prayer (Matthew 6:5-13)

Prayer is not just a way of getting what we want from God. Prayer is talking to God and listening to Him. It would be impolite to have a conversation with someone and do all the talking and no listening. Prayer makes us sensitive in our spirit so we can hear God speaking to our spirit.

What Is the Difference Between People and Animals?

God created every living creature on the earth; but, He made man in His own image, with a spirit, soul, and body.

"...God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (Genesis 1:27)

"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Genesis 2:7)

There are two extreme -- and extremely ignorant -- ideas that men have when they think that animals and people are basically the same. There is the idea that people are merely animals whose whole existence is in this physical life. This idea is called "secular humanism." The other extreme believes that every creature has an eternal soul; that, ultimately, the animals are merely recycled people, waiting to go around again in a, hopefully, higher form. That is called "reincarnation."

Those who do not want to believe that they have to give an account to God promote the doctrine of evolution, which is the basis of the religion of humanism. Those who teach that doctrine believe that man was not created, but that he gradually evolved from lower forms of life. Therefore, man was not created "a little lower than the angels" but made himself "a little higher than the monkeys." They gleefully point out the physical similarities

between species, especially those between apes and humans, to prove that we are "cousins," from the same family tree. But, the similarities between species do not prove that we have the same ancestors. They merely indicate that we have the same designer.

Since no species in history has ever evolved into another; and, since there are no "missing links" between any species which have ever been conclusive, the evolutionists decided that everything had to happen over millions and millions of years. Since none of them were around then, they feel safe. Who could dispute them?

But, we do have an account from the One who was there. God tells us in His Word that He created the earth and the universe. He formed the first man out of clay in one day. He breathed life into him and made man a living soul. God also gave man dominion over the birds and fowl of the air, the fish, the plants, and the animals. Man is not violating a cow's civil rights by eating it. It is still wrong for man to abuse and cruelly treat animals, because cruelty is not godly. However, it is not murder to kill a deer for food or to step on a cricket.

The people of India are bound by the Hindu religion, and they believe that

animals have souls. So, the rats and cows eat in style, while the poor people starve to death. On the other hand, the humanist believes that neither animals nor humans have souls. They think that when a person dies, he dies like a dog; and that is all there is.

This deception keeps him from preparing for eternity. In Luke 16:22-31,

Jesus spoke of a rich man who died unexpectedly. He was not ready to die. His spirit went to hell, where he suffered torment. It was too late. He was not born again before his death, so he had no hope for eternity.

What Is the Difference Between People and Angels?

God created man with a spirit, soul, and body; but, angels do not have a physical body, and they are neither male nor female.

"But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Hebrews 1:13-14)

Since angels are spirit beings, they never die. They also do not marry and cannot have baby angels. They are neither male nor female. However, when they do appear to men, they tend to look like men. When angels appear to people, note the number of times they say, "do not be afraid." Obviously, they do not have petite female shapes and long golden hair.

People are born one, or very few, at a time and are born into a physical family. **Angels were not born.** All of them were created, probably all at one time, by the creative word of the Lord.

Jesus died for the sins of people, so that, if they repent of their sins, God has the power to forgive and pardon them from the death sentence. However, **there is no plan of salvation for angels.** Those who have sinned are eternally lost, and they have no hope. God created a great "lake of fire" for the devil and the angels who

followed him. It is true that millions of sinners will be cast into the lake of fire with them; but, it really was not designed for sinners. They should repent and serve God.

Angels are more powerful than people.

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him....? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels...." (Psalms 8:4-5)

It is interesting to note that, when Satan will be brought to God for account, only one angel will be sent to arrest him. When Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, besieged Jerusalem after conquering Israel, God sent one angel, who killed 185,000 of his soldiers in one night. Not even Samson could match that performance.

When the **people** who are faithful to God are given their eternal reward and responsibilities, they **will have a great place of sonship with God and authority in heaven.** They are the redeemed children of God, and they will sing the song of the redeemed, which angels cannot sing.

"Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Corinthians 6:3)

Who Wrote the Bible?

The Bible is the written Word of God. It was recorded by men of God who were inspired and anointed by the Holy Spirit.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness...." (2 Timothy 3:16)

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter 1:21)

The Bible is the inspired Word of God, a revelation of Himself and His eternal purposes to His children among the nations of men. The Old Testament began with the writing of Moses, who lived about 1500 years before Christ. It ended with the prophet Malachi, about 445-432 B.C. The New Testament was written after the death and resurrection of Jesus, and it concludes with the "Revelation" which the Apostle John received from the Lord while he was imprisoned on Patmos Island for his faith. The Holy Spirit did not "dictate" the manuscripts word for word, but, rather, *inspired* (which literally means, "breathe in") godly writers to speak for God, using their vocabulary and expressions to communicate the heart and wisdom of God to the people.

The Bible is amazingly accurate, and its consistency is astounding when we realize that it was given to at least 33 identified

men and many others whose names are not known, over a period of nearly 1600 years. The Bible is a collection of 66 different "books," but the thematic flow and internal consistency reflect clearly that there is one supreme author.

The Bible has been attacked over the centuries, and Satan has tried repeatedly to destroy or to dilute its message; but, to no avail. Every single year, it is still the best-selling book in the world and it has been translated into more than 1,200 languages.

The central theme of the whole Bible is Jesus. The Old Testament (or, "covenant") gives the background and historical setting for the coming of Christ, the Messiah, and the New Testament is the fulfillment of the Old. The Bible also gives us clear directions in how to relate and respond to God, as well as to one another. The Old Testament was written primarily in the Hebrew language, while the New Testament was written mostly in Greek, the most accurate and universal language in the time of Jesus.

In 1607 A.D. a group of 54 language scholars began to translate the Word of God into the English language of that day. They were commissioned by James, the King of England. Their work was completed in 1610, and the King James Version of the Bible was published in 1611

A.D. It is a widely respected and used translation and is known as the "authorized version." It is good to understand that, while the Bible is perfect in its original writing, every translation has some flaws. But, most of them are honest and reasonably accurate.

As Christians, we believe in the Bible. As our God is perfect, He is able to create and preserve those writings which we need to have as a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our paths. (Psalms 119:105)

Every condition of man's heart and life is expressed and illustrated in the Bible, and there is an answer to every human need in its pages. For Christians, the Bible is the final court of appeal for all doctrine. Just as we need to feed our bodies to grow strong and healthy, we need to feed our spirit daily with the Bible, God's holy Word.

What Is the Trinity?

The one and only true God and ruler of the universe is an eternal Spirit, who is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD." (Deuteronomy 6:4)

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." (1 John 5:7)

"And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." (Luke 3:22)

The doctrine of the Trinity is one that is especially pure and unique to Christianity, because it is not a concept that could have been invented by the mind of a man, trying to develop a religion or a philosophy. None of the religious cults believe in the Trinity. We understand it only in part, and only by revelation from God. The term "Trinity" is used by Bible teachers to describe God as revealed in the scriptures, because God is spoken of as three distinct persons, yet one God.

There is only one self-existent eternal God. He is a plurality of three co-equal persons, yet one in His being. When referring to God, the Old Testament uses the plural word Elohim (El-o-heem) with

a verb form always in the singular. This occurs 2500 times in scripture.

Jesus, who is the Word of God (John 1:1, 14) and has always been, is the Son of God. That sonship is not exactly like a human relationship of father and son, because they are equal (Philippians 2:6). Yet, the Son proceeds from the Father. In His incarnation, Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost and spoke of God as "Father." As a man, Jesus made Himself of "no reputation," and He took on the form of a servant to identify with man and become our faithful high priest and kinsman redeemer.

God is a Spirit (John 4:24), and of course the Holy Spirit is a Spirit. Jesus is a Spirit, but He also has a glorified body, as the "firstfruits of the resurrection." The fact that God is a Spirit does not make Him any less real or personable. It is simply that He is everywhere in the universe, and His power has no limits.

It is interesting that each of us, as a human being, has three parts. We are created with a body, a soul, and a spirit, although each of us is only one person. We can see only our physical bodies with our eyes; but, our souls and spirits are just as real. We can only express ourselves through our bodies. God chose to reveal

Himself to us through Jesus, the *"fullness of the Godhead bodily."* (Colossians 2:9)

Do not be distressed if you cannot fully comprehend how God could be three persons, and yet, still be one God. Nobody can understand it with their limited

human mind, not even the smartest genius on earth. God is greater than we can explain or understand; and, come to think about it, it is good that He is not as limited as our minds.

What Is God Like?

The one true, self-existent, triune God is holy, just, good, kind, and loving.

"God is love." (1 John 4:8)

"Our God is a consuming fire."
(Hebrews 12:29)

"God is a Spirit." (John 4:24)

"Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." (Isaiah 6:3)

"Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised...." (Psalms 48:1)

It is important to realize that the Bible, as God's revelation of Himself to man, does not focus on the physical or philosophical aspects of God's being. It emphasizes the character qualities of God. There are poetic and prophetic references to His arms, hands, and eyes. These references are anthropomorphisms, or words to illustrate something by using human terms. Note that there are also references to His wings and feathers. God is not a man, and never has been.

God is so great that it is difficult to try to describe Him with mere words. He is everywhere; He is all-powerful; and, yet, He knows and cares about the smallest details in the lives of His creation. He is always perfect and just. He cannot make a mistake, although we make mistakes all the time. He is the absolute sovereign Master of the universe. He is so sovereign that He can allow His creatures to make

their own choice -- to rebel and disobey, or to trust Him and obey; and He is still Lord.

The greatest revelation of what God is like is **Jesus**. He came to reveal the Father. In fact, He emphasized the fatherly heart of God in teaching people to relate and respond to their Creator. As our Heavenly Father, God loves us. He loves us enough to chasten us when our attitudes are wrong. His desire is always for our eternal good. As a Father, God loves to gather and unite His children. He is grieved when we split up and cannot get along with each other.

God is holy. He is absolute in the integrity of His being, and no sin can stand in His presence. He is so holy that He could not pardon the sins of the world arbitrarily. Sin demands the death penalty. The necessity for the sacrificial lamb to atone for sins illustrates God's perfect holiness. The fact that He sent His only begotten Son to die on the cross as the "Lamb of God" is the greatest evidence of His love. Since the penalty for sin was paid, the choice now is up to each of us.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

God is faithful and legally justified to forgive our sins.

It is interesting to note that when men invent gods (as in Greek and Roman mythology), the gods are often mean, or angry, or unstable. Men who do not know God are always trying to "make God in their image." The true God is never mean, or fickle, or unfaithful. Our God never

changes. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He always keeps His Word, and He never fails. Our God is a good God. He is awesome. God is not like us. Our goal is to seek to be like Him.

Section 8

Lessons

He Shall Be a Prophet

Volume 2

Lesson 1



Bible References

1 Samuel 1-3

Amos 3:7

2 Peter 1:21

Ephesians 4:11

LORD was precious in those days; {there was} no open vision.

2 "And it came to pass at that time, when Eli {was} laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, {that} he could not see;

3 "And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God {was}, and Samuel was laid down {to sleep};

4 "That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here {am} I.

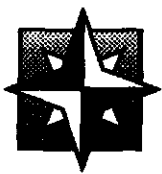
5 "And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here {am} I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

6 "And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here {am} I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again.

7 "Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him.

8 "And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here {am} I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child.

9 "Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy



Theme

God can speak to us, even when we are very young.



Scripture Reading

1 Samuel 3:1-10

1 "And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the

servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

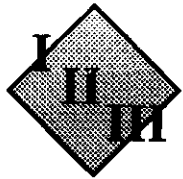
10 *"And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth."*



Memory Verse

1 Samuel 3:10

"Speak, for thy servant heareth."



Outline

I. The Word of the Lord Was Precious.

- A. God was well able to speak; but, the people were not hearing from God, because there was so much sin.
 1. "Precious" means "scarce."
 2. The people and the priests had drifted far from God.
- B. The high priest, Eli, was undisciplined and lazy, and his two sons were very wicked.
- C. Sin separates from God, and results in judgment.

II. The Boy Samuel.

- A. Samuel had been dedicated to God by his mother.
- B. Samuel knew he belonged to God, even though he did not yet know the Lord.
- C. Because of his mother's dedication, Samuel had the opportunity to live his life as a prophet and hear the voice of God many times.

III. Samuel Heard God's Voice.

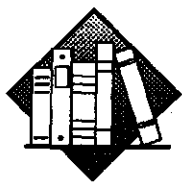
- A. When God called Samuel in the night, Samuel thought it was the voice of Eli, the priest.
- B. It took Eli three times to realize that God was speaking to Samuel.
- C. God gave Samuel a word of judgment to give to Eli.
- D. Eli insisted that Samuel tell him the Word of the Lord, even though he knew it was not good news.



Spiritual Truths

- Sin makes us dull and insensitive in our spirit.
- God's voice is never stilled, and we need to be willing and able to hear.
- Children tend to have the same weaknesses that their parents have, only magnified.

- Our mother's prayers can affect our whole life.
- God is patient and slow to bring judgment, but that does not mean we can get away with evil.
- Being a young person does not prevent you from hearing from God, if you have a heart that is open before Him.
- Being dedicated to God means that you belong to him, and you do not have the "right" to "be your own person."



Lesson Material

Samuel was born into a special situation. He was the firstborn son of a barren woman named Hannah. God had always wanted His people to dedicate their firstborn to Him for spiritual ministry, although many parents in Israel failed to do that. Hannah was unable to bear a child; so, when God healed her and gave her a healthy son, she recognized more than most mothers that he really belonged to God. Hannah not only dedicated her son to God; but, as soon as he was weaned, she sent him to live in the temple to be a servant to the priests.

Samuel "ministered" unto the Lord. The word minister means "to serve." Samuel ministered by sweeping the floor, or carrying water, or doing any task that needed to be done. Whenever we are meeting the needs of others, we are technically "ministering" to them.

The Word of the Lord was scarce in those days. Israel had the Pentateuch (the five books of Moses), but there was very little spiritual vision. Because the hearts of the people were so full of self-preoccupied sin, they were dull of hearing. After a time of peace and prosperity, the people were not hungry for God. Historically, the church has rarely been spiritually strong when the people had wealth and peace. When things got rough for the church, the church began to seek after God intently and experienced revival.

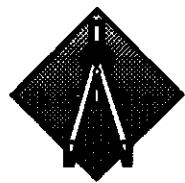
Eli was the high priest. He was very fat. The indication is that, while he was not an extremely evil man, he was undisciplined. His two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, however, were very wicked. They were dishonest, greedy, and immoral. They magnified the weaknesses of their father. Apparently, Eli was not strict with them when they were boys, and they failed to learn self-control. God caused them to be killed by their enemies. As always, they reaped what they sowed.

When Samuel was a boy, God chose to speak to him in an audible voice. Little Samuel did not know the Lord yet, so, naturally, he assumed that he was hearing Eli, the priest. Each time he responded to Eli, he was sent back to bed. The third time, Eli finally realized what was happening, and he told Samuel to answer God with obedience. God gave the boy a prophetic word of judgment against Eli and his family. Naturally, Samuel was very reluctant to tell Eli, the priest. But, when Eli questioned him, Samuel hid nothing from him.

The word the Lord gave to Samuel was not a positive or pleasant one for Eli. But, Eli knew it was true and just. It is interesting that we do not see the old prophet repent or make another appeal to

his sons to get right with God before they were destroyed. Eli seemed to take it passively, and to let the boys get their just reward. Soon afterwards, Israel was defeated by the Philistines. Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were killed; the ark was captured; and when he heard the ark was taken, old Eli fell off his chair and died from a broken neck.

God is a wonderful God of love, and He is just and holy. God has not changed.



Methods

This lesson is easily illustrated by a number of methods and especially is loved by children, because it is about a boy who is the spiritual hero of the story. You can illustrate this with flannelgraph, puppets, or a short, live dramatization. It is good to

remind children that prayer is not just giving petitions, or a wish list, to God. Prayer involves listening with a receptive heart to the voice of God.

One discussion question: How can God speak to me?

1. Through His Word, the Bible.
2. Through the preaching of the Word.
3. Through prophecy, or a word of knowledge.
4. Through your parents.
5. Through teachers, or other godly counselors.
6. Through an angel.
7. Through a still small voice in your spirit.
8. Through your conscience.
9. God can still speak in an audible voice.

A King Is Chosen

Volume 2

Lesson 2



Bible References

1 Samuel 8-13

Psalms 106:15

Galatians 5:20

5 "And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

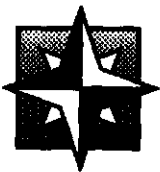
6 "But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD.

7 "And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them."

1 Samuel 9:2,17

2 "And he had a son, whose name {was} Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and {there was} not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward {he was} higher than any of the people.

17 "And when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people."



Theme

God sometimes allows us to get what we want, but His way is always the best.



Scripture Reading

1 Samuel 8:4-7

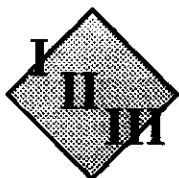
4 "Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah,



Memory Verse

Psalms 106:15

"And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul. "



Outline

I. Why Israel Wanted a King

- A. The people wanted to be like the other nations.
- B. This is called the sin of "emulation."
 1. It is a work of the flesh. (Galatians 5:20)
 2. "Emulation" means "ambitions or envious rivalry; to follow fads; to copy others."
- C. With a king, they would have a person to compare with the kings of other nations, instead of a God they could not see.

II. Why God Did Not Want to Give Them a King.

- A. God had ruled through Moses and other priests and prophets with a Theocracy.
 1. A theocracy is ruled by God.

2. A democracy is ruled by the people.
3. A monarchy is ruled by one person.

- B. God warned that a human king would take advantage of them, and tend to become greedy and proud.

III. Why did God choose Saul?

- A. God chose a man who would be all that the people wanted.
 1. Most kings of that day were big and strong.
 2. They often became king by overpowering everyone else who got in their way.
 3. People tend to want someone to look up to and admire for his strength, intelligence, and ambition.
- B. Saul had outstanding qualities.
 1. He was taller "than any of the people." (1 Samuel 9:2)
 2. In addition to his height and good looks, Saul was humble and meek. (1 Samuel 9:2)
 3. Saul had a powerful spiritual anointing from the Lord. He even prophesied. (1 Samuel 10:6)



Spiritual Truths

- God's purpose is always to have for Himself a people who will have a personal relationship with Him.
- The ideal home or church is one which recognizes that Jesus Christ is the Lord

and that the father or pastor is accountable to Him for every decision.

- When the church tries to be like the world, there are always problems in the long run.
- We should never try to justify any action with the idea that "everyone else does it."
- Some people are more gifted than others, but their ultimate success depends on their responses to God in life.
- Carnal people tend to want a person to exalt, imitate, or even idolize.



Lesson Material

When the prophet Samuel was old, the people began to feel insecure. They knew that they could trust Samuel, because he was always obedient to God. But his sons were a different story. Samuel wanted to establish them in the ministry, but they were carnal men, and the people knew it. Generally, they did not have faith that God would take care of the problems in the ministry as he had with Aaron and Eli's wicked sons. The people began to discuss their opinions about the leadership among themselves, and they came to the general conclusion that it was about time for them to have a king. After all, they were a nation of respectable size and power now, and every other nation they knew of had a king.

When we focus on people instead of God, we get into various kinds of trouble. The practice of copying people is called "emulation." There is strong peer pressure on school-aged children to follow "fads" in their dress, hair styles, or speech. Some of these fads have their origins in heathen worship of idols, or false cults, and others are simply birthed in rebellion against the Bible. We should never choose to do something simply because "everyone else is doing it."

Up to this time, God had raised up various leaders to give Israel direction and protection. Before the time of kings, God used "judges" to receive specific instructions from Him and lead the people in military campaigns. God used the priests and prophets to speak to the people. The fact that the true and living God was their king set Israel apart from every other nation. God was a perfect king, and wanted to show the world how He could bless and prosper a people who were submitted to Him.

There are various systems of government. A monarchy is the rule by one person, usually a king or queen. Monarchies are dangerous, because a person can easily become proud and corrupted by unlimited power.

The rule by a few people is called an oligarchy, and the rule by the people is called a democracy. Any kind of rule by man has its dangers, because people can be corrupted by sin and take advantage of the people they lead.

The church was never intended to be anything but a theocracy (ruled by God). Jesus is called the "head of the church" in Colossians 1. The purpose of the pastor and any leadership group is simply to find the will of God and obey Him.

But when the people of Israel decided that they wanted a king, God let them have one. He told Samuel to let them know that, if they had a king, that king would take much of their wealth for himself and would tend to be corrupted by the office. However, God let Israel know that He would still bless and lead them if they kept their hearts right with Him, and kept from serving idols. A king could be a good king, as long as he recognized the King of kings.

God not only gave Israel a king, but He also gave them just the kind they wanted. Saul had it all, including a humble heart and a good attitude. He stood "head and shoulders" taller than any of the people, with all the attributes of greatness. God blessed him with a powerful anointing and used Saul to lead the people in military victories over their enemies.

Ask, "What are some fads that are popular today?"

Show that it is not only important to do the right thing, but also to have the right reason. Do we do things as "unto the Lord," or just to please ourselves?

Discuss the difference between a leader, a hero, a king, and an idol.

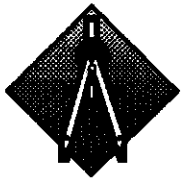
A godly leader will hear from God and seek to lead the people toward obedience to God.

A king will be a final authority, unless he voluntarily subjugates himself to God's oversight.

A hero is someone who is admired and appreciated and emulated by others. Who are your heroes?

An idol is one who receives from people the adoration and worship which rightfully belong to God. People can make idols of things, or of people. Since people today place such an emphasis on pleasure, they often make idols of entertainers or sports heroes. Can you name some prominent people today who are regarded as idols?

Do you have any idols in your life?



Methods

Discuss the spiritual meaning of current fads, and explain that, by following fads, we show that our focus in life is centered on people instead of on God and His wisdom.

I Did It My Way

Volume 2

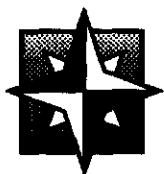
Lesson 3



Bible References

1 Samuel 15

1 Peter 5:5



Theme

Pride is extremely dangerous, and it causes us to lose God's presence and power in our lives.



Scripture Reading

1 Samuel 15:10-15; 22, 23

10 "Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying,

11 "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul (to be) king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my

commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night.

12 "And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal.

13 "And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed (be) thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD.

14 "And Samuel said, What (meaneth) then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?

15 "And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.

22 "And Samuel said, Hath the LORD (as great) delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey (is) better than sacrifice, (and) to hearken than the fat of rams.

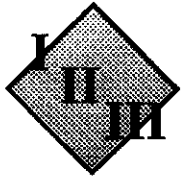
23 "For rebellion (is as) the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness (is as) iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from (being) king."



Memory Verse

1 Peter 5:5

"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."



Outline

I. The Sin of Saul.

- A. King Saul had become proud and vain.
- B. Saul did what God told him to do – almost.
- C. Samuel identified two sins that Saul had committed.
 1. Rebellion, which is an attitude of rejecting the authority of the one over us to make the final decisions.
 2. Stubbornness, which is clinging to our self-willed plans and refusing to be flexible.

II. The Spirit of Saul.

- A. Saul was beginning to take himself too seriously as king.
- B. He thought he had a better idea.
- C. Saul was trying to please the people and thought he was pleasing God.

III. The Rejection of Saul.

- A. Samuel grieved over King Saul, but he had to deliver God's message to him.
- B. When Saul failed to obey God's instructions exactly, he lost his ministry as king.
- C. God waited until later to fulfill the prophecy, but it did come.
- D. Saul could have repented of his disobedience, but he did not.
- E. By rebelling against God's specific command, Saul took himself out from under God's authority, and was, therefore, subject to satanic authority.



Spiritual Truths

- Pride is a subtle sin. You can be full of it and not know it.
- Obedience is better than sacrifice.
- You can lose your stewardship if you are not faithful with it.
- Sins of the spirit can be more dangerous than sins of the flesh, because they can seem so religious and right.
- Rebellion against God's authority can open our spirit to satanic authority by moving us out from under God's protection.
- Rebellion against authority was the first sin in history (Lucifer in heaven).



Lesson Material

This is one of the saddest accounts in the Bible. Saul was such a talented, intelligent, humble, strong, and handsome young man. He was anointed by God to be the king of the nation of Israel. That office brought him honor, wealth, and power. But, when he became successful and important, he became important in his own eyes. Saul became proud as a result of his success. He started out with a right attitude and a good anointing, but he failed to keep his heart tender before the Lord.

Later, Solomon, who had some of the same struggles with fame and wealth, wrote a poem that contained these words:

"...give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." (Proverbs 30:8-9)

Solomon realized that prosperity can be just as much of a spiritual stumbling block as failure and poverty. Wealth can make a man feel secure and comfortable, if he does not keep his heart right with God. That is why his father, David, had said, *"...if riches increase, set not your heart on them." (Psalms 62:10)*

King Saul became proud. Pride is not just a high opinion of yourself. The sin of pride is a carnal focus on self, a preoccupation with self-will or ambition. The Apostle Paul, for instance, did not put himself down. He said, "I can do all things

through Christ." (Phil. 4:13) His humility is seen in the phrase, "through Christ." Humility is the awareness of our constant and utter need for God's help and direction in life. Saul got his eyes off of God and onto himself.

When we move our focus away from God and His purposes in our lives, we tend to focus on self, then on people, and then ultimately on the things of darkness. Saul looked to the people and sought to please them, rather than God. Notice that he said, "The people wanted to save the best of the livestock to sacrifice unto the Lord." The fear of man always brings a snare, because it keeps us from a proper fear of God. Later, when Saul still could not hear from God, he even went to a witch. This was a serious sin.

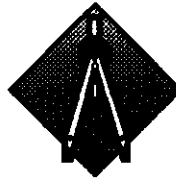
God told Saul to totally destroy the nation of the Amalekites. (1 Samuel 15:18) God knew that, if they were allowed to live, they would teach the Israelite children to worship idols and to do evil acts. Saul and the people thought they had a better idea. Perhaps Saul thought he was being a "kinder, gentler king" by saving King Agag's life. But, God always knows best, and we always get into trouble in life when we decide to do it our way.

God gave Samuel a word to deliver to King Saul. God said that "rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." To be under God's authority is to be under His protection. When we "submit ourselves to God," then we can "resist the devil, and he will flee from us." (James 4:7) We have no power to resist the devil, unless we are under God's authority. Satan is not afraid of us. He is only afraid of God. Therefore, when we are in rebellion, we are on our own. Rebellion says, "I am my own person. I can make my own decisions."

That removes us from under God's protection, and makes us subject to the devil's realm of darkness and deception. That is why rebellion works like witchcraft. Witchcraft is a way of submitting to the kingdom of darkness. If we rebel against God, we are doing the same thing.

Stubbornness is like iniquity and idolatry. The word, "iniquity," means "vanity and wickedness." When we are stubborn and strong-willed, we exert ourselves to our own hurt. To be self-willed is like submitting to a false idol, which can never do us any good. We can identify and relate to God only if he is Lord. We cannot serve God on our own stubborn terms. God will either be Lord of all, or He is not Lord at all. "Lord" means "owner" -- the one who has the right to make the final decision. When He is the Lord, we are His servants. Is He the Lord of your life?

"Trust, and obey, for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey." (Trust and Obey, by John H. Sammis and Daniel B. Towner).



Methods

Get together with two other workers and present a little skit about "Mergatroid, the Mule, and Homer, the Horse." You can play off the classic stereotype of a stubborn mule and let the students see that the mule gets the whip and anger from the farmer, while the happy horse gets praise and a nice feedbag of crackerjacks. Mergatroid may get a cup of raw oatmeal, or whatever.

Share the truth that obedience and faithfulness in life bring reward, and stubbornness and self-will bring pain. That is the reason that godly parents use the rod to correct rebellious children. They know that, if we can learn to be responsive and obedient to them, it will be easier for us to learn to be obedient to God, and that is the most important thing we can learn in life.

Best Friends

Volume 2

Lesson 4



Bible References

1 Samuel 18:1-9

1 Samuel 19:1-7

1 Samuel 20:1-42

Proverbs 18:24

Ecclesiastes 4:9, 12

Luke 9:24

Philippians 2:14

Hebrews 13:5



Scripture Reading

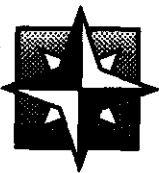
1 Samuel 18:1-4

1 "And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

2 "And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house.

3 "Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.

4 "And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that (was) upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle. "



Theme

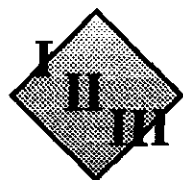
When we are in a covenant relationship with God, He makes us able to make real covenants with other believers.



Memory Verse

Proverbs 18:24

"There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."



Outline

I. The Heart Of Jonathan.

- A. Jonathan saw David kill Goliath and earn the respect of all the people.
- B. David was honored and blessed.
- C. Jonathan could have been jealous. Instead, he blessed and loved David, too.

II. The Covenant of Jonathan.

- A. Jonathan loved David as he loved his own soul.
 1. Love is seeking the best for someone else at your expense.
 2. Love puts the needs of others before self.
- B. Covenant relationship.
 1. Covenant means giving yourself to someone else.
 2. It is more than a contract.
 3. A covenant is a lifelong commitment of yourself to someone else.
 4. "I love you more than I love myself."

III. Jonathan's Sacrifice.

- A. His robe.
 1. A robe was an insignia of rank.
 2. Jonathan's robe was a symbol of his right to be the next king.

3. Jonathan was saying, "I want you to be the king instead of me. I give up my right to the throne for you."

B. His garments.

1. This was a token of trust and honesty.
2. "You can always trust me."

C. His sword, bow, and belt.

1. "My weapons are for your defense, and not just for my own."
2. "I will not defend myself against you; but, I will defend you against those who attack you."

IV. Communion.

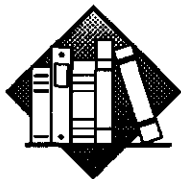
- A. Expression of covenant with God.
 1. Fruit of the vine: we are bought and cleansed by the blood of Jesus.
 2. Bread: His body was broken for us.
- B. Covenant with His Church.
 1. Blood: we are brothers and sisters in Christ.
 2. We are "one loaf," in unity and forgiveness. (1 Corinthians 1:17)



Spiritual Truths

- Christianity is a covenant with God.
- Jesus Christ initiated the covenant with us by laying down His own life for us.

- When we repent and believe God for salvation, we make a covenant to give our lives to God and love Him more than we love ourselves.
- Water baptism is a symbol of our covenant with God, where we die to self and live for Him.
- The Lord's Table is a symbol of our covenant with God through the death of Jesus Christ.
- Love is seeking the best for others.
- Sin puts self first and uses other people.
- Our tongues should be dedicated to defending our fellow believers.
- We should be honest with one another and delight when a brother or sister is blessed or honored.
- Jealousy is a sign of a lack of love.



Lesson Material

Most of us are familiar with the story of David and Goliath, but the following story is even more important. It is the story of David and Jonathan. Jonathan is a great example of a covenant man.

When David killed the giant, all of Israel honored him. But Jonathan did much more than that. Jonathan gave David his heart. Jonathan saw that David was a man of faith in God and a man of courage. Jonathan loved God, too, and identified with David as a friend. David had worked in the palace before as a

musician, so Jonathan already knew him, and had seen that he consistently prayed and lived a pure life.

When David demonstrated the courage and strength of a real leader, God moved on Jonathan's heart to do something that most people today would think to be foolish: he literally gave David his own throne. When Jonathan gave David the royal robe, he was in effect saying, "I would rather see you on the throne of Israel than to rule myself." It would be like a man, who was about to inherit a large family business, telling his friend, "I know Dad wants me to be the president of the company; but, I am giving that office and honor to you, and I will serve you instead." He was literally laying down his own life (ambitions, future) for his friend.

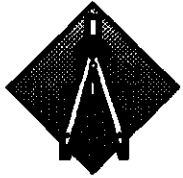
Today, most people are so focused on their own rights and careers that this kind of unselfishness is almost unheard of; yet, it is very basic to Christianity. Jesus Christ laid down His life literally for us and desires a people who will give themselves to Him. He said,

"Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." (Luke 9:24)

In other words, if we live for our own success and happiness in life, we will eventually lose everything, but if we give our lives to God, we will gain eternal life.

Jonathan also gave David his weapons. He was saying, "My sword is for your defense, and not for my own." How often do people argue, trying to defend themselves and their feelings against one another. Paul said, "*Do all things without murmuring and disputing.*" (Philippians 2:14) Christians should never gossip about

one another, but should always speak positively about each other, and defend one another as a covenant brother. Jonathan kept his word, and for the rest of his short life, he was loyal to David, even when it could have cost him his life. His goal was to defend and guard his friend, and to seek his friend's success. This kind of attitude is called a "servant's heart."



Methods

Have the strongest boy in the class break a stick in half. Then give him three of them, and see if he can break them when they are taped together. Remind the class that "*a threefold cord is not quickly broken,*" (Ecclesiastes 4:12) and that "*two are better than one.*" (Ecclesiastes 4:9)

Ask the students, "How many of you have a best friend?" Then, have some of them share the advantages of having a best friend. What qualities make someone a best friend? Then, compare our human best friend with Jesus. People may let us down, but Jesus will never leave us or forsake us. (Hebrews 13:5) We can always depend on Him, and He can always be trusted. Jesus will never speak against us behind our backs, and He loves us no matter what we do. He also tells us honestly when we do wrong, and He always seeks our best, even if it hurts our feelings to know the truth.

Communion

Encourage all who are born again and have been water baptized to partake of communion, explaining again the principles of covenant.

He Is Too Small

Volume 2

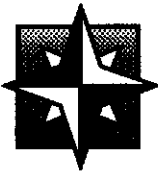
Lesson 5



Bible References

1 Samuel 16:1-23

Psalms 27



Theme

God is not impressed with our appearance or natural abilities, but He is impressed with faith and character.



Scripture Reading

1 Samuel 16:1-13, 17-18

1 "And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite:

for I have provided me a king among his sons.

2 "And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear (it), he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD.

3 "And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me (him) whom I name unto thee.

4 "And Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably?

5 "And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.

6 "And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the Lord's anointed (is) before him.

7 "But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for (the LORD seeth) not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

8 "Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this.

9 "Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this.

10 "Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these.

11 "And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all (thy) children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.

12 "And he sent, and brought him in. Now he (was) ruddy, (and) withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this (is) he.

13 "Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

17 "And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring (him) to me.

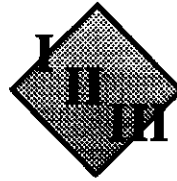
18 "Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, (that is) cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the LORD (is) with him. "



Memory Verse

1 Samuel 16:7

"Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart."



Outline

I. The Need for a New King.

- A. King Saul had become proud and vain and had tragically lost God's anointing as the king of Israel.
- B. Saul was still strong and smart; but, he had lost his humility and his heart for God.
- C. God sent the prophet Samuel to Bethlehem to anoint a new king while Saul was still on the throne.

II. The Selection of the New King.

- A. God told Samuel that the new king would be a son of Jesse, but he did not tell Samuel which one.
- B. Jesse presented to Samuel seven of his sons. His last son, David was not presented. He was tending his father's sheep, and was not with the other brothers.

- C. David would not have been elected by the people, but he was God's choice.
- D. David had a heart for God, and God loved him.

III. The Qualities of the New King.

- A. David had been observed by a servant of King Saul. He had a good reputation in the land.
- B. The servant listed David's qualities (from verse 18):
 1. Clever musician -- creative;
 2. A mighty, valiant man;
 3. A man of war
(not afraid of a battle);
 4. Prudent in matters
(David had good sense);
 5. Good-looking, neat appearance;
 6. The Lord was with him.



Spiritual Truths

- God works through leaders that He appoints and anoints.
- We cannot tell what is in a person's heart by their appearance or actions. Only God can see what is in one's heart.
- When people let us down, we do not need to become bitter. We can learn to turn to God, because He never fails.
- Even if we are assigned a job we do not like, we should be faithful and use our time to develop wisdom and skills.

- People will notice when we have a good attitude and have learned to do something well.



Lesson Material

God works through various leaders to train and direct us in our lives. He uses parents, teachers, pastors, government leaders, and others. God allowed Israel to have a king. When He gave them King Saul, He gave them the kind of tall, handsome, and brilliant man they wanted, and had him appointed by the prophet Samuel. But Saul became proud and carnal after he received such power and wealth, and his heart turned away from God.

So God sent Samuel, his prophet, to Bethlehem to anoint David, a teenager who had a genuine love for God and good character.

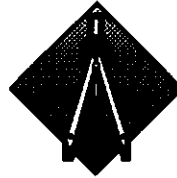
David was not highly regarded by his brothers, and was given the lowly task of tending his father's sheep. This was considered an undesirable and menial occupation. Rich men would never send a son to be a shepherd. This work was usually done by slaves or hired servants. But David was faithful, and he guarded the sheep with his life. Out in the lonely pasture, he prayed, sang to the Lord, and practiced his music. He also invented new musical instruments and wrote songs to God.

God used this anointing to teach Samuel a great lesson. Man sees the outward appearance, but only God looks at

the heart. We must never judge, because when we judge, we take on the right to see motives. God chose a young man who had no wordly position of stature or leadership and who was neither wealthy nor in the social "upper class." Only God could see His plan and David's potential for fulfilling that plan. And God could cause His plan for David's life to unfold only as David kept his heart clean and remained obedient and faithful.

When King Saul was tormented by demonic spirits, he wanted an anointed musician to play for him. He knew that evil spirits hate to stay around when God is worshipped in the spirit. On the recommendation of his servant, he hired David to come to the palace and be his music minister.

David was just a teenager. He had not yet met Goliath on the battlefield. But King Saul's servant perceived that he was a mighty and valiant man and a man of war. David had courage. He also had good sense. He was not silly or foolish. He made good use of his time and did not waste words in idle talk. He had a good appearance. He kept himself neat, even though he worked hard for a living. The most important quality of David was that God was with him. Others could see the peace and joy on his countenance, which came as the result of God's presence in his life. Can others see Jesus in your life?



Methods

Bring a "Barbie" (or other fashion doll), and ask the girls to share how they feel about the focus on physical perfection. Do they feel that there is too much emphasis on physical features?

Does Hollywood focus too much on physical beauty and ability? Is there a subtle association with beauty and character? Show them that physical beauty does not necessarily bring happiness in life.

Contrast this with the emphasis God's Word places on developing inner character. Teach them to observe and compliment others on positive character traits. Set the example by learning to praise children on a higher level than, "you have lovely hair," or "what beautiful eyes you have."

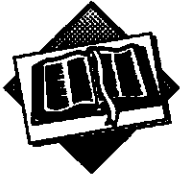
Flattery involves a focus on unchangeable features over which they have no control. Legitimate praise points out positive achievement or accomplishment. To have a neat and modest appearance takes effort, which could be praised and encouraged. But, to praise someone for being tall is flattery. How does the boy feel who is very short?

Discuss the difference between flattery and praise.

David's Training for Reigning

Volume 2

Lesson 6



Bible References

1 Samuel 17

Psalms 78:70-72

Psalms 144:1

Mark 10:43

Luke 22:24-27

2 Corinthians 6:11

Ephesians 6:13



Scripture Reading

1 Samuel 17:12-20, 34-36

12 *"Now David (was) the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehemjudah, whose name (was) Jesse; and he had eight sons: and the man went among men (for) an old man in the days of Saul.*

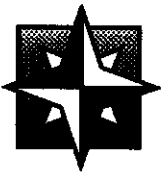
13 *"And the three eldest sons of Jesse went (and) followed Saul to the battle: and the names of his three sons that went to the battle (were) Eliab the firstborn, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah.*

14 *"And David (was) the youngest: and the three eldest followed Saul.*

15 *"But David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem.*

16 *"And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days.*

17 *"And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched (corn), and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren;*



Theme

God prepares us for future battles with smaller ones, and trains us through adversities in life.

18 "And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of {their} thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge.

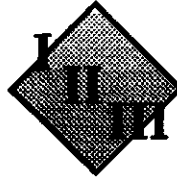
19 "Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, {were} in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

20 "And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the trench, as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle.

34 "And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock:

35 "And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered {it} out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught {him} by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.

36 "Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God."



Outline

I. David's Heart of a Servant.

- A. King Saul had become proud and vain, but David stayed humble.
- B. David had been hired to be the King's personal musician; but, when the army went to war, David went home, back to the lowly job of tending sheep.
- C. When his father asked him to take food to his brothers, he got up early in the morning to obey.

II. David's Preparation for Battle.

- A. While David was watching his father's sheep, he not only practiced his music (which got him a good job later), but he also practiced with his weapon -- a sling.
 - 1. This tested his heart, because he could have run away.
 - 2. It tested his skill and strength.
- B. God allowed him to face a lion and a bear alone.
- C. The battles with the lion and bear gave David confidence, and prepared him for his battle with Goliath.



Memory Verse

Psalms 144:1

"Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war."

III. David's Training for the Crown.

- A. God was using David's experience with sheep to prepare him to be a leader of people.
- B. God allowed him to suffer.
1. Rejection (from his peers);
 2. Ridicule, (from his older brothers);
 3. Violent attacks (from predators, and from Goliath).



Spiritual Truths

- God is preparing us in this life to live forever with Him and to reign with Him.
- God prepares us through battles in life.
- God allows the small problems to make us strong, and to prepare us for bigger ones.
- If we are faithful with the small tasks, we will be given more important ones to do.
- God's training ground for leadership is servanthood and not assertiveness training school.



Lesson Material

In life, there are always some people who are leaders. They excel in various areas, and they know how to motivate others. Leaders have an ability to be self-starters. They can discipline themselves to finish a job. Most people never become effective leaders. They must be led, supervised, and disciplined by others. David became one of the greatest leaders in history. He was called "a man after God's own heart." How did God train him as a young man for great leadership?

Jesse was training his oldest sons to be leaders. They were sharp, tall, and impressive. They looked like leaders. Jesse sent them to the best schools and encouraged them to go into the military. David had been overlooked. Instead of being sent to school, he was placed in the fields as a servant. It appeared that he would have no potential for greatness.

But the place of a servant was God's school for greatness. Jesus said, "...but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister (servant):" (Mark 10:43) Just as Joseph many centuries before, David developed leadership qualities serving as a shepherd.

David was being trained also for leadership when he suffered rejection, ridicule, and hardships.

In 2 Corinthians 6:11, the Apostle Paul told the church, "Our heart is enlarged toward you." He lists the things which increased the love and compassion in their hearts, such as persecution, distress,

affliction, and so on. The trials made them stronger and more able to lead others.

The third method of training for leadership is the **battle**. We are called "good soldiers of Jesus Christ." There is a spiritual warfare going on, and we need God's armor (Ephesians 6:13) to survive, let alone prevail. God allowed David to face a lion and a bear. He could have climbed a tree. After all, the wild beasts took only one lamb each; was that really significant? But David loved the sheep in his care. He cared about each one. He risked his life to rescue the lambs, and God knew that if David was faithful in tending sheep, he would be faithful in leading people. Also, the smaller battles gave David confidence and prepared him for greater battles later. The battles with the lion and bear prepared him for meeting Goliath, and the battle with Goliath prepared him for greater conflicts later.

When you are young, if you run from your problems or conflicts, it will only make the battles later in life more difficult to face. People who avoid those who hurt their feelings and refuse to talk to anyone with whom they have a conflict tend to be the same ones who cannot handle conflicts later in marriage. So, they divorce their mate; or, they have a disagreement in the church and go from church to church. No. Learn to face difficulties. If you do not get along with someone in your family, go to them and talk about it

and forgive one another. If someone morally wrongs you, tell your parents. Handle the problems, and let God train you to be a leader.



Methods

Discuss the difference in training that David received from that given to his brothers. David's brothers were being prepared by Jesse for leadership, but David was being used as a hired servant. This is similar to a "Cinderella" story -- except that it is true, and that David's success was made possible by God, and not by a "fairy godmother."

See if the children can discern the difference between man's methods of leadership training and God's. Contrast also the 40 years of training Moses had in Pharaoh's courts, and the 40 years of his training as a shepherd in the wilderness. Remind that students that Joseph suffered rejection from his brothers, but God used that rejection to build his character and his faith.

Notice that the way to greatness is to be a servant. "He that is greatest among you, shall be your servant."

The Courage of Jonathan

Volume 2

Lesson 7

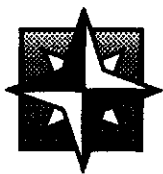


Bible References

1 Samuel 14

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

Daniel 11:32



Theme

If you have a right spirit, God will help you do great things for His glory.



Scripture Reading

1 Samuel 14:1-2, 6-7, 11-14

1 "Now it came to pass upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over to the

Philistines' garrison, that {is} on the other side. But he told not his father.

2 "And Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which {is} in Migron: and the people that {were} with him {were} about six hundred men;

6 "And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for {there is} no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few.

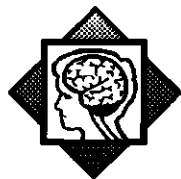
7 "And his armourbearer said unto him, Do all that {is} in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I {am} with thee according to thy heart.

11 "And both of them discovered themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines: and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves.

12 "And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armourbearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will show you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armourbearer, Come up after me: for the LORD hath delivered them into the hand of Israel.

13 "And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armourbearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armourbearer slew after him.

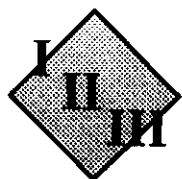
14 "And that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armourbearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were an half acre of land, (which) a yoke (of oxen might plow). "



Memory Verse

Daniel 11:32

"The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits."



Outline

I. Jonathan, a Good, Young Man.

- A. Many great leaders in Israel stayed true to God, but they had sons who were rebellious.
- B. King Saul became proud and carnal. But his son, Jonathan, had an excellent spirit, and stayed true to God and to his friend, David.
- C. Jonathan was the prince; but, we have no evidence that he was spoiled or selfish. This shows outstanding character.

II. Israel in Trouble.

- A. While Saul was king of Israel, the powerful Philistines oppressed them.
- B. Many of the Israelites fled to caves, or trembled in fear of the vicious Philistine soldiers.

III. Jonathan and his Armour-Bearer.

- A. Jonathan and his assistant were out walking and saw a group of enemy soldiers.
- B. Jonathan said, "God can use a small group to win a battle just as easily as He can use a large group."
 1. This was the same attitude of faith and wisdom that David had when he faced the giant Philistine, Goliath.
 2. The focus is on God's ability and not on our circumstances.
 3. Instead of saying, "we're outnumbered ten to one," Jonathan said, "God can do it."

IV. The Battle.

- A. Jonathan said, "If they see us and challenge us to go up to fight them, we will accept that as a sign from God that we will defeat them."

- B. When these two fought their battle against the Philistines, God sent an earthquake to help create confusion.
1. The Philistines were killing each other out of fear and confusion.
 2. As a result of Jonathan's brave act, the other Israelite soldiers were able to kill a great number of Philistines.



Spiritual Truths

- You can be faithful to God, even if others around you are not.
- Fear focuses on self and people, while faith involves a focus on God and His purposes.
- Faith with obedience always produces action.
- If God is for us, who can be against us?
- We can be more victorious in life when we have a friend to agree with us and help us fight the battles.
- You will not be afraid, if you know you are doing what is right.



Lesson Material

Jonathan was a very special young man. Although he came from very

different circumstances, he was much like David. While David grew up, as the youngest, he was assigned the role of a shepherd out in the field; Jonathan was raised in the palace, the favorite son of King Saul and the heir to the throne. Often, people who are raised in wealth, ease, and glory fail to develop good character qualities. Life is easy, and they become accustomed to luxury and pampering. They become "spoiled," which implies a selfish, immature focus in life.

But Jonathan was not spoiled. Apparently, he had a good, loving relationship with the Lord; and, even when his father was spiritually backslidden, Jonathan stayed true to God. This incident illustrates the kind of spirit Jonathan had. While the people of Israel were waiting in fear to see what the enemy would do to them next, Jonathan set out to see what could be done to stop the enemy. Israel had an enemy which tormented and oppressed them, and Jonathan wanted to do something about the situation.

All of us have enemies. First of all, our enemy is the devil, who wants to do all he can to keep us from serving God. He wants to destroy us spiritually. Satan hates to see people being born again or forgiving one another. All he wants to do is to kill, steal, and destroy. Sometimes, he uses people who seek to work against the church or who want to hurt the reputation of God's people. Another great enemy can be our own wrong attitudes or habits. Sin is destructive, and we should always see it as an enemy, not a friend trying to make us happy by temptation.

Jonathan stepped out in faith, looking for an opportunity to do something about the enemy that was destroying his friends. He went with an assistant. He had a friend to

help him, and his friend also encouraged him to obey the Lord. Solomon said that,

"Two (are) better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him (that is) alone when he falleth; for (he hath) not another to help him up. "(Ecclesiastes 4:9-10)

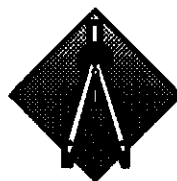
Many times, a Christian is defeated by temptation when he is alone, but he would have been able to overcome, if he had a friend to stand with him.

When Jonathan and his friend saw a group of Philistine soldiers, Jonathan talked about God and His ability to win battles, and not about the fact that they were outnumbered. That was the same thing David did when he faced Goliath some time later. Everyone else was looking at the giant, but David was looking at God's ability. That is called "faith." Jonathan said, "It does not matter to God how many there are in His army, because He has all the power. God can win through a few as easily as He can through many." Jonathan remembered the story of Gideon. Gideon had organized an army of 33,000 men from four tribes to fight the Midianites. Following God's instructions, the size of the army was pared down to 300 men. God helped Gideon and his 300-man army defeat a "host" or "multitude" of Midianite soldiers. (Judges 7:11-12)

When Jonathan felt that God wanted him to fight, he ran to meet the enemy. Again, David had the same attitude as he went to meet the giant, Goliath. Jonathan was not only willing to do something for God, he was also eager. He did not sit

around, waiting for someone to tell him every move to make or to do it for him. Jonathan took initiative. God responded by giving them strength and perhaps some angelic help. Twenty enemy soldiers lay dead. Then God sent an earthquake to cause more fear and confusion.

This is a little like the boy who gave Jesus his loaves and fishes. He did what he could, and God did the rest. Before the day was over, many Philistines soldiers were killing each other. There was a great military victory that day, because one special young man stepped out for God to do what he could do.



Methods

Discuss the value of doing good without having to be made to do it. Illustrate the character quality of initiative: which means recognizing what needs to be done and doing it before someone asks you to do it. Encourage each student to plan at least one project during the week to take initiative at home.

Look for an opportunity to do something pleasing for your mother or father before you are asked to do it.

Be ready to report on how it made you feel.

Also, discuss the quality of boldness, which comes from knowing that what you have to do is right and pleasing to God.

Goliath of Gath

Volume 2

Lesson 8



Bible References

1 Samuel 17

Hebrews 11:6

1 John 4:4

according to the same words: and David heard {them}.

24 "And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid.

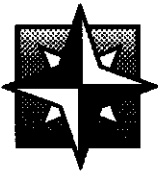
25 "And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, {that} the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.

26 "And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who {is} this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?

27 "And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him.

28 "And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.

29 "And David said, What have I now done? {Is there} not a cause?"



Theme

Wisdom is looking at things from God's point of view, and faith acts on what is realized in wisdom.



Scripture Reading

1 Samuel 17:23-29, 31-36, 42-45

23 "And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake

31 "And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed {them} before Saul: and he sent for him.

32 "And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.

33 "And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou {art but} a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.

34 "And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock:

35 "And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered {it} out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught {him} by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.

36 "Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.

42 "And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was {but} a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

43 "And the Philistine said unto David, {Am} I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

44 "And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.

45 "Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts,

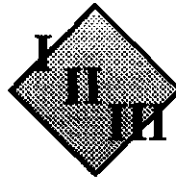
the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied."



Memory Verse

1 John 4:4

"Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."



Outline

I. David and His Brethren.

- A. David obeyed his father and took food to his brothers, who were in King Saul's army, fighting the Philistines.
- B. David found that a 9-foot-9-inch-tall Philistine warrior, Goliath, stood apart from the Philistine army each day for 40 days and challenged any Israeli warrior to fight him one-on-one.
- C. King Saul offered great riches and one of his daughters to any man who would kill Goliath.
- D. All of the soldiers of Israel saw Goliath. They were terrified of him, and fled.
- E. David went to King Saul and volunteered to fight Goliath.

F. Eliab, David's oldest brother, ridiculed him. Who did David think he was?

E. David hit Goliath in the forehead with a stone from his sling, and then used Goliath's own sword to cut off his head.

II. David and King Saul.

A. Saul, like the rest of Israel, was focused on the physical situation. The giant, Goliath, was bigger than he or any of his men. When you focus on yourself and the problem, you will have fear.

B. David, in turn, looked at it with faith.

1. Fear focuses on the problem; faith focuses on God.
2. God had prepared David by letting him fight the lion and the bear. He had confidence as a fighter.

C. Saul offered David his armor and weapons.

D. David had no experience with that type of armor. He declined to use it, and kept the weapon he was skilled in using.

III. David and Goliath.

A. Goliath, too, saw only the physical situation, and mocked David.

B. David was willing to fight, because he saw a principle that the others did not see. He realized that Goliath had defied Almighty God, and believed God was against him.

C. Goliath cursed David in the name of his gods.

D. David came against Goliath in the name of the Lord, as God's servant and instrument, and not just in his own strength.



Spiritual Truths

- Wisdom is seeing God's point of view.
- The other Israelites saw the giant, but David saw God's purposes.
- The battle was not between David and Goliath, but was between Goliath and God. So, Goliath did not have a chance.
- David was sensitive in his spirit to see the bigger picture, because he had consistently worshipped and prayed every day.
- David asked, "Is there not a cause?" He believed in God's purposes in the earth and had something to live for. He was not afraid to die.



Lesson Material

Earlier, we learned that David was subjected to the menial task of shepherding, and that he was misunderstood and judged by his brothers. He went to the battle front to take food to them, and all of them were cowering in fear of the giant. The Philistines had been fighting against Israel for many years. They

had conquered Israel before, and they were trying again. Their greatest fighter was a giant from the city of Gath, named Goliath. He was at least 9' 9" tall, larger than any man alive today. He had killed whole groups of men single-handedly, and he had never been beaten. He was powerful and in the prime of life.

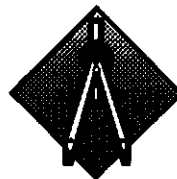
Goliath was challenging the Israelites to send a warrior to represent the army. Occasionally in history, the practice of using "champions" to substitute for a whole army was used, although it was not always honored. The idea was that the two champions would fight to the finish, and the losing group would concede to the winners, usually by submitting to slavery.

King Saul had promised a large reward to the man who would kill Goliath. But, for 40 days, the giant's mocking challenge was left unanswered. Then, young David came. He had returned to his shepherd's job, and had been alone with God, praying, singing, and serving. When he saw the situation, he recognized immediately that the others were too spiritually dull to realize that Goliath was not just mocking them. He was mocking their God.

David was not discouraged by his brother's remarks, and went to King Saul to volunteer for the job. Saul knew David as a musician; but, he did not know David was also a fighter. When Saul, who was a very large man himself, offered to let David use his armor, David wisely declined in favor of his more familiar weapon, the sling. The sling was a simple weapon, consisting of a leather pouch with two strings, or small ropes, attached to its opposite sides, having a stone placed in the middle of the pouch. The user of the sling would hold the two ends of the ropes together, with the stone in the pouch, and whirl it around to build up momentum.

When he released one of the ropes, the stone would fly through the air with great force. Judges 20:16 mentions that the tribe of Benjamin had 700 left-handed men who could sling a stone at a "hair breadth" and not miss. This took great skill.

The most important lesson in this story is not David's courage, but his wisdom and faith, which produced the courage. While all Israel could see the giant, David saw God's purposes. Anyone could see the problem, but David saw the answer in God. David knew that Goliath was bigger than he was; but, he also knew that God was bigger than Goliath. He realized that God could have used a lame armadillo, if it had the right attitude. So, God could certainly use a boy who had faith in God, a pure motive, and was prepared and skilled to use what he had. Do you know that God is bigger than any problem you have? Are you willing to be used by God to do His will?



Methods

Make a simple sling out of string, or a leather thong, and use a wrapped piece of taffy as a stone. Cautiously demonstrate the technique.

Show the class the approximate 9'9" height of the giant. Measure the height of the ceiling, and mention that his belt buckle would be around the level of an average man's eyes. He was six cubits and a span tall. A cubit is the distance from a man's elbow to the end of his finger -- about 18 inches. A span is the distance

between his extended thumb and little finger -- between 6 and 8 inches.

Have a student stand up and try to look ferocious, representing Goliath. Then

have a large man stand behind him, representing an angel of the Lord. Remind them that every problem looks small compared to God's might.

Dave In the Cave

Volume 2

Lesson 9



Bible References

1 Samuel 21:10-15

1 Samuel 22

Psalms 34

Psalms 40:17

1 Peter 5:8

1 John 5:18



Scripture Reading

1 Samuel 21:10-14

10 *"And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath.*

11 *"And the servants of Achish said unto him, (Is) not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?*

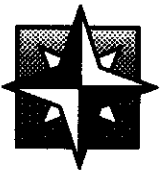
12 *"And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath.*

13 *"And he changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard.*

14 *"Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man is mad: wherefore {then} have ye brought him to me?"*

1 Samuel 22:1-2, 5

1 *"David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard {it}, they went down thither to him.*



Theme

In times of adversity we grow, and develop lasting and true friendships with faithful people.

2 "And every one {that was} in distress, and every one that {was} in debt, and every one {that was} discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.

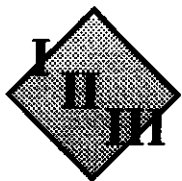
5 "And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth."



Memory Verse

Psalms 40:17

"Thou art my help and my deliverer."



Outline

I. David At Gath.

A. David tried to find refuge in Goliath's home town. (1 Samuel 21:10-15)

1. He thought he would be safer than he had been in Israel.
2. He was wrong.
3. The people had heard about his military exploits against the Philistines.

- B. Gath's king Achish thought David was mad and did not want him in Gath.
- C. David pretended to be dangerously insane, so that the Philistines would be afraid to kill him.
- D. After he was set free, David wrote Psalms 34 as a song of thanks to God.

II. David At Adullam.

A. God was building David's character, while he was exiled in the caves at Adullam.

B. While David was in hiding, God brought his family together.

1. His father and brothers came to him.
2. David feared King Saul would try to kill his brothers and parents.
3. David took them to Moah and asked the king there to give them shelter while King Saul was trying to find him.
4. Adversity unites families.

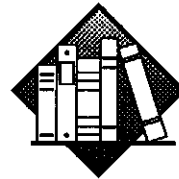
C. 400 men came to David and became his army.

1. People with problems sought out God's anointed leader.
2. People who were content under Saul stayed where they were.
3. Many people do not go to God until they have problems and realize they need Him.
4. The men who came to David were:
 - a. In distress;
 - b. In debt;
 - c. Discontented.

III. King Saul's Jealousy.

- A. When Saul learned that the priests of Nob had helped David, he had them and their families killed, even though they did not know David was running from Saul.
- B. Saul was afraid of losing his throne, because Samuel had anointed David to be king in Saul's place.
1. Jealousy is the fear of being replaced.
 2. Saul had the office, but David had God's anointing.
 3. David let God take care of Saul, even though he could have taken care of him himself.
 4. King Saul was hurting other people, because of his fear and anger. He did not turn to God in repentance and faith.
 5. People who hurt others are usually full of hurts and fears, and they need to submit to God.

- There are times when it is wise to run from danger.
- If we are not careful, we could go to other wicked people for help and get into more trouble, as David did when he went to the Philistines for protection.
- It is always best to turn to God when we are in danger or have problems, because He loves us and never lets us down.
- Jealousy is a type of fear, which is brought on by a selfish attitude.



Lesson Material

It is very sad to see King Saul at this point in his life. He started out so gifted, humble, and anointed by God. But, when he became a rich and powerful leader, he became self-centered, arrogant, and proud. He stopped seeking after God; and, through his rebellion, he left himself open to Satan. Evil spirits troubled and tormented him, and he was insanely jealous of David. If Saul had just turned to God and repented, he could have been forgiven and restored; but, he never did. He kept trying to keep his office through fleshly means. King Saul knew that God intended to make David the king, but he thought he could stop God's plan by killing David.

David kept his heart right with God, and God protected him from King Saul and his other enemies. The fact that David had enemies did not mean that God did



Spiritual Truths

- Adversity and problems tend to unify families.
- Sometimes we suffer because of the sin in the heart of an authority; but, God wants us to keep our hearts from bitterness and learn to forgive those who offend us.
- When an adult does something to hurt you, go to a parent or a pastor, and ask for their help and protection.

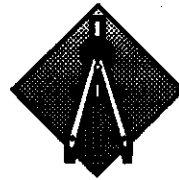
not love David. It was a powerful motivation for David to keep close to God, because he knew that one of his enemies wanted to destroy him. We also need to know that we have an enemy who wants to destroy us (1 Peter 5:8), and we need to stay under God's authority where Satan cannot touch us. (1 John 5:18)

When David fled to the caves of Adullam, God did some special things for him. In his time of adversity, David's parents and brothers came to him, and he was reunited with his family. In the past, his parents and brothers had rejected and mistreated him, but now they were acting like a family. David took them to Moab and asked the king to keep them safe from Saul until David's time of danger was ended.

God also began drawing other men to David and building his army. Men who were in debt, in trouble, or were discontented under King Saul made the courageous decision to go to David and come under his command. Many others in Israel thought that King Saul was insane, and they believed that David was God's anointed leader. David did not seem to be getting the "cream of the crop" for his army, but God used them to start a great

band of mighty men, who remained true and faithful to David.

Today, some people stay in religious organizations which have long ago dried up spiritually, but they do not make a major change until they have difficulties. Many people do not even come to God, until there are pressures and problems in their lives which show them their great need for God.



Methods

Discuss the term, "fair-weather friends."

Ask the students or teachers to share an experience of being in a difficult or discouraging place and discovering that a true friend will always stand with you.

Have the students visualize and share about how they think it would feel to live in a cave. Do you think it would make the blessings later in life more appreciated?

Love Your Enemies

Volume 2

Lesson 10



Bible References

1 Samuel 21,24,26

Psalms 55

Matthew 5:44

Matthew 18:15-17

Romans 12:21



Scripture Reading

1 Samuel 26:5-11

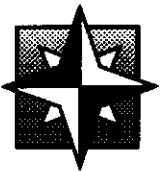
5 *"And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay in the trench, and the people pitched round about him.*

6 *"Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee.*

7 *"So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster: but Abner and the people lay round about him.*

8 *"Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not {smite} him the second time.*

9 *"And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand*



Theme

One great evidence of real Christianity is our response to people who do us wrong.

against the LORD'S anointed, and be guiltless?

10 "David said furthermore, {As} the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish.

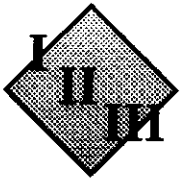
11 "The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD'S anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that {is} at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go."



Memory Verse

Matthew 5:44

"Love your enemies....do good to them that hate you."



Outline

I. What Is an Enemy?

- A. An enemy is anyone who seeks to harm you.
- B. Generally, people who hurt us in some way have problems with themselves, or they are reacting to misunderstandings.

- C. Satan is also our enemy. We are under no obligation to love him or his demons.
- D. We should love people, even if they hurt us or our reputation.

II. Why Do We Have Enemies?

- A. As long as there is sin in the world, people will be self-centered and harm others.
- B. God allows evil in the world to teach us to turn to Him for help and safety.

III. How Should We React to an Enemy?

- A. We should love them.
 1. Love does not mean that we must like them or seek to be around them.
 2. Love means that we are aware of their needs and their hurts, and we want to see them saved, or set free from their bitterness.
- B. We should do good to them and pray for them.
 1. "Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:21)
 2. David showed King Saul that he was not against him, even though Saul was trying to kill him.
 3. David had faith that God was able to promote him, and it did not have to be at the expense of others.



Spiritual Truths

- Sometimes people will do you wrong because of the sin and torment in their hearts, even though you have not done anything to them to deserve it.
- We need to forgive others, so we do not become bitter and end up hurting others.
- People who hurt others are always full of hurts themselves, and they need help.
- If we react to meanness by being mean in return, we are being led by evil.
- Love sees the need in others, even those who do us wrong, and seeks to help them.
- The best way to get rid of enemies is to win their friendship.
- By being kind, understanding and praying for a person who has tried to hurt us, we can overcome evil.



Lesson Material

In 1 Samuel 26, David was still a fugitive from King Saul. David had faithfully served King Saul, but Saul was jealous of David. Jealousy means the fear of being replaced. Saul had not been faithful to God, and God had chosen David

to be king in his place. When Saul realized that, instead of repenting of his pride and other sins, he tried to kill David.

David had not wronged Saul, yet the king repeatedly tried to kill him. For several years, David had suffered in the wilderness, all the while knowing that he was called to be a king and to live in a palace. Those times tried his faith. Did God mean it? Where was God?

Then, David learned where Saul was camped. During the night, David and Abishai quietly slipped into the middle of the camp, through hundreds of sleeping guards. Abishai was delighted. He was certain that this was a prophetic confirmation that Saul should be executed on the spot.

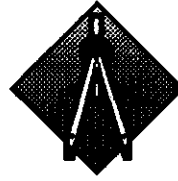
Has God ever tested your heart by giving you a chance to “get back” at someone who spoke against you in some way?

It is easy to talk ourselves into believing that the Lord wants to bless us by giving us the chance to get even with someone who has wronged us. But David had the wisdom to know that, if God wanted to kill Saul, He could do it in His time and in His own way. Even though Saul's leadership was rejected by God, David refused to be the one to “put him in his rightful place.” He refused to lift his hand against God's “anointed leader.”

It is very important for us to recognize that God anoints leaders in the church, such as pastors. We need to have the heart of David and the wisdom to see that God can take care of His anointed. Today, we do not use swords. We use the tongue to kill. We can kill a pastor's influence by the words of our mouth. We need to be very careful not to cut down God's anointed.

God can take care of him if he is wrong. Our pastors need to be encouraged and often protected against all the evil that is spoken against them.

Love is not a feeling. To "love our enemies," as Jesus said, does not mean that we seek intimate fellowship with them. Love is the opposite of selfishness. Sin causes us to focus on our own needs and feelings, and to react defensively when we are hurt. But love is unselfish. Love looks at the needs and hurts of the other person. Love seeks the best for others. When we love God, we are not only free to love our friends, but we also have the ability to be aware of the needs of those who do us wrong.



Methods

Plan with at least one other teacher to dramatize the concept of anger and bitterness. Establish one character as the "villain," who does something unkind to the "victim." Then let the victim fret, fume, and repeatedly scowl at the villain. Show how the victim is actually being controlled by the weakness of the other person. Then go to the villain, tell him his fault (Matthew 18:15-17), and forgive him. Discover a hurt or a misunderstanding that led to the offense in the first place, and demonstrate the freedom and peace that comes from forgiving and trusting God to take care of you.

I Rejoice At Thy Word

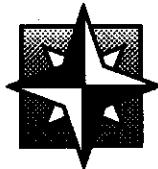
Volume 2

Lesson 11



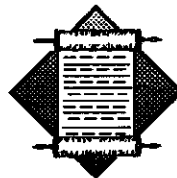
Bible References

Psalms 1:1, 2
Psalms 9:12, 15, 16
Psalms 19:7-10
Psalms 27:4
Psalms 56:3
Psalms 104:34
Psalms 119: 97, 162
Psalms 122:1
Psalms 130:5
John 6:63
Romans 10:17
1 Corinthians 2:14
Colossians 3:1
Revelation 2:7



Theme

King David lived a wonderful and successful life, because he loved God, and he loved God's Word.



Scripture Reading

Psalms 9:12,15,16

12 *"When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.*

15 *"The heathen are sunk down in the pit {that} they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken.*

16 *"The LORD is known {by} the judgment {which} he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgaion. Selah."*

Psalms 19:7-10

7 *"The law of the LORD {is} perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD {is} sure, making wise the simple.*

8 "The statutes of the LORD (are) right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD (is) pure, enlightening the eyes.

9 "The fear of the LORD (is) clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD (are) true (and) righteous altogether.

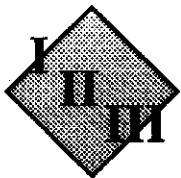
10 "More to be desired (are they) than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb."



Memory Verse

Psalms 119:162

"I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil."



Outline

I. David Loved God's Word.

- A. "One (thing) have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple." (Psalms 27:4)
- B. "My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD." (Psalms 104:34)

II. David Trusted God's Word.

- A. David learned that fear was his reminder to build his faith in God.
1. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee." (Psalms 56:3)
 2. Any time I become fearful, I will build my trust in God.
- B. God's Word teaches us to trust in God and not in flesh.
1. Throughout history, God has never failed.
 2. This is illustrated repeatedly in the Bible.
 3. That is why "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17)
- C. "I wait for the LORD...and in his word do I hope." (Psalms 130:5)

III. David Rejoiced In God's Word.

- A. The Word of God was a great source of joy to David, who found encouragement, comfort, and strength in the Word.
- B. "O how love I thy law! it (is) my meditation all the day." (Psalms 119:97)

We're not sure that David wrote Psalms 119, but it does express a love for the Word that was characteristic of David.

- C. David, and people like him, became as excited when they learned new truths from God's Word, as carnal people today become excited with entertainment.

IV. David Meditated On God's Word.

- A. Psalms 1:1 --Blessed (happy, fortunate, to be envied) is the person who does not:
1. Walk in the counsel of the ungodly;
 2. Stand in the way of sinners;
 3. Sit in the seat of the scornful.
- B. *"But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in his law doth he meditate day and night."* (Psalms 1:2)



Spiritual Truths

- If we genuinely love God, we will love His Word, the Bible.
- All truly great people in history have had a love for God's Word.
- To live an overcoming, happy life, you need to read and meditate on the Word of God every day.
- Faith comes by hearing the Word, because we constantly see from scripture the faithfulness and infallibility of God.
- There is no true wisdom apart from the Bible.
- If we go without food for several days, we become physically weak; and if we go without reading the Bible, we become spiritually weak.



Lesson Material

As we go through our study of the Bible, we find a consistent and recurring pattern. People who love God and His Word are blessed and successful in life, while those who reject God, or who turn away from God, suffer the consequences in the end. People who do not live for God may prosper or have success in the natural; but, in the end it turns bitter, and they are always losers in life. On the other hand, those who love God and His Word may go through testing and suffering; they may even die as martyrs; but, their end is always blessed. They are to live forever with their wonderful Father God.

Anyone who genuinely loves God will instinctively love His Word. The Bible is God's Word to His children. People who are not born again have a hard time understanding the Bible. They certainly do not enjoy it, because it is not written to them. Also, the Bible is not just written to the mind of man. Jesus said, *"the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."* (John 6:63) He said, *"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."* (Revelation 2:7) People who are not born again do not have spiritual understanding. They are spiritually blind and deaf. (1 Corinthians 2:14)

In a public school classroom, one teacher was an atheist. He hated God. To show his disgust, he took a Bible and threw it across the room, saying, "I've read some of the Bible, and it is offensive to me. It does not even make sense." One wise young girl politely raised her hand

and said gently, "Sir, that is what you get for reading someone else's mail." The Bible was written to God's children. If you are born again and love God, it is a personal letter to you.

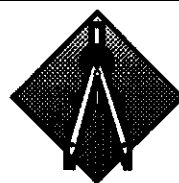
Of course, the Bible is good news only to Christians. For anyone who rejects God, it is bad news. It speaks of a holy and righteous God, who cannot and will not tolerate sin. It speaks of judgment against nations and individuals. It shows the awful consequences of the sins of people like Cain, Abimelech, Jezebel, Herod, Judas, and many, many more who were selfish and independent. The second coming of Christ is, indeed, bad news for those who are not found faithful when He comes. Eternity is a fearful and morbid thought for those who are not living for God in this life.

David was a man who lived for eternity, and not for the moment. He lived for God instead of for himself. Therefore, God took great pleasure in him, and blessed him greatly in his earthly life. David loved God and, therefore, loved to go to God's house. (Psalms 122:1) David loved godly people, and loved God's Word. If you received a letter in the mail from someone you loved very much, you would not open the phone bill and read it carefully before you finally opened their letter. You would be delighted to hear from that person.

Many people today claim that they love God, but they skip church whenever they have an excuse and seldom open a Bible outside of church. On the other hand, they eagerly arise early in the morning for a fishing trip, and they will make great sacrifices to attend sporting events where they shout themselves hoarse over a ball sailing through the air. What do we really love? Paul encourages you to "*Set your*

affection on things above, not on things on the earth." (Colossians 3:2)

David said that "*the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.*" (Psalms 19:7) Now, your soul is your mind, will, and emotion. To convert means to change. He was not saying that we are "saved" by the law, as we think of regeneration. He was saying that the principles of God's Word are perfect, both Old and New Testament, and they will cause positive changes in our attitudes and emotions as we read and hear them and as we apply them to our lives. God's Word will do us good in every part of our lives. "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." That means that the biographies in the Bible are accurate, and will help even those who are not brilliant intellectually to see life from God's perspective. The statutes, or rules, laid down by God are right, and are not heavy or morbid. Obedience to God will cause the heart to rejoice. When we obey His commandments, we gain a better understanding of life. We do not gain the wisdom of experience by living in sin, as some believe. We gain more wisdom by living a clean life in obedience to God. God's decisions are always right. We should desire the Word of God more than any sweet food. God's Word is wonderful, and, as Christians, we should read it, talk about it, and meditate on it every day.



Methods

Have a Bible contest. One obvious contest is to have a Bible scramble, where each student has a Bible and races to find

the verse you mention. Make sure each student has a complete Bible -- without a thumb index.

Another Bible contest could involve memorization. Have the students lined up either in a line or a circle, and ask each of

them to quote a verse (or a complete phrase of a verse) that has not been mentioned yet. When a student cannot think of another verse, he must sit down. The student still standing and quoting verses is the winner and should be given a desirable prize.

Do Not Give Up

Volume 2

Lesson 12



Bible References

1 Samuel 30

Psalms 30:5

Proverbs 24:10

Jeremiah 12:5

Luke 18; 21:26

1 Corinthians 15:58

Galatians 6:9

Hebrews 12:3



Scripture Reading

1 Samuel 30:1-8

1 *"And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire;*

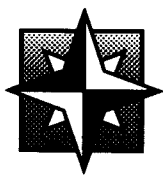
2 *"And had taken the women captives, that {were} therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried {them} away, and went on their way.*

3 *"So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, {it was} burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives.*

4 *"Then David and the people that {were} with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep.*

5 *"And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite.*

6 *"And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.*



Theme

One way to handle discouragement is to realize that our hardest times are often just before our greatest victories.

7 "And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David.

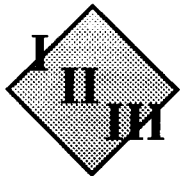
8 "And David inquired at the LORD, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake {them}, and without fail recover {all}."



Memory Verse

Galatians 6:9

"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."



Outline

I. Ziklag.

A. David was still running from Saul.

1. He had spent some time in Gath, a Philistine city.
2. He had about 600 men with him at the time.

B. When David and his soldiers returned home to Ziklag, they found that the Amalekite army had destroyed Ziklag

and had taken their families captive, to serve as their slaves.

II. David's Darkest Hour.

A. David's men were enraged and blamed him for their losses.

1. In their grief, they talked about stoning David.
2. They suddenly forgot their pledge of loyalty to him.

B. When everyone in David's congregation was against him:

1. David encouraged himself in the Lord.
2. When no one else is encouraging you, encourage yourself by prayer and reading the Bible.

C. David could stand alone because he did not have second-hand faith. He had a personal and real relationship with God.

III. David's Answer: Prayer.

A. David could have run from his men or could have tried to negotiate his way out of trouble with smooth talk, but he did not.

B. David turned to God.

1. David asked for the ephod.
 - a. The ephod was a linen garment, like a shirt or jacket.
 - b. The ephod was worn by Jewish priests when conducting worship before God.
2. The priest's ephod.
 - a. Had 12 stones set in it, one for each of the 12 tribes of Israel.

- b. Also had two special stones on it: the Urim and Thummim.
- c. Somehow God used the Urim and Thummim to answer questions.

C. Shall I pursue the enemy?

1. Yes. Pursue them.
2. You will overtake them.
3. You will recover everything you lost.

IV. Pursue, Overtake, Recover All.

A. David pursued the Amalekite army.

1. 200 of his men were too tired to go, so David went with 400.
2. They found an Egyptian captive who had been left behind to die.
3. David promised the Egyptian servant he would neither kill him nor turn him over to his Amalekite master, if he would help David and his men find the Amalekites.

B. David and his army found the Amalekites.

1. David and his men fought the Amalekites for nearly a full day.
2. 400 Amalekites escaped on camels.
3. There were apparently thousands of Amalekites against David's 400 men.
4. The Amalekites had been drinking and celebrating.
5. The Amalekites were no match for David's angry, sober men.

C. David and his men rescued their wives and all of their families, and they recovered everything the Amalekites had carried away.

- D. David and his men also gained a great fortune from the Amalekites, including their flocks, herds and cattle.
- E. Soon after this, David was crowned king in Hebron.

1. The darkest hour was just before the dawn of his greatest moments.
2. *"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."* (Psalms 30:5)

V. Do Not Give Up.

A. The Bible teaches us not to quit because things get tough.

1. We will reap IF we do not give up. (Galatians 6:9)
2. Do not get tired, or give up. (Hebrews 12:3)
3. *"...be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."* (1 Corinthians 15:58)

B. If you quit when things get tough, it shows that your strength is small. (Proverbs 24:10)

1. In the end times, men will lose heart and give up because they are so afraid. (Luke 21:26)
2. *"If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou content with the horses?"* (Jeremiah 12:5)



Spiritual Truths

- No one has ever achieved anything of value without problems or opposition.
- The same stone can be a stumbling-stone or a stepping-stone. It all depends on how it is used.
- Your faith is seen far more in how you handle hardship than in how many things you have.
- Your problems will make you either better or bitter, depending on what you do.
- When adversities in life come, God wants us to be quiet and pray, while Satan wants us to quit in despair.
- No one can stop a man who will not quit; not even the devil.
- In due time, we will reap the reward of sowing good seed, if we do not give up in the process.
- Never doubt in the darkness what God has shown you in the light.



Lesson Material

It is important to note that David was called "a man after God's own heart." He was greatly loved by God. Yet we see David suffering great rejection by his family, his employer (King Saul), his father-in-law

(the same), and now by his six hundred faithful followers. He had been unfairly persecuted and condemned to death. He suffered many hardships, especially in his flight from the mad King Saul. Yet, he continued to maintain his integrity. He refused to kill King Saul when he had the opportunity, and he kept a sweet spirit through it all. In fact, David did very well under pressure. It was much later, when he was prosperous and successful, when his life was easy, that David fell into sin and compromised himself.

All of us are tempted to feel sorry for ourselves when we feel misunderstood, rejected, or unfairly treated by others. Why cannot life be fair? Why do they not understand? The storms of life are very necessary for our growth in character. We need to know that life is not fair. Life is training for eternity, and we must have the rain, and even storms, in life if we are to grow strong. Problems teach us to humble ourselves and turn to God in prayer. When we have problems we cannot solve, we are most motivated to seek God. God does not tempt us, but He does allow trials in our life. It has been said that temptations are situations designed by Satan to lure us away from God, while trials are situations designed by God to draw us to Him.

Ziklag was a pivotal point in David's life. He was just starting to have some success. He had a family, and 600 faithful and courageous men as his army, even though he was still a fugitive from King Saul. Now they come home to find their city burned to the ground, and their wives and children taken captive by a large enemy army. David's men did not have as much faith as he had. They immediately put their focus on him, and became bitter. They forgot the covenant they had made

with David. They were planning to kill their leader.

Sometimes, when people are really angry at God, they will become bitter toward their church or their pastor and would never admit that they were actually angry with God. That is one reason you need to pray for your pastor. He needs encouragement, because he has a great responsibility in leading the people.

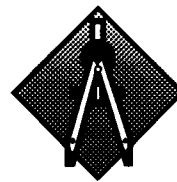
When no one was there to encourage him, David encouraged himself. This is the mark of a true leader. David did not sit back and feel sorry for himself. He turned to the Lord. David apparently had the priestly ephod, which was a sacred garment worn by the high priest. It contained the Urim and Thummim stones used by Israel to get direction from God. When David prayed for guidance, God told him to pursue the enemy, and that He would help David and his army find and defeat the Amalekites. God assured David that he would recover everything the enemy had taken.

David's men were encouraged by the news, and those who could get up immediately to go after the enemy. Two hundred men were so weary that they could not get up. They stayed at the camp. Later, when the four hundred returned with the spoils from the Amalekites, they wanted to exclude the 200 from sharing the wealth. But, David told them to share, because they would have helped if they had been physically able to pursue the Amalekites.

God helped David and his men find the Amalekites, who had been celebrating

rather heavily. In their drunken condition, they were no match for David's angry men, even though they were a much larger army. The Israelites slew the Amalekites through the night and into the next afternoon. Only four hundred of them escaped on camels. It must have been a huge amount of wealth that David's men carried back.

In addition to recovering everything the Amalekites had taken away from them, David and his army now had all the sheep, cattle and other livestock of the Amalekites. David was glad that he did not give up in despair in his darkest hour, and now he had a grand time of rejoicing.



Methods

Bring in a large stone or cinder block to illustrate the stepping stone principle. Trip over it; then stand on it.

Write the word, "better" on the blackboard. Then superimpose a large, bold letter, "I" over the first "e" to make it "bitter". Talk about the adverse effects of focusing on self.

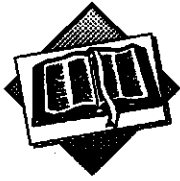
Do you know any people who have given up? Can you think of any?

The old saying goes, "the darkest hour is just before dawn." Is this an old wives' tale, or does it have a biblical basis? (See Psalms 30:5)

David's Mighty Men

Volume 2

Lesson 13



Bible References

1 Samuel 23

2 Samuel 23:8-161

1 Chronicles 14:2

Psalms 60:12

Daniel 11:32

Romans 12



Scripture Reading

2 Samuel 23:8-16

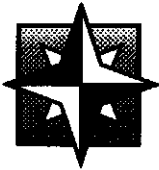
8 *"These (be) the names of the mighty men whom David had: The Tachmonite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains; the same (was) Adino the Eznite: (he lift up his spear) against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time.*

9 *"And after him (was) Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, (one) of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines (that) were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away:*

10 *"He arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword: and the LORD wrought a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to spoil.*

11 *"And after him (was) Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentiles: and the people fled from the Philistines.*

12 *"But he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines: and the LORD wrought a great victory.*



Theme

Every great leader in God needs a team of skilled and courageous helpers to achieve his potential.

13 "And three of the thirty chief went down, and came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam: and the troop of the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim.

14 "And David (was) then in an hold, and the garrison of the Philistines (was) then (in) Bethlehem.

15 "And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which (is) by the gate!

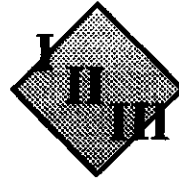
16 "And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that (was) by the gate, and took (it), and brought (it) to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the LORD."



Memory Verse

Psalms 60:12

"Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies."



Outline

I. David's Mighty Men.

- A. David was not a success by himself. A team of mighty men fought with him.
- B. When David faced four other giants after Goliath, he had his mighty men with him, and they killed all of them. (2 Samuel 21:22)
- C. David also had a team of great musicians to help him in worship and song writing.
- D. The people made David a great king, and God confirmed it. (1 Chronicles 14:2)

II. The Three Mightiest.

- A. Adino the Ezrite:
 1. He killed 800 enemy soldiers at one time.
 2. He was the chief of the captains.
- B. Eleazar the son of Dodo:
 1. He defied the Philistine army, even though the Israeli army was away.
 2. He killed them until he could not pry his hand off his sword.
- C. Shammah the son of Agee:
 1. The Philistines came as a troop, and the other Israelites fled.
 2. He stood his ground in a bean patch, and defeated the Philistine army.

III. Three Courageous Men.

A. David was in a cave near Bethlehem.

1. The Philistine army was occupying Bethlehem, David's boyhood town.
2. David sighed that he longed for a drink from that well.

B. Three of his thirty mighty men went down to fetch a pail of water.

1. They literally broke through the army in broad daylight, and fought off the army, while one of them got the water and carried it to David.
2. David was so moved, that he poured it out as an offering to God.

IV. Other Mighty Men.

A. Abishai:

1. The brother of Joab.
2. Killed 300 men with a spear.

B. Benaiah:

1. He killed two lion-like men of Moab.
2. He killed a lion in a pit on a snowy day.
3. He killed a strong Egyptian with his own spear.
4. He was captain of the guard.

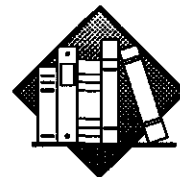
- Greatness comes from a combination of a good attitude, faith in God, and hard work.

- You are not living fully, until you have something worth dying for.

- "The people who know their God shall be strong, and do exploits."

- People tend to be like those who lead them.

- The greatest exploits in history have been accomplished by people whose motive was to help or defend others.



Lesson Material

David was one of the greatest men of history. He was great, because he loved God with all his heart. Everything else in life flowed from that pure motive. As a boy who knew God personally, he did not sit and daydream while working as a servant for his father. He also did not sit around feeling sorry for himself because he had to work while his brothers got to go to battle, and were treated better than he was. Instead of complaining, he faithfully took care of his father's sheep as though they were his own, and he used his time to develop his skills in music and in fighting. He became an excellent singer, musician, athlete, and fighter.

As a leader, David had quite a group of skilled fighters, as well as outstanding musicians around him. One reason is that "like attracts like." People of strength and courage were attracted to David, and they



Spiritual Truths

- God loves to raise up great teams, not just great individuals.

were glad to be under a leader they could respect and admire. Another factor was that David inspired those under his command to be the best they could be, because he practiced what he urged others to do. We are affected and influenced by those we relate to, especially by our leaders. If the leader is kind and gracious, his people will tend to be kind and gracious. If the leader is a hard worker, his people will tend to work hard.

David had a "special forces" group of thirty mighty men who had been through great battles and had done astounding exploits. Samson was not the only fighter in history who fought an army and won. Several of David's warriors had killed hundreds of enemy soldiers at a time. There are three major factors:

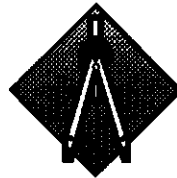
1. They were in superb physical condition. They had worked their muscles diligently for years.
2. They were well-trained. They knew how to use weapons with skill.
3. They were anointed by God, who made them able to accomplish far more than their human endurance would allow.

Imagine three young men, who were so strong and fearless, that they broke through a garrison of Philistine soldiers to get a jar of water from the middle of their military camp. David was so moved, that he could not drink the water which they offered to him.

Note that there was a definite order within the ranks of the mighty men. Some were greater than others, and had more responsibility. Adino, Eleazar, and Shammah were the three mightiest. They were men of amazing strength and

courage. They had also proved to be faithful, with a servant's heart for their God and for their great king, David.

One of the basic problems that human beings tend to have is a selfish motive in life. When we are selfish, we tend to do whatever seems to benefit ourselves the most, and we will use or even harm other people in the process. This basic selfish spirit is called "sin." When we repent and give our lives to the Lord Jesus Christ, we begin to live for Him instead of for self. We seek His honor and pleasure, and we believe He will do what is best for us. We love Him, because He first loved us. When we fully give ourselves to the Lord, we become free to do His will and gain the potential to be the best we can be.



Methods

Romans 12 teaches us that God gives different strengths and abilities to different believers, and that we are to develop those God-given abilities as much as we can. The gifts that God gives are not like the gifts we think of as "freebies." God is not like Santa. God never gives us a gift just for our own benefit. God always gives gifts that enable us to help others. His gifts to us are always special abilities to help and serve others.

Discussion questions.

"What are some gifts that God gives people to enable them to help other people better?" (Music, art, teaching, prophecy, showing mercy, etc.)

If God gives a gift of musical ability to you, do you have to work and practice to develop it? Is it hard work?

Do you know whether you have a special gift that can bless and help others if you develop it?

Do you think God is pleased when we practice skills and develop them for him?

Mephibosheth

Volume 2

Lesson 14

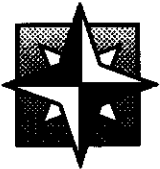


Bible References

2 Samuel 9

Titus 3:5

1 John 1:9



Theme

If we go to heaven and live with God forever, it will be because of our relationship with Jesus Christ as a child of God, and not because of our works.



Scripture Reading

2 Samuel 9:1-13

1 "And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

2 "And {there was} of the house of Saul a servant whose name {was} Ziba. And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, {Art} thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant {is he}.

3 "And the king said, {Is} there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, {which is} lame on {his} feet.

4 "And the king said unto him, Where {is} he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he {is} in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lodebar.

5 "Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lodebar.

6 "Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant!

7 "And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.

8 "And he bowed himself, and said, What {is} thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I {am}?

9 "Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house.

10 "Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in (the fruits), that thy master's son may have food to eat: but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

11 "Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, (said the king), he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons.

12 "And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name {was} Micha. And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba {were} servants unto Mephibosheth.

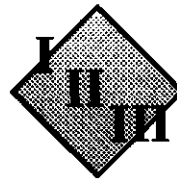
13 "So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet."



Memory Verse

Titus 3:5

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us."



Outline

I. David's Kindness.

- A. Because David loved God, he naturally loved people as well.
- B. A covenant does not end with one person. If you love someone as David loved Jonathan, you will want to bless those that he loves.

II. Mephibosheth's Fear.

- A. Mephibosheth was the son of David's best friend, but he was also the grandson of David's most bitter enemy, King Saul.
- B. It was a very common practice for a new king to execute the male descendants of the former monarch. So Mephibosheth had good reason to fear.
- C. Kings had complete power to kill people if they chose to, and they often used that power.

III. Mephibosheth's Inheritance.

- A. He received all the real estate property of his wealthy grandfather, King Saul.
- B. He was also given the privilege of eating at King David's table daily.

IV. Spiritual Lesson.

- A. Our eternal inheritance as children of God is not dependent on our works,

but is dependent on the question of our paternity: who is our father?

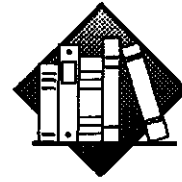
- B. If we have repented of our sins and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, we are "in Christ." That is, we are children of God through Christ, and we are heirs with Him.
- C. Even if we are not able to walk perfectly, we are partakers of God's love and provision, because we have received sonship from God by faith.



Spiritual Truths

- Heaven is not the destiny of "good, moral" people, but of the children of God who have given their hearts and lives to the Lord Jesus Christ by faith.
- Hell is not the place for "bad" people, but for those who have chosen to live their lives for self and have rejected the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Our inheritance as sons of God is not only great wealth eternally, but also a relationship with our Heavenly Father.
- Lameness is a physical type of our sinfulness, because as sinners, we are not able to walk perfectly, and need to be made whole in order to function as we were created.
- God does not have any grandchildren. The issue is, who is your father?
- The fact that we are loved is not the result of our loveliness or achievement; it

is because of the character and nature of the One who loves us.



Lesson Material

David became the king of the nation of Israel about 3,000 years ago. In those days, people who were injured did not have the medical care available to us today. If a child had an accident and broke his feet, or mangled his leg, he would often remain helplessly crippled for life. There were many people with various forms of permanent disability, and they were often forced to eke out a meager living by begging, unless their family could care for them.

For whatever reason, a lame person was unable to walk on his own, and that meant in those days that he could not contribute much to society. He was dependent upon others, and was often cruelly treated by those who were able-bodied. Crippled people -- the blind, the lepers -- were usually rejects from the mainstream of society and lived a lonely life, full of pain.

When God made man, He made him spiritually whole and happy. Adam and Eve lived for God and had sweet fellowship with Him. They were in perfect harmony with God and with each other. When they sinned in self-willed rebellion, they became spiritually and morally diminished. They could no longer have the same kind of freedom to live right.

Sin brought fear, suspicion, anger, selfishness, and every kind of human

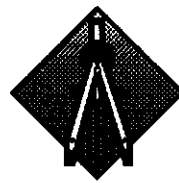
misery. When we are in sin, we are spiritually blind and unable to walk right. Even if we know how to walk, the legs will not cooperate with the brain. We are "lame" and unrighteous. When we are born again by repentance and faith, God does a work in our spirit. When we honestly confess our sins before God, He not only forgives us, but He begins to cleanse us and bring us into wholeness, so that we do not have to be slaves to sin. He is able to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

It is important to stress to the students that disabilities are not always the result of someone's sin or evidence of God's punishment. A host of other factors, such as accidents and medical problems, can cause a person to be disabled, through no "fault" of their own. We live in an evil world where bad things happen to good people. An illness or disability is not an automatic indication that a person has weak faith or has sinned.

It is also important to note that Mephibosheth did not do anything to deserve the favor of King David. He received a fabulous inheritance of great wealth, as well as the privilege of eating with the king daily, all because of who his father was. When we are born again by God's grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we become adopted into the family of God. He is our Heavenly Father. When we die, our soul will go either to heaven or hell. Heaven is a real place, where we will dwell in the presence of God and worship King Jesus. Hell is a place of

blackness, fire, and torment in the earth, where the souls of the wicked will suffer until the Great White Throne judgment day. Those who are children of God by faith will go to heaven, and those who have not given their lives to Jesus Christ will be forever separated from Him in absolute misery.

We see in the story of Mephibosheth a wonderful example of the love and mercy of God and the principle of His grace. Our assurance of heaven is not because of our ability, effort, or goodness. It is based on the completed work of Christ on the cross, and the result of the love and mercy in the heart of our wonderful God.



Methods

Encourage the class to visualize life as a lame person. Have one boy try to keep his legs perfectly limp while two others carry him around. Reinforce the principle that this is a spiritual picture of sin. Sin is not the freedom to do selfish things as much as it is the inability to walk uprightly before God. Sin brings some pleasure, but always results in problems, fears, and personal loss. Sin brings sorrow and anger, and never has lasting benefit for our lives. Holiness is really related to wholeness.

This lesson can also be illustrated with puppets, if they are available.

Prince Absalom

Volume 2

Lesson 15



Bible References

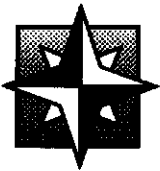
2 Samuel 14-18

Proverbs 13:24

26 "And when he polled his head, (for it was at every year's end that he polled {it}: because {the hair} was heavy on him, therefore he polled it:) he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight.

27 "And unto Absalom there were born three sons, and one daughter, whose name {was} Tamar: she was a woman of a fair countenance.

28 "So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face."



Theme

It is very important to maintain good communication with our parents, and to be submitted to them.

2 Samuel 15:1-6

1 "And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him.

2 "And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was {so}, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city {art} thou? And he said, Thy servant {is} of one of the tribes of Israel.

3 "And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters {are} good and right; but {there is} no man {deputed} of the king to hear thee.

4 "Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!



Scripture Reading

2 Samuel 14:25-28

25 "But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him.

5 "And it was (so), that when any man came nigh (to him) to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him.

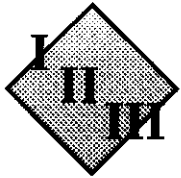
6 "And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel."



Memory Verse

Exodus 20:12

"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days might be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee."



Outline

I. Absalom's Beauty.

- A. King David was greatly blessed by God.
 1. David had several wives, and many good-looking children.
 2. His son, Absalom, was renowned for his physical beauty.
- B. Absalom was a prince, who lived in great wealth, comfort, and popularity.

II. Absalom's Problem.

- A. Absalom was bitter, because his half-brother, Amnon, had grievously wronged his sister, Tamar.
- B. King David was too easy on his sons, and did not discipline Amnon as he should have.
- C. After two years, Absalom had Amnon killed.
- D. David also failed to deal with Absalom, and simply would not talk to him.

III. Absalom's Disloyalty.

- A. As a young man, Absalom went back to Jerusalem, and went to the streets to win the hearts of the people.
- B. Absalom sought to become popular with the people of Israel, because he wanted to be king.
- C. Absalom wanted to kill his father and replace him as king.
- D. Absalom used the blessing and position he had been given to promote his own political career.

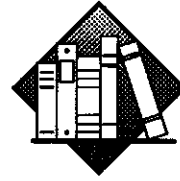
IV. Absalom's Destruction.

- A. Absalom did gain the throne in Israel for a time, forcing his father David to flee in exile.
- B. General Joab and some other Israeli troops killed Absalom when his head caught in the boughs of an oak tree and his horse went out from under him, leaving him hanging helplessly.

C. David had ordered that no harm would come to Absalom, but Joab disobeyed for the sake of the king.

1. He knew that Absalom would always be trouble.
2. David mourned for Absalom. He may have given the throne to Absalom if he had been patient.

- Bitterness always hurts the person who is bitter far more than it hurts the person who has offended him.



Lesson Material



Spiritual Truths

- Fathers need to talk with their children and resolve conflicts.
- We can avoid confrontation and hope the problems will go away; but, they usually will not until we deal with them.
- Children need to learn to talk things through with their parents and trust God to help them together.
- To honor means to value greatly, to esteem, and to respect them for the place God has given them in our lives.
- One way we have to honor those who are our elders is to address them by their last name, not by their first name.
- We should never speak to an adult on a first-name basis, as we would to a peer.
- We always suffer consequences when we take vengeance on someone else for their sin, because vengeance belongs to God.

David was a remarkable man. He was God's special servant and had achieved greatness in his life. David did have some weaknesses. King David had trouble when it came to his sons. He had been a very successful leader of the nation, but he was a weak father. His son, Amnon, had seriously hurt his daughter, Tamar. He damaged her reputation, her self-esteem, and her potential in life. Amnon had harmed her so grievously that he could have been given a death sentence. Instead, King David just could not bring himself to deal with the situation. He was strong and fair, except when it came to his sons. Then, he would not do what he should have done.

Tamar was Absalom's sister, and Absalom was bitter. Bitterness is a strong attitude of resentment and unforgiveness, which comes from an excessive focus on people and self and a lack of faith. People will never treat us perfectly. Life is not fair all of the time, because even the most loving authority can only see part of what is happening in your life. As long as there is sin, there will be problems and unfairness. Faith is a focus on God, and faith understands that God can work even through the weaknesses and mistakes of people. When we only look at people and the temporal side of life, we will tend to become bitter.

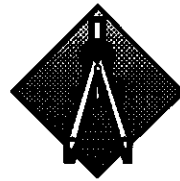
Absalom was bitter toward his brother, Amnon, because he saw that he had done a great evil to his beautiful sister and had not been punished. That was not fair. He did not realize that God was in control, and he became impatient. After two years, Absalom found a way to have Amnon killed by his servants. Absalom was guilty of murder; but, King David continued to be too lenient with his son. Now David would not talk to Absalom. Absalom needed to be corrected, but his father would not do it.

We usually think of David's love for his sons, and feel that he would not discipline them because of that. But another son of David, Solomon, later said, *"He that spareth his rod hateth his son."* (Proverbs 13:24) Remember, it is really hard for your father or mother to discipline you. They are always tempted to avoid your wrong attitudes and avoid confrontation. But, real love motivates them to take a firm stand and "give you the rod," to guard you from developing the idea that you can get away with sin, or that life will go well with those who are self-willed.

In the end, Absalom was more bitter toward his father than he ever was against his brother, Amnon. He killed Amnon; and he not only tried to kill King David, but he also worked for years to destroy his father's life's work, and to dishonor him before the people of Israel. Absalom was clever. While David spent most of his time in the palace, Absalom worked long hours on the political trail, kissing babies and showing the people how much he "loved" them. People are generally inclined to follow a leader if they feel he loves them, even if he is not a particularly good leader. Today, many faithful church members will leave a pastor who is called and anointed by God only to follow a man

or woman who comes across as caring and compassionate. Often, these "Absaloms" in the church are motivated by bitterness, which eventually will affect the way they lead people. In the end, Absalom's ambition and bitterness cost him his life, and he died without knowing that his father truly loved him.

If only King David would have sat down and talked things out with his sons. If only he had punished them when they hurt one another. It is unlikely that they would have ended up so badly. The next time Dad or Mom is tough, remember the story of Absalom. He was spoiled, popular, smart, and amazingly handsome. He had everything we normally want in life. He had it easy; but, his dad did not discipline him when he needed it. He died in misery and bitterness as a young man.



Methods

Ask the class to notice how the television and movie industry portray fathers. How many fathers in comics or movies are stupid and lazy? How many times in the movies does the father approve of God's best marriage partner for his daughter? How many cartoon series and advertisements portray kids where adults are absent, or non-existent?

The secular world would like to get children to focus on a peer-centered and self-centered world view. But the healthiest way to live a successful childhood is to be surrounded by and subjected to parents, grandparents, and other nurturing adults. God's plan for

healthy development is centered in the home. Satan wants to destroy the home by divorce, rebellion, and other forms of discord and distrust.

Encourage the adult members of the Sunday School team to be addressed by their family name, for example: "Mrs. Smith." Do not allow children to relate to them on a first-name basis, as peers. It sounds gracious for an adult to tell a child, "Just call me Bill," but it damages the principle of respect.

Ask, "What should we call our mother and father?" ("Mom" and "Dad," or similar titles -- not by their first name.)

What should we call the Pastor? ("Pastor," or "Pastor Smith," or "Sir.")

How do we address our teachers? A fourth-grader? A pre-schooler?

Never address a peer or sibling with a demeaning nick-name. Show respect for others, and others will be more inclined to show respect for you.

A Christian World View

Volume 2

Lesson 16



Bible References

Psalms 14

Psalms 24:1

Psalms 37:23

Psalms 110:2

Proverbs 13:20

Isaiah 40:22

Romans 1

1 Corinthians 6:20

Ephesians 1:6

2 Timothy 3

Titus 2:1

are young, for our character and behavior are greatly affected by our world view.



Scripture Reading

Psalms 14:1-5

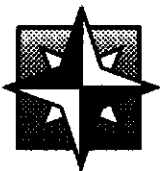
1 *"To the chief Musician, {A Psalm} of David. The fool hath said in his heart, {There is} no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, {there is} none that doeth good.*

2 *"The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, {and} seek God.*

3 *"They are all gone aside, they are {all} together become filthy: {there is} none that doeth good, no, not one.*

4 *"Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people {as} they eat bread, and call not upon the LORD.*

5 *"There were they in great fear: for God {is} in the generation of the righteous."*



Theme

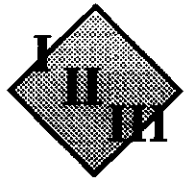
We should diligently establish a Christian world view in our minds, even when we



Memory Verse

Psalms 24:1

"The earth (is) the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein."



Outline

I. The Fool.

- A. The Bible mentions different kinds of fools.
- B. One such fool is "Nabal," who was of the house of Caleb. (1 Samuel 25:3)
 1. "Nabal" means "stupid, wicked, a vile person."
 2. It comes from the root "nabel," which means "to fall away, to become vain."
- C. A fool is a person who turns from the knowledge of God to focus his life on the temporal and physical things.
 1. A fool rejects the truth of God and chooses to believe the lie of secularism.
 2. A fool, in practice, is an "atheist."
 - a. "a" means "not," or "non."
 - b. "theo" means God.
 - c. "Atheist" means "no God," and denotes a person who either

believes or acts as if God did not exist.

- d. Atheism is always a temporary condition. There will be no atheists in heaven or hell.
- D. Fools have "turned aside" and become corrupt.
1. Because only "by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil." (Proverbs 16:6)
 2. Fools love themselves instead of God. (2 Timothy 3:1-4)
- ### II. A Secular World View.
- A. "Secular" means "godless, worldly or temporal; leaving God out of the picture."
 - B. "Humanism" is the religion that puts man in the place of God as the source of hope, peace, and fulfillment in life.
 - C. A secular world view sees self as the center of life, surrounded by people, events, and philosophies.
 - D. Christopher Columbus.
 1. The scientists of his day believed that the earth was the center of the universe, and that the sun and moon rotated around the flat earth.
 2. Columbus, a Christian, believed that the earth was round, because it is referred to as so in Isaiah 40:22.
 3. A secular humanist is like the people of Columbus' day, who see life, and even God, revolving around themselves.
 - E. Most secular humanists believe in Darwin's theory of evolution, and reject Creation.

1. There is little solid scientific evidence for the theory of evolution.
 2. Men believe it, because they want to believe it.
 3. If Creation is true, then there must be a Creator.
 - a. If God is our Creator, then He will also be our judge.
 - b. If God is going to judge my life, then I cannot get away with wickedness.
- F. The fool has said in his heart, "No God."
1. He may believe in God in his mind, but his heart rejects a holy God.
 2. His heart is for himself, so he becomes vile and self-seeking.

III. A Christian World View.

- A. God is my Creator, my Lord, my Savior, my King, and the Judge of my life.
- B. When I become a Christian, I do not just accept Jesus into my life; I become a part of His kingdom, His body, and His life.
1. He accepts us. (Ephesians 1:6)
 2. Faith is not a way to get God to do what I want, but it is the way for me to do what God wants.
- C. When I have a Christian world view:
1. I will recognize that God has the right to make the decisions in my life;
 2. I am not "my own person;" I belong to God; (1 Corinthians 6:20)
 3. My goal in life is not my own happiness, but God's glory;
 4. I will walk every day with thankfulness to God, and will bless the Lord;

5. I will be more concerned about what God thinks of me than I will about what people think of me;
6. I will live for eternity instead of for the moment;
7. I will be able to overcome temptations by faith;
8. I will love people, because God loves me.



Spiritual Truths

- A fool willfully rejects truth, because the lie is more pleasing to his ego.
- A fool loves pleasure more than he loves God.
- A fool will sell his birthright of eternal life for a mess of pottage, called the "pleasure of sin."
- Jesus is the "Alpha and Omega," the beginning and the end, the Creator and the Judge.
- Wisdom is seeing life from God's perspective, with a values system that acknowledges eternity.
- A man's morality will direct his theology.
- The evolutionist has true faith in his doctrine, because he still believes in evolution, even when science has proven it wrong.
- Historically, when "science" has disagreed with the Bible, sooner or later science has proven itself wrong.

- God is the judge of all men, even if they try to elect themselves to that position.



Lesson Material

All education is religious. There is no such thing as a "religiously neutral" education. All schools are schools of religion; the question is, which religion? The courts of the land in the United States have long recognized Secular Humanism as a religion. It is the view that man exists of himself, as the chance product of an evolutionary process, and, therefore, is "his own person," with no Almighty God to judge him. It is the view that when man dies, he is dead like a dog, so all of life consists of temporal values.

All education is based on a world view. If you teach history, you will include the lives and philosophies of "great" people of history, determined by your world view. If you have a Christian world view, then you will recognize Noah, Moses, David, and Paul as "great," and you will recognize Jesus as the greatest person who ever lived. If you are a humanist, you will focus on Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates as "great," even though they were immoral, troubled, pseudo-intellectuals. A Christian world view of history will explain that nations rise and fall according to their response to God. Nations with a Christian world view will have strong families, a strong work ethic, and will tend to prosper. Nations with a secular world view tend to devalue the family and the work ethic, and they have an increase in social problems.

Today, most of our culture is based on a secular world view. That is, on television, at the movies, in our courts and legislatures, and in our public schools, we make decisions and live our lives as if God does not exist. He is not regarded as the Supreme Judge or the center of history. His name is largely left out of our conversation, except as a swear word.

If we allow ourselves to be led by the prevailing culture, we will be caught up with things, pleasure, and self. We will have difficulty with self-discipline, and will react with anger when life does not go our way. We will put ourselves at the center of our world, and be prone to selfish acts of sin.

However, the more we center our view of life around Jesus, the more we will tend to be like Him. We become like those we admire and respect.

"He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." (Proverbs 13:20)

This is true, because wise men will think and, therefore, talk more about God and His purposes. The more we consider God in our thinking, the more wise we become.

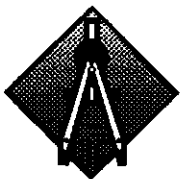
Man was made for God. We were created in His image, to become His children. It is important to learn to pray, to read the Bible, and to meditate on positive things. Jesus is the center of any good life. *"The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD." (Psalms 37:23)*

The purpose of the church is not to find out how people want to worship God, but to find out what God wants to say to the people. A Christian world view sees

the purpose of the church and family as groups designed to glorify God and to raise up a godly seed in the earth, not merely as social agencies for the welfare of the people.

If we are not careful, we can even get the idea that God exists to solve our problems, rather than understanding that we exist to please Him. God does love us, and He does care about our needs; but, let us realize that He is the most important one of all. If we can "deny self," (Luke 9:23) and put Him first, we will find that, in turn, He gives us His best, and we will be eternally glad that we gave ourselves to Him. *"Serve the LORD with gladness."* (Psalms 100:2)

It is very important for us to equip our children with a Christian world view, and with the realization that all knowledge has a religious basis. Then, when they are exposed to *"science falsely so called,"* and to historical books written by secularists, they will be less confused by the message that is implied, or even directly stated, that is in opposition to the Christian faith. *"But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine."* (Titus 2:1)



Methods

Challenge the students to discuss the concept of a world view, and see whether they understand that:

1. Everyone has a world view, but only Christians can have an accurate one;
2. A world view is simply a way of looking at life; a basic overall concept of how life and the universe operate;
3. A secular world view leaves God and eternity out of the picture;
4. A Christian world view sees Christ as the center of our world.

Think of a popular person in your nation, and discuss, "based on his (or her) lifestyle, what do you think his world view might be?"

Also, think of a few fictional characters the children would recognize and speculate on their world view.

"When a person believes in the doctrine of evolution, what does that tell us about his world view?"

What about our personal philosophy? Do we see Jesus as just someone who can make our lives better; or do we see ourselves as His servants? Are we learning to live for Jesus?

The more we can reinforce a Christian world view, the more likely we are to overcome the temptation to sin, and the more we will be able to withstand the false philosophies that the world uses to manipulate our thinking.

Trick or Treat

Volume 2

Lesson 17



Bible References

Exodus 22:10

Deuteronomy 18:9-12

1 Samuel 28

Jeremiah 10:2

Luke 6:28

Galatians 5:20

Ephesians 4:28; 5:1-8, 11-16

Philippians 4:8

1 Thessalonians 5:22



Scripture Reading

Ephesians 5:1-8, 11-16

1 *"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;*

2 *"And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.*

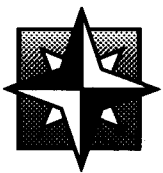
3 *"But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;*

4 *"Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.*

5 *"For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*

6 *"Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.*

7 *"Be not ye therefore partakers with them.*



Theme

Halloween is a pagan holiday, based on non-biblical principles, and should not be observed by Christians.

8 "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now (are ye) light in the Lord: walk as children of light."

11 "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove (them).

12 "For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

13 "But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

14 "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

15 "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

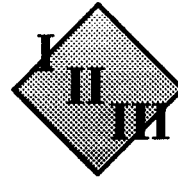
16 "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."



Memory Verse

1 Thessalonians 5:22

"Abstain from all appearance of evil."



Outline

I. The History of Halloween.

- A. Halloween began as a celebration on November 1 for Samhain, the pagan lord of the dead.
- B. The druids were pagan priests (sorcerers, witches) of ancient England, Ireland, and Gaul, who promoted the celebration of the eve of the festival of Samhain.
- C. They believed that on October 31, their god of the dead, Samhain, would call the spirits of the wicked people, who had been assigned the bodies of animals to inhabit until that "new year's" time.
 1. These spirits would be released to roam as ghosts and goblins.
 2. The people would dress as ghouls, or goblins, in order to mix in with the evil spirits and not be tormented by them.
 3. They would light candles and offer sacrifices to the evil spirits; and they were forced to offer food to the spirits, so they would not be harmed, or tricked, by them.
 4. Cats were sacred, because it was believed that evil, dead people inhabited cats.
- D. The Celts chose the date of October 1 as their New Year's Eve, and celebrated death and evil with animal and human sacrifices.

- E. The Romans conquered the Celts in 43 A.D. and added a ceremony to honor their goddess of fruit and trees.

II. The Response Of the Dark Ages Church.

- A. Centuries after this pagan holiday had been established in Great Britain, the church decided to try to "Christianize" the holiday by declaring November 1 to be "All Saints Day," with October 31 being "All Hallows (Holy Saints) Eve."
- B. This is where the name "Halloween" originated.
- C. The forms and practices of celebrating darkness, death, and witchcraft, however, remained dominant.

III. What Is "Trick Or Treat?"

- A. "Trick or Treat" came from the idea that the people of the town had to give food to the evil spirits or suffer the consequences.
- B. It is the short form of the command, "**Give me a treat or I'll play a trick on you**" (Actually a threat of vandalism or physical violence).
- C. This is also called "extortion."
- D. The Christian ethic is that:
1. We are givers, not assertive takers. (Luke 6:28)
 2. We are to work for our food, not demand it from strangers. (Ephesians 4:28)

IV. Should Christians Celebrate Halloween?

- A. No. Halloween is a celebration of death, witchcraft, and greed.
- B. Christians must avoid the appearance of evil.
- C. We are "children of light, not of the darkness."
- D. We should certainly not imitate evil spirits, witches, ghosts, or any other evil personality. We should always imitate Christ with our character.
- E. Note also that the Greek word for "hypocrite" means "one who wears a mask, a play-actor."



Spiritual Truths

- We are commanded to abstain from all appearance of evil.
- Christians celebrate life, and not death, because of the resurrection.
- We need to learn to serve, work, and earn, not demand or threaten.
- Halloween is a pagan holiday based on pagan myths.
- "*Learn not the way of the heathen.*" (Jeremiah 10:2)
- We are to be imitators of Christ, as dear children. (Ephesians 5:1)



Lesson Material

Halloween is not a Christian holiday, yet many Christians gleefully play along with the dark traditions of the season, oblivious to the original intent or the ethics of the day. It has been argued that Christmas began also as a pagan holiday. However, it has been at least partially revised to celebrate some Christian values, and it can be a time to focus on the birth of Christ. Halloween was not successfully "Christianized," although the effort was made. Halloween remains focused on witchcraft, death, and evil. It is Satan's holiday and has a foundation of evil.

The Druids were occult priests of ancient Gaul, Ireland, and Britain, dating from many years before the birth of Christ. They practiced sorcery and witchcraft, and were subjects of Satan. They believed many of the false doctrines of our "New Age" cults, including forms of reincarnation and necromancy, which is sorcery, divination, and witchcraft.

The Bible teaches that both the soul and spirit of a person leave the body at death; the righteous go to heaven, while the wicked souls go to hell, where they are imprisoned in torment until the Great White Throne Judgment. The souls of the dead cannot wander on the earth. They cannot "haunt" a house or possess any body.

However, we do know from God's Word that there are spirits who are not human beings. The good spirits are called "angels," and the evil spirits are called "demons, devils, familiar spirits, etc." These spirits can pretend to be the ghosts of

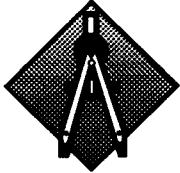
dead people, or they can give information to a person who is possessed by them. This is the basis of "psychic phenomena." Generally, a "psychic" is a demon-possessed person who receives information from evil spirits, while thinking that he has a "gift" of extra-sensory perception.

Christians receive life and power from God. They can receive knowledge or wisdom supernaturally imparted to them, and the Holy Spirit can operate through them to do the miraculous. Satan tries to imitate that. The practice of becoming involved in this satanic counterfeit of the gifts of the Spirit is called "witchcraft." Witches become involved with evil spirits or human trickery. Usually, they are unaware that there is a real devil or that they are dealing with evil spirits. Generally, they think that they are dealing with human power or an impersonal "force." They are deceived.

Halloween is based upon darkness. The practice of masquerading as ghosts and ghouls comes from the idea that, on the eve of the Festival of Samhain, lord of the dead, the spirits of evil dead people were loosed to roam the streets and torment the living. So, the people would try to look like a ghoul to avoid being persecuted by them. The people gave food and offered shelter to the demons and Druids out of fear. To them, it was a choice of "a treat or a trick." The leaders of the worshippers of Satan have commented that they appreciate the free publicity for their movement. In 1982, it was found that some witches gave out candy laced with LSD to hundreds of children in California. (Newsweek, February, 1974)

Instead of the "trick or treat" mentality, it would be good to concentrate on earning privileges, and on learning to give and

serve. The Christian attitude is reflected in Thanksgiving and in Easter, and not in a time to focus on darkness, deception, masks, death, and extortion. The next time the world celebrates Halloween, just say, "No!" to the devil.



Methods

Satan's goal is to draw the children of believers away from God and to deceive as many as possible into rejecting the life of righteousness through Jesus Christ. His work is to make good to appear as evil, and evil to appear as good.

Discuss the spiritual message behind the traditions of Halloween and how ghosts, skeletons, and other themes which relate to death are treated as "nice" and "innocent." Note that for decades in America, particularly in the movie and television industry, there has been active promoting of witchcraft (involvement with magic power, spells, sorcery). Ask the students if they know of any programs that portray witchcraft as good and pure.

These programs are examples of deceptive programs that make witchcraft or the occult appear to be "good," but in their message, they are really anti-Christian; for example: "Bewitched," "The Smurfs," "Care Bears," "My Little Pony," "Jem," "He-Man," and many others. In fact, the secular cartoon industry is full of anti-Christian witchcraft. This is far more dangerous than the old Warner Brothers cartoon characters that thrived on extreme violence for entertainment. Encourage young people to be aware of the message behind the entertainment, and to follow Philippians 4:8:

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things {are} honest, whatsoever things {are} just, whatsoever things {are} pure, whatsoever things {are} lovely, whatsoever things {are} of good report; if {there be} any virtue, and if {there be} any praise, think on these things."

In evaluating a cartoon, learn to ask yourself, "Is this promoting the concept of a loving, personal and powerful God; or is it focused on an impersonal "force", the power in the "hero", or in the power of a 'nice feeling?'"

A Wedding At Cana



Bible References

Isaiah 12

Matthew 25:21

John 2

John 7:37-38

John 10:10

1 John 5:3



Scripture Reading

John 2:1-10

1 *"And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:*

2 *"And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.*

3 *"And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.*

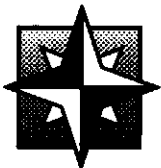
4 *"Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.*

5 *"His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do {it}.*

6 *"And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.*

7 *"Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.*

8 *"And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare {it}.*



Theme

Obedience to Jesus will make the difference in life between merely existing and truly living.

9 "When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

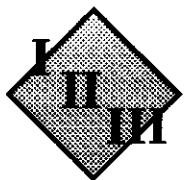
10 "And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: (but) thou hast kept the good wine until now."



Memory Verse

John 10:10

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."



Outline

I. Jesus At the Wedding.

- A. Weddings are very important to Christians, and Jesus loves marriage.
- B. They served wine at weddings.
 1. Wine is a type of the spiritual joy of the Holy Spirit.
 2. Usually, wine was only lightly fermented, and it was purer than the water available to many people of that day.

II. The Mother Of Jesus.

- A. Mary told Jesus that they were out of wine.
- B. The response of Jesus was not disrespectful, as it might appear in English translations.
- C. Jesus seemed reluctant to work a miracle so early in his ministry, but He honored His mother's request and did.
- D. Mary told the servants to do whatever Jesus told them to do. This is still the best advice in the world.

III. Jesus' First Miracle.

- A. Jesus told the servants to fill the waterpots with water and take them to the man who was in charge of the wedding feast.
- B. This took an act of faith, for they did not taste the water first.
- C. As the servants were obeying Jesus, the water, supernaturally, was turned into excellent wine.

IV. The Spiritual Lesson.

- A. In the Bible, water is a type of life, while wine is a type of joy.
- B. Obedience to Jesus is the key to enjoying life to the fullest.
 1. "...His commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5:3) This means that everything Jesus commands us to do is good for us, in the long run.

2. *"Well done, thou good and faithful servant..., Enter thou into the joy of the Lord."* (Matthew 25:21)



Spiritual Truths

- Happiness does not come from seeking happiness. It comes from seeking God and obeying Him.
- Joy is a part of the fruit of the Spirit. It is not just an emotion of the soul.
- God loves marriage and hates divorce.
- Satan always gives his best first, and the pain and consequences come later.
- After obedience, faith, or suffering, God always gives his rewards.
- Faith always produces obedience, and the obedience of faith can prompt God to move supernaturally on behalf of the faithful.



Lesson Material

In the early stages of His ministry, Jesus was in Cana of Galilee. He was attending a wedding. People often picture Jesus as being a long-faced recluse, but that is not true. While Jesus was very serious about His work on earth, He took great delight in doing the will of His Father. He enjoyed

happy feast times with people. It is obvious that Jesus smiled often, because children would not have been so attracted to any man who maintained a sour countenance. Jewish weddings of that era were very festive occasions. People feasted, laughed, and danced at a Jewish "halal." The word "halal" means "to be clamorously foolish, to celebrate, to dance." It is the basis for the word "hallelujah," which means to "celebrate and to be clamorously happy before the Lord."

When Mary told Jesus of the wine shortage, Jesus was not disrespectful. Today, to address your mother as "Woman" would be wrong, because we associate the term as an impersonal, or even harsh, response. But Jesus was very respectful, although He was gently letting His mother know that He was now in His public ministry as God's Son, the Messiah of the world, and was no longer her responsibility. He reminded His mother that "my hour has not yet come," meaning that He was not ready to promote His ultimate mission in the world -- to go to the cross -- until a few more years had passed.

At this point, Mary wisely turned to the servants with one of the greatest expressions of wisdom ever recorded: She said, "Whatever He says to you, do it." This is the key to living a joyful life. Water is a type of life, while wine is a type of joy. Many people have entered into life, but they struggle with unhappy lives, because they keep disobeying the Lord. Some people try to live a self-centered Christian life, and they have a hard time doing it. The more we seek to obey and please God in life, the more potential we have for joy.

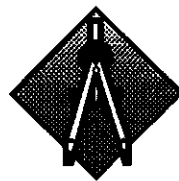
The Jews kept large storage pots of water around, because they followed God's

principles of sanitation. They washed their hands often, and this accounted for the fact that they had far fewer diseases and plagues than other cultures. These storage pots contained about 20 gallons each. Jesus instructed the servants to fill six pots with water and give some to the master of ceremonies of the feast.

As the servants were in the process of obeying, Jesus worked a miracle and turned plain water into excellent wine. Obedience is important, and it is not as frightening as some may think. What if the governor had tasted the contents of the pot and said, "What kind of deal is this? This is plain water!" What would have happened to the servants? Nothing. They would have simply said, "That man over there in the seamless robe with the older woman told us to bring this to you." The responsibility would have been on the one giving the order. When you are a servant, you just do what you are told, and the one you serve is responsible. Of course, the master also receives the glory when something good happens. That is the way it should be with us. We are God's servants, and when we walk in obedience to His will, He is glorified.

Many people seek happiness during their lives. But the happiest people on earth are the ones who seek God, and their joy is a byproduct of obedience. When Jesus told the parable of the servants and the talents, He said to those who had been faithful and obeyed, "Well done, servants. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Sometimes we think, "I just cannot work for the Lord, because I do not feel joyful." But joy comes as a result of doing what is right and from being what God called us to

be. If you want joy, real joy, wonderful joy, do what Mary said: "Whatever He says to do, do it."



Methods

It would be helpful to do whatever you can to create a sense of the atmosphere of a Jewish wedding at the time of Christ. The celebration was long, and very festive. The costumes were colorful. There was music and dancing. It was not at all like the sensual dancing that is popular in our world today. The focus was on the movement of the feet and sometimes the hands. People would often hold hands in a line or circle and do a simple step back and forth. There would sometimes be a rejoicing dance involving a higher step, leaping, twirling, or stomping as in triumph over a foe, but it was all pure and modest. If you can, play some Jewish style praise music (in a minor key) and find someone who can demonstrate a few of the steps.

Illustrate the story with a flannelgraph, or with puppets, or with pictures you have available. Emphasize the importance of obedience. Discuss the times in your life, or in the lives of others, when obedience brought blessing and joy, or when disobedience resulted in sorrow. Ask for testimonies from the students.

The Woman At the Well

Volume 2

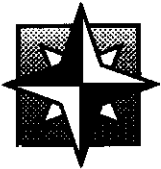
Lesson 19



Bible References

John 4

John 7:37



Theme

Jesus loves the most hopeless sinner, and wants to lead them to God.



Scripture Reading

John 4:5-14

5 "Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

6 "Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with (his)

journey, sat thus on the well: (and) it was about the sixth hour.

7 "There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

8 "(For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

9 "Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10 "Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

11 "The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

12 "Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

13 "Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

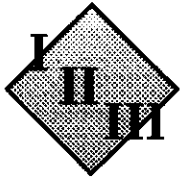
14 "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."



Memory Verse

John 7:37

"If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."



Outline

I. The Samaritan Woman.

- A. Samaritans were generally despised by the Jews.
 - 1. They were really a mixed race, part Jewish and part Gentile.
 - 2. Their ancestors had caused trouble for the Jews in the past.
- B. This woman at the well was looked down upon, even by other Samaritans.
 - 1. She had a bad reputation.
 - 2. She had been married to five husbands, and was living in adultery.
 - 3. She came to the well by herself at noon to draw water. The other women had come early in the morning, when it was cool. This was a social time for them.

II. Jesus Asked Her For a Drink.

- A. She was surprised because:

- 1. Jews generally would not speak to Samaritans;
- 2. Normally, men would not speak to a woman alone -- it could stir gossip;
- 3. Jesus was a stranger to her.

B. "Why are you asking me for a drink?"

C. Jesus used her natural question to stimulate her curiosity.

- 1. "If you knew who I am, you would have asked me for a drink."
- 2. I have living water to give."

III. The Moral Problem.

- A. When she asked for His living water, He said, "Go call your husband."
- B. "Sir, I have no husband."
- C. "You have had five husbands, and you are living with a man now who is not your husband."
- D. Jesus touched on her basic problem: she had been with one man after another, looking for happiness.

IV. The Prophet.

- A. She perceived that Jesus was a prophet, because He had a word of knowledge about her.
- B. When she realized that He was anointed by God, she started to debate religion.
- C. Jesus told her that "God is Spirit," and that He, Jesus, was the promised Messiah.
- D. The woman went through the town to tell everyone that they should come to

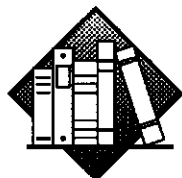
"see a man who told me everything I've ever done."

E. Then the people came to see Jesus.



Spiritual Truths

- Jesus loves people who are not loved by other people.
- One test of true Christianity is our ability to love the unlovely, or those who are new or different.
- Jesus took the time to share one of the greatest truths in history with a woman who was shunned by other people.
- Water is a type of life, and living water refers to spiritual, eternal life through Jesus Christ.
- Love reaches out and takes an interest in other people and their needs.
- God loves and deals with each of us as individuals.
- God knows everything we have ever done. We cannot hide from Him.



Lesson Material

Jesus and His disciples were traveling from Judea to Galilee. They passed through the land of Samaria. Jesus stopped

at a city called Sychar, and sat down by the well. Each morning, the women of the town would gather early and draw out the water their families would need for the day. For many, this was their social hour, where they would chat with the other women. Now it was about noon, and the well area was deserted. Jesus was tired, so the disciples went into town to buy food, leaving him by the well to rest.

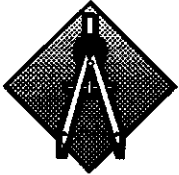
One lonely woman, who is never called by name in the Bible, came to draw water at the time Jesus was there. It is obvious that she was not part of the normal social scene. She went to the well during the day, to avoid the glances and remarks of the more respectable women. This was a small town, and everyone there knew of her reputation with men. She was unhappy, but she did not know what to do about it. She was still looking for a man who would make her as happy as other women seemed to be, but she had not found him. She wondered if any man at all could be trusted.

She was surprised when this Man asked her for a drink of water. He was a stranger, and He was obviously a Jew. In spite of the fact that the Jews were also under the oppressive rule of the Romans, they were still a proud people. They considered themselves to be superior to the lowly Samaritans. This Man would have to be desperately thirsty, to ask her for help in obtaining water!

But, this stranger went on to engage her in conversation. First, He spoke mysteriously about having living water that could forever satisfy a thirst. Then, He told her that He knew she had had five husbands and was living with a sixth man without a marriage covenant. Only a prophet could have that kind of knowledge about her.

When she decided that He was a prophet who could hear from God, she began to discuss religion. The Samaritans and Jews had argued over the correct form of worship for many years. But Jesus said that God is Spirit, and that true worshippers worship in spirit and in truth. That is, you do not just worship with your voice and emotions; you worship God with your spirit. When she mentioned the promised Messiah, Jesus told her, "I am He."

She did not debate or question any more. She believed. We can see that she really believed, because she ran to tell everyone she could about Jesus. When we really believe that Jesus has given us eternal life and has forgiven all our sins, it should greatly affect us. We should want to tell others about so great a salvation.



Methods

In America, conversation is considered almost a lost art. People who have been

raised on television are used to having the talking done for them. Images are vividly provided for them, and they have a greatly diminished sense of imagination.

Play the "Gossip Game." Start with one student, and whisper a message. Have that one whisper the message to the next, and go on around the room in succession. A suggested message might be "The woman at the well was named Clarabelle. She had a dog named Fritz who ate peanut butter for breakfast." By the time the story goes around the room, it will probably change.

Encourage the students to be good listeners and talkers and to be willing to take an interest in people, and learn how to lead a friend to Jesus by understanding God's plan of salvation. Learn to speak clearly and look people in the eye when you talk to them. Practice the art of good conversation.

Note that Jesus was a master of talking to people. He took a keen interest in people and gave each individual His full attention.

Troubled Waters

Volume 2

Lesson 20

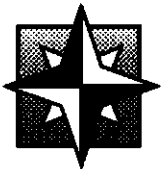


Bible References

Exodus 15:26

John 5:1-16

Philippians 2:14



Theme

Jesus is able to heal any physical disease or injury. He is the Great Physician.



Scripture Reading

John 5 :1-9

1 "After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

2 "Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep (market) a pool, which is called in the

Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

3 "In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

4 "For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

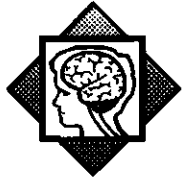
5 "And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

6 "When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time (in that case), he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

7 "The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

8 "Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

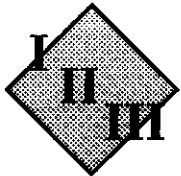
9 "And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath."



Memory Verse

Exodus 15:26

"...I am the LORD that healeth thee."



Outline

I. The Pool Of Bethesda.

A. A pool in Jerusalem by the sheep gate.

1. A smelly and dusty place.
2. "Bethesda" means "house of kindness."

B. Five porches.

1. Covered porticos.
2. A large number of people were at these porticos.

C. The angel.

1. Sometimes stirred up the water.
2. The first person to enter the stagnant water after it was "troubled," was healed.

II. The Impotent Man.

A. He had been afflicted with an unidentified physical impairment for 38 years.

B. He was crippled in some way .

C. He lay on a pallet in the shade of the portico.

III. Jesus, the Healer.

A. Jesus picked one man out of the group to heal.

1. We do not know exactly why this man was chosen, but Jesus was prompted by the Holy Spirit.
2. It is not mentioned whether this man exhibited any particular expression of faith.

B. The dialogue.

1. *"Wilt thou be made whole?"*
2. *"Sir, I have no man when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool."* (The man did not answer the question.)
3. *"Rise, take up thy bed, and walk."* (Jesus seems to ignore his excuses. and commands him to get up.)

C. The result.

1. The man was healed instantly, and he got up and carried his pallet.
2. The Jews became angry at this violation of the sabbath.

IV. The Sabbath.

A. This incident happened on Saturday, the Jewish sabbath.

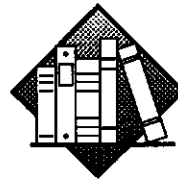
1. The sabbath was a day of rest, and it was not lawful for Jews to work on Saturday.

2. Jesus told the man to carry his pallet, and this offended the legalistic Jewish leaders.
- B. Did Jesus violate the sabbath laws, which the Father had established for Israel?
1. The book of Hebrews teaches that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Sabbath.
 2. We cease from our own efforts and enter into His rest by receiving and being justified by His righteousness.
3. God's sovereign purposes.
 4. Repentance or confession of sins.
 5. Humility.
- Jesus fulfilled the principle of the sabbath when He died on the cross, doing the work necessary for our salvation.



Spiritual Truths

- God is able to heal any physical affliction, injury, or disease in an instant, or as a healing process.
- God is not limited to a set formula or method for healing.
- We do not know all the reasons why God heals some people and does not heal others, who seem to have so much faith.
- The fact that you are not healed does not prove you do not have faith; and the fact that you are healed does not prove you do.
- Some factors in healing are:
 1. The faith of the individual being healed.
 2. The faith of the person ministering the gift of healing.



Lesson Material

The story of the pool of Bethesda presents a unique and interesting scene in Bible history. The pool was not in a good location. The sheep market was dirty and noisy. It was through this gate that livestock were brought in and out of the city, with all of the dust and smells of animal herds. The pool contained stagnant water. There were five covered porticos around the pool. There was only one aspect of this scene that could explain the multitudes of people who crowded around this pool, enduring all the noises and smells of the sheep gate: it was known that this was a place where a person could get healed.

We try to build comfortable, attractive, acceptable church buildings, and we try to have a reputation as a friendly, happy, and competent group of people. Ultimately, there is one thing that will cause people to make the effort to give up some of their leisure time, and to attend church regularly. They need Jesus to heal their lives, their hearts, their families, or their bodies. People are hurting, and they need the supernatural power of the living God

to offer them wholeness and health, which the world cannot offer. God is a supernatural God, and He can perform miracles. In this story, Jesus responds to the desire and hurt of one man out of the crowd of seekers, and heals his body.

The whole concept of Bethesda has puzzled Bible teachers for centuries. Why would God send an angel to stir up water, and then heal only the first person who hastened into the water? Did God not feel sorry for the poor fellow who was so sick or so alone that he was always left behind in the race to be healed? Was there someone around the pool shouting, "Last one in the pool stays sick!?" Why did only the first one in get healed?

We do not have all the answers to questions about healing. Much of it is a mystery. But we do know that God is perfectly just. He knows all the factors. He knows exactly why every person is sick, and He knows their heart and the level of their faith. He also knows the future and what some people would do with a healing. There have been many who have received a miracle. Then afterward, in their health and strength, they have turned their hearts away from the Lord. Some physical problems are a direct result of sin. Notice that Jesus said to the man later,

"Behold, thou art made whole: Sin no more, lest a worst thing come upon thee." (John 5:14)

As far as we know in this instance, Jesus was not responding to any expression of faith on the man's part. Remember that many times, people would come to Him with requests, and Jesus would make remarks to His disciples about their great faith. But, here at Bethesda, the "house of kindness," Jesus

seems to be responding out of His own compassion for a man who had not only been crippled for 38 years, but who also apparently had no one to help him. What a sad situation for anyone -- neither friends nor family to stand with him in his time of need.

When Jesus asked the man if he wanted to be healed, he was so discouraged that he did not say, "Yes, Sir!" He started complaining about his lack of friends. Perhaps this could help explain why he did not have friends. No one enjoys being around a complainer, even if they really have serious problems. Some of the happiest and friendliest people are those with physical handicaps or limitations. But those who are the happiest have learned to focus on the positives -- to make the best of life by enjoying what they have and what they can do. They have learned gratitude and contentment, and others enjoy being around them. As Christians with God's love in our hearts, we are drawn to people who are in need of compassion. However, after hearing constant whining and complaining from some people, we can become weary of being around them.

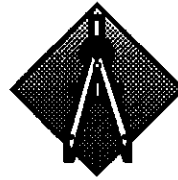
The Bible teaches us to be thankful for what we have, and with faith, to keep our focus on God. Philippians 2:14 says to "*do all things without murmurings or disputings.*"

Jesus was so full of love and compassion for this man that He did not even rebuke him for his complaining. He just told him to get up, take up his pallet, and walk. Jesus did not start a "healing line." He did not ask the man to come forward as an expression of faith. In this case, we do not know of any expression of faith. But, we rejoice because Jesus healed him. God is sovereign. This means that He

can do what He wants. We know that God is perfectly just, but we simply do not know all of the factors involved in every circumstance. We really do not know why some folks are healed, and why others are not. Have you ever thought, "If I were God, I would not heal him?" God does not owe a miracle to anyone. We cannot earn "brownie points" to receive a healing; but, we do know that God loves faith and obedience and that He is able to heal anyone.

Now there were some Pharisees who were upset about all of this, because they saw the man carrying his pallet around town, and that was "working" on the sabbath. They were very fussy about keeping the sabbath. In fact, they had made over 400 additional regulations relating to what constituted "work" on the sabbath. They felt that they were helping God by "clarifying" His laws. It seems that Jesus deliberately healed some folks on the sabbath, just to teach His disciples that "man was not made for the sabbath, but the sabbath was made for man." In other words, God made the sabbath a day of rest so people would not work seven days a week, burn themselves out with overwork, and neglect their relationship with Him. God did not make the sabbath so he could punish us with it.

It should be noted that Jesus, in His teaching, reiterated all of the ten commandments except the fourth one. He did not really "break" the sabbath. He fulfilled it. He is our sabbath rest. That means that our salvation is not dependent upon our works, but upon the completed work of the cross. Hebrews Chapter four explains that Jesus is the fulfillment of the sabbath in the new covenant.



Methods

Teach this lesson by emphasizing God's sovereignty and compassion for hurting people. Assure your students that God is still able to heal the sick.

Ask the class if any of them has ever experienced a miraculous healing, or if they have ever seen a miracle. Share a testimony about a healing you have seen or experienced, or bring someone to speak to the class about an encouraging personal testimony.

Walking On the Sea

Volume 2

Lesson 21



Bible References

Psalms 56:3

John 6:16-21

Matthew 14:22-33

Romans 1:17

Titus 2:14

22 *"And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.*

23 *"And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.*

24 *"But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.*

25 *"And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.*

26 *"And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.*

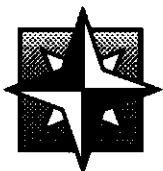
27 *"But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.*

28 *"And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.*

29 *"And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.*

30 *"But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.*

31 *"And immediately Jesus stretched forth (his) hand, and caught him, and said unto*



Theme

Faith means keeping our eyes on Jesus and seeing His purposes in the storms of life.



Scripture Reading

Matthew 14:22-33

him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

32 "And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

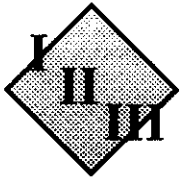
33 "Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God."



Memory Verse

Psalms 56:3

"What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee."



Outline

I. He Constrained His Disciples to Get Into a Ship.

- A. After Jesus fed the 5,000 with one young boy's sack lunch, He ordered His disciples to sail to the other side of the Sea of Galilee.
- B. Jesus went to the mountain alone to pray.

II. The Storm.

- A. Jesus stayed behind, knowing that a storm was coming.
 1. God knows we will have problems in life.
 2. Storms are a type of problems in life, including problems with other people.
- B. Jesus left his disciples out there for many hours, and He did not come to them until the fourth watch of the night.
 1. The Romans divided the night into four equal periods, or "watches," from sunset until dawn.
 2. That means it was nearly morning -- between 3:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. -- when Jesus came to the rescue of the disciples.
 3. Not only was there a severe storm, but the disciples had struggled all night to stay alive.
 4. During a storm at sea, it is difficult to navigate. You just concentrate on staying alive.
- C. God does allow storms -- difficulties -- in our lives, even when we live righteously.
 1. The disciples were out at sea, because Jesus told them to get into their ship and go to the other side of the sea.
 2. Problems in life do not prove that you are out of the will of God.

III. Peter.

A. When the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water, they were afraid.

1. They were tired, and then they saw the figure of a man walking on the sea.
2. They thought they were seeing a ghost.

B. Jesus immediately said, *"It is I, be not afraid."*

C. Peter said, *"Lord, if it be thou, bid me to come unto you on the water."*

1. Peter knew that he could not walk on water.
2. He realized that if Jesus told him to do something, Jesus would also enable him to do it.
3. Jesus said, "Come."

D. Peter walked on the water, until he took his eyes off of Jesus and looked at the big waves.

1. When he turned his attention to the storm, he began to sink.
2. This is a vivid analogy about the principle of faith.
3. Faith concentrates on God and His purposes.
4. Fear focuses on the problem and on self.

IV. The Result.

A. Jesus said, *"O thou of little faith. Wherefore didst thou doubt?"*

1. Consider how much less faith the other disciples had than Peter.

2. All Peter needed to do was to keep his eyes on Jesus.

B. When Jesus and Peter entered the boat, the storm stopped instantly.

C. The disciples worshipped Jesus, realizing that He was indeed the Son of God.



Spiritual Truths

- Faith focuses on God and His plan.
- Fear comes from a focus on self and the temporal things of life.
- Even though you are obedient to God, you will still experience problems.
- God does not guarantee an easy life. He promises a victorious life to those who seek and obey Him.
- True prosperity is not wealth and ease. Prosperity is the realization of worthwhile goals and personal development.
- If you believe that God told you to do something, then do it -- no matter what -- as long as it does not contradict what He has written in the Bible.
- Faith steps out when Jesus says "Come." Presumption is stepping out on the sea, insisting that Jesus save you from drowning.
- No amount of positive confession will enable anyone to walk on water. It takes a miracle.

- People often say, "I'm fine, under the circumstances." God does not want us to live under the circumstances. He wants us to walk on top of them by faith.



Lesson Material

It was a dark and stormy night.

Several times during His earthly ministry, Jesus sent His disciples out onto the sea in a boat to teach them lessons about life and God's ways. This time, He wanted to teach them about faith. They had just witnessed an amazing miracle. A vast crowd had been fed with one small sack lunch that consisted of five loaves and two fishes. They had twelve baskets of McFish sandwiches left over for lunch the next day! Most people would have tried to keep the crowd, but Jesus sent them home. Jesus wanted to spend some time alone with God. So, He told the disciples to get into a boat and sail across the Sea of Galilee to the other side. He insisted that they go that evening.

Later that night, as Jesus was on the mountain, a storm moved over the lake. Jesus did not say, "Oh no! I told the men to sail to the other side of the sea, and now they are out there in this storm!" No -- that is what we might have said. But God never says, "Oops!" Jesus knew exactly what He was doing. He deliberately sent the disciples out into the stormy sea, and He waited until the fourth -- last -- watch of the night to rescue them. Through the fearsome night, they struggled with the pounding, relentless waves. Often they

wondered if the next wave would capsize their frail craft or break it apart. They wondered what had happened to Jesus. How could this Messiah, who had multiplied the loaves and fish and had opened the eyes of the blind, now make such a mistake? How could Jesus order them into a boat, only to let them down?

They had received a clear word from the Lord, and they had obeyed Him. They had been faithful and obedient, and now, here they were in mortal danger. So many people have the idea that Jesus died to solve our problems and make us happy. Not really. Jesus died to redeem us from sin. In fact, He died to redeem a holy people who will serve God and live with Him forever. (Titus 2:14) God does not promise us an easy life. He promises a victorious life, if we will continue in the faith. There is no victory without conflict. You cannot be an overcomer, with no problems to overcome. There is no crown without a cross.

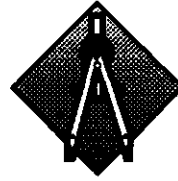
When we go through the storms of life, we learn to rely on the Lord as our source. We see that life is not fair, and that God is faithful. The disciples went through that dark and stormy night and gained greatly from it. Our goal should not be to avoid anything uncomfortable in life, but to grow in character and wisdom.

When the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water, they were afraid. Now, come on. You would be, too. They had been afraid all through the night. They had faced death for several hours; and, now, they see a "ghost" walking on the rough and stormy sea. Jesus immediately said, "*It is I; Be not afraid.*" Peter was the first to respond. He said, "*Lord, if it be thou, bid me to come unto thee on the water.*" He knew that if Jesus said to do it, he could do it. He did not just suddenly get the idea to

walk on water. That takes a miracle, and Peter knew the difference between faith and presumption. Presumption is trying to get God to do what you want Him to do for you. Faith is not a way of getting God to do what you want. Faith will get you to do whatever God wants. Faith waits on a Word from God and acts in confident obedience. Presumption tries to get God to act on our word. There is an important difference.

Peter did walk on water, at least until he got his eyes off of Jesus and onto the problem. It is human nature to focus on the things of life and on self. But faith is a function of our spirit, and it enables us to look up, even when the waves of human problems are swirling around our heads and vying for our attention. Faith says, "Lord, if You tell me to walk on water, then You will give me the ability to do it."

When we give all of our attention to ourselves and our problems, we begin to sink in life. We will never become so intelligent in life that we can walk on water. The key to an overcoming life is not just what we say or do, but it is how we believe. *"The just shall live by faith."* (Romans 1:17) If we overcome, it will be because we have learned to look up to God as our strength and our protector.



Methods

The key to this lesson is the principle of faith in God. It is good to make the scene as vivid as possible. Show pictures of the boats used in that day, and point out that the disciples were not sailing on a cruise ship. Talk about the fact that storms are far more dangerous out on the open sea, and are more frightening in the dark of night.

But the heart of the message is the response of Peter to Jesus. Faith is a response to a word from the Lord, and not a way to manipulate God.

Play a game of "Simon Says." We do not know where the idea originated. In this case, it was Simon who was waiting for a "Jesus Says." Give an instruction, such as "raise your right hand," step forward one step," etc., but tell the children that they are to follow the instruction only if the command is preceded by "Simon Says." It is a nice little game to teach attentiveness; but it also shows us something about presumption. *"Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto you."* "Lord, give me a command, and I'll obey." Obedience is the mark of true faith.

Thank You, Jesus

Volume 2

Lesson 22



Bible References

Psalms 100:4

Psalms 136

Isaiah 59:2

Luke 17: 11-19

John 6:37

Romans 6:23; 8:28

Ephesians 5:20

1 Thessalonians 5:18

2 Timothy 3:2

1 John 1:19



Scripture Reading

Luke 17:11-19

11 *"And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.*

12 *"And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:*

13 *"And they lifted up {their} voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.*

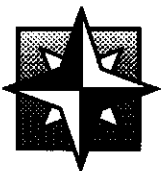
14 *"And when he saw {them}, he said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.*

15 *"And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,*

16 *"And fell down on {his} face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.*

17 *"And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where {are} the nine?*

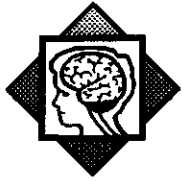
18 *"There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.*



Theme

It is very important to give thanks to the Lord for everything He has done for us.

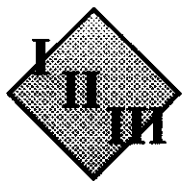
19 "And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole."



Memory Verse

1 Thessalonians 5:18

"In every thing give thanks."



Outline

I. Leprosy: A Type Of Sin.

A. Leprosy is a serious disease of the skin, which causes a loss of sensitivity in the body.

1. Sin makes us insensitive to God and to right and wrong.
2. Sin brings destruction and death, like this dreadful disease.
3. Leprosy caused people to be defiled, and they had to be separated from Israel.
4. Sin causes us to be separated from God. (Isaiah 59:2)

II. Cleansed.

- A. Ten men came to Jesus for cleansing from the disease, and ten were healed.
- B. Everyone who comes to Jesus in faith for salvation (cleansing from sin) will be saved. (John 6:37)

III. Thank You, Jesus!

A. Jesus seemed to be surprised that nine of the lepers who had received healing had failed to thank Him for it.

B. Only one of the ten thanked Jesus. This man was the only one to whom Jesus said, "Your faith has made you whole."

1. Leprosy causes much damage and loss to the body.
2. While all ten of the lepers were cleansed of the disease, nine of them did not return to thank Jesus for their healing.
3. The one who returned had not been completely "whole" (possibly missing fingers, etc.); but, he went away whole, after he came back to Jesus and thanked Him.

C. This one was a Samaritan.

1. Samaritans were "half-breeds," rejected by the Jews.
2. They were considered to be a low-class, ethnic minority.

IV. Thanksgiving Is Good.

A. Always receive food with an expression of thanks to God.

B. Learn to live every day with a grateful heart, and you will not become bitter.



Spiritual Truths

- It is always important to give thanks to God.
- Being thankful can have very positive benefits.
- It would be very wrong for us to receive so much from God, and not express thanks for it.
- When we do not feel appreciated, all of us tend to be less generous.



Lesson Material

The story of the ten lepers illustrates the importance of giving thanks to the Lord. The Apostle Paul, in describing the end times in which we are now living, said that men would be

"lovers of their own selves...disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy..." (2 Timothy 3:2)

This lack of gratitude is indeed a characteristic of our day. Every time we do something kind or generous for another person, and that person fails to thank us for it, we can readily understand how God feels each time we fail to thank Him. Each of us wants to be appreciated, and the lack of thanks can quickly take away our desire to do anything for that person.

As our Heavenly Father, God loves and, in fact, demands our expressions of gratitude. It is a serious breach of court etiquette to come before the throne without some kind of gift to express esteem and gratitude to the King. That is why the Bible says to

"enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise:...." (Psalms 100:1)

It would be grossly rude and improper to approach God without first thanking Him for His previous help and blessings.

No matter what our situation in life, we should learn to thank God. *"In every thing, give thanks."* (1 Thessalonians 5:18) Some people interpret that to say that, in spite of our circumstances, we should give thanks: not for all things, but in all things. But the same writer also said that we should be *"giving thanks always for all things...."* (Ephesians 5:20) Even though we cannot see the benefit in some things, we know that

"...all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28)

So, we learn to give God thanks in and for all things.

Leprosy is a physical disease that is a type, or picture, of the disease of sin in our lives. As this disease destroys the sensitivity of the nerves, so also sin damages our sensitivity to God and to spiritual matters. People afflicted with leprosy were regarded as outcasts. So that others would not contract the disease, lepers were required by law to shout, "Unclean! Unclean!" as they approached

other people. Lepers were defiled, and had a death sentence on them.

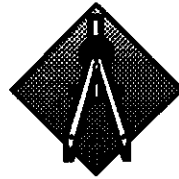
Sin defiles us and is the reason for death in the human race, *"for the wages of sin is death..."* (Romans 6:23) We cannot cleanse ourselves from sin, regardless of how hard we try. We can only be made free by a supernatural miracle of God's grace. Sin is not only what we do, but is also what we are. God's Word says that,

"if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us {our} sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

When the ten lepers came to Jesus, He told them to go show themselves to the priest. They were not cleansed immediately, but as they were obedient to Jesus and went to show themselves to the priest, they noticed that their skin had been restored. They were clean! They became excited, but only one of them returned to thank Jesus. He shouted praises to God. He did not care who heard him! He was so excited, much like people today become emotional at events such as ball games. Luke made a note of the fact that this leper was a Samaritan, a member of an ethnic group which was looked down on by others, simply because of their race.

Jesus said to him, *"Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole."* Many Bible scholars note the difference between cleansing and wholeness and suggest that, while all ten lepers were free of the disease, this one was made whole. That is, if any of his fingers or toes were missing, they were miraculously restored. Any disfigurement was changed, and he was from that day forward a whole man.

God's purpose in our lives is to bring us to wholeness. Bodily healing brings the body to wholeness. God loves to heal our minds and emotions, as well as our spirits. The word in the Bible for "saved" is the same as the word for "healed." In other words, salvation is also a process of bringing to a condition of wholeness a life that had been damaged and diminished by the disease of sin: salvation for the spirit, soul, and body. The sins we commit are evidences of a lack of wholeness in our spirit. We need not only forgiveness, but also cleansing. The Samaritan leper's response of gratefulness resulted in a further work of God's grace in his life, although we note with joy that all who came to Jesus for healing were cleansed.



Methods

Have each student share with the class three things for which they are most thankful. Encourage them to think about it for a few moments first and avoid repeating the same things. Involve the teachers in this as well.

Use as an illustration an incident from your life which seemed to be negative, but turned out to be a blessing in disguise. Teach the students to be thankful in everything, even though they do not see the end result yet. For example, some people have missed their flight at an airport, and later learned that the plane crashed. Once, a town in Georgia was devastated by a hoard of boll weevils, which destroyed their cotton crop, and they were forced to plant other crops. As a result, their profits were far greater than they would have received from cotton.

Later the town erected a monument in thanks to the boll weevil.

Encourage the students to practice giving thanks every day during the coming week, and then the next Sunday, ask for testimonies about the results. Make a note each day of the times you said "thank you" to God. Suggest thanking God for a sunny day, good food, a warm house, and indoor plumbing. Also, have them make a note of the times they expressed

thanks to a parent, teacher, or friend. Find out who documented the most instances of thanksgiving during the week, and present that child with a nice prize. (Not a new car, because they do not drive; but something nice.) Do not tell them this week that you are planning to give a reward, or they will tend to be competitive. Also, you will be under more pressure to come up with a lavish reward.

What Is a Missionary?

Volume 2

Lesson 23



Bible References

Ezekiel 3

Matthew 24:14

Matthew 28:19-20

Mark 16:15-18

Acts 1:8

Acts 16

Romans 1:18-20

Ephesians 4:11-12

Philippians 2:13

James 2:24



Scripture Reading

Acts 16:6-13

6 "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,

7 "After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

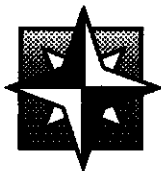
8 "And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.

9 "And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

10 "And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

11 "Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next {day} to Neapolis;

12 "And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia,

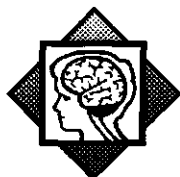


Theme

We need to understand, appreciate, and support missionaries of the Christian faith, who are going into all the world with the Gospel.

{and} a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.

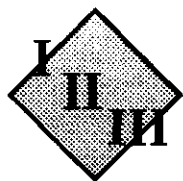
13 "And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted {thither}."



Memory Verse

Mark 16:15

"...Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."



Outline

I. What Is a Christian Missionary?

- A. A Christian missionary is someone who takes the Gospel of Jesus Christ to another culture or land.
- B. The term "missionary" is not used in the Bible, but there are many examples of evangelists and other servants of God going forth as ambassadors of Christ.
- C. The term literally means "one with a mission," and, therefore, anyone with

the call of God on his life to preach the Gospel is a "missionary."

- D. Generally, we refer to those who take the Gospel to other cultures as "foreign missionaries."
- E. America sends many missionaries to foreign countries and supports them financially, because the people in those foreign countries, who are being ministered to, do not have the income to support the missionaries from America.

II. Why Did Paul Go To Macedonia?

- A. Paul was an apostle.
 1. "Apostle" means "one sent forth," "a messenger", "an ambassador."
 2. The original 11 apostles were the first leaders of the church.
 3. They were involved in the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus. They usually had many elders and pastors under their leadership.
 4. There are about 23 apostles mentioned in the Bible, and God has apostles today. God never limited the number to the first 12, or abolished the office.
 5. Apostles were often church-planters, as well as overseers.
- B. Paul was traveling with Timothy and other preachers, but the Holy Spirit told them that they were not allowed to go to Asia.

- C. God gave Paul a dream during the night.
1. He saw a man asking for help.
 2. The man was saying, *"Come over into Macedonia, and help us."*
- D. Christians were already in Macedonia, but they needed the wisdom, oversight, and help that a senior apostle, like Paul could give them.
- E. When Paul went to Macedonia, he experienced opposition and hardship.
1. Even when you are in the will of God, you will have troubles.
 2. God wants to teach us to lean on Him and overcome the problems.

III. What Is the Great Commission?

- A. It is the "marching orders," or commands that Jesus gave to His followers as He ascended into Heaven.
1. Matthew 28:19-20.
 2. Mark 16:15-18.
 3. Acts 1:8.
- B. *"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel...."* (Mark 16:15)
1. Or, "as you are going through the world, preach the good news of the Kingdom of God."
 2. Jesus said, *"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations."* (Matthew 24:14)
 3. This does not mean political nations, but actual people groups.
 4. About 3,000 such nations have not heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

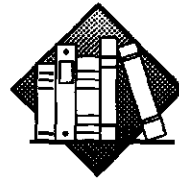
- C. *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."* (Mark 16:16)
1. Baptism is a sign that we have given our lives to Jesus Christ.
 2. Baptism does not save us. It is a "sign" of the covenant we have with God.
 3. We make that covenant through repentance from sin and faith in God.
- D. *"...He that believeth not shall be damned."* (Mark 16:16)
1. If we do not warn them, they will die in their sins. (Ezekiel 3)
 2. The heathen are without excuse and will not be exempted from hell, even if they have never heard the Gospel. (Romans 1:18-20)
- E. *"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you..."* (Matthew 28:20)
1. Our commission is not to "make converts," but to "make disciples."
 2. We need to be taught to do what God commands in His Word, the Bible.

IV. These Signs Shall Follow.

- A. If we are going in the name of Jesus Christ, there will be supernatural evidences.
- B. Jesus said that these signs shall follow believers. (Mark 16:17-18)
1. *"In my name they shall cast out devils;"*
 2. *"They shall speak with new tongues,"* (glossolalia, unknown tongues);

3. *"They shall take up serpents..."*
 - a. This is illustrated in Acts, where Paul was bitten in the hand by a deadly viper, but it did him no harm.
 - b. They will not deliberately pick up deadly snakes, because that would be tempting God, and would be presumption.
4. *"And if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them..."*
 - a. Again, divine protection against poisoning.
 - b. But do not be foolish and poison yourself.
5. *"They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover"* (Divine healing).

- When we are going out on our own whims and schemes, God is not obligated to give us grace.
- *"They shall take up serpents and not be harmed..."* is a promise of protection, but not a command to be foolish. (Mark 16:18)



Lesson Material

Jesus has a purpose in the earth, and it is not to play Santa and make people feel warm and happy. His purpose is to fulfill the heart of the Heavenly Father by building a church. He is changing lives, making many people sons of God through the new birth, and making them disciples. He is not just looking for people willing to go to heaven, because everyone is. Most people want to live their own lives, and therein is the problem. That is the basis of the sin question. God is holy and cannot look upon sin. God wants all men to repent, to give their lives to Him, and to become part of His eternal kingdom.

When we give our lives to the Lord, we begin to live for him. He desires to teach us, to build us up, and to equip us for His service. God calls some into the "five-fold" preaching/teaching ministry. There are five such leadership ministries listed in Ephesians 4:11: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. They are leaders whose job is *"for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry."* (Ephesians 4:12) You see, all of us are called to the ministry. We are called to work for God, but some of us are called especially to train and equip others. We



Spiritual Truths

- Foreign missionaries are Christian ministers who take the Great Commission seriously.
- All of us should be willing to go anywhere God sends us.
- Paul was an apostle; but, part of his calling at times involved being a foreign missionary.
- We are to take the Gospel to other cultures, as well as our own culture.
- The truths of God's Word will apply in any nation, culture, or economic condition, in any period of history.
- When God gives you the direction, He will give you the grace to accomplish what He sent you to do.

are called to minister to God (worship), to minister to our fellow believers (fellowship, exhortation, nurturing), and to minister to the unsaved (evangelism).

We are not getting into heaven by our works; but we will be judged by our works. We will be rewarded according to our works; we will be justified by our works. (James 2:24) God's purpose is to work through us and not just to let us do everything by our own power. He gives us direction and the power to obey. (Philippians 2:13) The dynamic of God working in and through us is called "grace." "Grace" means "gift." A gift is unmerited favor, or something we do not deserve. Whenever God gives a gift, it is always for the benefit of others, and not just for ourselves. All grace is given to us to enable us to work for God and help other people.

Jesus said that true believers will have supernatural evidence that they are walking in grace. There are many religious people in the world, but most of them are operating on their own zeal. Many have been taught that they must work their way to heaven. So, they go out zealously knocking on doors or raising money for their guru. But, that is vain, human effort, and they do not have any power from the Holy Spirit. When we are serving God by the power of the Holy Spirit, we can believe for supernatural miracles, healings, and divine protection. Of course, many faithful Christians have been killed by the enemies of the faith, but God uses their death to further His kingdom, and He gives them a very special reward in eternity.

In the 1950's, a man named Jim Elliot went with several other missionaries to take the Gospel to the Auca Indians in the Amazon jungle of Brazil. When they

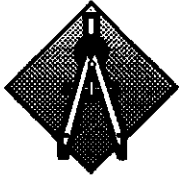
arrived, they were killed almost immediately by the very people they had come to help. It seemed like a total loss, because they had prepared to be missionaries; but they never even got to meet the people. Later, Jim Elliot's wife found his Bible. In it, he had written, "He is no fool who exchanges what he cannot keep for that which he cannot lose." As a result of his story of courage and sacrifice, hundreds of others have responded to the call to take the Gospel to the world, and millions have been influenced by his life and death.

In Acts 1:8, Jesus said,

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

The word "witness" here is "martus," which also means "martyr." "Jerusalem" means your local city; "Judea" is your own state, or nation; "Samaria" refers to foreign cities; and the "uttermost part of the earth" is any distant location: such as Nepal, Borneo, Siberia, Nebraska, etc.

Not all of us are called to go to the uttermost parts of the world. However, all of us are called to do something to win the lost. All of us can be witnesses somewhere, and we can help support those who serve as missionaries. We should regularly share in the ministry of others, especially those who go to areas where the people cannot support the missionary's work with their finances. We also need to pray for others, and not just for ourselves.



Methods

There are many good accounts of great missionaries, such as Hudson Taylor, Adoniram Judson, and others who have endured great hardships to take the Gospel to heathen cultures at the risk of their own lives. Recently, Iranian Muslims executed at least one American for the crime of winning someone to Christ. In many countries it is illegal to preach the Gospel. Many godly Christians have obeyed the Great Commission, and have given their lives in doing it.

Learn interesting facts about the missionaries who are supported by your church and share them with the class. Discuss the fact that it is necessary for many of them to learn a new language and to adapt to a new culture before they can teach the people about Jesus effectively. Encourage the students to appreciate, pray for, and support every missionary they can; to be open to God; and to be willing to be called and used by God anywhere He sends them.

Give information about a specific foreign ministry supported by your church, and take a special offering for a project or immediate need.

Christmas Is for Christians

Volume 2

Lesson 24



Bible References

Luke 2

John 3:16

9 *"And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.*

10 *"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*

11 *"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*

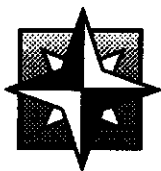
12 *"And this {shall be} a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.*

13 *"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,*

14 *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*

15 *"And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.*

16 *"And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger."*



Theme

Christmas is a time to celebrate and remember God's greatest gift to mankind – Jesus.



Scripture Reading

Luke 2:8-16

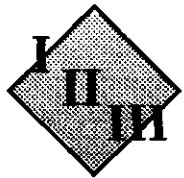
8 *"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.*



Memory Verse

Luke 2:14

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."



Outline

I. The Setting.

- A. God's only begotten Son, Jesus, had just been born to the virgin Mary in Bethlehem, the city of King David.
- B. An angel appeared to a group of shepherds in the fields nearby and announced the birth of the Saviour of the world.
 - 1. This was appropriate, because David had been a shepherd, and Jesus would become the Great Shepherd.
 - 2. Jesus was also to be called the "Good Shepherd" and the "Chief Shepherd."

II. The Angel's Message.

- A. *"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour,.." (Luke 2:11)*
 - 1. The Name "Jesus" means "savior, or deliverer."

- 2. Jesus came to set people free from the power of sin, which controls their lives.

- B. *"...which is Christ the Lord..." (Luke 2:11)*

- 1. "Christos" means "the anointed one".
- 2. "Lord" means "owner; the one who has the right to make the final decisions."

- C. *"...Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." (Luke 2:12)*

- 1. Diapers had not been invented.
- 2. A manger is a feed trough for cattle.

III. The Message Of Christmas.

- A. Jesus was the greatest gift ever given to the human race.
 - 1. His coming as the sin offering for mankind enabled anyone to have a relationship with God, if he would repent of his sins and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 2. John 3:16.
- B. We celebrate the love gift which God gave to the world 2,000 years ago:
 - 1. By our praise and worship to God;
 - 2. By giving gifts to one another.

IV. The Santa Problem.

- A. Saint Nicholas was an unselfish giver, and for millions of people, he has come to represent the spirit of Christmas giving.

1. The name has become "Santa Claus."
 2. This story has developed over the years, and in many homes it has replaced the story of Jesus.
- B. There is great danger in the way Santa is presented, and it affects our ideas about what God is like.
1. Santa cannot be seen and must be received and believed by faith.
 2. On Christmas Eve, Santa is said to be omnipresent -- cover the whole world at one time.
 3. Santa is said to be omniscient -- knowing all about us -- whether we have been good or bad.
- C. Santa does not give a good picture of what God is like, and that can cause us to have wrong ideas about God.
1. Santa seems to reward us even when we have been bad; but God is holy and just.
 2. Santa stays far away at the North Pole; God is close to us and lives in our hearts.
 3. Santa gives material things and asks for nothing in return. God does not focus on things, and He wants us to give ourselves to Him.
 4. Santa is a glorified human; but God is Spirit. God has no physical body.
 5. Santa has little elves; God has mighty angels.
 6. Santa "judges" us only on the basis of whether we are "naughty or nice;" God judges us on whether we have turned from sin and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ.
 7. Santa is a made up story; God is real.
- D. The danger in promoting both the story of Jesus and Santa Claus is that both are

presented in the same way by the same parents.

1. We should always know the difference between a nice, made-up story and the truth.
2. We should know that our parents give gifts to us in honor of Jesus.
3. If a relative wants to play the Santa Claus routine, do not be offended and do not hurt his feelings.
4. It is a harmless story, as long as you do not confuse Santa with your understanding of God.



Spiritual Truths

- Jesus came as the greatest gift in the history of humanity.
- We show our love to God by showing love to one another.
- A gift is unmerited favor.
- God gave because it was in His character to love, not because we deserve to be loved.
- If the Santa Claus story affects our view of God and His principles of judgment, it can be harmful to us.
- God is holy and perfectly just.
- Our focus of Christmas should be on God and our relationship to Him.
- Sometimes we can be distracted from truth by nice things and pleasant stories.



Lesson Material

The birth of Jesus, the Messiah, was a momentous event in the history of the world. In importance to history, it is second only to His crucifixion and resurrection. It is tragic that in America, the Christians have allowed secular revisionists to shift the emphasis away from balanced values. Today, almost all of our history books speak of Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle as "great" men and "great" thinkers and ignore the far greater intellect and historical contributions of Solomon and Paul. Jesus is the center of history; yet His Name is not mentioned in many history books. Authors prefer to include Greek humanists in their reviews of important historical names, because the authors are humanists.

Humanism is a religion, and is promoted by those who believe it. As Christians, we need to proclaim that Jesus is the Name above all names, in His character, His wisdom, and His importance to the human race. Christmas time is a time to honor and exalt the Name of Jesus Christ. It is not a time to get sidetracked by other characters or concepts which crowd out or displace the real story.

The birth of Jesus had been anticipated for 4,000 years, since God first provided the skins of slain animals to cover Adam and Eve in their sin and shame. From the beginning, blood has always been necessary to atone for sin. Sin is a serious crime against God and against His holiness, and it demands the death penalty.

Abraham transferred (imputed) the guilt of his sins to animals, which were slain as an offering to atone for his transgressions. The people of Israel, His descendants, carried on the practice of sin offerings and were constantly reminded of the seriousness of sin, and the value of righteousness and obedience to God. Through it all, God was pleased that men were willing to sacrifice their beloved animals to restore their relationship to Him. God has always been a God of love and has always loved relationship from the heart more than rituals and sacrifices.

But the blood of animals could not atone for sins forever. The weight of the sins of the world demanded a perfect sin offering, one that would be able to identify with mankind as a "kinsman redeemer" and as the "...Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world." (John 1:29) That sin offering could only be the Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity. After four thousand years of human history, Jesus was incarnated. The word "incarnate" means to "become human." Jesus was God, equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Jesus did not begin His life in Bethlehem. The Holy Spirit moved on a young virgin girl, named Mary, and God was the actual Father of Jesus, who came down from Heaven to become a baby. He grew up; trained twelve disciples; taught for a few years; and then gave His life by suffering a cruel death for the sins of the whole world.

The birth of Jesus was surrounded with supernatural confirmations. There are over 300 prophecies concerning Jesus in the Bible regarding His birth, life, death, resurrection, and future return and reign. Most of these prophecies were at least 400 years old at the time that Jesus came to the earth. There were signs in the sky, and

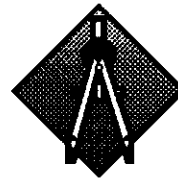
angels confirmed to witnesses that this was, indeed, the Son of God, the Savior.

An angel appeared to a group of shepherds, confirming that the Savior of the world was born in Bethlehem, called the "City of David." David had lived there 1,000 years earlier, and he was its greatest citizen until that time. In fact, both Mary and Joseph were descended from David. Jesus was called the "Son of David," because David was a type of Christ in the Old Testament, and because God had made a promise to David that one of his descendants would rule on the throne for ever. Jesus is now King of Kings, and He is the fulfillment of that promise.

Jesus is the center of Christmas, and we should be careful to give Him His proper place of preeminence. Many people feel uncomfortable with the Christmas story. Over the years, the story of "Saint Nicholas" has evolved in the minds of people to the point that in many homes, "Santa" is the heart of Christmas -- and the object of faith and honor. The danger of mixing the Santa Claus story with Christmas is that it can affect our view of God and the way God responds to people. Santa always seems to come through with the goods, even when we are not very good. Many people have developed the idea that "I know I did bad things; but it turned out all right on Christmas (judgment) morning. I think God will overlook my bad deeds, and I will come out okay on judgment day." But, God is holy and perfectly righteous. We must repent and be sure our sins are dealt with and placed under the blood of Jesus.

One of the problems is that children learn not to trust. They are taught about Santa the same way they are taught about God. "Mommy taught me about the Easter bunny, the tooth fairy, Santa Claus,

Jesus...." Studies have shown that many children are not as disappointed to learn there is no Santa as they are to learn that their parents have lied to them. It is better to say, "We are giving you these gifts in honor of Jesus, who is God's love gift to us. Santa is a pleasant, make believe story. God is real, and He is not like Santa." Santa gives gifts without any relationship. He stays up North with his elves and has nothing to do with us. Santa only wants to give and asks nothing in return. God is not like that. God wants our hearts. God wants us to give our lives to Him. He wants to dwell in our hearts and live through us as the Lord of our lives.



Methods

This can be a sensitive area, because we want to encourage children to understand the biblical story of Christmas and to distinguish between fiction and fact. There is a difference between a healthy imagination and subtle deception. The problem is that many parents are caught in the idea that Santa and other myths are harmless and necessary to a happy childhood.

If you have children whose parents teach them that Santa is real and should be received by faith, you should share with them this material before you teach it to the children, because we do not want to be in a position of contradicting something children are being taught at home. We need to be in one accord. Normally, parents who care enough about their children to send them to Sunday School really desire the best for them; and, when

the parents are shown the subtle effects of the Santa myth and a positive alternative -- the truth of the Christmas story -- they will join you in teaching the truth to their children.

That is the key. Communicate with the parents first and avoid confusion. We do not usually have this problem, because most parents do not teach doctrine to their children. So, there is no confusion. To be sure, parents should teach doctrine to children. Often, the parents need to be taught themselves, but they simply leave that up to you and the pastor.

Ultimately, the most effective way to teach children is to teach and encourage their parents. The more we work with parents, the more solidly the concepts are reinforced in young minds. God's first educational institution is the family. Remember, we are teaching as a supplement to the home training and are not out to supplant or replace it. As a teacher, you are a secondary authority to children, and you should always encourage children to look to their parents with trust and admiration.

Wise Men Still Seek Him

Volume 2

Lesson 25



Bible References

Psalms 14:1

Psalms 37:23

Psalms 75:7

Psalms 111:10

Jeremiah 29:13

Matthew 1:21

Matthew 2

Luke 12:18-19

John 1:11-12

John 11:10



Scripture Reading

Matthew 2:1-12

1 *"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,*

2 *"Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.*

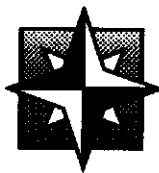
3 *"When Herod the king had heard {these things}, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.*

4 *"And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.*

5 *"And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet,*

6 *"And thou Bethlehem, {in} the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.*

7 *"Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.*



Theme

Wise men still seek Him.

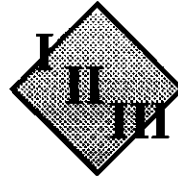
8 "And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found (him), bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

9 "When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

10 "When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11 "And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

12 "And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way."



Outline

I. A Savior Is Born.

A. The angel proclaimed to shepherds near Bethlehem that the Messiah from God had been born.

1. They arose and worshipped Him.
2. He was born in a stable, because there was no room for Him in the inn.

B. Jesus was the promised Messiah, whose coming had been foretold for centuries by God's prophets throughout Old Testament times.

1. "Jesus" means "savior, salvation."
2. "Christ" means "anointed one."
3. "Messiah" also means "anointed, the chosen one."
4. "Emmanuel" means "God with us."
5. "Lord" means "owner, master."

II. Wise Men From the East.

A. They were learned scholars -- not magicians.

1. Possibly astronomers, not astrologers.
 - a. Astronomy is the study of stars and constellations.
 - b. Astrology is the satanic religion which makes stars into gods.



Memory Verse

Matthew 1:21

"Thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins."

2. We do not know how many there were.
 - a. There may have been two, three, or any number of them.
 - b. They did bring three kinds of gifts.
3. They were possibly Persians, or Chaldeans.

B. They were from another culture, but they knew that God was sending a Messiah.

1. They were more perceptive than most Jews of that day.
2. They were wise, because they understood spiritual values. They sought the Lord.

C. Their visit came some time after that of the shepherds. Jesus could have been one or two years old at the time.

III. Herod.

A. Herod was a tetrarch of Judea.

1. He was appointed by Rome to be a local governor.
2. Herod was not a sovereign king.

B. Herod was a wicked and selfish man.

1. He was not Jewish, but as a ruler over the Jewish people, he tried to pretend that he was.
2. When Herod heard of the "King of the Jews," he felt his power threatened.
3. He tried to arrange the death of this possible threat to his power.

C. Herod's treachery.

1. Herod asked the wise men to tell him when they found the Christ-child, so he could "worship Him."
2. Herod lied.
3. God told the wise men in a dream not to see Herod again.
4. Herod ordered the execution of all the male babies in Bethlehem, but Joseph had already escaped to Egypt with Mary and Jesus.

IV. The Lesson.

A. The wise men sought the Lord.

1. Their goal was to worship Him and present gifts to Him.
2. Many people today seek the Lord only because they hope to receive from Him.
3. The wise men sacrificed to go in search of the Messiah and demanded nothing.
4. They brought gifts which represent things we should give to God.
 - a. Gold -- glory, worship. Give God all the glory.
 - b. Frankincense -- prayer, communion. God wants us to pray.
 - c. Myrrh -- means beauty: a type of holiness. We are called to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

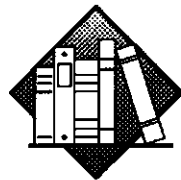
B. When you seek God honestly, God can direct your life.

1. *"The steps of a {good} man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way."* (Psalms 37:23)
2. God spoke to the wise men and Joseph in dreams and protected them.



Spiritual Truths

- A wise man is one who sees God's point of view in life, not necessarily one who is merely intellectual.
- We are not told how many wise men there were who sought Jesus. All truly wise men still seek Him.
- Our lives are not guided by stars as the astrologers think. They are guided by the One who created the stars.
- God can speak to us in many ways; but, to hear Him clearly, we must have an honest heart.
- Carnal people try to protect their authority by attacking those who are anointed; but when God raises up a leader, they cannot stop God.
- "Emmanuel" means "God with us." Jesus has always existed as God. His incarnation began His earthly ministry.
- Wise men still seek to give God glory, communion, and holy living.
- Wise men want God to rule their lives; but, fools seek to "be their own person."



Lesson Material

Wise men still seek Jesus. We know very little about these men who followed the star to seek out the baby Messiah. There is an old song you probably know: "We Three Kings Of Orient Are." Ironically, they were not kings. We have no idea how many there were, and they probably were not from the Orient. Other than that, the song is historically accurate. Some of our theological errors come from songs we have heard many times. Remember that songs are written by people, and they are no more accurate than anything else that people might write. Some ideas get into songs because the words fit the meter of the songs. "We Three Kings Of Orient Are" fits the music better than "We, a group of Persian or Chaldean scholars of an unspecified number, of someplace east of Judea are." Do not believe everything you hear in a song.

There are many names mentioned in the Bible. This shows us that God loves people and notices the individual. God knew each of these wise men and gave them a respected place in history. Why, then, are they left unnamed? Why do not we know any more about them? If they could hear from God well enough to find the Messiah and then be wise enough know to avoid Herod, why are they anonymous?

They are described rather vaguely because they represent many people of all races who honestly seek God. John said,

"He came unto his own, and His own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God."
(John 1:11-12)

There were many Jewish people in the region of Judea, and most of them missed the Messiah they had been anticipating for centuries. They were busy with their lives. They were unhappy under oppressive Roman rule, and they were looking for a Messiah who would come and solve their problems, not change their hearts.

The Jews were God's first choice -- His chosen people. Some shepherds worshipped Jesus. Simeon and Anna recognized and honored Him. But most of these beloved people missed it. He was right there; but, they were too caught up with life to see the Lifegiver. God was opening the door to the Gentiles -- people who were not descended from Israel. God extended His love and mercy to those who would seek Him. Through His prophets, God had long ago promised that anyone, who would seek Him with an honest heart, could find Him. (Jeremiah 29:13)

If God is so good, and hell is so horrible, why does not everyone seek God? The answer is: sin. The sin nature in our hearts pulls against God's authority. God is not a Santa, who stays away and only wants to hand heaven to us on judgment day. God is the Lord, and He is holy. Everyone wanted a Savior who would set them free from Rome and solve their problems; but, most people did not want to submit to a Lord who would save them from their sin. People wanted the reward, without repentance. They wanted to run their own lives. (John 11:10) Herod was focused on his own power and wealth. He loved his physical life and feared political rivalry. But he did not fear God;

therefore, he had no wisdom. Wisdom sees the eternal, spiritual side of issues. Wisdom knows that all authority comes from God. (Psalms 75:7) Wisdom knows that the only truly free life is the one that is in submission to Jesus Christ, the Lord. Wisdom knows that life lived for self, in the power of the flesh, is vain and hopeless. It is only when we "die to self" that we can really live; and, only as we become God's servants, can we really rule.

The fool seeks his own glory, and says,

"I will pull down my barns, and build greater;...take thine ease, eat, drink, {and} be merry."(Luke 12:18-19)

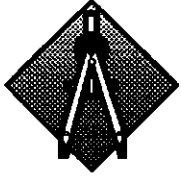
"The fool hath said in his heart, {There is} no God" (he acts as if there is no higher authority than himself). (Psalms 14)

But, wisdom says, "I will obey God, and lay down my rights. Instead of seeking to get God to give me something, I will seek to give myself to Him. I will let God rule my life, and He will bless me because He loves me. I will obey and honor my parents and teachers, because then I will reap more freedom and blessing."

The Jewish people were looking for God to give them things; but, the wise men sought the Messiah, so that they could give their gifts to Him.

Most of the people had Jesus right there and missed Him. But the wise men came from a distant land in the East to seek out God's anointed one. They were wise, because they understood the eternal nature of life and reality and were looking for God to tell them what to do. They wanted truth; and, in order to find it, they were willing to make personal sacrifices

and obey the Master. They realized that *"the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."* (Psalms 111:10)



Methods

There are many drawings and props which portray the "wise men from the east." Be sure to inform the students about the accuracy of some of our traditional notions and explain why we are not told much about these men.

The emphasis of this lesson should be on wisdom. Why were the Magi considered by God to be wise? What is the difference between wisdom and common sense?

The world views them as the same. Common sense comes from intelligence

and experience; but, wisdom comes from seeking God and submitting to His will, and honoring His Word. Wisdom fears God more than man. It was not sensible for Daniel's three Hebrew friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to stand up to King Nebuchadnezzar and refuse to bow to the image, because they could get killed. But it was wisdom, because they feared God more than the king, and the *"fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."* (Psalms 111:10)

Note also that the three wise men probably came to visit the baby Jesus much later than the Shepherds.

Emphasize the difference between seeking a savior and seeking a Lord. Truly wise people seek the protection and blessing that comes from being under authority. Genuine faith trusts God to work through parents and other authorities in our lives for our best interest. Wisdom realizes that we do not know nearly as much as God and our parents know.

Created In His Image

Volume 2

Lesson 26



Bible References

Genesis 1:27

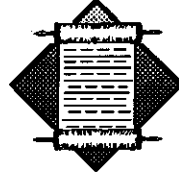
Psalms 8:4-6

Psalms 139

Luke 14:11

Philippians 2:3

Colossians 1:16



Scripture Reading

Psalms 8:4-6

4 "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

5 "For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

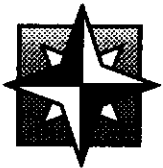
6 "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all {things} under his feet."

Psalms 139:13-16

13 "For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

14 "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully {and} wonderfully made: marvellous {are} thy works; and {that} my soul knoweth right well.

15 "My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, {and} curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.



Theme

Self-acceptance comes from knowing that God made us in His image for an eternal purpose.

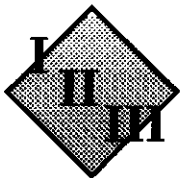
16 "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all {my members} were written, {which} in continuance were fashioned, when {as yet there was} none of them."



Memory Verse

Psalms 139:14

"I am fearfully and wonderfully made."



Outline

I. Created In His Image.

- A. We did not evolve by chance from monkeys.
 - 1. We were created by God.
 - 2. The fact that there is a design shows that there is a designer, and all of creation shows design.
 - 3. Men choose to believe in evolution, because they do not want to believe that they are accountable to a higher authority.
- B. We are created in God's moral image.
 - 1. We have a conscience to help us distinguish between right from wrong.

- 2. We were made to live and love like God.

C. We are created in God's spiritual image.

- 1. God is three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
- 2. We were created as a spirit, soul, and body.
 - a. This reflects an image of God, but we are not gods.
 - b. God is three persons. Each of us is one person with three parts to our being.
 - c. Our spirit is God-conscious. Our soul is self-conscious. Our body is sense-conscious.

II. Created for a Purpose.

- A. We were created by God to be His children and have fellowship with Him.
- B. We were created to serve and worship God.
- C. We were created to have dominion over God's creation on earth.

III. Godly Self-Acceptance Vs. Carnal Self-Esteem.

- A. People who do not know God usually do not realize that man is a spirit as well as a soul. So, they can only relate to the personality (soul).
 - 1. People may try to teach us self-esteem or assertiveness.
 - 2. An over-emphasis on self-esteem becomes pride. We are told in the Bible to esteem others better than

ourselves and not to have high self-esteem. (Philippians 2:3)

3. Assertiveness is based on selfishness. It focuses on demanding rights instead of fulfilling responsibilities.

B. When we accept ourselves, we realize that God designed us and has a plan for our lives. We can feel good about ourselves, because of the grace and love of God, and be excited about life.

1. Self-acceptance is a product of genuine salvation, which begins with repentance and faith in God.
2. When I have self-acceptance, I am thankful for the way God made me and for all the things He provided, which I could not control:
 - a. Parents and family;
 - b. The order of my birth in the family;
 - c. My race and nationality;
 - d. My gender;
 - e. My physical features;
 - f. My inborn talents and abilities.

- We are special because of God's work in our lives, and not because of our efforts to be better than other people.
- Sin can damage and destroy the character image God created in us; and it will prevent us from becoming what we were created to be.
- God gave us life and potential. We choose what we will do with that life, and we will give an account to God in the end.
- Self-esteem training is a poor substitute for godly self-acceptance.



Lesson Material

God is awesome. He is bigger than the universe; yet, He knows and cares about the details of every one of our lives. God created man, because He had a Father's heart and desired children. He had created a multitude of spirit-beings, called angels, and had created the universe, with billions of stars and planets. God was totally complete in Himself in the persons of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. But because of His vast capacity to love, God cultivated a tiny particle of matter called planet earth and created an atmosphere which could support physical life.

The angels could skillfully serve and worship God, but they could not really satisfy the Father's heart of God. God created the animals. Then, He took some earth, formed man, and breathed life into him. Man was a spirit, designed to live for ever. He was a soul, who could respond,



Spiritual Truths

- We are not the product of evolution by chance but are God's creation and design.
- We do not consider monkeys our distant ancestors. We believe God is our close and loving Creator.
- Self-worth comes from knowing who we are in God, and not by exalting ourselves above others.

love, and make choices. He also had a physical body and could relate to the physical creation of God. Man was created with less power than angels, but God gave man the potential to grow in the image of God and, in eternity, to judge angels. As God's special child, man was destined to have dominion over creation.

Sin mars that image, and keeps us from receiving God's grace in our lives. Because of the sin of Adam and Eve, death became part of the condition of man. We will have to face death sooner or later, and we are not guaranteed a long life on earth. The important thing in life is to seek God and to grow in His character image. We learn to respond to God by first repenting of our sins; believing that He will forgive us of our rebellion and self-will; and then learning to walk with God in faithful obedience. We learn to grow in grace. That is, as we mature, we learn to live life with God's help and guidance and to reject the selfish impulses that damaged our lives so much in the first place.

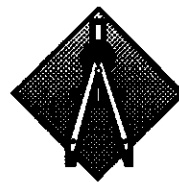
When man drifts away from God, he often tries to restore what sin damaged, with his own earthly wisdom. Sin damages our potential for greatness in life. So, men try to build up their self-esteem, thinking that they will be more fulfilled in life if they build up their ego. But, the Bible teaches us that, in order to be really honored in life, we should humble ourselves. Jesus said,

"For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."
(Luke 14:11)

The basis for self-acceptance is the realization that God created us, and He designed every aspect of our lives. We are unique expressions of His character and

His creative power. We know that God has a wonderful plan for our lives and that we will be happiest when we seek to do His will, instead of our own. If we have faith in God, we can trust Him to know what is best for us and accept all the unchangeable aspects of our lives, which are part of His design. We have many choices in life, and what we become will be largely determined by our personal choices. We can obey or disobey. We can seek good for others, or we can focus on self. We can seek after God, or we can "do our own thing."

But there are some things in life which we must accept as God's design, and trust that He knows what is best. He placed us within our families. He determined the order and time of our arrival. He designed our features. We cannot change our height, although our choices can affect our width! Through it all, we need to be reminded that God loves us, and that we can trust Him with our lives. We are His special, unique creations. If we humble ourselves and seek after God, He will use our lives in a wonderful way, and we will be rewarded and blessed for ever.



Methods

Discuss the difference between self-acceptance and self-esteem. An extreme emphasis on self-esteem produces pride. The world promotes it, but it is a carnal substitute for self-acceptance.

Self-esteem focuses on self. Self-acceptance focuses on being grateful to God for the way He created us.

Ask the class, "Do you have any features which you wish God had designed differently and you would like to change?" Encourage each one to thank God for the

distinct and special way He made them. Then, help them to let those distinctions be reminders that each of us is a unique creation, who rightfully belongs to God.

Created to Praise Him

Volume 2

Lesson 27



Bible References

Psalms 19:1

Psalms 22:3

Psalms 34

Psalms 56:3

Psalms 100

Psalms 102:18

Psalms 119:64

Psalms 147:1

Proverbs 16:6

Proverbs 19:11

Isaiah 26:3

Isaiah 41:23

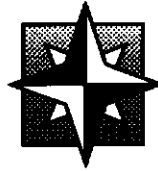
Isaiah 43:21

1 Corinthians 15:10

Hebrews 13:15

James 4:6

Revelation 4:11



Theme

God created mankind for His honor and pleasure. Praise to God is an excellent activity for people.



Scripture Reading

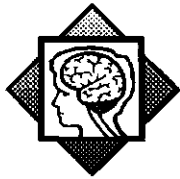
Psalms 100:1-4

1 "A Psalms of praise. Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.

2 "Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

3 "Know ye that the LORD he (is) God: (it is) he (that) hath made us, and not we ourselves; (we are) his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

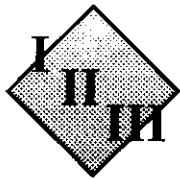
4 "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, (and) into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, (and) bless his name."



Memory Verse

Psalms 147:1

"Praise ye the LORD: for (it is) good to sing praises unto our God;..."



Outline

I. Why God Created Man.

- A. God made mankind for His own pleasure and glory.
 - 1. The highest good in life is to give praise, honor, and worship to God, who made us.
 - 2. Isaiah 41:23.
- B. God made man to care for the earth and have dominion over it.

II. What Is Praise To God?

- A. Praise is the practice of talking or singing about the good things God has done and is doing for us.
 - 1. Praise is expressing admiration.

- 2. Praise is boasting about the virtues and works of God.
- 3. Praise is glorying in God instead of in ourselves. (Proverbs 19:11)

- B. Thanksgiving is expressing gratefulness for what God has done for you.

III. What Are the Benefits From Praising God?

- A. Praise to God creates a focus on God and His ability.
 - 1. This helps us to be humble, so that we can receive grace from God. (James 4:6)
 - 2. This builds our faith and confidence in God.
 - 3. This results in perfect peace. (Isaiah 26:3)
 - 4. A focus on faith in God will overcome our fears. (Psalms 56:3)
- B. Psalms 147:1.
 - 1. Praise to God is good. It is a good activity, and there are no negative side-effects.
 - 2. Praise is pleasant. It makes you feel good about life and about yourself.
 - 3. Praise is comely. We look our best when we are glorifying God with our lives.
- C. Praise brings the manifest presence of God. (Psalms 22:3)
- D. Praise is an act of faith and obedience, and pleases God.
 - 1. Hebrews 13:15.
 - 2. Psalms 92:1.

IV. When Should We Praise God?

- A. We should have a habit of praising God every day, several times a day.
1. Psalms 34:1.
 2. Psalms 119:164.
- B. We should praise God even when we do not feel like it, as a sacrifice of praise. (Hebrews 13:15)



Spiritual Truths

- God created mankind to glorify and praise Him. God is pleased when we honor Him with praise every day.
- Praise is boasting on God and causes a building up of our faith.
- Praise involves thanksgiving and helps us develop a grateful spirit.
- Praise to God keeps us focused on the positives in life.
- Praise is speaking and singing about God, while worship is ministering to God with your spirit.
- People tend to look their very best when they praise the Lord, because it is what they were designed to do.
- Praise is pleasant and comely, and has no negative side-effects.
- Praise is good medicine to help prevent the disease of spiritual pride.



Lesson Material

It is important that every Christian teacher seek to lead his students to cultivate a Christian world view. Our world view is the way we see the purpose and perspective in life. A Christian world view sees Jesus as the center of life and culture, and recognizes that He is an integral part of every day, every decision, and every activity of life. By contrast, a humanist world view sees self as the center of life and results in a selfish and sinful lifestyle.

The practice of praising God regularly and often helps us to strengthen our Christian world view. The consistent practice of praising God will make us more conscious of His presence and His purposes in our lives. It will result in responses of love, joy, patience, peace, and other character qualities which come from the Holy Spirit working in our lives. The secular view excludes God from our thinking and, therefore, fails to see life in relation to the eternal. The result is that we live for self and for the moment; and will be inclined to be sinful, rebellious, and hedonistic. The realization that we will answer to God for our life keeps us from doing evil. *"...By the fear of the LORD (men) depart from evil."* (Proverbs 16:6)

Praise is an expression of admiration, or adoration. It is important to determine that God will be the focus of most of the praise we exercise. We need to have a habit of glorying in God instead of ourselves, as the humanist would teach. Humility is the character quality which

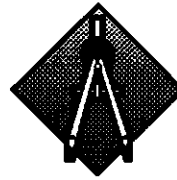
recognizes our utter dependence on God and gives Him the honor and credit for every good thing in life. (1 Corinthians 15:10) As God's children, we glory in our Heavenly Father, and not in ourselves.

David is a prime example of a young man who made it a habit to praise God. David practiced music. In fact, he invented several musical instruments and wrote numerous songs of praise to God. David developed a delight and focus on God through the habit of offering praise to God continually. That is why, when he saw Goliath mocking the men of Israel, he could see the bigger picture. David saw God in the situation and realized that the giant was really defying God. David correctly reasoned that God was just waiting for someone to act as God's representative in faith. He believed that God would supernaturally help any Israelite to defeat this carnal man, who did not even know God existed.

Praise is bragging on God. The phrase, "Praise the Lord," is not really a praise, but it is an exhortation to praise the Lord. To praise God, we speak or sing about His works. All of creation is praising God continually by its beauty and harmony. Every plant grows and blooms as a testimony to the divine Creator. Every sunset is a witness to His infinite ability. *"The heavens declare the glory of God."* (Psalms 19:1)

The wisest men learn to give God the credit for the benefits and blessings in life and for every success they achieve. Praise to God is good; it is healthy; and it is

beautiful. Praising God can keep us from becoming bitter when people let us down, because it diverts our focus to the eternal God. Even when we are going through difficult times in life, we should "offer unto God the sacrifice of praise." (Hebrews 13:15) That is, we should praise God because of who He is and for what He has done. Praise Him, not because you feel like it; but, because He is God, and He is a good and merciful God.



Methods

Schedule time for the students to practice praising each other and their parents sincerely. Call attention to how praise changes an individual's attitude -- how that person is encouraged and blessed by the sincere compliments about their work. Ask for expressions of sincere praise, particularly for fathers. Notice how praise changes the way we think about our fathers as well as our mothers.

Be careful to clarify the difference between **praise** and **flattery**. Praise focuses on what a person has done well. Flattery focuses on features or conditions which they did not control. "You have beautiful eyes" is not praise. It is flattery. However, the statement, "God gave you a beautiful pair of eyes" is praise to God and turns our attention correctly on our Creator.

John's Baptism

Volume 2

Lesson 28



Bible References

Matthew 3:1-17

Matthew 28:19

Mark 1:1-11

Acts 19:1-6

Romans 6:4

Hebrews 6



Scripture Reading

Matthew 3:1-8,11

1 *"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,*

2 *"And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

3 *"For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.*

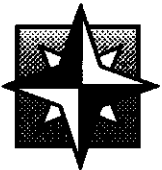
4 *"And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.*

5 *"Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,*

6 *"And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.*

7 *"But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?*

8 *"Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."*



Theme

John's baptism was a baptism to show repentance for sin, but Christian baptism is the sign of our covenant with God.

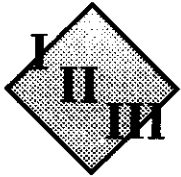
11 "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and {with} fire."



Memory Verse

Romans 6:4

"...we are buried with him by baptism...."



Outline

I. The Baptism Of John.

- A. God anointed John to teach people to repent of their sins and to prepare people for the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ.
- B. Before you can receive salvation, you must recognize that you are a sinner who is in need of a Savior.
- C. John baptized (buried) people in the waters of the river as a sign of repentance.

II. Repentance.

- A. To repent is to acknowledge that we have sinned and to turn from sin in our lives.
- B. John rebuked the Pharisees, because they were trying to be religious without repenting of their sins.

III. Jesus Came to John.

- A. John was surprised when Jesus came to him to be baptized, because he knew that Jesus had no sin. So, why should Jesus repent?
- B. This was the beginning of Christian baptism. It was the act of a saved believer, consecrating and dedicating his life to God and not "unto repentance."
- C. Jesus said, "this is my act of righteousness."

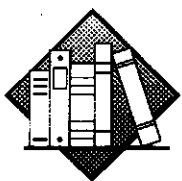
IV. Christian Baptism.

- A. The Ephesians needed Christian baptism. (Acts 19:1-6)
- B. Christian baptism is the sign of obedience. It shows that we belong to God and "rise to walk in newness of life."
- C. After we have been born again through faith and repentance, we follow the Lord Jesus into the waters of baptism.



Spiritual Truths

- John's baptism was not Christian baptism. It was a baptism to show repentance. It prepared the people for the Messiah.
- Repentance means a turning around, a changing of heart and direction in life.
- Like all true prophets, John the Baptist was very unpopular with carnal men.
- The Pharisees were rebuked, because they wanted salvation and religion without repentance and humility.
- We are not saved by baptism. Baptism is a sign of obedience for people who are saved by God's grace through faith.
- Baptism is a demonstration that we belong to God through a covenant relationship.



Lesson Material

John the Baptist was a fiery prophet of God. The purpose of his ministry was to prepare the way for Jesus, the Messiah. John did not lead an easy life. He was noted for his diet of locusts and wild honey. He did not necessarily eat them raw, and we do not know for certain that he limited his diet to those insects. That was only one of the characteristics of his way of life. He was a rough and tumble

outdoors man, and he was very bold in telling people that they were sinners and needed to repent. He was not popular with the self-righteous religious leaders, and did not live a long life. He was killed as a result of this direct, sincere honesty in his rebuke of King Herod, the adulterous government official. John was about thirty-one years old.

The purpose of John's ministry was to lead people to repentance. That is not a popular doctrine today; but, it is still the first word of the Gospel. Repentance is the first foundation stone of the Christian life listed in Hebrews 6. In genuine repentance, we recognize and confess that we are sinners and deserve death, the just penalty for rebellion against God. When we repent from sin, we turn from a self-centered life to a Christ-centered life. We make a decision to live for Jesus instead of for self. We confess our sins to God and ask for His forgiveness. Faith is necessary, because we must not only ask for forgiveness, but we must also receive it.

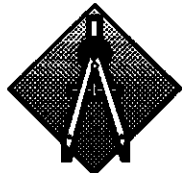
John did not understand why Jesus came to him to be baptized. He was baptizing people unto repentance, and Jesus had no sin. Why should He repent? But Jesus explained to him, "John, you let me do this. This is my act of obedience, to fulfill all righteousness." So John obeyed, and lowered Jesus into the muddy waters of the Jordan river.

Christian baptism is a picture of death. When Jesus was baptized, He was declaring that He was dead to His own desires and will, and that he belonged completely to His Heavenly Father.

Baptism means burial; to be totally covered over with something. The Apostle Paul said that in Christian baptism we are "buried with Christ." We are

identifying with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection as we:

1. Confess Him before men;
2. Become immersed in the waters;
3. Rise up out of the water.



Methods

Discuss what kind of person would eat locusts. Note that, when properly cooked, locusts are nutritious. But today, locusts and other insects are not included in our diets. It may surprise you to learn that most of our foods have insect parts in them, which have not been removed while the foods are being processed and packaged. We simply are not aware of it.

Ask whether any of the children have been water-baptized, or have they seen a baptismal service. How much do they understand about it? What are their impressions?

Discuss John's boldness in rebuking the Pharisees for their insincerity. Show that it was really a motive of love that prompted John to be so direct and honest, because the Pharisees needed to understand that they were sinners, and they would have a chance to be saved.

Go through a rehearsal of baptism. Have one student keep himself very stiff and straight while you lower him down and then raise him to a standing position. Explain that we are not physically dying; but, in our hearts, we must "die to self" and to the world in order to live effectively for God.

The Profit-Minded Prophet

Volume 2

Lesson 29



Bible References

Numbers 22

Numbers 23

Romans 6:23

Colossians 3:2

1 Timothy 6:10

2 Peter 2:15-16

Jude 11

Revelation 2:14



Scripture Reading

Numbers 22:22-31

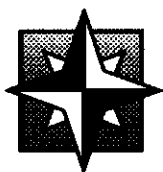
22 *"And God's anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants {were} with him.*

23 *"And the ass saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way.*

24 *"But the angel of the LORD stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall {being} on this side, and a wall on that side.*

25 *"And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall: and he smote her again.*

26 *"And the angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place, where {was} no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left.*



Theme

God is able to speak to us in many ways, and is not limited to the laws of nature.

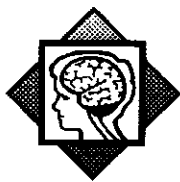
27 "And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff.

28 "And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?

29 "And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee.

30 "And the ass said unto Balaam, {Am} not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since {I was} thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay.

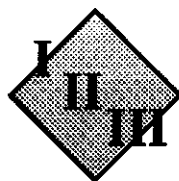
31 "Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face."



Memory Verse

1 Timothy 6:10

"For the love of money is the root of all evil...."



Outline

I. Balaam's Greed.

- A. King Balak was afraid of Israel, so he tried to hire Balaam, the prophet, to curse them for him.
- B. When Balaam inquired of God about it, God said, "No."
- C. When Balaam heard that King Balak would pay him whatever he asked, Balaam decided that God should really reconsider.

II. Balaam's Disobedience.

- A. Balaam had a clear word from God not to go to King Balak, but Balaam kept asking for permission.
- B. Sometimes God will let us do what we want, and He will let us suffer the consequences.
- C. The angel was ready to kill Balaam, because he was going to work against God's people for his own gain.

III. Balaam's Donkey.

- A. Three times the donkey resisted Balaam and was beaten each time.
 - 1. The donkey went off the path the first time she saw the angel.
 - 2. The second time, they were going between two stone walls, and to avoid the angel, the donkey brushed

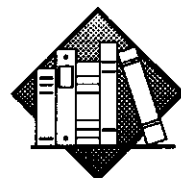
against one wall and crushed Balaam's foot.

3. The third time, there was no way the donkey could go around the angel, so the donkey dropped to the ground and refused to move.

B. Although Balaam was a prophet, in this case, the donkey saw a spiritual reality that Balaam did not see, because he was blinded by greed.

C. God opened the donkey's mouth so that she could talk to Balaam.

1. Balaam was so enraged that he did not even notice he was talking to a donkey.
2. Then God opened Balaam's eyes, and he realized that his faithful donkey had saved his life.



Lesson Material

Although the end results of this incident were sad for Israel, this is still considered to be one of the most humorous stories in the Bible. The idea that a man would start talking back to a talking donkey and not seem to be aware of it is uniquely amazing. But, such is the case with the emotions of man.

While the talking donkey is the most interesting aspect of this story and has sparked imaginations for centuries, the key to this story is the heart of the prophet, Balaam. He was not an Israelite; yet, he was a recognized prophet of the God of Israel. God, after all, is the only true God, and if a man seeks truth, he can know God. Balaam must have started out as a man of faith and prayer, but this one response to money marked his life for history, and made him the archetype of irrational greed.

When King Balak offered to hire the prophet to curse Israel, Balaam was told by God not to do it. When he was told that the wage was very high, he sought God again. It seems as if he wanted to make sure that God understood the true importance of this deal. Perhaps God



Spiritual Truths

- God can speak to us through many different means.
- Sometimes God in His mercy will stop us from going our own selfish way.
- There are angels and other spiritual beings on the earth, although most of the time we do not see them.
- At times, we may feel that others are not cooperative, when actually they are trying to do what is best for us.
- Money should never be our goal in life. It should be a byproduct of work.

would be impressed with the offer, if He knew how much money was involved. Actually, God is never impressed with money. He only does what is right. But Balaam got off track when he became enticed with the promise of wealth for functioning in his ministry, and ultimately it ruined his reputation and destroyed his life. Just because a job pays well does not mean it is God's will for you to be employed in it, and it does not make it the best job for you.

It is important to note that, when Balaam appealed to the Lord, he was given permission to go. God did not create us to be robots. He wants to give us choices in life, because He wants to teach us responsibility. He wants us to serve Him voluntarily out of love. God let Balaam do what he wanted to do, but He gave him warnings.

God allowed Balaam to go to Moab, but He also sent an angel to stop him and kill him. There are at least two reasons for this.

1. This illustrates the fact that *"the wages of sin is death."* (Romans 6:23) Balaam's sin was covetousness and greed. Money became his focus and, as a result, his god. He had his heart set on the money and became spiritually insensitive. We are commanded to *"set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth."* (Colossians 3:2)

2. God knew that Balaam was going to do something to hurt Israel, and interfered to protect them.

When the donkey saw the angel, she ran off the road. Angels are powerful beings. Almost every time an angel appears to a person in the Bible, he says, "Do not be afraid." That is because angels

are not pretty young females like we see in so much art, and neither do they appear as chubby children with tiny wings. This angel was big and threatening. The problem was that Balaam was too carnal to be aware that the angel was there. Balaam was probably thinking so much about what he could buy with his wages from King Balak, that he could not see what was happening in the spirit-realm. Angels and other spiritual beings are very real in our world; but, we cannot see them with our natural eyes. We can only see them if God gives us vision in our spirit.

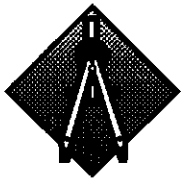
God was very gracious to Balaam, because He opened the donkey's eyes and let her see the angel. God then opened the donkey's mouth, as well. Three times the donkey avoided the mighty sword of the angel of the Lord; and three time, she was beaten and abused by the man she had just saved from death. The third time the donkey said something like this: "Hey, why are you beating me? Have I not always been faithful to you? Have I not always done as you have asked? Have I ever harmed you?"

Balaam's foot was throbbing and hurting, and he began talking back to the donkey, as if they talked to each other all the time. Balaam was so enraged that he became irrational. Then the Lord opened Balaam's eyes and let him see the angel. This made Balaam realize how disobedient to God he was being. He immediately bowed down and fell on his face before the angel, which was the wise thing for him to do at that time.

The angel told Balaam he could go to King Balak with his men, but he cautioned Balaam that he could say only what God told him to say. As a matter of fact, Balaam was given words of blessing over Israel. King Balak was infuriated by this, because

he had hired Balaam to curse Israel. Balaam told King Balak that he could not curse those whom God had blessed; that Israel was blessed by God and under God's authority. But, if they were lured away from God's presence, they would no longer have God's protection.

In the same way, Satan loves to lure us away from God so he can attack us. That is the purpose of temptation. Stay under godly authority, and do not let the world lure you away from God.



Methods

This would be a good lesson to illustrate using either three people in a skit or three puppets. It may be difficult to find someone willing to play the role of the donkey. But, just remind the students that we should be willing to be "mules (fools) for Christ's sake."

The student who plays Balaam is to act completely unaware of the presence of the angel, while at the same time the donkey is keenly aware of the angel and starts moving around to avoid the angel. The first time, the donkey moves out of the way of the angel. The second time, the donkey brushes against the wall and scrapes Balaam's foot against the wall. The third time, the donkey falls to the ground and will not move.

Each time Balaam, the prophet, shouts angrily at the donkey and beats it with a stick.

If this is done as a skit, it will be best to use all men if possible. The angel should look big enough to strike fear in the donkey, and the person playing the donkey must be strong enough to carry "Balaam" easily. We know that the donkey was a female, but it may be necessary to take some liberty, unless you are able to recruit "Frances, the Talking Mule."

Joshua's Call To Leadership

Volume 2

Lesson 30



Bible References

Exodus 17:6-8

Numbers 13:8, 16

Deuteronomy 3:28

Deuteronomy 34:9

Joshua 1

Proverbs 10:22

Proverbs 17:2

Psalms 119:11

Luke 16:10-12



Scripture Reading

Joshua 1:1-9

1 *"Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying,*

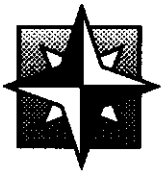
2 *"Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, {even} to the children of Israel.*

3 *"Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.*

4 *"From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.*

5 *"There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, {so} I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.*

6 *"Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an*



Theme

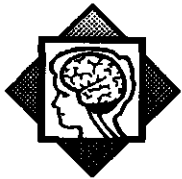
The way to be a leader in God's kingdom is to be a servant.

inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them.

7 *"Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it (to) the right hand or (to) the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.*

8 *"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*

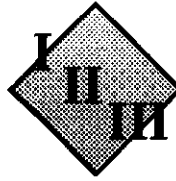
9 *"Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God (is) with thee whithersoever thou goest."*



Memory Verse

Joshua 1:9

"Be strong and of a good courage;...for the Lord thy God is with thee..."



Outline

I. Joshua, Son Of Nun.

A. "Joshua" means "Jehovah is deliverance, or salvation."

1. This has the same meaning from the Hebrew as the name "Jesus" has in the Greek.
2. God used Joshua to bring the people of Israel into the Promised Land.
3. Moses changed Joshua's name. It had been "Oshea" ("salvation"). (Numbers 13:8, 16)

B. Joshua was from the tribe of Ephraim.

II. Joshua the Servant.

A. Joshua was a military leader in Israel. (Exodus 17:8-16)

B. Joshua was a personal servant to Moses.

1. "Minister" means "servant, or helper."
2. Joshua accompanied Moses part of the way up Mt. Sinai.

C. Joshua was in charge of the Tabernacle after Israel committed idolatry.

D. Joshua was one of the twelve leaders picked to spy out the land of Canaan for Moses, and one of only two who gave a report in faith.

III. God Chose Joshua to Succeed Moses As Israel's Leader.

- A. Joshua was chosen because he was faithful.
- B. Jesus gave three tests of a faithful man. (Luke 16:10-12)
1. If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in big things.
 2. If you are faithful with money, you will be faithful with true riches.
 3. If you are faithful with that which belongs to someone else, you will be faithful with your own.
- C. God knew Joshua would be a good leader, because he had been a faithful follower.

IV. God's Encouragement To Joshua.

- A. After Moses died, God spoke to Joshua.
- B. God reminded Joshua:
1. I am giving the land to My people, Israel.
 2. No man can defeat you, because I sent you, and I am with you.
 3. Be strong and courageous.
 4. Do exactly what the Word of God says.
 5. Talk and think the Word of God every day continually.
 6. Then you will prosper and have good success.



Spiritual Truths

- God is the source of all true authority.
- God is looking for leaders who are obedient and faithful to Him, and not those who have their own ideas.
- Courage comes from knowing that you are doing the will of God for your life, and that He is with you.
- A right focus on God's Word will tend to produce good success in life.
- Being faithful is being dependable, reliable, worthy of the faith others have in you.
- Faith and faithfulness go hand in hand.



Lesson Material

In a time where men usually exalted one supreme individual to be their king, God had a different kind of leader for His people. God was their sovereign King, and Moses was God's spokesman to Israel. Moses was more like a pastor. His work was to stay close to God and communicate God's direction and wisdom to the people. When it came time for Moses to die, God told him to appoint Joshua as his successor. Moses was not to look for the strongest or smartest man in Israel to be the leader. He was simply to ordain the man that God had chosen. In choosing a

leader, God does not look at appearance, aptitude, or personality. God looks for a faithful heart.

Joshua was the right man for the job. Joshua was a good soldier and had stood faithfully by Moses for years. His given name was Oshea, which means "salvation." Moses changed his name to Joshua, which means "The Lord is Salvation." Names in the Bible are significant, especially when a name is changed. Joshua's name was to be a constant reminder that his strength and success came from the Lord, and not from his own ability.

In the past, God had told Moses to encourage Joshua and to make sure he kept a good record of all of Joshua's past military victories. Apparently, Joshua had a tendency to be timid. He was faithful and always obedient, but he did not have a strong self-image. He needed extra encouragement. Moses had often encouraged Joshua, and had laid his hands on him with prayer to impart his spirit of wisdom to Joshua. It is interesting to note that Moses did not give this fatherly blessing to his sons. We know that he had sons, but we know nothing significant about their lives, even though their father was God's personal friend. When it came time to transfer his ministry to a successor, Moses chose his personal servant instead of one of his sons. Solomon said, "*A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame.*" (Proverbs 17:2) Perhaps Moses' sons were not faithful to God, while Joshua, his servant, was.

After the death of Moses, God spoke to Joshua again and encouraged him. God reminded Joshua that God had called him; and, therefore, he did not need to fear. God was with him, and Joshua defeated seven nations, each of which was stronger than

the nation of Israel. God's exhortation to Joshua was to be strong and courageous, and to meditate on God's Word day and night.

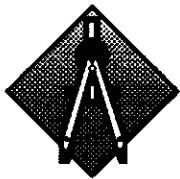
Now, at that time, man had as the written word of God only the five books of Moses. They are the first books of the Bible, and are known as the "Pentateuch." In these books of history and statute, Joshua had the basics of everything he needed to know to guide the nation wisely and to make the best choices. He had guidelines for judging civil and criminal cases and for directing the military operations of his army. The basic principle for military conquest was simple: whatever God says to do, do it.

Not only was Joshua to read the Word of God, but he was to make it the center of his conversation. We tend to be greatly influenced by what we discuss. James, the Apostle, said that the "tongue is a rudder." In other words, what we say with our mouths influences the direction of our lives. The more we speak of God and His Word, the greater the tendency will be for us to live accordingly. Some people love entertainment or sports more than they love God, and this fills their conversation. Do you speak about God and the Bible at home and at school, or only in Sunday School?

Joshua was told to "meditate therein day and night." Meditation is more than memorizing. To meditate means to let the ideas simmer in your heart and to ponder and think about it in your personal quiet time. When we meditate on the Word of God, we often visualize the stories and principles working in our lives. For example, after hearing the story of Joshua, we might think of ourselves as faithful helpers and messengers, serving our leaders and then meeting with God to get

our "marching orders." We might visualize winning victories in our own lives through faith, such as victories over the enemy of bitterness, or selfishness, or a mean attitude. We could also see ourselves speaking about God to others, especially to those who are unsaved, and see God perform a miracle in their lives.

We can hide the Word of God in our heads (memorize it); but, meditation helps us hide the Word in our hearts. (Psalms 119:11) As long as Joshua focused on God's Word, he was successful in life. He had good success. Good success means that you can achieve goals and good in your life without sacrificing other good things. For example, some people in the world have had financial success; but, they have had failed marriages or rebellious children. Some have achieved fame and fortune; but, they have sacrificed their integrity or their health to get there. But *"The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it."* (Proverbs 10:22)



Methods

Discuss the value and principle of meditating on the Word of God. Pick a

Bible principle or passage and discuss how each of us can apply it to our lives. As an example, let us use the story of the Good Samaritan. What would you do if you saw someone who was hurting, because others had mocked them, or they had been the victim of a "practical joke?" Would you try to comfort them; or, would you try to avoid becoming involved?"

Ask if any of the students has ever been exposed to "transcendental meditation." Some of them may have been, but did not realize it, because it was promoted subtly on some television cartoon program. This kind of meditation focuses on self and seeks to look within for truth and power, instead of looking to God. This kind of meditation is dangerous, because it opens the soul to evil influences. We need to direct our meditation according to God's Spirit and toward God's Word, the Bible.

Review the three tests of a faithful person which Jesus gave in Luke 16:10-12. How can we be faithful in little things? In money matters? In that which belongs to others? Is it important for me to be faithful if I am only seven years old?

The Wisdom Of Rahab

Volume 2

Lesson 31



Bible References

Joshua 2

Joshua 6:17

Psalms 111:10

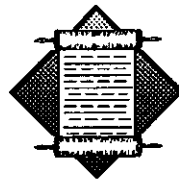
Matthew 10:41

Matthew 21:31

Romans 13:14

Hebrews 9:9

Hebrews 11



Scripture Reading

Joshua 2:1-15

1 *"And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there.*

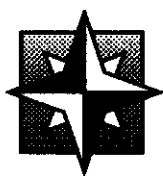
2 *"And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to night of the children of Israel to search out the country.*

3 *"And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country.*

4 *"And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they {were}:*

5 *"And it came to pass {about the time} of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them.*

6 *"But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the*



Theme

Rahab responded correctly to her fear of the God of Israel by acting in faith and trust.

stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof.

7 "And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate.

8 "And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof;

9 "And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.

10 "For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that (were) on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.

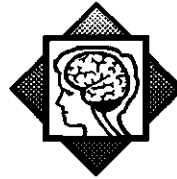
11 "And as soon as we had heard (these things), our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he (is) God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.

12 "Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have showed you kindness, that ye will also show kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token:

13 "And (that) ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.

14 "And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee.

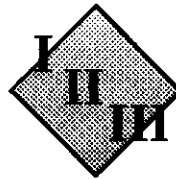
15 "Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house (was) upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall."



Memory Verse

Psalms 111:10

"The fear of the LORD (is) the beginning of wisdom...."



Outline

I. Rahab the Harlot.

- A. Rahab was a sinner, who made her living by moral impurity.
- B. Jesus said, "the harlots and publicans (IRS men, or tax collectors) will get into heaven before you Pharisees (religious leaders)."
 - 1. Why? Because they generally knew they were sinners and needed a Savior.
 - 2. The Pharisees were "good," moral people, who thought they were pleasing to God and did not know they needed anything.

II. Rahab's Wisdom.

- A. Rahab and all Jericho feared Israel, because their God was so powerful.
- B. While the leaders of Jericho tried to defend themselves, Rahab put her trust in the Israelites and, therefore, in God.

III. Rahab's Kindness.

- A. Rahab hid the two spies and helped them escape.
- B. Rahab received the Israelites.
 1. Jesus said, *"He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward...."* (Matthew 10:41)
 2. You cannot receive any person's ministry, unless you receive that person.
- C. Rahab appealed for the lives of her family, as well as for herself.

IV. Rahab's Reward.

- A. When Israel conquered Jericho, Rahab's family was spared.
- B. Rahab married an Israelite from the tribe of Judah, and she became part of the genealogy of David and Jesus.

- People who do not fear God have no wisdom.
- Wisdom is seeing life from God's perspective.
- The fear of man brings a snare; but, the fear of God leads to life, joy, and peace.
- When you receive a child of God, you can receive what they have to give.
- It is wise to defend God's children against those who would attack them.



Lesson Material

Many people who do not understand God's ways have trouble with the story of Rahab. For one thing, why did God tell His people to destroy all the nations in the Land of Canaan?

There are several reasons for this. First of all, God had told Israel that the heathens of the land would tend to teach their children to serve idols. The unclean would defile the clean. Secondly, there were possibly many diseases which were the result of the immoral and unsanitary lifestyles of the pagan people who occupied the land. The only way to prevent the spread of disease was to destroy all of the people. The story of Israel is also a type of the life of a believer. (Hebrews 9:9) When we have sin in our lives, we need to repent completely, turn from it, and *"...make not [provision for the flesh], to {fulfil} the lusts {thereof}."* (Romans 13:14)



Spiritual Truths

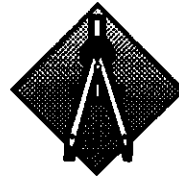
- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, and of wisdom.

The second problem people have is with Rahab's occupation. Why did not God choose a nice female attorney, or an honest seamstress? Was she really a harlot? Or, was that a generic term for an innkeeper? The point is that this illustrates a principle that Jesus taught: that the publicans and harlots will get into the kingdom of God before the *Pharisees*. (Matthew 21:31) Jesus was not endorsing sin. He was merely pointing out a very real truth. Some people are very religious, but they are not saved. We are not saved by being good. We are saved by repenting and believing God. People cannot be saved, unless they realize they are lost. Some people do not feel a need for humility before God. They have, perhaps, a Santa-based concept of a God who judges us by the "naughty or nice" factors in our lives. Harlots know they are immoral and need God's mercy.

The real key to the story of Rahab is her fear of the Lord. All of the people of Jericho feared God's people, because they knew of the miracles performed against the nation of Egypt. When you realize that God is an awesome God, you will either try to defend yourself against His justice; or justify yourself; or repent of your sins and fall on His mercy. Humanists try to avoid feeling guilty for their sins by convincing themselves that there will be no judgment. Religious people try to justify themselves by being good. But those who are wise will seek forgiveness and mercy.

Rahab responded to her fear of God by receiving the people of Israel. She received

the spies, and, therefore, received the protection they could offer. She sided with God's people, and she received the reward of life. She responded to the fear of the Lord with faith and was included in God's "Hall of Fame" in Hebrews 11.



Methods

Find in the scriptures some references to the fear of the Lord, particularly in Proverbs. Use a good concordance. You will find that there are more than 30 benefits of the fear of the Lord listed in the Bible. Share some of these with the class.

Explain that there is a difference between the fear of the Lord and the fear of man, or other phobias. Stimulate a discussion about fears and phobias. What do you fear? Why do you fear that? Then talk about the fact that all of us will give an account to God as the judge of our lives, and that we should have a healthy respect and awe for Him.

Talk about wisdom, which begins with the fear of the Lord. Wisdom is not intelligence, but the ability to see God's point of view. Wisdom considers eternity, not just what seems best for the moment.

The Salvation Of Rahab

Volume 2

Lesson 32



Bible References

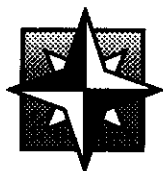
Joshua 2

John 3

Ephesians 2:8-9

Romans 3:23

1 John 1:9



Theme

Rahab is a clear picture of salvation. We are saved by grace through faith.



Scripture Reading

Joshua 2:14-18

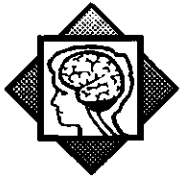
14 *"And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee.*

15 *"Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house {was} upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall.*

16 *"And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way.*

17 *"And the men said unto her, We {will be} blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear.*

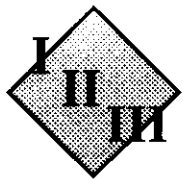
18 *"Behold, {when} we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee."*



Memory Verse

Ephesians 2:8-9

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: (it is) the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."



Outline

I. Rahab Was a Sinner.

- A. Rahab was a harlot, who made her living from immorality.
- B. All of us have sinned, but many are not aware of it. (Romans 3:23)
- C. When soldiers came looking for the Israeli spies, Rahab lied. She did not know any better.

II. Rahab Was Going To Die.

- A. Rahab was a citizen of Jericho, and God was judging that nation because of its wickedness.
- B. The wages of sin is death. Death is the natural and inevitable result of sin.

C. There are two kinds of death:

1. Separation from the body -- physical death;
2. Separation from God -- spiritual death.

III. Rahab Was Not Saved By Works.

- A. Rahab was saved by the Israelites.
- B. Rahab had no power to prevent her execution with the rest of Jericho.
- C. Rahab demonstrated her faith by her work of rescuing the Israelite spies.

IV. Rahab Believed.

- A. She believed and was saved from death.
- B. Rahab believed in the God of Israel, and she feared Him more than she feared the army of Jericho.

V. Rahab Repented.

- A. She turned from her loyalty for Jericho to help the Israelites.
- B. When we repent, we turn from living for self and the world to living for God and His purposes.
- C. "Repent" means to "turn around; to change direction and purpose."

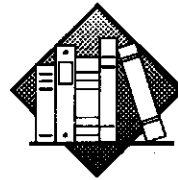
VI. Rahab Acted On Her Faith.

- A. She let down the scarlet cord to show that she had made a covenant with the spies.
- B. She also saw the salvation of her family.
- C. The scarlet cord: a type or picture of the blood of Christ.
- D. She became a bride, even as the church will become the bride of Christ.



Spiritual Truths

- We are not saved by works. We are saved by God's grace.
- We receive grace from God by humility and faith.
- We are not saved by works. We must act on our faith to receive salvation.
- Rahab was saved from death. We are saved from sin, as well as from hell.
- Rahab became part of Israel: a bride of Israel. When we repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, we become part of His covenant people: the church.
- We are not saved by our works; but, we show that we have faith when we act in harmony with faith.



Lesson Material

We understand that the Old Testament, or Covenant, is God's picture and preparation for the New. God did not design His covenant of blood with man for atonement from sin and reconciliation and then say, "Oops, that did not work! I will try again." God is perfect. He knew from the beginning what He would do. From the beginning, God designed a way for sinful man to repent and come to Him by faith. We think of faith as part of the New Testament; but, it took greater faith for people to come to God before Jesus died on the cross, because they trusted God's mercy with prophetic faith. By faith they looked for the coming of the Messiah. We have received the promise and seen the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy, and we see and understand through historic faith.

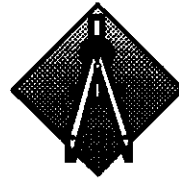
God had made His covenant with Abraham. The Israelites, the children of Abraham, were the heirs of the promise. Each individual had to respond in faith and obedience to God in order to apply it to his life. At the Passover, each family had to obey God in slaying the lamb and applying the blood to their doorposts. If strangers obeyed the rules set by God, they were allowed to become part of the covenant. Ruth and Rahab are notable examples of heathens who, by faith, became heirs with the people of God by faith. Rahab is listed with the heroes of faith, because she believed and acted on her faith.

Rahab was a sinner, and she knew it. She was not trusting in her goodness to save her. She was trusting in the God of

the people of Israel. She feared God. She realized that her people were destined for death and destruction. She knew that they deserved it. While other people in Jericho were planning their defense, Rahab was looking for mercy. She sided with the two Israeli spies. This is a picture of repentance. Repentance is not feeling sorry. It means to change, to turn around. When we repent, we stop living on our own terms and for our own gain, and we start living for God. We have a new lifestyle, because we have a new life source.

Rahab believed, and she acted on her faith. She attached the scarlet cord to her house, as a sign that she was in agreement with Israel. She did not just imagine it; she received her salvation.

To be saved is to be rescued. Rahab was saved from the death of military defeat. We are saved from sin and from hell. The Greek word for "saved" means to be made whole, or complete. It is the same word for "healed." Sin destroys our life, but God is able to save us from the power, as well as the consequences, of sin. We often think the word "saved" means "rescued from hell," or a "ticket to heaven." But, it is more than that. Peter said that we are "saved from our vain conversation." (1 Peter 1:18) In other words, saved from our selfish lifestyle of sin. Jesus Christ is able to "forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)



Methods

This would be an excellent lesson to conclude with an altar call. Everyone in the human race is a sinner and at one time or another has rebelled against God. The wages, or result, of sin is death. Spiritual death is separation from God. Just as Rahab believed in God and became a part of the family of God, so, too, we can believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and repent.

To repent means not only to regret our sin and ask forgiveness, but it also means to turn from our selfish way of living and become loyal to God as our Heavenly Father -- to become a part of His family. Heaven becomes our eternal home, and Jesus becomes the center of our lives. As we repent of our sins and believe, we receive God's promise and assurance in our hearts, and we have a desire to persuade others to accept Jesus Christ as the Lord of their lives and to be converted to Christianity.

Drama

You could easily dramatize this story with as few as three people, who would portray Rahab and the two Israeli spies. In a chance meeting with Rahab, the men could greet her and explain why they are in Jericho. During the conversation, they could tell her that the city of Jericho and all of its people are going to be destroyed completely.

They could tell Rahab about their God -- the one true God, who delivered them from slavery in Egypt miraculously; who parted the Red Sea so they could escape

from the pursuing Egyptians; and who sustained them in the wilderness for forty years. Rahab replies that she believes in the one God of Israel.

The Israeli men could then ask Rahab to help them escape from Jericho without being discovered.

Rahab agrees to help them. After hiding them in her house, Rahab goes outside to talk to some of Jericho's soldiers who are approaching her house. While Rahab is gone, the Israeli spies express their concern about whether Rahab can be trusted and whether she will betray them to the soldiers and the city officials.

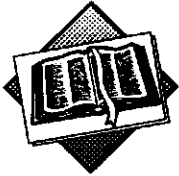
Rahab keeps her word. When she returns, she helps the Israeli spies escape by using a red cord to lower them through her window. She urges them to flee to the mountains and hide for three days until the soldiers stop searching for them.

As they depart, the Israeli spies instruct Rahab to display in the window of her house the red cord she is using to lower them to safety. The cord would be a signal to Joshua's army to spare her and her family.

The Walls Came Tumbling Down

Volume 2

Lesson 33



Bible References

Numbers 32:23

Joshua 5:10

Joshua 6:1-5, 16, 20, 25

Joshua 24:24



Scripture Reading

Joshua 6:1-5, 16, 20

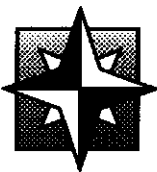
1 *"Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.*

2 *"And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, (and) the mighty men of valour.*

3 *"And ye shall compass the city, all (ye) men of war, (and) go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days.*

4 *"And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams'horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets.*

5 *"And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long (blast) with the ram's horn, (and) when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him."*



Theme

God wants to teach us to obey Him without question or doubt, and He is able to work supernaturally to bring about His will in our lives.

16 "And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city."

20 "So the people shouted when (the priests) blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city."

D. This was probably Jesus Himself.

II. God's Orders To Israel.

A. To march around Jericho 13 times;

1. Once a day for six days;
2. Seven times on day seven;
3. March in silence; then shout at the end of the last trip around the city.

B. To destroy all of the people, except Rahab's family.

C. To give all of the wealth from the city to the Lord as a tithe. (Joshua 6:24)

D. Joshua then pronounced a curse on anyone who would rebuild Jericho. (Joshua 6:26)

III. The Principle Of Obedience.

A. The marching and shouting did not cause these massive walls to fall down flat.

B. This was done supernaturally, as God's response to their unquestioning obedience.

IV. The Principle Of Tithing.

A. This was the first of ten major cities Israel was to conquer.

B. God demanded the "first fruits" of the spoils of their conquests -- the first tenth of the gold and silver.

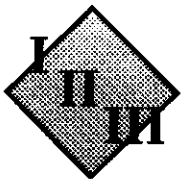
C. They were defeated by the next city, Ai, because Achan had taken some of the wealth for himself. There was sin in the camp.



Memory Verse

Joshua 24:24

"The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey."



Outline

I. The Captain Of the Lord's Hosts.

- A. When Joshua was near Jericho, he saw a "man" with a sword.
- B. "Are you for us, or an enemy?"
- C. "I am the Captain of the Lord's host."



Spiritual Truths

- We should not seek to get Jesus to be on our side and do our bidding. We should seek to be submitted to His leadership.
- We try to figure out God's formulas for doing things, but God is looking for obedient hearts.
- The key to victory is finding out exactly what God said to do and doing it exactly that way.
- God is true to His Word, and He wants us to be true to ours.
- The first tenth of all our increase belongs to God.
- When we take that which belongs to God and use it for ourselves, there are always consequences.



Lesson Material

While he was preparing to go to war against the city of Jericho, Joshua saw a man with his sword drawn. He approached him and said, "Are you for us?" This is a perfectly logical question to ask a man with a weapon in his hand. The man responded by identifying himself as "The Captain of the host of the Lord."

Most Bible scholars believe that this was no ordinary angel, but rather Jesus Christ Himself. You see, Jesus did not begin His life in a manger 2,000 years ago. That was His incarnation, when he became a man, so He could go the cross and be our redeemer. Jesus has always been God, the Word. He appeared many times in the Old Testament. The fact that He allowed Joshua to worship him is the primary indication that He was Jesus. Angels were not allowed to receive worship.

Joshua's question is significant. "Are you for us, or for our enemies?" The response was, "No." That sounds strange; but Joshua was missing the point, because at the time, he did not recognize the man carrying the sword. Many people try to get God to be for them, and to do things for them. But God is not like that. God is God, and is looking for people who will be for Him, and will do things for Him. We are the servants, and He is the Lord. "Lord" means "owner," and "master."

The Lord gave Joshua clear directions for conquering Jericho. It was a strange set of instructions, but Joshua obeyed them completely. A news reporter once asked General Douglas MacArthur, "Sir, who do you think was the greatest military leader in history?" The great American hero of World War II said, "Joshua was the greatest general of all, because he could take orders so easily." Joshua did not even question God. He did just as God had said, and God did the work.

After the people had marched around the baffled city of Jericho for seven days, and seven times on the seventh day, the priests blew the ram's horns, and the people shouted. God possibly had a legion of burley angels with heavenly bulldozers knocking down the walls. It does not

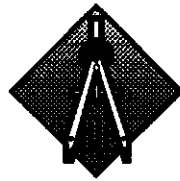
matter how God did it, but it was a miracle. It is possible that the walls fell down flat onto many of the soldiers of Jericho, and that many of them were on the wall.

Given the massive size of the city walls in those days, we can safely say that the top of this structure during such a move of the Spirit was not a safe location. Standing beside the wall could also have been a definite health hazard. Thousands of defenders were probably killed by the falling wall. We know that Israel did the mop-up operation easily, with no casualties.

The key is that God is looking for **obedience**. Religion tends to look for formulas and rituals to repeat; but, God wants us to stay close to Him, so we can hear His voice and obey His commands.

The last point of this incident is the principle of tithing. God always claims the first fruits of our increase, as a reminder

that it all belongs to Him, and that He is our source of wealth and victory in life. All of the spoils of Jericho were to be dedicated to the Lord, and then all of the spoils of the next nine cities were for the enjoyment and enrichment of the people. When Achan coveted some of the spoils and hid them for himself, he was really violating that principle, and God held him accountable. The nation suffered because of his sin, and they were defeated at Ai. When Achan was caught, he was executed, along with his family. *"Be sure your sin will find you out."* (Numbers 32:23)



Methods

Use a flannelgraph or a video presentation of this familiar story. Emphasize the massive size of the walls of cities in those days and the great numbers of people involved.

Defeat At Ai

Volume 2

Lesson 34



Bible References

Numbers 32:23

Joshua 7

1 Corinthians 1:31

Philippians 4:11

1 Thessalonians 5:20

1 *"But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel.*

2 *"And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which {is} beside Bethaven, on the east side of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai.*

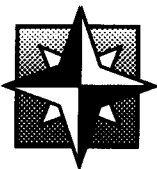
3 *"And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; {and} make not all the people to labour thither; for they {are but} few.*

4 *"So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai.*

5 *"And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them {from} before the gate {even} unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.*

10 *"And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?*

11 *"Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also*



Theme

Sin has consequences, and our sin can affect those around us as well as ourselves.

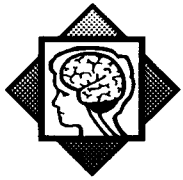


Scripture Reading

Joshua 7:1-5, 10-12

stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put {it} even among their own stuff.

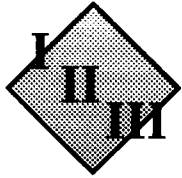
12 "Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, {but} turned {their} backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you."



Memory Verse

Numbers 32:23

"Be sure your sin will find you out."



Outline

I. The Accursed Thing.

- A. When Israel conquered Jericho, God commanded them to dedicate all of the spoils of battle to the Lord.
- B. Jericho was the first of ten major cities to be conquered, so this was a national tithe to the Lord.
- C. We should always give to the Lord first.

II. The Sin Of Achan.

- A. When Israel was gathering the wealth of Jericho for the Lord, Achan saw a fine Babylonian garment, and took it with some gold and silver for himself, burying them in the ground under his tent.
- B. Achan's sin was covetousness. He violated the tenth Commandment.

III. Israel's Suffering.

- A. When Israel went to conquer the next city, they were defeated, and 36 of them were killed.
- B. God could not prosper Israel, because there was sin in the camp.
- C. Joshua should have asked God for specific direction at this next step. He should not have assumed that he was to proceed.

IV. Achan's Punishment.

- A. Joshua and the people sought the Lord, who showed them who the guilty party was.
- B. When Achan was caught, he confessed.
 1. Joshua told Achan to give glory to God by confessing.
 2. When Achan confessed his sin, he showed that God was not unfair to let Israel be defeated.
 3. Many times people suffer and keep their sin a secret; and they give the impression that God has not been good to them by allowing them to suffer.

- C. Achan was executed by stoning.
1. His wife and daughters were also executed with him.
 2. Sin affects those we love.



Spiritual Truths

- Sooner or later, sin results in suffering.
- In the long run, it never pays to disobey God's laws.
- The first tenth of our income always belongs to God.
- We should continually seek God for wisdom and guidance.
- We should confess our faults to one another, so that we do not give the false impression that God is unfair.
- Covetousness is loving and seeking after things which belong to someone else.



Lesson Material

All of us are familiar with the exciting story of the fall of Jericho. God performed a miracle, because Joshua and the children of Israel had obeyed His instructions. The walls fell flat, and the Israeli people took the city without one casualty. Rahab was

saved from death, because of her faith and obedience. Of course, we realize, but do not focus on the fact, that many thousands of people in Jericho died. What a slaughter! Was this fair? After all, Israel was the invader, and Jericho was the home of the people who lived in the city.

But these were people who were very wicked. They had rejected God and were serving the devil with their idols and pagan rituals. While God was giving Israel the land of promise, He was also using Israel as His agent to punish the wicked people of the land. If they been allowed to live, they would have corrupted the children of the Israelites with their wicked practices and evil thoughts.

This story is an excellent illustration of the tithing principle, which we should learn at an early age. God made provision for everything Israel needed. He gave the finest piece of real estate on earth to them, along with the spoils of the Canaanites. But, God also wants to teach us to give -- and that giving is a key to wisdom and blessing in life. Tithing is a continual reminder that everything belongs to God, and it teaches us to be "stewards of wealth," rather than "owners." God miraculously gave Jericho to Israel, but He demanded the spoils as a "firstfruits" offering.

One of the men of Israel, named Achan, was working along with the others in gathering the spoils of the battle for the Lord, and he was attracted to a flashy Babylonian garment. Sometimes we are tempted to look like the world -- to follow the fads in the fashion world which are not modest or godly. But, the Bible teaches us that we should "*Abstain from all appearance of evil.*" (1 Thessalonians 5:22) Also, gold is a type of the glory of God. When we excel or achieve something in

life, we can be tempted to keep the glory for ourselves; but, we should always give the glory to God. (1 Corinthians 1:31)

Achan sinned, because he yielded to the temptation of covetousness. Covetousness is a selfish greed for things which belong to others. In Exodus 20:17, we are specifically commanded not to covet. Covetousness is the opposite of contentment. When we are content, we learn to enjoy present possessions, rather than focus on what we do not have. Contentment says, "I realize that God has provided everything I need." Paul said, "*I have learned...to be content.*" (Philippians 4:11)

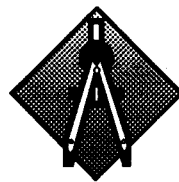
Achan took for himself something which belonged to God. He was stealing. He had to bury the stolen goods in the ground. He could not really enjoy them, because others would recognize that the things had been stolen. He received no benefit from his sin. His family suffered, and his nation suffered. When we are tempted to sin, we think we will benefit from doing wrong. But, in the long run, it only results in hurt and suffering. Satan is a deceiver. He always tries to lure us away from God with things which claim to satisfy, but they do not.

Israel was defeated at Ai because there was sin in their camp. The sin of one person affected the entire nation. Joshua should have sought the Lord before starting a battle; but, it seemed like such an easy one. This was not the only time that Joshua erred by making a decision quickly before praying about it. We think we can make a wise decision. But we do not know all the facts, so we need to keep praying and asking God for guidance.

When 36 men of Israel were killed by the men of Ai, the nation grieved. They

wondered why God had abandoned them. When Joshua prayed, God told him the reason and helped him find the guilty party. God directed them to Achan, who confessed his guilt. Achan "gave glory to God" by letting the people know that they had suffered because of his sin, not because God had deserted them. It was not God's fault. Many people feel that God cannot be good, because there is so much suffering and tragedy in the world. But, God allows mankind to make choices, and sin is the cause of all of our suffering and world problems. Sin destroys relationships, self-worth, joy, and reputations. The sins of one person affects those around him. Sometimes we really do not know why we are suffering. But whenever we confess our faults to others, we are reminded that God is absolutely righteous. We are reminded that God is good, and that the ultimate problem is sin, and not God.

It is very sad that Achan's wife, his sons, and his daughters were also killed because of his sin. The fact is that sin affects others. We do not know whether they are in heaven, because that is between God and them. Achan's sin caused their lives to end prematurely. They suffered a loss, and it was his fault. We need to know that sin does not pay. Let us enjoy what God has provided, and not covet others' things.



Methods

Several themes can be developed from this incident in Israel's history. This illustrates the tithing principle, covetousness, confession, and the fear of

the Lord. You may be able to find a flashy costume to represent the Babylonian garment. You may be able to make a wedge out of wood. Make it smooth, and paint it gold. Use a larger item to paint silver.

Divide the class into discussion groups, each with an adult leader and five or six students. Discuss tithing. How many practice tithing? How does that affect our attitude about money?

Discuss contentment. Have each one list at least two things in their life for

which they are grateful. Then, consider, "Have you been tempted to covet something in the past?" "Have you desperately wanted something, only to find when you got it that soon you lost interest in it?"

Discuss, "Have you ever thought about the fact that, if God is so good, why is there so much suffering in the world?" Make sure each leader knows how to give a biblical answer.

Joshua and the Gibeonites

Volume 2

Lesson 35



Bible References

Numbers 30

Joshua 9

Proverbs 3:5

Proverbs 28:26

Jeremiah 17:5-9

John 5:30

2 Corinthians 5:7

James 1:5



Scripture Reading

Joshua 9:4-8, 12-15

4 *"They did work wilyly, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up;*

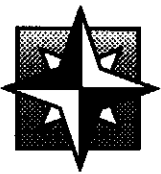
5 *"And old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry {and} mouldy.*

6 *"And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us.*

7 *"And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites, Peradventure ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a league with you?*

8 *"And they said unto Joshua, We {are} thy servants. And Joshua said unto them, Who {are} ye? and from whence come ye?*

12 *"This our bread we took hot {for} our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy:*



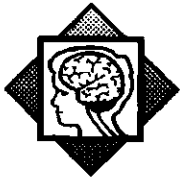
Theme

We must pray and study God's Word, so that we will not be deceived by the devil.

13 "And these bottles of wine, which we filled, {were} new; and, behold, they be rent: and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey.

14 "And the men took of their victuals, and asked not {counsel} at the mouth of the LORD.

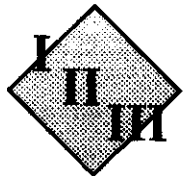
15 "And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them."



Memory Verse

Jeremiah 17:7

"Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD...."



Outline

I. The Gibeonites.

- A. Israel was blessed by God and was a source of terror to the seven nations who heard about the miraculous defeat of Jericho.
- B. Within the nation of the Hivites, there was a city called Gibeon.

- C. The leaders of Gibeon decided to try to trick Joshua into a peace treaty.
- D. They pretended to be from a distant land, using old, tattered clothes and stale bread as "proof" that they had come a long way.

II. The Power Of a Treaty.

- A. Once Joshua gave his word that he would not destroy a group of people, the nation of Israel was bound to keep his word, no matter what.
- B. An important part of the ethics of being a genuine Christian is that you keep your word. A man's word is as good as his name, and we are named by the name of Christ.
- C. Many years later, King Saul broke the treaty with the Gibeonites, and God allowed a curse on the land.
 1. Seven of King Saul's descendants were executed as punishment.
 2. Then God sent the rain on the land.

III. The Danger Of Trusting In Man.

- A. It is easy to get our focus on people, and off of God.
- B. Note Jeremiah 17:5-9:
 1. "Cursed {be} the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD."

2. *"He shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh."*
- A heath could be compared to a dry bush or a tumbleweed.
 - A tumbleweed has a weak stem, and is broken off by a brisk wind.
 - The heath is dry and lifeless, blown about by every wind (of doctrine).

IV. The Importance Of Prayer.

- Joshua prayed before he went against Jericho, and God gave him the victory.
- He neglected to pray before attacking Ai, and he was defeated. It seemed easy and obvious; why pray?
- Again, Joshua failed to consult God, because the right thing to do seemed so obvious.
- God wants us to learn to go to Him, even with the smaller decisions, and receive His guidance.
- Wisdom is seeing things from God's point of view.
 - We see only part of the picture.
 - God sees every aspect of the situation.

- Even he who trusts his own heart is called a fool. (Proverbs 28:26)
- "Common sense" is using good judgment, based on the information you have.
- Wisdom is seeing God's point of view.
- If you give your word, you must keep it, unless what you promised was a sin.
- Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart.



Lesson Material

The people of Gibeon were afraid of Israel, and with good reason. The word had spread quickly among the seven nations living in the land of Canaan that the God of Israel was a mighty God. He was not just a make-believe idol, used by the priests to manipulate the people they served. The people of Gibeon knew that God had promised to give the land to the Israelites for their inheritance. That meant a death sentence for the people of Gibeon unless they moved away quickly.

The leaders of Gibeon devised a clever scheme to avoid this. They knew that the God of Israel was a holy God and that He demanded honesty and integrity. If they could get these people to make a peace treaty with them, they would be safe, because God's people always kept their word. So, they planned to trick Joshua by pretending to live in a far distant land. They used old wineskins and old, moldy



Spiritual Truths

- The arm of flesh will fail you, but you can always trust God.

bread to convince Joshua that they had made a long journey to see him at Gilgal.

When they approached the leaders of Israel with their story, Joshua and his men were naturally skeptical and asked, "How do we know you are not really Canaanites, trying to escape death?" The Gibeonites replied, "Just look at our provisions. They were new when we left home." "Okay, I guess you are telling the truth," replied Joshua.

The children of Israel were not wise. They made a decision based on what they saw, instead of on what they heard from God. They trusted their intelligence and natural wisdom and decided to trust these men. They should have asked God, who had never failed to show them what they needed to know when they prayed. *"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God..."* (James 1:5) Jesus did not go by what He saw in life. Instead, He spent a great deal of time in prayer, and did whatever the Father told Him to do. Jesus said, *"As I hear, I judge."* (John 5:30) In 2 Corinthians 5:7, the Apostle Paul says that we should *"...walk by faith, not by sightt..."* which means that we should seek God's will through prayer, not concentrating on the circumstances we face in the natural.

It was so obvious that these men were from a distant land. Joshua could tell by their dusty clothes and by their moldy bread. Why pray about it? The men were nice and friendly, and everyone wants friends. So, Joshua trusted these men and made a permanent treaty with them. He agreed that they would not be attacked or destroyed by Israel under any circumstances. Soon, Joshua learned that he had been deceived; but he had given his word, and he had to honor it. For generations, the Gibeonites were a problem to Israel, but they kept their word.

Jeremiah 17, verse 5 states:

"Thus saith the LORD; Cursed {be} the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD."

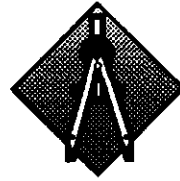
Now, that does not mean that we should never trust anyone. It simply means that we should not build our lives on the flesh, or on people. As believers, we need to trust one another, because we know that God is working in our brothers and sisters. We can trust Christ in one another.

But Israel had a problem, because many times they trusted in other nations and formed alliances, instead of seeking God's will; and it always created a problem. Hezekiah had trusted the ambassadors from Babylon, and had shown all of his wealth to them. Later, they returned and conquered all of the land of Judah. Much later, the Jews turned to an alliance with Rome to help them against oppression from the Greeks; and Rome became their cruel oppressors. God wants to teach us to put our trust in Him -- to go to Him first when we are in trouble, or sick, or hurting. It is not wrong to trust a doctor or a policeman to help you when you need it. But you should always pray and trust God as your healer and your protector, and believe that God will use other people to bless and protect you.

The important lesson here is the value of prayer and the realization that we do not see the whole picture. God always does. So, we need His guidance, even in the "obvious" things.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding." (Proverbs 3:5)

We also need to learn to keep our word. Observe how God cursed Israel generations later when King Saul broke Joshua's treaty with rulers of Gibeon. There is an important distinction, however. In Numbers 30, God said that if a girl made a vow without her father's permission, she was not bound to the vow if he disagreed. This is important. If we make a vow that is wrong, we are not bound to keep it, because our Heavenly Father is a higher authority. We are never to do anything that is a sin. For instance, some young people in a certain youth ministry were commanded by the leaders to vow that they would never speak in tongues. Is that a scriptural vow? No. The Bible says that we should all receive the baptism in the Holy Ghost and speak with tongues. So that was an unscriptural vow. Our Heavenly Father did not give such a command. But if you give your word to do something, unless it is definitely a sin, you must keep your word.



Methods

Find pictures of people from old newspapers or magazines. Show them to the class and ask, "Is this man rich? Poor? Happy? Sick? Honest?" Remind them that you can not know for certain from appearances. A man may appear to be rich; but actually he may be living on borrowed or rented things. Some people may seem to be poor, because they are dressed in old clothes; but, they may have wealth hoarded away somewhere. Have you ever talked to someone who seemed trustworthy, only learn later that he was lying? Has a stranger ever approached you to gain your confidence so that he could deceive or cheat you? Who can be trusted?

Raining Rocks

Volume 2

Lesson 36



Bible References

Joshua 10

Psalms 46:1

Psalms 101:5

all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us.

7 "So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour.

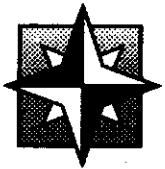
8 "And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee.

9 "Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly, (and) went up from Gilgal all night.

10 "And the LORD discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Bethhoron, and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah.

11 "And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, (and) were in the going down to Bethhoron, that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: (they were) more which died with hailstones than (they) whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.

12 "Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.



Theme

When God tells His people to do a job, He will help them do it, even if it takes moving the world.



Scripture Reading

Joshua 10:6-14

6 "And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us: for

13 "And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. (Is) not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hastened not to go down about a whole day.

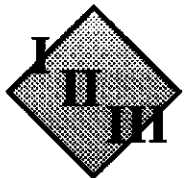
14 "And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel."



Memory Verse

Psalms 46:1

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."



Outline

I. War Against Gibeon.

- A. Gibeon was one of the great cities in Canaan, which Joshua and the people of Israel were called to conquer.
- B. The Gibeonites deceived Joshua into making a peace treaty with them. Even so, Israel was committed to keeping the commitment.
- C. Several other nations around heard that Gibeon was in covenant with

Israel, and they decided to destroy that city, because of their fear of Israel.

II. The Gibeonites Ask Joshua for Help.

- A. Since Gibeon was in covenant with Israel, they had the right to ask for help when they were threatened by their enemies.
- B. Joshua gathered all the great warriors of Israel and went to help them.
 1. If you have a friend, those who are for him will tend to be for you; but those who are against him will tend to be against you.
 2. Part of being a friend is standing up for your friends and defending them, when someone speaks against them or seeks to hurt them.

III. God Honored the Covenant.

- A. Israel attacked the army at Gibeon, and God "discomfited" them.
 1. "Discomfit:" "To rout; defeat; scatter in fight; cause to flee; vanquish; frustrate the foe's plans."
 2. While Israel fought, God filled the hearts of the enemy soldiers with terror as He "*chased them...and smote them.*"
- B. Then, God cast down great stones from heaven and killed more of the enemy with the hailstones than the Israeli soldiers killed with their swords. (Joshua 10:11)
 1. God could have prepared a shower of meteorite stones to fall at that

exact spot, or possibly some great ice hailstones.

2. The great hailstones were deadly, and they fell only on the enemy, and not on the Israelites.

C. The third miracle God performed was the greatest. In fact, it is one of the most awesome miracles in history. God caused the **sun and moon to stand still**, until Israel had finished the battle.

1. Joshua may not have understood how the solar system worked. He may have thought that the sun and moon revolved around the earth.
2. In fact, the earth revolves on its axis, making one turn per day.
3. When Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, it was necessary for God to stop the rotation of the entire planet earth to answer his prayer.
4. Nothing is impossible with God. So, He did it. Awesome!

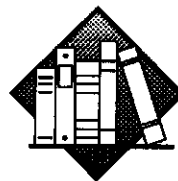
IV. God Helps Us to Help Others.

- A. God commands us to love our neighbor; and, when we unselfishly seek the best for others, He will help us.
- B. Love means seeking the good for someone else, instead of concentrating on our own wants and needs.
- C. Love is willing to sacrifice our own safety, or comfort, or possessions to bless someone else.



Spiritual Truths

- God will help us to keep our word and honor our commitments to others.
- We will be identified by the people with whom we associate. Their friends will tend to be our friends, and their enemies will be our foes.
- If you are a true friend, you will be willing to defend your friend.
- Most of the attacks against us are made with hurtful words, such as gossip or slander.
- God loves to answer the prayer that is motivated by faith and an unselfish heart, even if He has to move the earth to do it.
- When we are fighting in a spiritual warfare in obedience to God's command, He will fight for us and prepare the way for us to succeed.
- Faith involves believing, trusting, and obeying.
- The essence of genuine love is not a warm feeling. It is unselfish giving.



Lesson Material

When Joshua and the children of Israel invaded the land of Canaan, there were

seven distinct nations, or groups of people in the land. Many of the people of these nations lived in fortified cities, and each city had its own king. According to Joshua 10, the nation of the Amorites had five kings. Each king had his own kingdom and central, fortified city. When Gibeon made a covenant with Israel, the other kings were angry. They hated Israel, because they were afraid of Israel's God; and they hated Gibeon, because they hated Israel.

There may be people in your life who will oppose you because you are a Christian, or because you attend a certain church. If someone is bitter against God, or in deep rebellion, he may react by being unkind or even hostile to you, because of your willingness to identify with God. It is important that we remain faithful and honor God at all times, and, if necessary, suffer for His sake. In our world, evil people love to criticize and find fault with Christians. We need to use caution in the way we speak of other believers, and defend them as much as possible. If a believer is found to be in sin, he should be corrected by the church leaders and protected from a mocking world.

Sometimes people may attack your home church or your pastor with gossip or other kinds of evil speaking. Be careful that you do not let it get into your spirit. David said, *"Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off."* (Psalms 101:5) We can stop the criticism by saying, "I do not care to listen to that," or, "Before you go on, why do we not just go the pastor together with these concerns; and if he is wrong, let us help him."

All Christians are in a place of covenant with one another. That is, we have an obligation to be for one another -- to defend one another. The family and the

local church are places where we especially practice the principles of Christian covenant. A covenant says, "I am your brother (or sister), and I am for you. If someone attacks you, I will defend you. I will put your safety and reputation ahead of my own and will seek God's best for you. You can trust me, for I will never knowingly harm you. I love you with the love of the Lord, because we are part of the same eternal family and because we have the same eternal goals." Christians should be careful never to offend one another. Satan is so pleased when we do that.

When the kings of the Amorites and the other Canaanite kings attacked Gibeon, the men of Gibeon sent word to Joshua and asked for help. This time, Joshua was careful to seek God's guidance in prayer before he did anything. God assured Joshua that He would help him, because it was an honorable cause to help the people who had made a treaty with them. God again told Joshua to "fear them not." It is interesting to note how many times Joshua was instructed not to fear. Apparently, he tended to be timid, and needed constant encouragement. Most of us need regular encouragement, especially children. The most encouraging idea in the world is to be reminded that "God is with you, and what you are doing is the right thing."

God performed three distinct miracles in helping Joshua defeat the Amorites:

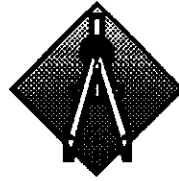
1. He discomfited the enemy soldiers. He created fear and confusion, so that they turned on one another. Satan loves to do that to Christians, when they do not keep up their shield of faith with a strong prayer life. Believers who become weak in the Spirit can get their eyes on people, or the pastor, or money, and begin to sow "discord," or disharmony and distrust

among themselves. No army can stand if the soldiers do not defend and protect one another.

2. God threw great hailstones out of heaven. This was a supernatural event. The exact timing and precise aiming of these deadly missiles were miraculously directed by a sovereign, Almighty God. He did not miss.

3. God stopped the rotation of the earth. God did something similar for Hezekiah later, when He turned the earth back to change the shadow on the sundial. We think of the earth as being huge and weighing quadrillions of tons. Yet, to God, it is only a speck in His infinite universe. God is really, really big.

God helped Joshua and the people of Israel, because they were keeping their commitment to the Lord. First, they were helping someone else in distress. God loves it when we care for others and give generously. Secondly, they were obeying God. He told them to go and help the Gibeonites. Thirdly, they were keeping their covenant, and God loves it when we keep our word. God wants us to be more and more like Him.



Methods

There are some great truths to emphasize in this story about Joshua.

Friendship. Look up scripture verses about friends, and discuss the qualities of a true friend.

Covenant. Emphasize the importance of keeping your word and helping others. Would you defend your family and your church family, if someone spoke against them?

Miracles. If we ask in faith with unselfish motives, God can do anything.

Try to get a model of the earth. Show how it spins on its axis and revolves around to sun to give us day and night.

Explain how a meteor shower could enter the earth's atmosphere and rain down as a hot shower of stones or balls of ice.

Remind the students that God is infinite and eternal. There is nothing too difficult for Him to do.

Old Caleb



Bible References

Joshua 14

Job 3:25

Matthew 21:21

Romans 8:31

Hebrews 11:6

James 2:18

James 4:7, 11

1 John 5:4



Scripture Reading

Joshua 14:6-13

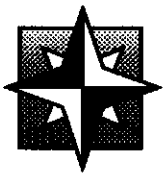
6 *"Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadeshbarnea.*

7 *"Forty years old {was} I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadeshbarnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as {it was} in mine heart.*

8 *"Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God.*

9 *"And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God.*

10 *"And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while {the children of} Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I {am} this day fourscore and five years old.*



Theme

Life is an exciting adventure when you live with faith in God; and you will never get bored.

11 "As yet I (am as) strong this day as (I was) in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength (was) then, even so (is) my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in."

12 "Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims (were) there, and (that) the cities (were) great (and) fenced: if so be the LORD (will be) with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said."

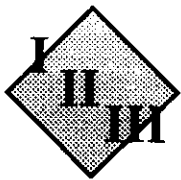
13 "And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance."



Memory Verse

1 John 5:4

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."



Outline

I. Caleb At Kadesh-Barnea.

A. When Israel left Egypt, Moses sent 12 spies into the land of Canaan, one from each tribe.

- B. Ten of the spies came back, saying, "It is a good land, but we are not strong enough to take it."
- C. Joshua and Caleb were the two who said, "It is a good land, and there are seven mighty nations there; but, through God, we can take the land."
- D. The ten spies brought an evil report.
 1. Note that it was a true report.
 2. It was an evil report, because of their emphasis and the effect it had on the people.
 3. As Christians, we should "Speak not evil of one another...." (James 4:11)
 4. Whenever we cause doubt and division among Christians, even if we are telling a true story, we are bringing an evil report.

II. The Reward Of Faith.

- A. After 40 years in the wilderness, Caleb and Joshua were the only people in Israel over the age of 60 who had lived to take the land of Canaan.
- B. At the age of 85, Caleb was still vigorous, strong, and ready to fight and win another war.

III. Caleb's Vision.

- A. As the oldest man in Israel, Caleb could have "retired;" but, his attitude was the same at 85 years of age as it was when he was 40, and he was ready to fight another war.
- B. The ten spies had seen only the problems. Caleb understood that, with God fighting for them, they could not lose.

- C. This was the same situation that David had later, when Israel faced Goliath: the soldiers saw the problem, but David saw God's power and purposes.
- D. At 85, Caleb said again, "I can take the mountain, because God said to do it. So, He will help me."
- E. "Mountains" represent extremely difficult situations in life.
1. The Anakims lived in a fortified city on a mountain. It was easy for them to defend it, and most difficult for anyone to conquer.
 2. "Mustard seed faith" can move mountains, or possess them. (Matthew 21:21)

IV. The Principle Of Faith and Works.

- A. Faith is confidence in the absolute truthfulness of every statement which comes from the Word of God. Fear is anticipation of the danger which may result when we fail to seek God's will through prayer, before making a decision and acting on it.
- B. Fear concentrates on our weaknesses. Faith relies on God's power.
- C. Fear only regards the problem. Faith turns to God for a solution.
- D. *"Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works."* (James 2:18)
- E. True faith develops the courage to obey God.



Spiritual Truths

- True faith is belief in God, His purposes, and His power.
- The opposite of faith is fear, which is caused by thinking only of ourselves, our problems, and our weaknesses.
- God always rewards genuine faith.
- True faith sees obstacles as exciting challenges, instead of threats.
- People with real faith will not become discouraged and quit, when they are being tested in the wilderness.
- Fear says, "It cannot be done." Faith says, "I can do all things through Christ."
- Regardless of how great your problem may be, the question is, how great is your God?



Lesson Material

Most of us have heard the story about the twelve spies who were sent by Moses into Canaan to survey the land. God had just delivered Israel out of Egypt, where they had been held as slaves for many generations. Although God had performed many astounding miracles for them, including the parting of the Red Sea, the people in general had a slave mentality. It

is easier to take a man out of slavery than it is to take the slavery out of the man. The people had not learned to trust God fully and to think as good soldiers. They were accustomed to being victims -- losers. Victory was not part of their mentality.

When one leader from each tribe went out to survey the land, only two of them had the right perspective. Joshua and Caleb said, "The land is good. There are giants; but, we can take it, because God told us to do it." The other ten looked at the same situation; saw the same people; and, with exactly the same physical information, they drew a wrong conclusion. They had overlooked an important ingredient in their calculation.

They said, "Blessing + obstacles = defeat."

Joshua and Caleb said, "Blessing + obstacles + God = victory."

The key difference was faith. Faith is still the essential difference between believers who overcome and losers in life. Hebrews 11:6 says that *"without faith, it is impossible to please Him...."* Faith is belief in God, His purposes, and His ability. Essentially, sin is the result of unbelief, which causes an undue focus on self. The more we turn our eyes away from God and His Word, the more fearful we will become. Fear works much like faith, but with the opposite effect. Faith emphasizes the positive and the eternal. When we have faith, we tend to be positive, faithful people. We see God in the situation, and trust Him to do what He wants to in our lives. Faith gives substance to our expectations.

Fear centers on the problem, and emphasizes the negative. The more we think about being afraid, the more we tend

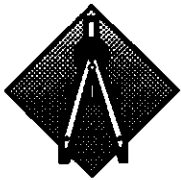
to help bring about that which we fear. Job said, *"the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me."* (Job 3:25) For example, people who live with the constant fear of failure have a tendency to fail, because they rarely will try anything with a risk involved. People who fear rejection from others will be so self-conscious that others will not be attracted to them.

Joshua and Caleb had faith in God. Their faith said, "We can take the land, because God told us to do it." Genuine faith results in obedience with a servant's heart. Faith does "name and claim", making God our servant. Faith is not a way to get God to do what we want; but, rather, it is a way to move us to do anything God wants. Faith trusts God with the results and says, "God, not my will, but thine be done." Faith involves trust and results in obedience.

The spies who did not have faith gave a negative report. Note that a negative report is not a false report. It is one that has a negative effect on other people. The conclusion of the spies discouraged the people. They saw only the problems, and this caused Israel to lose heart. As Christians, we should be "edifiers." That means to "build up" one another. Negative talk, such as slander and gossip, causes people to distrust one another. Satan loves "discord among brethren." God loves encouragers.

The ten spies, who did not have faith, died in the wilderness. God did not strike them dead on the spot; but, when they went through the wilderness-time of testing, they died. Forty is the biblical number of testing. After forty years, all the people who were over twenty years old at Kadesh-Barnea died, except for Joshua and Caleb. They were the only people over the age of sixty to take the land, and Caleb was

85! Yet, when it came time to take the difficult mountain fortress of the Anakims, Caleb was the one who volunteered to fight. He said, "I am just as tough as I was at forty. Give me the mountain." His reasoning had not changed. He said, "God told us to take the land, so God will enable us to do it." Caleb had faithfully believed God; and, once again, God honored his faith.



Methods

This is a lesson on faith. Use it to show why *"faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."* (Romans 10:17)

The more we study God's Word, the more we see that God never fails. Those who put their trust in God always gain the victory in the end. Even if they are killed as martyrs like Stephen, they win, because they have an eternal reward. The Bible emphasizes God's will and purposes and His faithfulness. The more we are exposed to God's Word, the more we will look at life through the eyes of faith.

Object Lesson

Develop a skit to illustrate the principle of faith.

Recruit a large, strong man to come into the class.

Have a girl or small boy play the part of "Christian" and two larger boys act as the bullies, or adversaries.

First, instruct the two "bullies" to intimidate the smaller child. They can force him to give up his lunch money, or his twinkies.

Then, use the verse, *"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."* (James 4:7) Have the big man stand directly behind and tower a bit over the small one. This time, when the "bullies" come to intimidate, let them look up into the glaring face of the strong man, and stammer apologies. "Here, take our twinkies."

Remember, the devil is not afraid of your power; but, if you are under God's authority, you are under His protection.

"If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31)

Joshua and Jesus



Bible References

Joshua 24

Matthew 1:21

Matthew 5

Matthew 20:27

John 5:17-47

2 Corinthians 2:15

2 Corinthians 3:2

Philippians 1:21

1 Peter 1:18

1 John 3:2



Scripture Reading

Joshua 24:1-3, 14-21

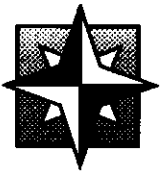
1 *"And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God.*

2 *"And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, (even) Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods.*

3 *"And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac.*

14 *"Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD.*

15 *"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that (were) on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*



Theme

Joshua's life was a picture of the life of Jesus, just as ours should be.

16 "And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods;

17 "For the LORD our God, he (it is) that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed:

18 "And the LORD drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: (therefore) will we also serve the LORD; for he (is) our God.

19 "And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he (is) an holy God; he (is) a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

20 "If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.

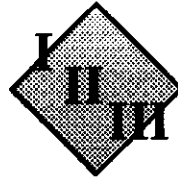
21 "And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD."



Memory Verse

Matthew 1:21

"...Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."



Outline

I. Savior.

- A. The Hebrew name "Joshua" and the Greek name "Jesus" are the same: they mean "salvation," or "savior."
- B. These were, and still are, common names.
- C. Joshua, who had served as Moses' minister, led the people of God into the Promised Land.

II. Joshua Was a Type -- a Picture -- Of Jesus Christ.

- A. Joshua had been a servant to Moses.
 1. For 40 years, Joshua was the personal servant of Moses.
 2. Jesus came to earth as the greatest servant who ever lived.
 3. He said, "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." (Matthew 20:27)
- B. Joshua fully obeyed God.
 1. He only did what God told him to do.
 2. Jesus came only to do the will of His Father.
- C. Joshua led the people of God into the promised land.
 1. Canaan was a biblical type of the abundant, Spirit-filled life we can

- live when we trust and obey the Lord.
2. Jesus came "...that they might have life...more abundantly." (John 10:10)
 3. The word "salvation" means "to save; to rescue; to heal; to make whole." In a natural sense, Joshua was a savior to the people of Israel.

III. Other Pictures (Types) Of Jesus.

A. Joseph:

1. Was rejected by his brothers;
2. Was a servant;
3. Suffered for doing right;
4. Stayed faithful to God;
5. Became a great leader;
6. Saved the people of the world from the great famine.

B. David:

1. Was a shepherd;
2. Was rejected;
3. Was a faithful servant;
4. Was an anointed king;
5. Served as a prophet, priest, and king;
6. Was a mighty warrior;
7. Loved God with all his heart;
8. Was greatly honored and blessed by God.

IV. We Should Be Like Jesus.

- A. Jesus is the light of the world, and "*Ye are the light of the world.*" (Matthew 5:14)
- B. Jesus is the bread of life, and we are to be "one bread."
- C. Jesus is the "Word made flesh," and we are to be "living epistles."

- D. We are the "*sweet savour of Christ.*" (2 Corinthians 2:15)
- E. ". . .*We shall be like Him.*" (1 John 3:3)
- F. "Christian" means "a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ."



Spiritual Truths

- All great leaders among men are merely faithful followers of God.
- The goal of the true Christian is to look to Jesus as our ideal and model -- and not to other people.
- The great desire of a servant is to seek the benefit and success of others. That is the greatest difference in the lifestyle of a Christian.
- Joshua was a success, because he was not "his own person." He was God's servant.
- Jesus became sin for us, that we might become like Him through grace.
- The test of true Christians: Can other people see Christ in us?
- The Old Testament is full of types and shadows of the truths of the New Testament.



Lesson Material

Joshua was one of the greatest leaders in history. The mark of a truly great leader is that he is a sincere follower of Christ. God does not need people with great independent ideas. He needs servants who have a heart and will to obey. Joshua was a great type of Christ, while Samson was a Bible character who was an antitype of Christ.

Samson was very independent, and a rugged individualist. Although he had a special birth as a result of prophecy, and he was to "begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines," he never had the kind of ministry or results that Jesus had. Samson worked alone, and he did not submit to anyone. Some have portrayed Jesus as a "rebel," because He disregarded the Sabbath laws of the Pharisees and wore a beard. But Jesus was the most submitted man on earth. That is what meekness is all about. He never asserted His rights. He came only to obey the Father, and that was the objective of His whole life. The only reason He went against the Pharisees was that they had missed God's purposes, and Jesus was living in total obedience to God.

Joshua was Moses' "minister." That meant that Joshua was a personal attendant and assistant. In those days, a "minister" would do whatever was necessary to make his master comfortable. He might be a messenger. When it came time for Moses to retire, God chose the man who had done the most serving. As Moses was primarily a spokesman and servant to God, so Joshua had shown that he wanted only to do what he was told.

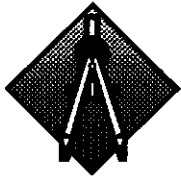
Joshua was named "Oshea" by his parents; but, when he began his service to Moses, the leader realized his potential in life, and changed his name to "Joshua," meaning "salvation." Perhaps he knew then that God would use him to bring the Israeli nation into the land of promise. Salvation refers to wholeness and blessing, and not just to rescue. Often, we think of salvation only in terms of being rescued from the torment of hell -- from the penalty of our sins. But, biblical salvation is more than that. We are saved -- rescued -- from sin, from the lifestyle of evil, and from the dominion of wrong impulses. (1 Peter 1:18) In full salvation, God is bringing us out of the dry land of carnal living and into the good land, where we can dwell in His will and His presence and receive the milk of His Word and the honey of the joy of the Lord.

We say that Joshua was a type of Christ. That is, we can see similarities between them, and we can gain a better understanding of Jesus by seeing Joshua. Paul said that we are living "*epistles...known and read of all men.*" (2 Corinthians 3:2) The disciples of Jesus were first called "Christians" in Antioch; and we have been known as "Christians" ever since.

It is an awesome thing to be called a "Christian." It does not only mean that we have the hope of heaven. Literally, it means to live and act like Jesus Christ. Not only has He changed our hope and destiny, but He has also changed our hearts and attitudes. Not only did He live for us and die for us, but we are also privileged to live for Him. Some of us may even have the honor of dying for Him.

Jesus lives in us and through us. To live in us means that His peace and

presence abides with us at all times. To live through us means that He does His work of helping others by using us as His instruments. We live to let Him live in us. *"For me to live is Christ...."* (Philippians 1:21)



Methods

Have each student draw a picture of his concept of Jesus.

Note that they will tend to think of a physical image, with a robe, beard, and long hair. Talk about the character image of Jesus, and ask, "Can you think of a time when you thought someone seemed to act or talk like Jesus?"

Emphasize the character image of Jesus and the ways we can be more like Him.

Read the "Beatitudes" in Matthew 5, and show the class that this is part of the picture of the character of Jesus.

Palm Sunday

Volume 2

Lesson 39



Bible References

Deuteronomy 18:15

Job 13:15

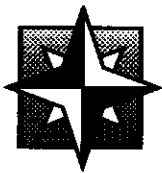
Micah 5:2

John 1:11

John 6

John 12:12-18

1 Corinthians 1:22-23



Theme

The people of Jerusalem accepted Jesus when they thought that He would establish a natural kingdom; but, they later rejected Him.



Scripture Reading

John 12:12-18

12 *"On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,*

13 *"Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed (is) the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.*

14 *"And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written,*

15 *"Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.*

16 *"These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and {that} they had done these things unto him.*

17 *"The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record.*

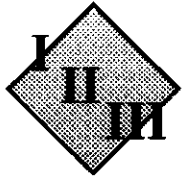
18 *"For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle."*



Memory Verse

John 1:11

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not."



Outline

I. The People Accepted Jesus.

- A. The people of Jerusalem knew that Jesus had raised the dead, and had performed many mighty miracles.
- B. They believed that He must have come to set them free from the powerful Roman Empire.
- C. They cried, "Hosanna (Save, we pray)!"
 1. "Hosanna" is both a praise and a prayer.
 2. The people looked for a natural deliverance and physical blessings.

II. Jesus Fulfilled Prophecy.

- A. God had spoken through His prophets hundreds of years before that Jesus would:
 1. Be born in Bethlehem; (Micah 5:2)
 2. Be of the tribe of Judah;

3. Be a great teacher and prophet; (Deuteronomy 18:15)
4. Come to Jerusalem riding on a donkey. (Zechariah 9:9)

B. There are about 333 prophecies in the Old Testament about Jesus, the Messiah, many of which were fulfilled during Jesus' earthly ministry. Those not yet fulfilled will be during the rapture and second coming of Christ.

1. Most of these prophecies were given at least 400 years before the Messiah came to earth.
2. Isaiah also said that the Messiah would be a man of sorrows, and would bear our sins as the sin offering.
3. David prophesied about Jesus' rejection and suffering on a cross, but the Jews overlooked those prophecies, or failed to understand them.

III. Why Jerusalem Rejected Jesus.

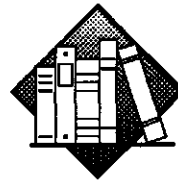
- A. Only a few days after "Palm Sunday," the same people who were shouting "Hosanna!" to Jesus were shouting "Crucify Him, Crucify Him!" at Pilate's judgment hall.
- B. They felt that Jesus had let them down, when they realized He was not going to overthrow the Roman government and set them free politically.
- C. Jesus did not come to set them free from Rome. He came to set them free from sin.
- D. Paul said, *"For the Jews require a sign....but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock..."* (1 Corinthians 1:22-23)

1. The Jews wanted a supernatural deliverance from Rome, and they rejected a Messiah who would die.
2. Jesus came to earth to die for our sins -- to be a perfect sin offering to satisfy God's holy demand for justice.
3. Jesus conquered Satan by laying down His life for those who would believe on Him and give their lives to Him.



Spiritual Truths

- Everyone is willing to accept Jesus when they think of all He can do for them; but, not everyone is willing to live for Him.
- We cannot receive Jesus as our Savior if we reject Him as our Lord.
- "Lord" means "owner" -- the one who has the right to make the final decisions in our lives.
- Many people want a Jesus who will just save them from hell; but, the Bible says that Jesus came to save us from sin.
- "Hosanna" is both a prayer and a praise: "Lord, save us; Lord, our Savior."
- God still loves the Jewish people. But they must receive His Son, Jesus Christ, as their only Savior.



Lesson Material

Jesus had come to earth more than thirty-three years before His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on that Palm Sunday. He had been born in humble circumstances and relative obscurity. For three and one-half years He had been in public ministry. Usually, He had avoided Jerusalem, because the Jewish leaders there were strongly opposed to Him and were intent on killing Him. Jesus had performed many miracles and had accomplished many good things, and the Jews regarded him as a threat to their religious system. They were especially agitated, because Jesus had repeatedly performed miracles on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath day. They reasoned that Jesus was working on the Sabbath day, and the law of the Jews did not permit them to work on the Sabbath.

Jesus went to Jerusalem, riding on a young donkey, in direct fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah. Later that week, many of the people who greeted Him, by spreading palm branches and their coats before Him as He entered Jerusalem, probably were among the throng of people who shouted for Him to be crucified.

Jesus knew that He would be crucified by the Romans with the full consent of the Jewish people. The Jewish leaders wanted to put Him to death. However, they were under the rule of the Roman Empire, and they had no authority to act on their own and carry out their treacherous plan. Only the Roman officials had that authority.

The Israelites were not a free people. As a nation, they were still religious.

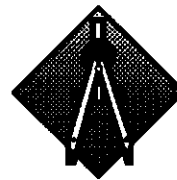
However, they were not in close fellowship with God. Of all the people of Israel, the Pharisees were the most religious. They were very careful to obey the law. However, they were not obedient to God. They had certain rituals and spoke of the true God; but, they did not live for Him.

The Jews wanted a Messiah who would bless them and set them free from Rome. They were looking for a great leader, perhaps one like Alexander the Great, who, with his mighty Greek army, had conquered the known world by military strength and strategy. But Jesus came quietly and humbly, and He conquered by laying down His life. The Jews did not understand this. Even the devil thought Jesus was being defeated when he was executed on the Roman cross. But Jesus came to fulfill a greater purpose. He came to be a sin offering, so that those who believed on Him could be eternally reconciled to God. He conquered sin by laying down His life. He established an eternal kingdom by love, not by force. He came as a servant, not as a Samson.

Jesus knew that the people were looking for a Santa-like savior. They were hoping that He would come and bless them; solve their problems; heal their sickness; and make life wonderful for them. But, when it came to trusting Him with the control of their lives, they backed away. In John 6, a great multitude was following Jesus. They were excited about this man who could feed a multitude with one sack lunch; or turn water into wine; or heal the sick. "Hey, this is great. Jesus came to bless me and make me happy!" But then Jesus said, "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you do not have any part of me." Jesus talked about a deep commitment in a way that they did not understand. Suddenly,

He was not longer a Santa Claus figure, but One who demanded their all. Most of the crowd left Him, and never followed Him again.

Today, there are many people who can get excited about what God can do for them. "Hosanna! Save Us!" "God, bless me, heal me, and take me to heaven." God loves us. But He wants a people who love Him for who He is, and not just for what He can do for them. Jesus deserves to be the Lord of our lives, and not just our benefactor. Since He gave His life for us, we should be willing to live our lives for Him instead of for self. He does want to bless us, because He loves us; and because Jesus loves us, He wants us to love Him. He also wants us to trust Him, even though we do not understand everything that happens. Job said, "*Though he slay me, yet will I trust him.*" (Job 13:15) Now, that is faith!



Methods

This is a popular story, with many pictures and props available to make it come alive to the children. We should understand the word "Hosanna," and the concept of "Messiah." The important lesson here is the contrast between what the people thought Jesus would do, and what He had in mind. Explain the difference between an earthly kingdom and a spiritual one. Jesus said, "*My kingdom is not of this world....*" (John 18:36) Where is God's kingdom? It is in our hearts. Jesus dwells in the hearts of all those who are born again, who know Him as Savior and Lord.

Talk about the name, "Lord Jesus Christ." The title "Lord" speaks of the fact that He is the master of our lives, the owner, the ruler. The name "Jesus" means "savior" -- the one who saves us and sets us free from the sin that had enslaved us. "Christ" means "the anointed one from God" -- the great Messiah." These three names speak of three aspects of our Lord and show us something about our relationship to Him.

Hold up a palm branch, and learn something about palm trees. In the Bible, palms speak of praise to God. They live in sunny climates, and are very resilient plants. Palm trees are full of life, and all of the branches are from the high top of the tree. We should praise the Lord with joy, and with confident trust in our hearts.

Glorify Thy Name

Volume 2

Lesson 40



Bible References

Psalms 22

Matthew 5:5

John 12

1 Corinthians 4:19

Philippians 2

23 *"And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.*

24 *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*

25 *"He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.*

26 *"If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will (my) Father honour.*

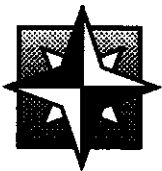
27 *"Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.*

28 *"Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, (saying), I have both glorified (it), and will glorify (it) again.*

29 *"The people therefore, that stood by, and heard (it), said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.*

30 *"Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.*

31 *"Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.*



Theme

Jesus came to earth to give His life for the sins of the whole world, to redeem from sin all those who would believe on Him.



Scripture Reading

John 12:23-32

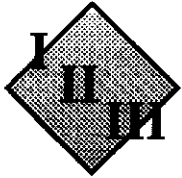
32 "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all {men} unto me."



Memory Verse

John 12:32

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all {men} unto me."



Outline

I. Jesus and His Disciples.

- A. Jesus had been praised and well-received in Jerusalem, until the people realized that He was not going to set up an earthly kingdom for them.
- B. Some Greeks in Jerusalem came to Philip, and said,
 - 1. "Sir, we would see Jesus." (John 12:21)
 - 2. In other words, "Mister, we would like to meet Jesus."
 - 3. This is a great sentence for any teacher or preacher to have printed on his podium.
 - a. The people want to see Jesus in you and in your message.
 - b. They do not just want a clever book report.

C. The reply of Jesus to Philip and Andrew gives the basis for the Easter message from Jesus' point of view. (John 12:23-27)

D. Jesus knew that He was about to die for the sin of the world.

II. The Seed Principle.

- A. A seed has to die, before it can germinate and produce a great plant.
- B. If a seed dies in fertile soil and is watered, it will become a full plant and will produce many new seeds.
 - 1. It will produce fruit; and fruit contains seed, the beginning of new life.
 - 2. Jesus died, so that millions of people could live.

III. The Prayer Of Jesus.

- A. "What shall I say? Save me from this hour?"
 - 1. This could be a common prayer in our day.
 - 2. When problems come, do we pray, "God, solve my problems, and do not let people hurt me?"
- B. "No. My prayer is, Father, glorify Thy name."
 - 1. Instead of seeking His own safety and blessing, Jesus was most concerned about the Father's will and purposes.
 - 2. His goal in life was not to be blessed, but only to do the Father's will.
 - 3. Jesus was the perfect servant of servants.

IV. God Spoke.

A. God answered in an audible voice, but the people around and near Jesus did not hear clearly.

1. Some thought it was thunder.
2. Others thought an angel spoke.

B. Jesus spoke of two things happening:

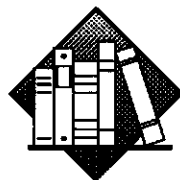
1. "The prince of this world (Satan) shall be cast out (defeated at the cross);"
2. "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me."
 - a. He was speaking of being lifted up on a Roman cross to die.
 - b. In dying, He would reach mankind with God's redemption and grace.

- We cannot live for Jesus until we have died to self.
- There are two basic ways to pray: "Father, solve my problems and make my life better;" or, "Father, glorify Your name through my life."
- Jesus always prayed the unselfish prayer, and He is the happiest person in the universe.
- Jesus sought nothing for Himself. He gave all and gained the whole world.
- If your natural life on earth is your first love and chief interest, you will lose out in this life and in eternity.



Spiritual Truths

- The world does not need more religion. The world needs Jesus.
- We are not just to teach the words of Jesus. We are to live so that Jesus can be seen in us.
- Jesus did not come to earth primarily to live as a good teacher. He came to die as a perfect sacrifice.
- It is only through giving that we can really receive, and it is only through dying that we can really live.



Lesson Material

While Jesus was in Jerusalem during that last week of Passover, some Greeks came to Philip and said, "Sir, we would see Jesus." (John 12:21) What a powerful challenge for those of us who are His disciples and Bible teachers. Anyone can give a book report on the Bible; but, do your students see Jesus in you? Is His love flowing out of your life? Is the power of the Holy Ghost in evidence as you minister by the Spirit? Can you say, "In the name of Jesus, rise up and walk?" Paul said that he was not interested in the words of those who are "puffed up." He was interested in the supernatural power in their lives. (1 Corinthians 4:19)

When Philip and Andrew came to Jesus with the request from the Greeks, Jesus responded with a revelation about

what was about to happen. He said, "*The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.*" (John 12:23) That is an interesting word to use, considering that He was going to be betrayed, mocked, shamed, beaten, spit upon, and executed in the most humiliating way that evil men could devise.

But Jesus felt that His greatest honor was to be the sin offering. Through this shameful and painful death, He would satisfy the demands of a perfect and holy God and purchase for God a great company of believers, past and future, who would receive eternal life by faith and repentance from their sins. He would take upon Himself the guilt and shame of the whole world, and he would make it possible for wicked, sinful men to become reconciled to a holy, righteous God. In laying down His life, Jesus knew that He would be raised up in a glorified body -- a body that would never decay or diminish -- a body of flesh and bone. He would go to Paradise. He would then lead to heaven all of the souls of the believers who had died in faith since the world began; and He would ascend to the right hand of the Father forever.

Jesus was the greatest illustration of the principle of the seed. He said that, unless a seed falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone. If it dies and is planted and watered, it can germinate, growing into a tree or some great plant, and reproduce itself thousands of times. If Jesus were to seek to save Himself, He would never have been able to redeem a people for God. In dying, He gave; and, in giving, He received.

Jesus said that people who love their life will lose it, but the man who hates his life in this world will keep it unto eternal life. People who are self-centered -- who

think only of themselves -- use others in their search for personal fulfillment and happiness. Ironically, the harder you seek to make yourself happy, the more unfulfilled and frustrated you become. But, those who repent from sin -- selfishly using and hurting others for their own gain -- and decide to live for God instead of for self, find that they are the most blessed, happy people on earth. Additionally, they have the hope of an eternal heaven .

The key to living for God is to die to self and have a servant's heart. A servant is one who is interested in and excited about the success of another. Jesus was more concerned about doing the will of His Father than He was about His own success. He never did anything for Himself. He felt that He belonged totally to God, and He acted accordingly. He "*took upon Him the form of a servant.*" (Philippians 2:7)

Jesus mentioned two ways to pray:

1. "Father, save me from this hour."

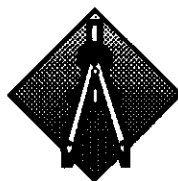
This could be called our classic human prayer. How often do we pray, "God, bless me and my friends. Solve my problems, and help me to be happy." The Greek language does not use punctuation like the English and some translators have had difficulty understanding the message here. There should be a question mark after the word, "hour." It is more correct to read, "What shall I pray? Father, save me from this hour? No. I will pray, Father, glorify Your name." That is the prayer of a servant.

2. "Father, glorify Your name -- God, do what will benefit You the most."

That is a mature, unselfish way to pray. Ironically, the more we give ourselves to

God, the more we will live for others and the more joy and happiness we will have in our lives. Jesus said, "*Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.*" (Matthew 5:5) In other words, blessed are those who are humble and not self-centered. They are fortunate, happy, and are to be envied. Those who lay down their lives and their interests in order to help others will gain everything in the end, while those who live only for themselves will lose everything.

Jesus knew that to die on the cross would be the greatest act of unselfish love the world had ever known. He knew that He would please the Father by "bringing many sons unto glory." He knew that He would have great joy every time a human being gave his life to God. He knew that the pain would be temporary and that the reward would be eternal.



Methods

This is an excellent time to invite children to give their hearts to the Lord. Show them the difference between accepting Jesus into their lives and giving their lives to God. Many people accepted Jesus on Palm Sunday; but, they did not dedicate their lives to Him. To repent is to turn from seeking only for self to seeking God's glory and pleasure, as Jesus died to save us from sin. He died for us, so that we might live for Him. To be a Christian means that we belong to God and want to do what pleases Him.

Prayer:

"Jesus, you died for me. How can I do anything less than live for you? Please forgive my sins, and wash my heart. Live in me, and love others through me. Teach me to love you more than I love myself, and to follow Jesus as a true, born-again Christian. Amen."

The First Sunday Night Service

Volume 2

Lesson 41



Bible References

Psalms 22:3

Matthew 18:20

John 20

Acts 19

1 John 1:9

1 John 3:2

Revelation 1:18



Scripture Reading

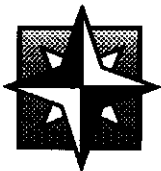
John 20:19-22

19 *"Then the same day at evening, being the first {day} of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace {be} unto you.*

20 *"And when he had so said, he showed unto them {his} hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.*

21 *"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace {be} unto you: as {my} Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*

22 *"And when he had said this, he breathed on {them}, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost."*



Theme

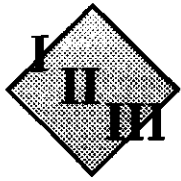
Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to His disciples that first Easter Sunday. He is alive forevermore.



Memory Verse

Revelation 1:18

"I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore...."



Outline

I. Jesus Died On the Cross.

- A. Jesus Christ took on the sin of the whole world, when He became our sin offering nearly 2,000 years ago at Jerusalem.
1. He died in our place, so that we would not have to spend eternity in hell.
 2. If we receive Him as Savior and Lord of our lives, we will also live forever.
- B. His soul and spirit left His body for three days. He was physically dead.

II. Jesus Rose From the Dead On the Third Day.

- A. The Romans made sure Jesus was dead. When the disciples put His body in a borrowed tomb, they put a huge stone in front of it.

1. Pilate stationed guards at the tomb to keep the disciples from taking Jesus' body.
2. His body had been anointed with spices and wrapped in linen cloth.

- B. Early on Sunday morning, two women came to the tomb.

1. The stone had been rolled away, not to let Jesus out, but to let the disciples see that He was gone.
2. Mary saw Jesus in the garden, and she told the others that He had risen from the dead.

III. The First Sunday Night Service.

- A. The disciples were in Jerusalem.

1. They were afraid of the Jews who had killed Jesus.
2. They were meeting in a closed room.

- B. Jesus came and said:

1. *"Peace be unto you:"*
2. *"As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you."* (John 20:21)
 - a. Jesus was the light of the world, and He sends us to be the light of the world.
 - b. Jesus came to teach, and commands us to teach others.
 - c. Jesus is the Prince of Peace, and calls us to be peacemakers.
 - d. Jesus came to do the will of God, and calls us to do His will.
 - e. Jesus lived to reveal the Father to men, and we live to show Jesus to the world.

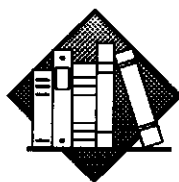
3. "Receive ye the Holy Ghost:" (John 20:22)
- This was not the baptism in the Holy Ghost, because that was given seven weeks later on the day of Pentecost.
 - This was a divine impartation of the Spirit to dwell within them.
 - All believers have the Holy Ghost living in them; but, not all believers have been baptized (immersed) in the Holy Ghost.
 - In Acts 19, Paul asked some disciples in Ephesus if they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed.
 - If all believers had this baptism at the moment of salvation, then it would have been senseless to have asked these believers if they had received the Holy Ghost baptism.

- We can be reconciled to God, because Jesus died; and we can live forever, because Jesus rose from the dead.
- The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the central point of human history and the greatest event known to man.
- The fact that Jesus had to die proves that God is holy. The fact that Jesus died proves that God is love.
- The stone was rolled away, not to let Jesus out of the tomb, but to let His disciples see that He had risen.
- Jesus appeared to His disciples at that Sunday night meeting, and Sunday night is still a good time to meet with His people.
- We can see how Jesus sends us, because it is the same way the Father sent Him to the world.
- God wants every believer to receive the Holy Spirit baptism, as well as salvation.



Spiritual Truths

- Moslems hope in vain that Mohammed will rise from the dead. Jesus did rise from the dead, and still lives.
- Today, Jesus is at the right hand of the Father in Heaven. Jesus is our King, our Shepherd, and our High Priest, making intercession for us.
- Since Jesus is also God, He can be everywhere; and He lives in the hearts and lives of those who have been born again through faith in His blood.



Lesson Material

It seemed like such a dark day of defeat for Jesus, God's Son. He had been betrayed by one of His most trusted disciples. He had been utterly rejected by His people, the Jews. He had been mocked, unjustly accused and condemned, spat on, and beaten until His back was a mass of torn, bloody flesh. He had been publicly executed in the most shameful, painful,

and humiliating way that the cruel Romans could devise. As He died, a young man of only 33 years, even the daytime sky turned utterly dark, and the thunder rolled. His disciples were scattered in fear. Peter had denied Jesus, and Satan and his demons were having a victory party in their dark spirit world.

But what seemed to be the worst turn of events really became the greatest scene in the history of mankind. God is so holy, that He cannot merely look away and forgive the sins of wicked humanity without justice. Sin is so serious, that the death penalty is required. Our lives really belong to God. Each of us is given one life, and we will all answer to God for what we have done with it. We will be judged. When it comes to sin, we are all guilty. Those who try to "plead innocent" and justify themselves will have the record books opened. They will be exposed, and will be assigned to their eternal punishment -- torment and separation from God for ever.

However, those who "plead guilty" -- confess their sin -- and fall on the mercy of the Court will find that the sentence has been satisfied; the fine has been paid. The death penalty, though entirely just, has already been completed.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

Yes, Jesus, the Son of God, died on the cross that day. His blood had been drained from His body. His great heart had ceased to beat, and His spirit left His body. While His disciples were ministering to His lifeless body, He went down into Paradise with the saints who had died in faith during the past 4,000 years. He took the

keys of death, hell, and the grave, and ascended in victory to the Heavenly Father. On Sunday morning, He went to the tomb and entered His body. It was a changed body. It was perfect, except for the scars on His hands, feet, and side. It was no longer a body of flesh and blood. It was a body of flesh and bone. The life of His body was now in the Spirit, not in the blood. He could travel at the speed of thought and appear anywhere at will. His body was "incorruptible." It would never become tired or old. And *"we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."* (1 John 3:2)

Jesus died as the sin offering, the *"Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world,"* (John 1:29) He was the great Passover Lamb, who sacrificed Himself to die in our stead. But, through the resurrection, Jesus also acted as our Great High Priest, who would take the blood of the sacrifice (His own blood) and sprinkle it on God's "mercy seat" in the holy of holies in Heaven, just as the high priest in Israel had sprinkled the blood of the lamb on the Ark of the Covenant for hundreds of years in the tabernacle and the temple. As our high priest, Jesus now sits at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us, His children by faith.

The disciples had gone through a horrible weekend. They had scattered in fear. Peter felt greatly dejected. He had promised the Lord that he would never deny Him. Then, on that very night, three times he had denied even knowing Jesus. He had used curse words as well. The disciples were gathered again in Jerusalem. Some of them were insisting that they had seen Jesus, alive and glorified. Thomas, for some reason or another, did not attend the meeting. The disciples were still afraid. They wondered how much time would pass before they would be executed, too.

Suddenly, Jesus appeared in their midst. It is significant that Jesus appeared to them during a Sunday night meeting. Need we add that Thomas did not miss the next Sunday night service? He missed this one, and what a meeting! Jesus was there! Actually, in a very real sense, Jesus meets with us, although not in such a physical manifestation. He dwells in the praises of His people. (Psalms 22:3) He is alive, and lives in our hearts. We can pray to the Father in His name, for *"where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."* (Matthew 18:20) Let us encourage one another to be in church on Sunday nights!

Jesus shared with them. He probably spoke more than just these few sentences, but this is the basic message, which should be a great model sermon.

1. Comfort. *"Peace be unto you."* (John 20:21)

His first word was one of comfort, not of condemnation. The disciples were discouraged. They felt bad enough about their failures. Jesus could have dealt harshly with them. They had fallen asleep while He prayed in the garden; they had reacted wrongly; and all of them had deserted Him when things got rough. Instead of rebuking them, Jesus comforted them.

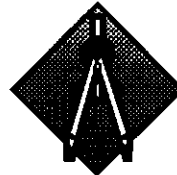
2. Commission. *"So send I you."* (John 20:21)

After the words of comfort and encouragement, Jesus gave a word of commission. He let them know that they had a job to do. He told them that He would be sending them to minister to the world in much the same way as the Father had sent Him, and they should pattern their ministry after His example.

3. Impartation. *"Receive ye the Holy Ghost."* (John 20:22)

Jesus empowers us to do whatever he orders us to do. He did not intend for the disciples to do the work of God through their own resources. He expected them to receive supernatural grace to accomplish what they could not do alone. He imparted power to them, so that they could not only preach to the lame, but could also say, *"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."*

All in all, it was a great service. The crowd was not large, but Jesus had really ministered to them, and they were very glad they came. They came to be equipped, and they went out from that meeting with joy in their hearts.



Methods

Design a skit with a courtroom scene. Use students, adults, or puppets. Have "Mr. Anybody" come before the judge, and bring his record of felony sins. "How do you plead?" Have him plead "Not guilty, your honor. I am really a good person. I was just led to do those bad things. It was their fault, sir."

Then have "Mr. Born-Again Anybody" come. "Guilty, your honor." Sentence: death. Then, the defense lawyer enters. "Sir, I have paid the penalty." The judge pronounces the sentence: "Let the record show that the fine has been paid in full. You are pardoned. Congratulations."

Discuss with the class:

“What is your understanding of what Jesus did for us on the cross?”

“How should we respond to Jesus, after what He did for us?”

Project

Encourage the students to undertake a project. The next time they hear a sermon, have them listen and take notes on what

they can pick up relating to this great model sermon. Have them listen carefully for anything the preacher said to comfort and encourage the people. Listen for words of exhortation, which challenge the people to live for God. Also, look for ways in which blessing and strength are imparted by spiritual ministry.

Jesus Is Coming Again

Volume 2

Lesson 42



Bible References

Proverbs 14:27

Proverbs 16:6

Malachi 3:4

Matthew 24

Acts 1

1 Corinthians 13:9

1 Corinthians 15:58

2 Corinthians 4:18

1 Thessalonians 4

1 John 3:2-3



Scripture Reading

Acts 1:6-11

6 *"When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"*

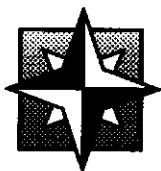
7 *"And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.*

8 *"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

9 *"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.*

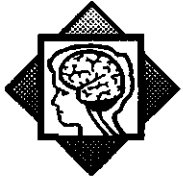
10 *"And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;*

11 *"Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."*



Theme

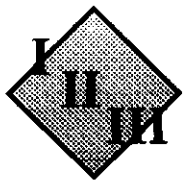
Jesus is coming to earth again, and we need to be ready to meet Him.



Memory Verse

John 14:3

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself...."



Outline

I. The Ascension Of Christ To Heaven.

A. Jesus had been crucified, but He rose from the dead on Easter, and appeared to His disciples for 40 days.

B. The question of restoration.

1. The disciples asked Jesus if He would restore the nation of Israel now that He had conquered death.
2. Jesus answered, *"It is not for you to know...but ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."* (Acts 1:7-8)
3. Jesus did not restore Israel, but He did build His church, which is the spiritual family of born-again believers.
4. This church never had an earthly headquarters, although local divisions of it do have.

C. Jesus was taken up into the clouds.

D. The two men dressed in white.

1. The Bible does not refer to them as angels, although we often think they were.
2. Their names are not revealed, but they prophesied that Jesus would return to earth in the same manner in which he left.

II. The Return Of Christ To the Earth.

A. *"In like manner."*

1. Jesus will come back to earth in His physical body *"in the clouds."*
2. He will be visible -- *"every eye shall see Him."* (Revelation 1:7)
3. It will be His literal return to earth to rule and reign.

B. 1 Thessalonians 4.

1. He shall descend from Heaven;
2. With a shout;
3. And the voice of the archangel;
4. And the trumpet of God;
5. The dead in Christ shall rise first;
 - a. Christians who have died and left their bodies in graves.
 - b. They will come to the earth and rejoin their bodies in a restored, glorified, incorruptible form.
6. Then the living saints will rise to meet the Lord in the air.

III. The Rapture Of the Church.

A. When Jesus comes, the saints will be changed in a moment and meet Him in the air. This is often called "the Rapture."

1. The word, "rapture" is not found in the Bible.
 2. The word, "rapture" has two basic meanings in English:
 - a. "To be transported or carried out of yourself."
 - b. "Spiritual or emotional ecstasy."
 - c. Both meanings relate to the rapture of the church.
- B. After the rapture of the Christians, Jesus will come to the earth and rule over the whole planet for 1,000 years.
1. Some distinguish the rapture of 1 Thessalonians 4 from the second coming of Jesus.
 2. Others consider these events as two stages of the second coming of Christ.
- C. The early Christians greeted each other with "**Maranatha**," which means "our Lord cometh."

IV. Why Do We Look for the Second Coming?

- A. This is a source of **comfort**, **encouragement**, and **joy**.
1. "*Comfort one another with these words.*"
 2. 1 Thessalonians 4:18.
- B. This motivates us to **fear the Lord**.
1. Malachi 4.
 2. Matthew 24:42-51.
 - a. The fear of the Lord is "*a fountain of life*," and it keeps us from sin. (Proverbs 14:27)
 - b. When one of God's servants says, "*My Lord delayeth his coming*," he will tend to mistreat

his fellow believers and indulge in wickedness. (Matthew 24:48)

- C. This hope moves us to purify ourselves.

1. "*We shall be like Him.*" (1 John 3:2)
2. Everyone who has this hope will purify himself.
3. Only by the fear of the Lord do men depart from evil. (Proverbs 16:6)



Spiritual Truths

- Jesus did not come to earth to restore Israel's natural kingdom, but to restore men to God.
- God's kingdom is not in a physical nation, but is in the hearts of believers who live in the domain of the King, Jesus.
- Jesus is returning to earth in the last days.
- We believe that we are living in the last days.
- To be ready for the coming of the Lord, we need to be found faithful and watching.
- No people on earth have as much to live for and to look forward to as Christians.
- The Bible never says that we will have a new body; it says that our corruptible mortal bodies will be changed and glorified, as Jesus was.

- The promise of His coming reminds us that the physical things in our lives are only temporary and not as important as the spiritual aspects of life.



Lesson Material

Of all the promises in the Word of God, perhaps the most mysterious and awe-inspiring is that *"this same Jesus...shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."* (Acts 1:11) Theologians have discussed, debated, and pondered this event since it happened almost two thousand years ago. "Exactly how will Jesus return? Who will qualify to 'rise to meet the Lord in the air?' What will happen to all the people left behind? Will the church be caught up and carried away before or after the Great Tribulation?"

There are good, honest men of God who have searched the scriptures diligently and have come to surprisingly different conclusions. The things concerning the end times yet to be are certainly a mystery, and presumptuous is the man who is so persuaded in his own scholarship that he knows all of the right answers. This certainly is one case where each of us *"knows in part."* (1 Corinthians 13:9) Can you visualize Satan hastening from one eschatology convention to another, memorizing a maze of charts, and trying to figure out who is right?

But we can be sure of the basic truth on which all true Christians agree. The Bible is true, and someday we will understand it all. In the meantime, we know that Jesus Christ, the same Jesus who was "the Lamb

slain from the foundation of the world," is coming to earth in power and great glory. He will come "in the air," and the dead in Christ will rejoin their physical bodies and rise in the same resurrection power that Jesus knew that first Easter morning. They will have bodies of "flesh and bone" -- eternal, immortal, glorified. They will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and will be with the Lord for evermore.

We know that there will be a "Judgment Seat of Christ", where the believers will be judged on the basis of their works on earth and will be given eternal crowns. We know that in the last days there will be a Great Tribulation -- worldwide havoc and destruction that will exceed all the atrocities and disasters in history. We also know that Satan will be bound for a thousand years after that event, and that during the last "millennium" of human history, there will be great peace as Jesus rules with His saints.

The main theme of this lesson is the "rapture," or the time when Jesus will appear in the air to "catch up" His church, the genuine believers. Sadly, there are many people in false religions, and others who are religious but have not been genuinely born again, who think they will be in the chosen number; but, they will not be chosen. Jesus warned many times about the deception of false religion in the last days, as many deceivers imitate the anointing and draw people into false security. (Matthew 24)

Jesus did encourage a healthy sense of the fear of the Lord in relation to the second coming. He mentioned the days of Noah and of Lot, and said that there would be similarities during the end times. In both cases, the majority of the people were concentrating on their secular

lives and thinking only of evil. Only Noah and his family were saved from the awful destruction of the Great Flood.

The message of the Second Coming of Christ is also one of hope and comfort. We see injustice and fearful things in the world; but, we know that *"our redemption draweth nigh."* (Luke 21:28) We know that although evil seems to triumph in many places, Jesus is going to come as *"a refiner's fire, and fuller's soap,"* (Malachi 3) to judge the nations righteously. Even if we, as individuals, suffer persecution, prison, or death for the sake of the gospel, we know that we are on the winning side. We know that our eternal reward will not be lost, as we abide in Jesus and are found in Him without spot on that day.

John spoke of this glorious hope of the believers and of the effect on our lifestyle. He said that *"we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as he is."* What is the result? *"Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."* (1 John 3:2-3) This means that if a person is living a self-willed life of rebellion and pleasure, he does not have this hope in Christ. If he did, he would change his behavior. He is thinking only of this temporary life, and will miss out in eternity.

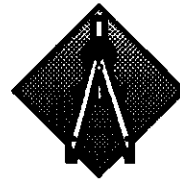
Paul spoke about the rapture in 1 Corinthians 15:58. His conclusion was,

"Therefore,...be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

"Stick with it; do not give up, and work as hard as you can for God, because you

know it will pay off abundantly in the end. Nothing you do for God will be regretted."

The early Christians reminded one another of this hope regularly. When they greeted one another, they did not think only of themselves, as we tend to do. They did not say "How are you?" They said, *"Maranatha! (Our Lord cometh!)"* They encouraged each other with that hope. Today, we are much closer to this great historical event. Even more so, we should say to one another, *"Maranatha!"*



Methods

This lesson is one which may be hard for young minds to grasp, because it is not something which can be acted out in a skit or drama. The one exception would be to act out the part of the servant in Matthew 24 who said in his heart, *"My Lord delayeth His coming."*

For the most part, this material relates on the abstract and spiritual side of life. It deals with hope and expectation. It is good to encourage and reinforce the concept that *"the things which are seen are temporal; but the things that are not seen are eternal."* (2 Corinthians 4:18) Visualize a spiritual rapture of the saints, and concentrate on character and wisdom, rather than on things and pleasure.

Ask the question, "If you knew Jesus would come tomorrow, how would you live today?"

Samson's Special Gift

Volume 2

Lesson 43



Bible References

Judges 13, 14

Judges 15:4-15

Psalms 18:2

Romans 12

Titus 2:12

2 "And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name {was} Manoah; and his wife {was} barren, and bare not.

3 "And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou {art} barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son.

4 "Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean {thing}:

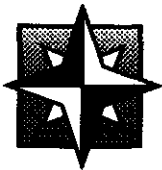
5 "For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines."

Judges 15:4-15

4 "And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails.

5 "And when he had set the brands on fire, he let {them} go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards {and} olives.

6 "Then the Philistines said, Who hath done this? And they answered, Samson, the son in law of the Timnite, because he had taken his wife, and given her to his



Theme

God gives different gifts and abilities to different people, according to the needs that He knows they will face in life.



Scripture Reading

Judges 13:2-5

companion. And the Philistines came up, and burnt her and her father with fire.

7 "And Samson said unto them, Though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of you, and after that I will cease.

8 "And he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter: and he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam.

9 "Then the Philistines went up, and pitched in Judah, and spread themselves in Lehi.

10 "And the men of Judah said, Why are ye come up against us? And they answered, To bind Samson are we come up, to do to him as he hath done to us.

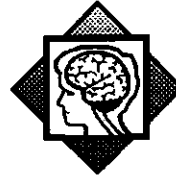
11 "Then three thousand men of Judah went to the top of the rock Etam, and said to Samson, Knowest thou not that the Philistines {are} rulers over us? what {is} this {that} thou hast done unto us? And he said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them.

12 "And they said unto him, We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines. And Samson said unto them, Swear unto me, that ye will not fall upon me yourselves.

13 "And they spake unto him, saying, No; but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hand: but surely we will not kill thee. And they bound him with two new cords, and brought him up from the rock.

14 "{And} when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him: and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and the cords that {were} upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands.

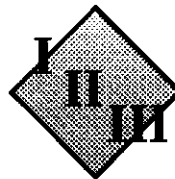
15 "And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith."



Memory Verse

Psalms 18:2

"The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and...my strength."



Outline

I. Israel In Bondage.

A. The people of Israel were carnal, so God brought them to repentance.

1. God used the Philistine nation to oppress them for 40 years.
2. The Philistines treated them as slaves.

B. Instead of using a military leader or an angel, God chose to raise up a man with a special gift for fighting.

II. Samson's Gift.

- A. Samson had a supernatural anointing of strength to kill the Philistines.
1. When he needed special strength, the Spirit of the Lord would come upon him, and he would be strong enough to defeat his foe.
 2. Samson's gift was dependent on God's command to his parents that he keep the Nazarite vows:
 - a. Do not drink any fermented drink;
 - b. Eat no unclean thing;
 - c. Do not ever cut your hair.
 3. Because Samson was not naturally strong, the Philistines were looking for his "secret."
- B. When God sees a need, He usually raises up a man through whom He can work to meet the need.
- C. Samson is an example of God's grace.
1. Romans 12 speaks about grace and gifts. They are almost synonymous.
 - a. In the Greek, "grace" is "charis"
 - b. "Gift" is "charisma."
 2. Samson did not get his strength from exercise and steroids. He received supernatural ability from God.
 3. Grace is receiving a supernatural gift from God, as opposed to developing our human skills and resources.
 4. Samson received the grace he needed to overcome his enemies.

III. Samson's Weakness.

- A. Samson had a weakness for pretty women.
1. God used this to stir up hard feelings between Samson and the Philistines.
 2. Samson used this as an excuse to fight a personal war against them.
- B. God can use a person, even in his weakness; but, that person will be judged on the basis of his own faithfulness and responses in life.



Spiritual Truths

- God can work through angels or providence, but He loves to raise up a special person to do a special work.
- God gives different kinds of gifts or anointing to different people. This is called the "manifold grace of God."
- Grace is the desire and power God gives to us to do His work and bless His people. To grow in grace means to depend less on human ability and resources and more on God's supernatural power working through us.
- Every good gift we have comes down from God.
- We should not boast about ourselves, but about God, our Father.

- God is our refuge, our protector, our provider, and the source of our strength.



Lesson Material

The nation of Israel had been up and down spiritually in the days of the judges. When the people became carnal (focused on the business of life and not at all on God), they became weak and divided as a nation. They were unable to defend themselves against more powerful nations, and they always got into trouble. In the time of the Judges, the nation fell away from God seven times. Each time, other nations conquered them. They suffered for years under the yoke of bondage. Finally, they cried out to God in humility.

Each time Israel cried out to God, the Lord heard and answered by raising up a leader, or judge, to help set them free. God had done the same thing earlier by raising up Moses, who led them out of Egypt. Normally, we think of a judge as one who sits in a court of law, making decisions. But "judge" really means, "one who vindicates, or makes things right." Samson was a "judge" of Israel, because his job was to weaken the Philistine nation, which was cruelly oppressing the people of Israel.

God revealed the promise of this judge to Samson's parents before he was born. His mother was barren, so they knew he was a miracle child. Samson was to be a Nazarite from birth. In fact, his mother was to observe the Nazarite vow of

abstinence from alcohol while he was in her womb. This is another indication that our life really begins at conception, and not at birth.

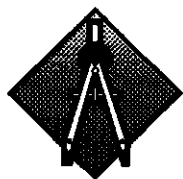
Samson's hair was the symbol of the Nazarite vow. A Nazarite was an Israelite who was set apart exclusively for God for a special purpose. He was not to eat anything unclean or drink any fermented drink. His uncut hair was the primary sign of his vow to God. As long as he kept his vow, God's anointing was on his life to do what he was called to do. Even though Samson did some things which were not right, he was still anointed to fight Philistines. He would have to answer to God for his personal behavior. In the end he suffered greatly for his foolish sin, but God still loved him and used him to help Israel.

Samson was a great example of the grace of God. We often think of grace as being "unmerited favor," because it is almost the same word as "gift." We think of a gift as something we receive without doing anything special to earn it. God's concept of "gift" is different. The biblical context of "spiritual gift" always involves something that we receive to give to others. God's gift is His supernatural enabling, and it is not just something we acquire for ourselves. That is why grace teaches us to "*deny ungodliness and worldly lusts.*" (Titus 2:12) If grace were just unmerited favor, it would not teach us that. We are not saved by works, but by the supernatural work of God for us and through us. We are not saved by works, but we are saved by grace "unto good works." God gave Samson spiritual grace to do a physical work -- in this case, a military work.

When God's anointing came on Samson, he shook under the power of the

Holy Spirit. When he was attacked by a lion, Samson tore it apart with his bare hands. Samson caught 300 swift foxes and used them to set fire to the corn fields and olive groves of the Philistines. During the night -- from about midnight until daybreak -- he carried the massive gates of the city of Gaza from Gaza to Hebron, a distance of about 40 miles. On another occasion, Samson killed a thousand Philistine soldiers with the jawbone of a donkey.

Samson always knew that his special strength was a gift of God's grace.



Methods

Demonstrate grace by having two students arm wrestle. Stand by the one who lost, and say, "Now we're going to have them arm wrestle again, and I'm going to pretend I'm God's hand." This time, use your strength to help the weaker

student bring down the arm of the other boy easily. If you think you do not have enough physical strength to do this, have another adult on the team demonstrate this part.

Discuss the symbolism in Samson's long hair. Historically, the way we dress says a lot about our attitudes and station in life. Generally, when we dress in sloppy or shabby clothes, it says that we are poor, or have little self-respect. Some cult groups use hair styles to express their religious beliefs. Hare Krishnas may shave their heads, while Rastafarians will wear extremely long unwashed locks of hair. The practice of men wearing short hair with one long lock as a "tail" came from an Eastern religion which claimed that this was a handle for spirits to pull up the soul; so it was very necessary, in their tradition, to have this long hair in the back. Samson's hair showed everyone that he was to abide by a strict dietary standard, and that he was separated unto God.

Samson Brings Down the House

Volume 2

Lesson 44



Bible References

Judges 14

Judges 16

John 10:10

Romans 6:12

2 Corinthians 4:4

15 "And she said unto him, How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart {is} not with me? thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength {lieth}.

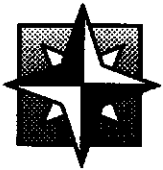
16 "And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, {so} that his soul was vexed unto death;

17 "That he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I {have been} a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any {other} man.

18 "And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath showed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand.

19 "And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him.

20 "And she said, The Philistines {be} upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he



Theme

Temptations are designed by Satan to lure us away from God.



Scripture Reading

Judges 16:15-20

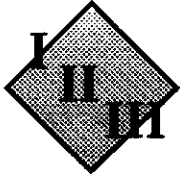
wist not that the LORD was departed from him."



Memory Verse

Romans 6:12

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body...."



Outline

I. Samson's Warning.

A. When Samson gave a riddle to the Philistines, they used his wife to get the answer out of him.

1. He only lost his wager, but he should have learned that his enemies would use a woman against him.
2. Samson killed 30 Philistines and gave their garments as the prize.

B. The next time the Philistines were seeking information, they bribed Delilah.

1. This time, she persuaded him to tell her the secret of his strength.
2. Not only did Samson have the previous lesson with the riddle as a warning, but Delilah had betrayed

him on three occasions when he gave her false answers. He finally gave in to her charms.

II. Samson Lost the Anointing.

- A. When Samson was lured to sleep on Delilah's lap, she had a man cut off his hair.
- B. The Philistines were waiting, and they came out to capture him.
- C. One of the saddest statements in the Bible occurs when Samson wakes up, bald. He said, *"I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself."* And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him." (Judges 16:20)

1. When the supernatural, fighting strength came upon Samson, he shook under the power of God.
2. This time, he shook himself, but he did not realize that God had left him.
3. His strength was not really in his hair; but, his long hair was a condition of the covenant his parents made with God.
4. When Samson violated the covenant, he lost his gift of supernatural strength, and was captured.

III. Samson's Suffering.

A. When Samson was captured, the Philistines put out his eyes.

1. When Satan captures a person with his lies, he first seeks to make them blind.
2. Satan works by deception. When people can see truth, they always reject his offer.

3. 2 Corinthians 4:4.

B. Samson was mocked, tormented, and put to work at a mill to grind grain.

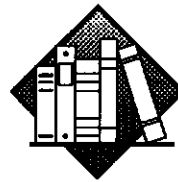
1. Satan, our enemy, not only wants us blind, but loves to torment us.
2. He comes only to kill, steal, and destroy. (John 10:10)

- God is a God of great mercy and love, but sin destroys.
- Sin always has its reward immediately and the consequences later.
- Satan always wants us to see the pleasure of sin, without regarding the consequences.

IV. Samson's Revenge.

A. When Samson was taken to a great hall filled with Philistines, he prayed and asked God to let him bring down the building, which was built around two massive stone pillars.

B. God granted this request, and Samson killed thousands of them by pushing down the supporting pillars.



Lesson Material

God works through people to fulfill His purposes. God gives various gifts and abilities to each of us, and all of us will give an account to Him for how we were faithful in the use of those gifts for His kingdom. There are many people who have been blessed with exceptional abilities and talents. They have been used by God and have become famous. However, they have strayed from God and may have to answer for moral failures in their lives. Then there are other people whose abilities, talents, and achievements are less noteworthy; but, they will receive their reward in heaven for faithfully serving God with a pure heart and life.

Samson is noted for having a great and unusual gift, but he had a moral weakness. Although God used him to kill thousands of Philistines, he suffered shame, torture, and an early, violent death, because he was lured by immoral women. While God's purposes were fulfilled, Samson suffered greatly, because he was not faithful to his calling.

Samson was attracted to the Philistine women. This grieved his parents, for they



Spiritual Truths

- There are those who continue on in the same "form of godliness," and lose the power of God; but, they do not even know it.
- During our lives, God often gives us lessons to teach us, so that we do not have to suffer a more serious loss sometime later.
- We can receive God's forgiveness; but, we may still suffer the consequences of our past sins.
- Satan's first goal with those he captures is to make them spiritually blind, so they will not repent.

wanted him to settle down with a nice Jewish girl. God used that attraction to worldly women to create a conflict between Samson and the Philistines. Now, God did not condone immorality, nor did God intend for Samson to become involved with those heathen women. God had forbidden the Israelites to marry heathens, just as he tells Christians to marry only Christian partners. If Samson had been closer to God, God could have directed him to fight under authority. As it was, Samson appeared to be self-centered and insensitive to the Spirit, and God let him follow his urges. This resulted in animosity and fighting. If you choose to identify yourself with a group which denies the Lord, sooner or later, trouble will develop.

When Samson was on his way to visit a lady friend in Timnath, he was confronted by a lion, which had the misfortune to mistake him for a quick lunch. Samson was not an easy prey. He seized the beast and tore it apart with his bare hands.

At Samson's wedding feast, he gave his Philistine guests the famous riddle, "out of the eater came forth meat." They could not guess the answer to the riddle, so they privately threatened to kill his bride and her parents if she did not get the answer from him. Samson immediately knew that the Philistine men had obtained the answer by threatening his wife with harm. In anger, he killed 30 other Philistines and gave their bloody clothes to the men who had threatened his wife.

This should have taught Samson a valuable lesson, because later the Philistines used Delilah in the same way. This time, however, the consequences were much more severe.

Delilah was Samson's Philistine girlfriend who lived in the valley of Sorek. She was bribed by the Philistine leaders, with the promise of a very large sum of money, to betray Samson's secret. They could see that it was a supernatural strength. No amount of training could produce such a superman. Large armies could not defeat him; but, one delicate woman could.

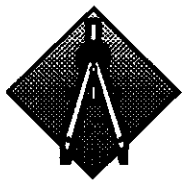
Delilah pressured him to share his secret with her. Three times, he gave her a false answer, and three times, she followed the instructions. Each time, a group of Philistines just happened to be around to capture him. Samson should have realized that Delilah was betraying him. Finally, she persuaded him to share the secret of his Nazarite vows. His strength came from God, and was the result of God's anointing on his life. He was never to cut his hair. That was the sign of this covenant with God.

Delilah knew she had won. She lulled him to sleep, and brought in the barber. When she said, "Get up, Sam, the Philistines are attacking!" he awoke, and said, "I'll just shake myself and fight them off like I always do." The Bible says that Samson did not know that God had left him. What a powerful statement. He felt the same. He went through the same motions, but something was missing. He no longer had God's anointing. His enemies knew that he had lost the anointing, but he did not know. How tragically sad.

The Philistines put out his eyes, just as Satan always seeks to "*blind the minds of them that believe not.*" (2 Corinthians. 4:4) Because of his lack of faith, Samson lost his vision. He was blinded by his enemy and taken into bondage. Samson disobeyed God and suffered humiliation, torture,

blindness, and loneliness. For years, God had been patient with him; but, now he was reaping what he had sowed.

For a long time, Samson ground grain at the mill while the Philistines mocked him. Perhaps his greatest torment was the knowledge that he could have done so much more to bring freedom to his people. He failed to complete the work he was called to do, because of his moral weakness. Finally, when he was brought to the great amusement hall filled with thousands of Philistines, he asked God to strengthen him one more time. In his death, he accomplished more for Israel than he had during his lifetime, because his ministry was to kill the Philistines. God used him, and from the ending of this story, we believe that God forgave Samson and that he is in heaven now -- although his sin caused him to lose what he could have had.



Methods

One principle that is greatly neglected today is that there are consequences to sin. In our zeal to get people to make a decision for Christ, we often speak only of

confession and forgiveness. The Bible has many warnings to believers about the consequences of sin. Share a personal experience, or one about someone you know, that will illustrate this point. Use an assumed name of another person, if necessary. For example, your parents may forgive you for playing in the street, but you still suffered a broken leg from being hit by a car.

The secular world is very good at portraying various sins and implying that there are no consequences. Children who watch secular television see it constantly. Cartoon characters commit extreme acts of violence with weapons and explosives, and they are never punished; nor do their victims suffer permanently. Heroes in movies commit fornication, adultery, and drink alcohol with no apparent consequences, such as disease, guilt, or death. Young, healthy, happy people are used to promote beer during sports events. Ask the class if they can see the hypocrisy and deception in this: "Have you seen a show which portrays sin with no consequences? Is this from God?"

Remind them that God loves them so much, that He wants to warn them against the dangers of sin. To obey and honor our parents and live honestly will bring us the greatest happiness and joy we can have in life.

A Praying Mother

Volume 2

Lesson 45



Bible References

1 Samuel 1

1 Samuel 2

1 Samuel 3

Amos 3:7

Romans 2:1

James 5:16



Scripture Reading

1 Samuel 1:10-20

10 "And she {was} in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore.

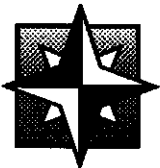
11 "And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

12 "And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth.

13 "Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken.

14 "And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee.

15 "And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I {am} a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD.



Theme

God gave us the prophet, Samuel, because of the faithful and diligent prayers of his mother, Hannah.

16 "Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.

17 "Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant (thee) thy petition that thou hast asked of him.

18 "And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more {sad}.

19 "And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her.

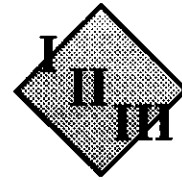
20 "Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, {saying}, Because I have asked him of the LORD."



Memory Verse

Psalms 121:2

"My help {cometh} from the LORD, which made heaven and earth."



Outline

I. The Prayer Of Petition.

- A. When Hannah had a serious need, she went to God in serious prayer.
- B. Hannah asked God for a son, and promised to dedicate him to the Lord.
- C. The prevailing prayer of a pure person produces plenty. (James 5:16)

II. The Priest and His Problem.

- A. Eli was the chief priest in the temple and also a judge.
- B. Eli was an undisciplined priest in the temple.
- C. Eli noticed Hannah's lips moving as she prayed silently, and he thought she was drunk.

III. The Blessing Received.

- A. Eli told Hannah to "Go in peace," and he asked God to grant her petition. (1 Samuel 1:17)
- B. Later Hannah's prayers were answered and she bore a son. She named him "Samuel."
 - 1. "Samuel" means "asked of God."
 - 2. What is the spiritual meaning of your name?

C. After Hannah gave her first child to the Lord to serve in the temple, God blessed her with five more children.

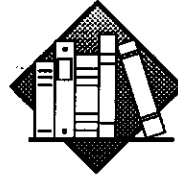
IV. The Prophet.

A. When Samuel was still a young boy, God spoke to him and gave him a message for Eli the priest. (1 Samuel 3)

B. A prophet is someone God calls especially to be His messenger to people or to leaders. What other prophets are mentioned in the Bible?

C. God gives important insights to His prophets. (Amos 3:7)

- When we give to God first, as Hannah did, we can expect God to honor our faith and obedience.
- Our choices in life will affect others, especially those in our family.



Lesson Material

The story of Samuel really begins with his parents, because his special place in history is largely the result of his mother's prayer for a son and her dedication of him to serve God. Hannah was the wife of Elkanah. They were Israelites who lived over 3,000 years ago, in the days before Israel had kings. In their culture, children were very important and desired by the people.

Hannah had a physical problem and was unable to conceive a baby. This deeply grieved her, and she went to the temple to pray. She prayed so intensely that the chief priest, Eli, thought she was drunk when he noticed her at the altar. He judged her. That is, he formed an opinion about her character, based on what he saw. When we judge one another, we always base our judgment on what we see and on what is in our own heart. We only see part of the story, and we see others in the light of our own weakness. Eli was not disciplined in his eating and drinking, and he was quick to think that others had the same weakness.

Hannah, in turn, could have judged the priest. He had a serious weight problem, and was also harsh and insensitive. But she respected the office



Spiritual Truths

- Our lives are greatly influenced by the faith and prayers of our parents.
- Children are gifts from God.
- A prophet is someone called by God to speak a message from Him to people.
- We should not judge other Christians by their appearances, but should talk with them if we see a problem.
- If you judge others, it is an indication that you have a similar problem in your own life.
- Eli and his sons were in the ministry, but they were not right with God.
- Samuel lived a good life, because he was obedient and faithful to God.

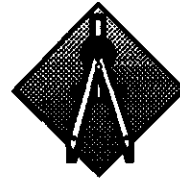
and did not react to him personally. She quickly told him of her situation, and he told her to "Go in peace," asking God to grant her petition. (1 Samuel 1:17) Hannah received the blessing, and God healed her.

The next year, Hannah had a baby boy. She named him "Samuel (asked of God)." All his life, Samuel's name would be a reminder that he was a gift from the Lord and that he was someone special. Do you know the spiritual meaning of your name? What does your name encourage you to be?

Hannah was so grateful to God, that she dedicated Samuel to the Lord for as long as he lived. That is, she took him as a young child to the temple, and he became a servant to the priests. What does it mean to you to be dedicated to God? To Samuel, it meant that he belonged to God completely and that he would serve God all his life. God loved Samuel, and he lived a good and fruitful life. God blessed Hannah for giving her son to Him, and she had three more sons and two daughters.

Eli was the chief priest. A priest is someone who represents the people to God in the temple.

Samuel was a prophet. A prophet is someone God raises up to be His messenger to the people. Samuel heard from God and told the people what God had said. God used Samuel to search out and anoint King Saul and King David.



Methods

Puppets would be effective in relating the story of Hannah in the temple. Two puppets could also be used to portray the scene in 1 Samuel 3 between Samuel, the boy; Eli, the priest; and the Lord.

There are several key questions which explain this lesson to the students. Select a few of the children's names for which you know the spiritual meaning and ask, "Do you know what your name means?" If some do not know, urge them to ask their parents, or agree to research it for them the following week.

Emphasize the lesson on judging. Remind them that only God looks on the heart and that we should not judge one another. To judge another person is to decide that you know the person's motives (heart) rather than just see the outward appearance. Someone may appear mean, when, actually, they are very sad or sick.

Remind them that the Bible is God's Holy Word, because He gave it to His messengers, the prophets of old, for our benefit.

Be Ye Kind



Bible References

Proverbs 15:4

Proverbs 18:21

Proverbs 25:15

Proverbs 31:26

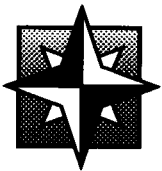
Matthew 12:34

Matthew 25:32-34

Mark 7:18-23

Ephesians 4:26-32

James 3



Theme

We must learn to guard our hearts, and be careful not to hurt one another with thoughtless or coarse words.



Scripture Reading

Ephesians 4:26-32

26 *"Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:*

27 *"Neither give place to the devil.*

28 *"Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with {his} hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*

29 *"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*

30 *"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

31 *"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:*

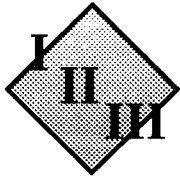
32 *"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."*



Memory Verse

Ephesians 4:32

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another...."



Outline

I. The Power Of the Tongue.

A. James 3.

1. The tongue is like the rudder of a ship.
 - a. It controls the direction of our hearts and lives.
 - b. If we talk positively and kindly, we will be more positive with others.
 - c. If we are critical, harsh, or negative with our tongue, our heart will be more negative.
2. The tongue is a fire.
 - a. Fire breaks down order and creates rubble and destruction.
 - b. If a tiny fire is allowed to spread and is not quenched, it can destroy a city.
 - c. Water quenches fire, as the rain of the Holy Spirit quenches gossip and mean talk.
3. Nobody can tame the tongue.
 - a. The tongue will tend to speak what is in the heart.

- b. A mean heart will produce mean words.

B. Mark 7:18-23.

1. We are not defiled by what goes into our mouths as much as by what comes out of us.
2. The more we speak evil, the more evil our heart becomes.

C. The saying "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me," is not scriptural.

1. The Bible says, "*A soft tongue breaketh the bone.*" (Proverbs 25:15)
2. "*Death and life are in the power of the tongue:*" (Proverbs 18:21)

II. The Law Of Kindness.

A. "*A wholesome tongue is a tree of life:*" Proverbs 15:4)

B. Ephesians 4.

1. No corrupt communication.
 - a. No swearing, cursing, profanity, or bywords.
 - b. Talk plainly, without adding unnecessary adjectives.
 - c. You do not have to say, "that darned dog!" Just say, "that dog!"
2. Speak that which is good to the use of edifying.
 - a. "Edify" means to "build up."
 - b. Are my words kind and encouraging, or do they cut down?
3. "*...minister grace to the hearers....*"
 - a. Do I serve others with kind words?
 - b. Grace -- do I impart spiritual strength with my words?

4. Be kind and tenderhearted to each other, forgiving one another.



Spiritual Truths

- The tongue tends to reveal what is in the heart.
- What we say will also greatly affect our heart and the direction of our life.
- Sticks and stone may break my bones, but words can crush my spirit.
- Life and death are in the power of the tongue.
- Kindness is one of the results of having the Holy Spirit in your heart.
- It is sad to think that the apostle Paul had to remind the believers to be nice to each other.
- People have a natural tendency to put others down; but, Jesus teaches us to love the unlovely and to lift up hurting people.
- God is not mocked. If we sow unkind words, we will reap a harvest of hurts.



Lesson Material

One of the qualities of the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31:26 is that *"in her*

tongue is the law of kindness." Virtue is the positive influence that flows out of a sincere heart. A virtuous person is one who is a positive moral influence. As the old saying goes, some people brighten a room when they enter, and some brighten a room by leaving.

A significant part of the sin nature is the tendency to be selfish, harsh, or even cruel. In most cultures today, the majority of the children are placed in peer-group schools with other children; and children can be extremely cruel to each other. The Bible teaches that foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, and that the rod of correction will drive it away. Left to ourselves, we will be inclined to follow the law of unkindness, which is rooted in pride and selfishness.

Children in western cultures, especially those strongly influenced by television, find selfish pleasure in using cutting, hurtful language and negative names. We should do everything we can to teach the children we influence that hurtful nicknames and sarcastic talk are not consistent with a lifestyle that pleases God. In the Great Commission, we note that Jesus said that we should be "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Jesus also taught us to be kind to one another, and that we are defiled in our heart by the words that go out of our mouths.

In Matthew 25 verses 32-34, Jesus speaks of the day in which He will judge between the sheep and the goats of His spiritual flock. The genuine believers are called sheep, while the phony believers are called goats. Jesus said that the test of our faith is primarily the way we respond to people who are hurting. How do we treat those who are in spiritual need -- hungry and thirsty? What do we do when

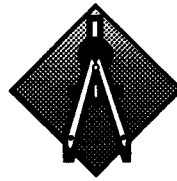
confronted by a stranger -- a new boy or girl -- someone who is different? How do we respond to the naked -- one who is in an embarrassing or shameful situation? Do we love the sick -- those who cannot function spiritually, or those who are not born again? Jesus said,

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matthew 25:40)

Jesus places people who are weaker or different into our lives, in order to see what kind of character we really have.

It is interesting that Jesus spoke so gently to sinners. His harshest words were always to religious leaders, because they thought they were righteous, and they needed to be awakened. Jesus never concentrated on Himself. He was always looking for the weak and hurting, and He always sought to encourage them. How different from the carnal people around us who delight in putting down anyone who is different, in order to make themselves feel smart or important. We need to see that being unkind to a child who is different is really being unkind to the Lord.

Our children need to be taught to speak properly, as well as kindly. They tend to be quick to pick up on bywords they hear around them, and they tend to think it is "cool" to speak in demeaning terms to others. Children need to be taught that cruel nicknames and demeaning talk are offenses just as serious as blows with their fists, because words can do even greater harm to people than bruises. We need to remind ourselves to be kind. We need to judge ourselves when we realize we are using vain or coarse language, for it is *"...out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaketh."* (Matthew 12:34)



Methods

Discuss ways of speaking to parents or to other adults. Ask them if they have yielded to the temptation of using negative names or harsh talk to their brothers or sisters. Practice calling other children by their first names, and adults by their last names.

Practice "the law of kindness." Put on a little skit. One member is down on the floor, and others speak to him. One might say, "You numbskull." Another might ask, "Do you not ever do anything right?" It is amazing how many descriptive negative names we have in our vocabulary for people who make mistakes. Now have that person walk away and trip over his own foot. What will he tend to receive in return?

Now have a few others pick up the first child who is down, and practice speaking words of kindness and encouragement. Let all the students see the difference, and realize that they need speak positive and kind words regularly to each other.

Ask the students whether they see the power of kind words. Then ask how many of them will agree to practice using kind words with a sibling or other children for a few days, particularly someone for whom they have a "pet" negative nickname. The following week have a few testify about how it made the other person feel to hear kind words instead of mean ones.

Love Accepted

Volume 2

Lesson 47



Bible References

Psalms 63:3

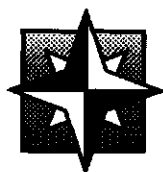
Luke 10:38-42

39 *"And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.*

40 *"But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me.*

41 *"And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:*

42 *"But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."*



Theme

God is more interested in a personal relationship with us than He is in our service for Him.



Memory Verse

Psalms 63:3

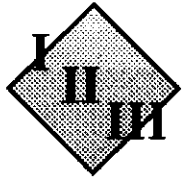
"Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee."



Scripture Reading

Luke 10:38-42

38 *"Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.*



Outline

I. Mary and Martha.

A. Mary and Martha lived with their brother Lazarus in the village of Bethany.

1. They were close friends of Jesus.
2. Apparently their parents were not living.

B. Martha:

1. Had the gift of serving. Some call it the gift of helps.
2. She was a faithful worker.
3. Her main concern was to serve dinner to her guest, Jesus.

C. Mary:

1. Was a worshipper.
2. Her main interest was Jesus, a friend to be heard.

II. Serving Or Relating.

A. Serving is good.

1. We are commanded to serve one another.
2. The Bible teaches us to serve in many ways.
3. Some Christians have a special gift of serving in practical ways.
4. Cleaning the church can be a very honorable ministry to the Lord.
5. Jesus was a great servant, who lived for others.

B. Worship is more important.

1. God's purpose, first of all, is a relationship.
2. Many religions have a god who is cold and impersonal.
 - a. Most false religions stress duty and ceremonies.
 - b. False religions tend to use people as slaves and bring them into bondage.
3. Christianity is unique, because our Heavenly Father loves us and wants us to be close to Him.

C. Some Christian teachers think that worship means service.

1. No, but service is a natural expression of worship.
2. Worship involves loving and enjoying God's presence.
3. It is good to serve. It is better to serve out of love and joy.

III. The Art Of Conversation.

A. Conversation involves listening well and asking questions, as well as sharing interesting information.

B. Prayer should be a personal talk with God.

C. In the Bible, rotely reciting prayers that someone else has written is called "vain repetition."

D. God wants us to love Him, and to talk with Him every day.

IV. Worship.

- A. Worship does not only mean singing.
1. The Greek word for worship means "to kiss toward."
 2. Worship means love and adoration – to declare "worthship."
- B. We worship God with our spirit, as we come into His presence with praise and thanksgiving.



Spiritual Truths

- The contrast between Mary and Martha was not one of good and bad, but of good and best.
- Friendship involves caring for others -- not just doing for others.
- We can serve without loving, but we can not really love without serving.
- Worship is loving God and enjoying His presence.
- The Pharisees were very busy trying to work for God; but, they did not know how to love Him.
- Prayer is talking to God and listening, and not reciting words.
- God's love for people is a unique aspect of the Christian faith.



Lesson Material

To most Christians, this is a familiar scene from the scriptures. We catch a glimpse of our Lord as a man on earth who is not seen in His public image. In our visualizing Jesus, we do not often think of the fact that Jesus had many personal friends, and that some of His best friends were women. Usually, we picture Jesus surrounded by men. Many religions exalt men above women; but, Christianity does not. In terms of the value of the individual, there is no difference to God between men and women. We have different roles and responsibilities, but each of us is special to God.

Both Mary and Martha were friends of Jesus. In fact, their brother Lazarus is not even mentioned in this scene. Each of these women had a unique personality and a different way of showing their love for the Lord. Martha sought to make Him comfortable and meet His needs. He was probably weary and hungry, and Martha wanted to bless Him. Mary was different. Mary was glad to see Jesus, and was delighted to sit at His feet and listen attentively to His word as He spoke.

When Martha came to Jesus and complained about Mary's neglect of the service, Jesus did not harshly scold her. Probably, with a gentle voice, He said, "Martha, Martha, you're so worried about all this. Mary has made a good choice. She is doing all right." One great pastor in Michigan has a sign on his desk which says, "Cooleth it." That says it, too.

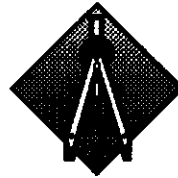
Jesus was not displeased with Martha's serving. She was probably a great cook and

made the best cornbread in town. She was expressing love to the Lord by her gift. The problem was not the housework. The problem was Martha's inability to accept Mary's response to the Lord. People who have a spiritual motivation to serve may think that everyone should be servers, and they may react unkindly to those who express themselves in other ways. Martha was judging her sister, thinking that Mary was just too lazy to help with the work. It did not seem to concern her that there were several healthy men in the room, too. From Martha's point of view, Mary was a woman; and, therefore, she should be doing housework. Only men should sit around talking.

Jesus gently rebuked Martha, because she was reacting to Mary and asking Him to send her younger sister to the kitchen to help her. How often do we seek to change others around us? How many unhappy people are in the church today, who are constantly thinking that their life could be so much better, if only the people around them would change? Have you ever been irritated with people, and wished they would change?

Jesus taught Martha to accept Mary and Mary's decision. He showed her that

friendship is more than just doing for other people. It includes caring for other people. Sometimes the best gift is to give someone your undivided attention and loyalty, instead of just giving them things. God teaches us to serve Him; but, our relationship to Him as worshippers is more important to Him than our work for Him as servants.



Methods

This lesson can be made more vivid by having some of the students act out the scene. If you do this, be sure to have some boys sitting at the feet of "Jesus," with Mary. This will help put the event into perspective.

Ask, "What are some ways in which we can serve the Lord?"

Also ask, "What are some ways we can worship the Lord?"

"Should we do both?"

Stop the Storm

Volume 2

Lesson 48



Bible References

Isaiah 26:3

Jeremiah 32:17

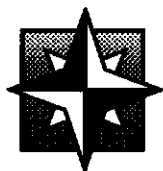
Matthew 8:20-28

24 "And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep.

25 "And his disciples came to (him), and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.

26 "And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

27 "But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!"



Theme

Faith in Jesus is the key to responding to the storms in life.



Memory Verse

Jeremiah 32:17

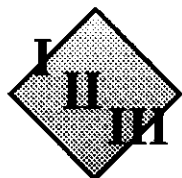
"Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, (and) there is nothing too hard for thee:"



Scripture Reading

Matthew 8:23-27

23 "And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.



Outline

I. He Entered Into a Ship.

A. His disciples followed Him.

1. Sometimes when you follow Jesus, you experience difficulties in life.
2. Jesus knew they would go through a storm and that they would learn from it.

B. Everyone experiences troubles.

1. When you are a Christian, Jesus is in the boat with you.
2. "Fellowship" is "some fellows together in a ship."

II. There Arose a Great Tempest.

A. A storm is a picture, or type, of problems in life.

1. The "sea" usually relates to humanity, so a storm at sea particularly is a type of people problems.
2. A storm at sea is particularly fearful, because, if the boat sinks, you will drown.

B. The ship was covered with the waves.

1. The waves were much larger than the boat.
2. Sometimes your problems in life are bigger than you and are impossible for you to handle or overcome.

III. Lord, Save Us!

A. Jesus was asleep.

1. They were facing the problem and were afraid.
2. Jesus was so unafraid that He slept through the storm.

B. The disciples awakened Him.

1. "Lord, do not you care that we are all going to die?!"
2. They did not stop to think that, if the ship did sink, Jesus would have to go down with it.

IV. Peace, Be Still.

A. *"Why are you so fearful, O ye of little faith?"*

1. Fear thinks only of the problem, while faith thinks on God's purposes.
2. They showed their lack of faith by their fear.
3. Faith says, "I know God has a plan for my life, and He will protect me until it is accomplished. Then I will be in heaven."

B. Jesus rebuked the wind and the waves, and there was a great calm.

1. Suddenly, there was no wind at all, and the sea was completely calm.
2. The disciples were amazed and said, "What kind of man is this?"
3. They had forgotten in their fear and excitement that the Lord was with them.



Spiritual Truths

- God never promised us that Christians would be exempt from problems.
- God's promise is that He will be with us through the storm.
- Fear is the result of magnifying the problem instead of magnifying the Lord.
- Fear causes us to think foolish things, such as "Lord, do not you care that I am about to fail?"
- When faced with a storm in life, it is wise to realize that only God is able to calm it.
- Peace does not come solely from the absence of storms. It comes from the presence of Jesus.
- Fear and faith are opposites, and are mutually exclusive.



Lesson Material

One of the great purposes of Jesus in His 42 months or so of earthly ministry was to train His disciples to teach people about God and build His church. As He went about doing good and teaching the people, He put His twelve disciples through a special training course. Jesus did not say, "Now today, men, I am going to

show something important to you about storms and faith." He simply got into a boat and started across the sea. He knew a storm was moving into the area, but He did not tell them.

The disciples followed Jesus into the ship. They wanted to be with Jesus, so they stayed with Him. Although they did not understand exactly what it was all about, they knew that this was their Messiah and that something more important than fishing was happening. Later, it seemed that they failed to grasp what Jesus was doing. As Jesus trained and equipped them, they learned what they needed to know and turned vast numbers of people to God.

Jesus never said it would be easy, or that there would be no problems for believers. In fact, just before the disciples got into the boat, a scribe had said to Jesus, "Master, I will follow you anywhere." Jesus had replied,

"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." (Matthew 8:20)

We never hear anything about that man again. As Christians, we will have problems. The Bible says that everyone in life has problems. The difference is that, as God's children, we have someone to whom we can always turn for the answer. As we go through the difficult situations in life, we will gain strength and understanding.

"All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28)

Unbelievers do not have such promise. Generally, problems are perceived by them as sources of pain, which are to be avoided at all cost; while to us, problems can be great teachers, for they motivate us to drop to our knees and pray -- and that is the best place for us to be.

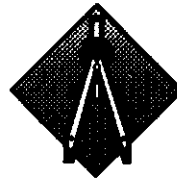
A storm is a picture, or an allegory about life. Storms at sea are like problems on the sea of life -- in the "sea of humanity." In life, we have "people problems." People misunderstand one another. People do wrong things. People sin. People hurt one another. People become fearful of one another and defensive. That is when they are most dangerous. When problems overwhelm you, remember that God put us in a world with imperfect people to teach us many good lessons in life. He is preparing us to live together with Him for eternity. Storms are a part of the training process.

Jesus was asleep in the ship. What a picture of faith! Peace is not the result of avoiding conflict. It is the result of deciding to live for God, regardless of the circumstances. *"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee."* (Isaiah 26:3) Jesus came to give a peace that "passes understanding." That is because His peace is not dependent upon circumstances. It is a peace that holds us steady when everything around us is tossing and turning. It is peace in the midst of the storm. Peace is a fruit of the Spirit. Peace is a quality of the Kingdom of God. How sad it is to see fearful people marching for "peace," trying to force the world to stop threatening them. They do not have peace in their hearts, and they are crying for peace in their world. It will not come that way.

The disciples were familiar with the sea. They knew that their frail boats could

not endure large waves for a long period of time. If they were on land, they could seek shelter. Normally, a storm might mean that they could get drenched and miserably cold. At sea, such conditions could be deadly. The wind would move the water into great mounds of unstable power, and could bring many tons of cold death crashing down on the open ship, quickly flooding it and sending everything into the dark depths of the sea.

The men were terrified; and, in their fear, they remembered that Jesus was on the ship somewhere. They found Him sleeping. They cried, "Lord, save us. We are all going to die!" Jesus asked a strange question. *"Why are ye fearful?"* Who would not be? This was the lesson Jesus was teaching them. He was the Master of the sea. He did care. When He is with you, there is nothing to fear. Nothing is too difficult for God. He is just waiting for us to turn to Him in prayer and faith, and look to Him for the answer. He has never failed.



Methods

Discussion:

Have you ever been afraid during a severe storm?

What can prevent fear of a storm? (Answer: knowing that you are in a secure house; having a light on; being with your parents; etc.)

Storms are a type of problems in our lives. Did Jesus promise to give us a life

free from storms? Did He promise to be with us and never leave us?

After a storm, trees tend to grow stronger. Do we become stronger when we go through the storms of life?

What keeps us from being afraid of life's difficulties?

How can we know we have real peace, in spite of any storm that may come?

The Day Of Pentecost

Volume 2

Lesson 49



Bible References

Exodus 34:22

Deuteronomy 16:10-16

Joel 2:28

Acts 1:4-10

Acts 2:1-17, 38-39

1 Corinthians 14

1 Corinthians 15:6

2 Corinthians 3:3

Ephesians 5:18

Jude 20



Scripture Reading

Acts 2:1-5,7,12-17

1 *"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*

2 *"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.*

3 *"And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.*

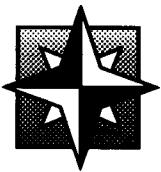
4 *"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

5 *"And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.*

7 *"And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?*

12 *"And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?*

13 *"Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.*



Theme

Jesus wants to baptize every believer in the Holy Ghost, in much the same way He did on the day of Pentecost.

14 "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all {ye} that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

15 "For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is {but} the third hour of the day.

16 "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

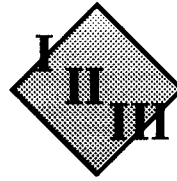
17 "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:"



Memory Verse

Acts 2:38

"...Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."



Outline

I. The Day Of Pentecost.

- A. "Pentecost" means "fiftieth," and it referred to the feast of Israel which commemorated the fiftieth day after the feast of Passover.
- B. In the Old Testament, the Feast of Pentecost was also called the Feast of Harvest, or Firstfruits, and the Feast of Weeks.
- C. In the Old Testament, on the Day of Pentecost, God gave Moses the tables of the law on Mt. Sinai.

II. The Baptism In the Holy Ghost.

- A. The baptism in the Holy Ghost came upon the disciples and the followers of Jesus on the first day of Pentecost, which was fifty days after the Passover.
- B. Jesus had been appearing to His disciples for 40 days after He had risen.
 1. When Jesus ascended, He told his disciples and about 500 followers to wait in Jerusalem, until He baptized them in the Holy Ghost.
 2. At sunrise on the day of Pentecost, the disciples and all of the followers of Jesus were baptized in the Holy Ghost; and they spoke in tongues, as the Spirit gave them the ability.
- C. When the disciples were accused of being drunk with wine, Peter told the

onlookers that this was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy in Joel chapter 2.

1. *"I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh."* (Joel 2:28)
2. *"Your sons and daughters shall prophesy."* (Joel 2:28) This means to speak word given by the Holy Ghost to the people.

D. In the initial outpouring:

1. There was a rushing, mighty wind and tongues like fire, which "sat upon each of them;" and all of them began to speak with other tongues.
2. After that, the only sign mentioned was speaking with tongues.

E. Speaking with tongues.

1. "Speaking with tongues" refers to speaking in a language you have not learned and do not understand.
2. It is a supernatural sign given by the Supernatural Holy Spirit.

F. Baptism:

1. Means "to dip; to immerse; to submerge; to cleanse or wash by the application of water."
2. Pastors or church leaders are told to baptize us in water for the remission of sins, but Jesus baptizes us in the Holy Ghost.

III. You Shall Receive Power.

- A. Jesus said that when we receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, we will receive power to witness boldly for the Lord.
- B. In the last days, especially, God is pouring out His Spirit on all kinds of

people. We especially need His anointing and strength to stand against great evil.

- C. When we allow the Holy Spirit to speak through us, we are "built up" spiritually, because we are letting Him lead and work through us and are not relying on our minds for the utterance.

1. 1 Corinthians 14:4.
2. Jude 20.

IV. The Gift Is Unto You.

- A. Peter said to *"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."* (Acts 2:39) In other words, turn from sin and serve God; be baptized and bring the disease of sin into remission. Wash the inner man.

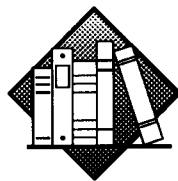
- B. *"The promise is unto you, and to your children...."* (Acts 2:39)

1. This indicates that this Pentecostal outpouring was not just for the original church, but for later generations, even *"to all that are afar off..."* (Like us -- 2,000 years later!)
2. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a gift we receive as we humble ourselves, believe, and allow the Holy Ghost to give us the utterance to speak that which He understands, but we do not.



Spiritual Truths

- God is pouring out the baptism in the Holy Spirit on millions of believers all over the world, as the prophet Joel prophesied.
- The initial biblical evidence that we have received this supernatural gift is speaking with tongues as the Spirit gives the utterance.
- The tongue is the most unruly member of the human body. (James 3:8) God chose the tongue to be the sign of a vessel yielded to the Holy Ghost.
- Jesus fulfilled the Feast of Pentecost by imparting the baptism in the Holy Spirit to the early church.
- Christians need to be baptized and filled with the Holy Ghost in the last days more than ever, because "the days are evil."
- Speaking with tongues builds up the believer spiritually.
- Anyone who is genuinely born again, through repentance and faith, can receive the baptism in the Holy Ghost, even if he is very young.
- Jesus is the one who immerses believers in the Holy Spirit.



Lesson Material

The New Testament is built upon the foundation of the Old Testament. The Old Testament is a physical picture of the covenants and principles of God, and the New Testament is the spiritual fulfillment of the Old. The Feasts of Israel give us a beautiful picture of the Christian life and of our relationship to God through the Spirit. In the Passover, we see the lamb slain for the covering of sins and salvation from the death angel. In Pentecost, we have the law of the Lord written on tablets of stone. God gave laws to Israel to help them know what to do and to show them right from wrong. In the Old Testament, we have the prophecy that God would write His laws "*on the fleshly tables of our hearts.*" (2 Corinthians 3:3) When we are filled with the Holy Ghost, doing what is right in our hearts, we want to do what pleases God more than ever.

"Pentecost" means "fiftieth." This refers to the fact that God gave this feast to Israel to commemorate the seven weeks following the Feast of Passover. We can only receive the Baptism in the Holy Ghost after we have been genuinely born again by the Spirit. It is a promise only to Christian believers. The Holy Spirit will not take up residence in a life that is not washed in the blood of Jesus Christ.

"Baptism" means "to dip; to immerse; to submerge; to cleanse or wash by the application of water." When John baptized people in water, it was a "baptism unto repentance." In other words, they were declaring their willingness to turn to God from their sin by being buried, or totally

covered over, with water. The baptism in the Spirit means that Jesus immerses our spirit completely in the Person of the Holy Spirit.

There is a difference in being baptized and being filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the one who immerses us in the Spirit when we seek Him as a believer. But, there are many fillings. Paul said *"be filled with the Spirit,"* (Ephesians 5:18) In this instance, it means to "continue being filled." According to the New Testament, the practice of speaking with tongues was a regular part of the lives of Spirit-filled believers, as they continued to allow the Holy Spirit to direct and strengthen them daily.

After Jesus had risen, He was seen by, walked and talked with, and ate with His eleven disciples. He was also seen by, and talked with, several of His close friends. On one occasion He was seen by about *"five hundred brethren at once."* (1 Corinthians 15:6)

Just before Jesus ascended into heaven, He told His disciples and some of His followers to tarry, or wait, in Jerusalem to be baptized in the Holy Ghost. After ten days, there were present only 120 of Jesus' followers, who had obeyed His last command and had waited faithfully day and night. At sunrise on the tenth day, which was the day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost was poured out upon all of the followers of Jesus who had waited.

During this initial baptism of the church, there were other supernatural signs, as well as speaking with other tongues. The baptism in the Holy Ghost is a supernatural work. There are other evidences in life which indicate that Jesus is in residence. This occasion was recorded in the Book of Acts, and it was accepted by

the apostles as proof that all of those believers had received from the Lord the baptism in the Holy Ghost.

They *"...began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."* (Acts 2:4) When the followers of Jesus sought God in one accord and in complete obedience to Jesus, something happened to all of them at the same time. They spoke in other languages, which they did not understand with their minds. They were doing the speaking; but, the Holy Spirit gave the words to them, and gave to them a special ability to speak the language.

In 1 Corinthians 14:5 the Apostle Paul said, *"I would that ye all spake with tongues."* Later in verse 18, the Apostle Paul said, *"I speak with tongues more than ye all:..."* He also said, *"He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself..."* (1 Corinthians 14:4)

In other words, when we pray in tongues, our inner man is strengthened. We are not speaking with our minds. We are speaking with our spirit. God wants us to be mighty in spirit; and it is important to speak with tongues. The writers of the New Testament encouraged believers to do this.

During most of the twentieth century in America, the Pentecostal Revival was just beginning. Ever since the early church on the day of Pentecost, there have always been groups of believers who prayed and worshipped with tongues. The great Pentecostal outpouring began in the early 1900's. For decades, most American Christians were in non-pentecostal, or "fundamentalist", churches. The Pentecostal people were often ridiculed by more "fashionable" believers. They were called "holy-rollers," because some became

very emotional in their worship and altar prayer services. Most of the Pentecostal churches were small and very poor.

In the last few decades of the 1900's, there has been a tremendous increase of believers who have received the baptism in the Holy Ghost. Not only have the Pentecostal churches grown, but millions of people in fundamentalist or liturgical churches have also become Spirit-filled, and have become a part of a great Charismatic movement. Today, the Pentecostal/Charismatic believers are estimated to be more than 51% of the number of Christians in America.

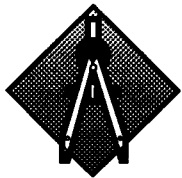
Less widely known is the fact that nearly all of the churches in Communist and third-world countries speak with tongues regularly. Even some Presbyterian and Methodist churches in Korea are f"Charismatic." All over the world, God is pouring out His Spirit on all mankind.

(1 Corinthians 14:15) Discuss the difference, and the benefits of yielding our whole body to the Holy Spirit.

Emphasize that the Holy Spirit is a real and distinct person. He is not just an impersonal force, or an "it." The Holy Spirit is God, the third person of the Trinity.

Explain that, while every believer has the Holy Spirit in his life, there is a further and distinct work in his life when he is immersed, or baptized, in the Holy Ghost.

Ask whether any of the students have received the Baptism in the Holy Ghost, and whether they continue to "pray in the Spirit." Have a few people available at the end of the class time who are strong in the Spirit, and have them offer to lay hands on any of the students who desire to receive the Baptism in the Holy Ghost. Encourage them to praise the Lord with their whole heart and to be willing and open to yield to God's prompting to speak with unknown words.



Methods

Paul said, *"I will pray in the Spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also:..."*

What Is a Father?

Volume 2

Lesson 50



Bible References

Psalms 23

Psalms 27:10

Psalms 68:1-2, 5

Psalms 91

Proverbs 4

Proverbs 13:1

Malachi 4

Romans 13:1

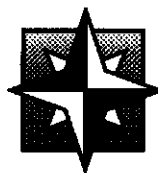
Ephesians 6:4

1 Timothy 5:8

2 Timothy 2:1-2

James 1:27

1 John 4:8



Theme

Our natural fathers are called by God to do in our natural lives many of the things our Heavenly Father does. Fathers are to guard, guide, and provide.



Scripture Reading

Proverbs 4:1-2, 4-6, 10-11, 23

1 *"Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.*

2 *"For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law.*

4 *"He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live.*

5 *"Get wisdom, get understanding: forget (it) not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.*

6 *"Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee."*

10 "Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many.

11 "I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths.

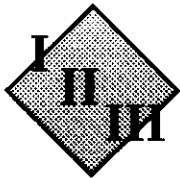
23 "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it (are) the issues of life."



Memory Verse

Proverbs 13:1

"A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke."



Outline

I. The Job Of a Father.

A. Fathers guard their children.

1. Most dads are strong and are able to protect us from harm.
2. Fathers are also to protect us from wrong influences:
 - a. Wrong or foolish friends;
 - b. Evil television programs;
 - c. Ungodly teaching from schools.

B. Fathers guide their children.

1. Our fathers should teach us about God and read the Bible to us.
2. We tend to follow our fathers' principle interests in life, especially when we are young.
3. We love to walk in their footsteps.

C. Fathers provide for their children.

1. You do not have to earn money to eat or have clothes, because your father has the responsibility to provide for you. (1 Timothy 5:8)
2. Sometimes mom has to help, but dad generally has the role of provider.
3. Father provides food and shelter. He will often teach us to earn the extras we want but do not really need.

II. Fathers Give Us an Idea Of What God Is Like.

A. God is our Heavenly Father.

1. God wants us to love Him and have a personal relationship with Him.
2. God wants us to live with Him for ever.
3. God guards, guides, and provides for us.

B. We need our natural parents, because children are not strong enough or wise enough to succeed in life without them.

1. Even when we are adults, we always need our Heavenly Father's protection, guidance, and provision to live an abundant life.

2. Everyone needs to have a child-like trust in God, or they will not be able to live God's way.

C. Fathers give us an idea about what God does; but, no father is perfectly like God.

1. Fathers are human and make mistakes.
2. God is perfect. He never fails.
3. Fathers are limited in their strength and ability. Nothing is too difficult for God.

III. What Makes a Father Good?

A. When a man loves God, he is able to love his children.

B. God is good, and all good qualities come from God.

1. If a father does not know God, he will be limited in his ability to show love to his children.
2. God is love, and every one who really loves is born of God and knows God personally. (1 John 4:8)
3. Also, all wisdom comes from God. Any father, who does not know God, will lack the wisdom to know what to do for us.

IV. What If I Do Not Have a Dad?

A. God has a special place in His kingdom for those who do not have an earthly father.

1. God said that He would be a Father to the fatherless. (Psalms 68:5)
2. He commanded the Christians to take special care of those who do not

have a father living with them. (James 1:27)

3. Many times in the Bible God told His people to do things for the fatherless.

B. What if my dad left us?

1. Refer to the blessings for the "fatherless" in point "A."
2. The Lord will take special care of you, as He did for David when his parents "forsook" him. (Psalms 27:10)

C. What if my dad does not know Jesus?

1. Pray for him. (1 Timothy 2:1-2)
2. Love him.
3. Honor him as God's representative to you.
4. Obey him, unless he tells you to do something that is a sin. If he does, appeal to him and ask him to excuse you from doing it.
 - a. God is a higher authority than any man.
 - b. We are commanded to obey the "higher authority." (Romans 13:1)



Spiritual Truths

- God called fathers to be our providers, protectors, and teachers in life.
- God placed us in natural families when we were born, and He also places us in spiritual families -- local churches -- when we are "born again."

- We learn many things about God from the role of our father, even though he is not perfect, like God is.
- God can work through our father to guide, guard, and provide, even when he is not saved.
- A man can only really love people to the degree that he loves God.
- God blesses and protects you through your father, so pray for him every day.
- The best way to win parents to the Lord is to obey and honor them as unto the Lord.
- God places great value on the relationship between fathers and their children. God's purpose is to turn their hearts toward one another.



Lesson Material

God has an eternal plan and purpose for our lives, and He uses the people and events in this temporary life on earth to shape us and mold our character for eternity. The family is God's initial and primary tool for our training, education, and character building. The family was designed by God to include a father, mother, sons, and daughters, although that is not always the case. If a father is not alive or functioning properly in the family, we need father-figures to look up to as role models. Fathers give us an idea of what God is like, at least in His relationship to us, and hopefully by their character and wisdom.

God had millions of angelic spirit-beings in the universe He created, but He wanted children. God created people to have a special relationship with Him which angels could not fulfill. We were created to fulfill the Father's heart of God. The more we trust and seek after Him in our lives, the more He is pleased with us, and wants to bless our lives.

There are many physical and spiritual dangers in life. Fathers protect us from the elements by providing a home and surrounding us with love to protect us from any danger. When war threatens a nation, it is usually the fathers and the young men who face the danger in protecting their families and nation from attack. But fathers should also be aware of spiritual dangers such as false teaching, humanistic ideas, evil television programs, and wicked movies. A wise father will see the occult influences in some cartoons and will provide other activities for his children. He will understand that Satan is out to deceive his family, and he will guard against wrong ideas. When you hear or see something which seems to draw you away from God and the truth of the Bible, go to your father and ask him to evaluate the program or the idea you have heard.

Fathers guide by giving directions for our lives. They are commanded to bring their children up in "*the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*" (Ephesians 6:4) "Nurture" means that they are to "train and to give wise instruction." "Admonition" means "correction or discipline." The Bible says that every father who loves his children will use the rod when it is needed to teach them to associate pain with wrong attitudes. One of the great dangers of false humanistic teaching is the idea that there are no real consequences to sin. A wise father will

discipline -- not when he is angry -- but when his children need to be assured that there are always consequences of sin.

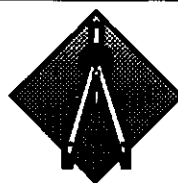
Fathers are the primary providers in the home. They have the main responsibility to work and generate income for the family to meet their physical needs. A good man will provide for his children's needs, and will also teach them to earn their "wants." Sometimes, mom has to help. But, in a Christian culture, the primary responsibility as provider belongs to dad. A good father will also provide spiritually, by taking his family to church and leading in family devotions.

Today, every Sunday School teacher needs to be very sensitive to the children who do not have a father at home, or whose fathers have not accepted Christ as their Savior. Look up the word "fatherless" in the concordance, and see what God has to say about children who are without a father. God takes special care of the fatherless, and He commands the church to fill that void. All of us need a strong father image. One of the most common factors contributing to the perversion of sodomy -- homosexuality, a moral abomination to God -- is the lack of a godly father-figure in a child's life. Some boys learn to identify with females, usually out of bitterness, and find themselves attracted to moral perversion later in life.

Be sensitive to those students whose fathers have left the family, or have died, or are unsaved. Those without a father need to have godly male role models, such as a godly grandfather, or a pastor or elder in the church. Encourage the mother to find a special Christian father to "adopt" her children for occasional contact and encouragement. Let the church exercise its

God-given responsibility to take care of the fatherless.

In those situations where the fathers have not accepted Jesus as their Savior, remind the children to honor their fathers. The word "honor" means to "place great value, or importance, on" them. We value them and pray for them. But, we realize that we should not become exactly like them, because they do not walk with God. However, they should be loved, and obeyed as much as possible. When it comes to obedience, the key is: obey the higher authority. For instance, when a teacher tells you something your parents do not agree with, honor your parents and tell the teacher that your parents will not permit you to do that. When a parent tells you to do something that God says not to do, you should tell your parent that you have given your life to Jesus Christ, and that He does not approve of such action or conduct. Always obey the higher authority.



Methods

In Malachi 4, the Old Testament ends with a prophecy concerning Elijah, the prophet, who would come and

"turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

God considers the relationship between fathers and their children to be very important.

Talk about the image of fathers portrayed by the world today. Notice the way fathers are always seen as bumbling idiots in cartoons in the newspaper. How are fathers portrayed by television programs? When was the last time "father knew best?" Note that, increasingly, children are portrayed as more intelligent than their parents. Also, comment about the numerous cartoons which do not show parents at all. Is the world seeking to "turn the hearts of children away from their fathers?" Absolutely. There is no doubt about it.

Discussion:

In what way is a good natural father like our Heavenly Father?

He protects, guides, and provides.

In what ways are natural fathers unlike God, our Heavenly Father?

They are human, imperfect, and limited in their ability and understanding. But their families love them and need them.

The Calling Of Gideon

Volume 2

Lesson 51



Bible References

Judges 6

Judges 7

Psalms 33

Psalms 37:3

Psalms 78:54-66

Romans 3:4



Scripture Reading

Judges 6:1,11-16,36-38

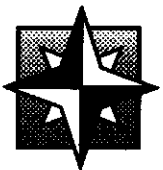
1 *"And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years."*

11 *"And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which (was) in Ophrah, that (pertained) unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide (it) from the Midianites.*

12 *"And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD (is) with thee, thou mighty man of valour.*

13 *"And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where (be) all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.*

14 *"And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?"*



Theme

God calls the people He chooses for special jobs, and we should be quick to listen and trust Him.

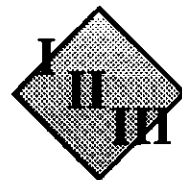
15 "And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family {is} poor in Manasseh, and I {am} the least in my father's house.

16 "And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.

36 "And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said,

37 "Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; {and} if the dew be on the fleece only, and {it be} dry upon all the earth {beside}, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said.

38 "And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water."



Outline

I. God's People Were Suffering.

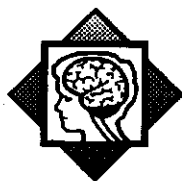
- A. Israel had been overcome by an enemy nation, the Midianites.
 1. People were living in caves, or in stockades.
 2. Their crops had been destroyed, and they were like slaves.
 3. They had been oppressed for seven years.
- B. God allowed the Midianites to conquer and oppress the people of Israel, because they had turned from God to serve Baal and indulge themselves in wickedness.

II. God Called Gideon to Be His Instrument to Lead the People To Freedom.

- A. God sent an angel to give Gideon the message.
- B. God told Gideon to tear down the altar of Baal and offer an ox as a sacrifice to the Lord.
- C. Gideon obeyed, but he did it at night.

III. Gideon's Fleece.

- A. Although he had heard directly from an angel of the Lord, Gideon still doubted that this was really God's will.



Memory Verse

Psalms 37:3

"Trust in the Lord, and do good; So shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."

1. Gideon set out a fleece, asking God to give him a sign: let the ground be dry and let the fleece be wet.
 - a. A fleece is the skin of a sheep with the wool intact.
 - b. Fleeces were used as coats, or rugs.
2. Gideon still doubted. The next night, he asked God to let the ground be wet and to let the fleece be dry.
3. Even though God confirmed both signs, Gideon still was not convinced.

B. Gideon's act of putting out the fleece was not an act of faith, but an act of unbelief.

1. Many people put out "fleeces," thinking that they are doing something spiritual.
2. "God, if you will give me a certain sign, then I will believe you."

IV. God Finally Convinces Gideon.

A. After Gideon gathered his troops, God told him, "If you are still afraid, then go down to the Midianite camp."

B. Gideon went down to the huge enemy camp, and overheard two soldiers in a tent.

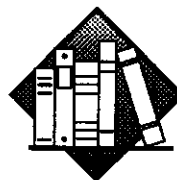
1. One said that he dreamed that a barley loaf came and knocked down a tent.
2. The other soldier said that the barley loaf was the sword of Gideon, son of Joash; that God had delivered all of them into his hands; and that Gideon was going to defeat them.

- C. It took a prophetic dream given to an enemy to convince Gideon to finally trust God's Word.



Spiritual Truths

- God can speak to us in any way He chooses.
- God is able to confirm His Word.
- When we are seeking to do His will, God is patient with us.
- "Fleecing God" is not necessarily an evidence of faith, or of spiritual maturity.
- Only God would have called Gideon a "mighty man of valor" while he was hiding behind the winepress.
- We are always wise to trust God, whatever He says.
- The greatest military strategy is still simple obedience to God.



Lesson Material

This is one of the times during the period of the Judges that God raised up a deliverer, or judge, to bring freedom to His people, Israel. The period of time from the days of Moses and Joshua to the time God permitted Israel to have its first king was

called the time of the Judges. With no strong leadership, the people tried to do what each thought was right. Seven times, the people became wicked and drifted into idolatry. Each time, God allowed their enemies to overcome them. Sin always brings destruction and bondage. When the people cried out to God and repented, God called an anointed person to be His special leader to free the Israelites from their captivity. When they were set free from bondage, they prospered and became content; but, they drifted from God again. This cycle was repeated often in Israel's history.

The Israelites were impoverished, because the Midianites destroyed their crops and left no sustenance for them or their livestock and animals. Gideon, a son of Joash, was threshing some wheat behind his winepress to hide it from the Midianites, when an angel of God appeared and sat under a nearby oak tree. The angel of God said, "*Hail, Gideon, thou mighty man of valour.*" We are given no indication of Gideon's character. Only God could see the potential in this young man's life. In this story, it appears that Gideon is quite timid. Although he refers to himself as a "poor son of a poor man," he took ten of his servants with him to tear down Baal's altar. This tells us that, while he was not financially poor, he had a humble attitude. He was "poor in spirit."

Gideon obeyed the Lord's direction, tearing down the altar to Baal and erecting in its place an altar to the true God. Although he did this at night, in secret, someone knew he had done it. When the people came and saw what he had done, they threatened to kill him. Gideon's father, Joash, defended him, saying, "If Baal is really a god, let him defend himself." From then on, Gideon was

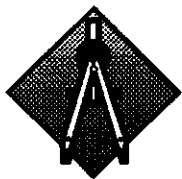
called "Jerubaal," which means, "let Baal contend."

After Gideon had sent out messengers to gather an army, he was still troubled. He was not sure he was hearing clearly from God. He asked God meekly if He would show him a sign, if he was indeed to deliver Israel. He set out a fleece (the full skin and wool coat of a sheep) and asked God to let the night dew fall on the fleece, but not on the ground around it. The next morning, the fleece was saturated with water, and the ground was dry. Did the "fleecing" work? No. Gideon was still not convinced. The next night, He asked God to reverse the sign; and God patiently made the ground wet with dew, and left the fleece dry.

Many Christians have grown up with this story, thinking that it is a good practice to test, or "fleece" the Lord. Please notice Gideon's reason for this. He used the fleece as a test, because he did not fully trust God's word. It was not faith, but rather a lack of faith, that motivated him. He still was not convinced. Later, God gave him a sign that he just had to believe. God told him to take his servant with him and go to the enemy camp, and listen. There, hiding behind the back of a tent on the fringe of the great army encampment, he overheard two soldiers talking. One was saying, "Wow, I just had a strange dream. A loaf of barley bread came down and smashed a tent." Remember that barley was a poor man's grain. It was easy to grow, but it was not as tasty as wheat or oats. The other heathen soldier replied, "That is none other than the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash. God has delivered us into his hands, and he is going to defeat us." The same God who spoke through Balaam's donkey now spoke through a heathen soldier, just to confirm His word to a "doubting Thomas"

servant, named Gideon. This was a miracle of prophecy. Now Gideon was convinced. He went home smiling and worshipping God. Now his faith was strong, and he did not doubt again.

The difference was that Gideon thought up the fleece idea. He was testing God. The trip to the camp of the enemy was God's idea. God gave him a far more powerful sign than he could ever dream up. God can easily and quickly confirm His Word to an honest heart.



Methods

Find a sheepskin rug or carseat cover and bring it to class to show the students

what a fleece is. Also, bring a loaf of bread that contains barley grain. Use them as object lessons, to show that God can and will convincingly confirm His Word.

Select three students to portray the story in a skit. You might even have them study the story during the week, to become very familiar with it. One would be Gideon, who would pray and ask God to show him a sign by making the fleece wet and then dry. Then he could walk across the room where the other two students are warming their hands by a "fire," acting as Midianite soldiers. One would talk about his wild dream, while the other would be the "prophet." Then have "Gideon" walk away, rejoicing and praising God with joy. Have the class join in praising the Lord for His faithfulness. You might have them sing, *"Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered:..."* (Psalms 68:1) A second verse to the song is *"Let God be true, and every man a liar."* (Romans 3:4)

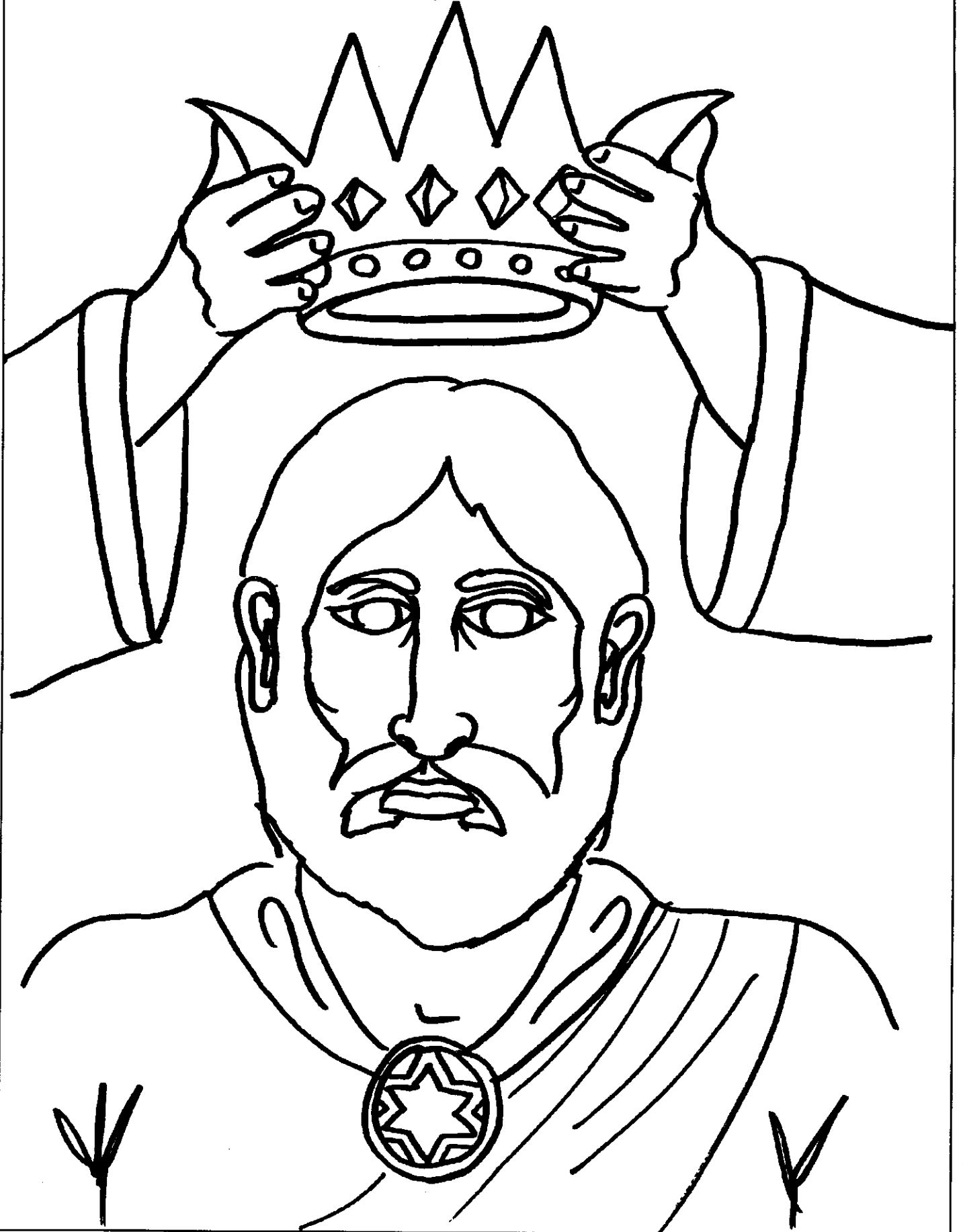
Section 9

Activity Pages

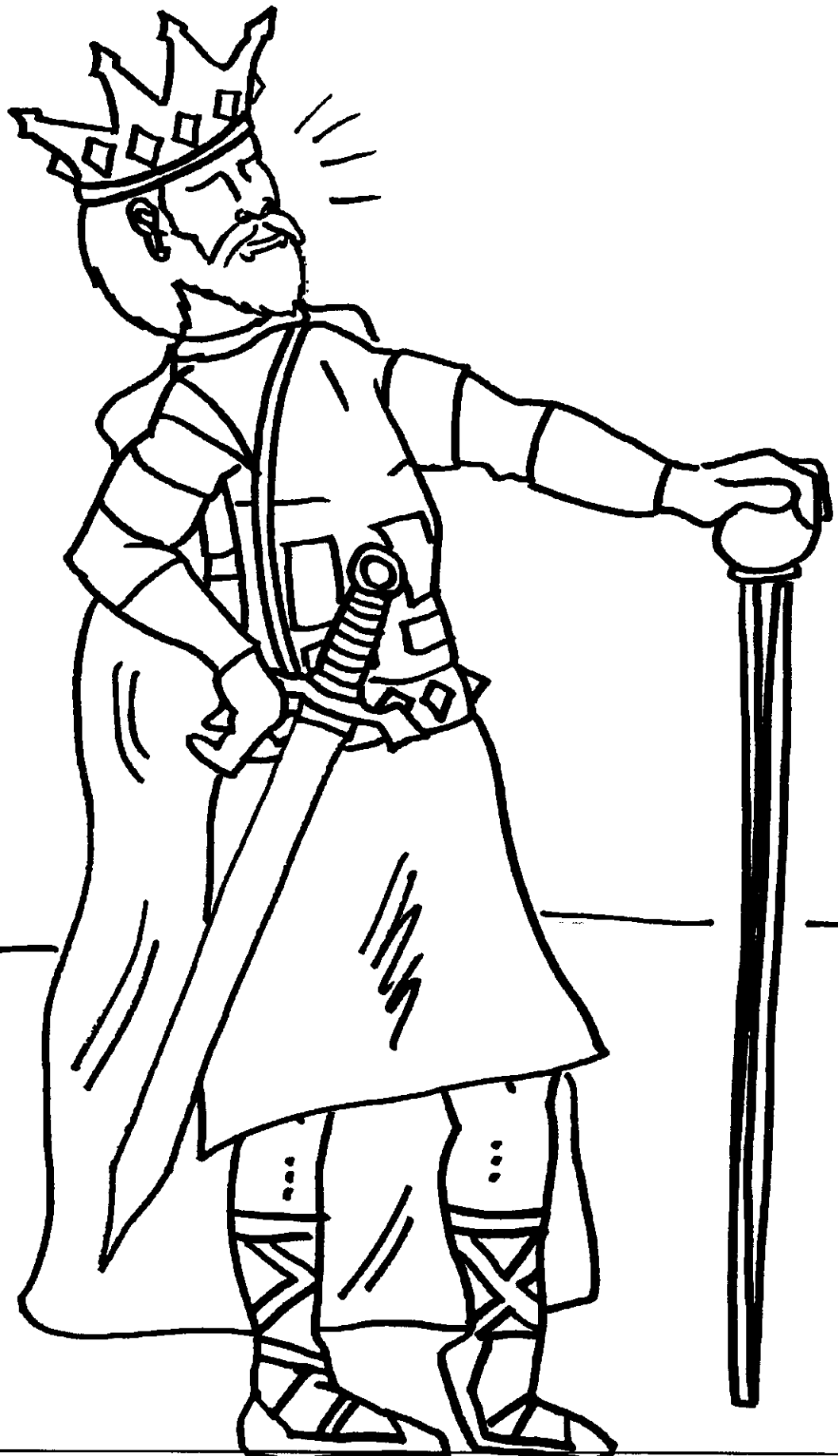
He Shall Be a Prophet



A King is Chosen



I Did It My Way



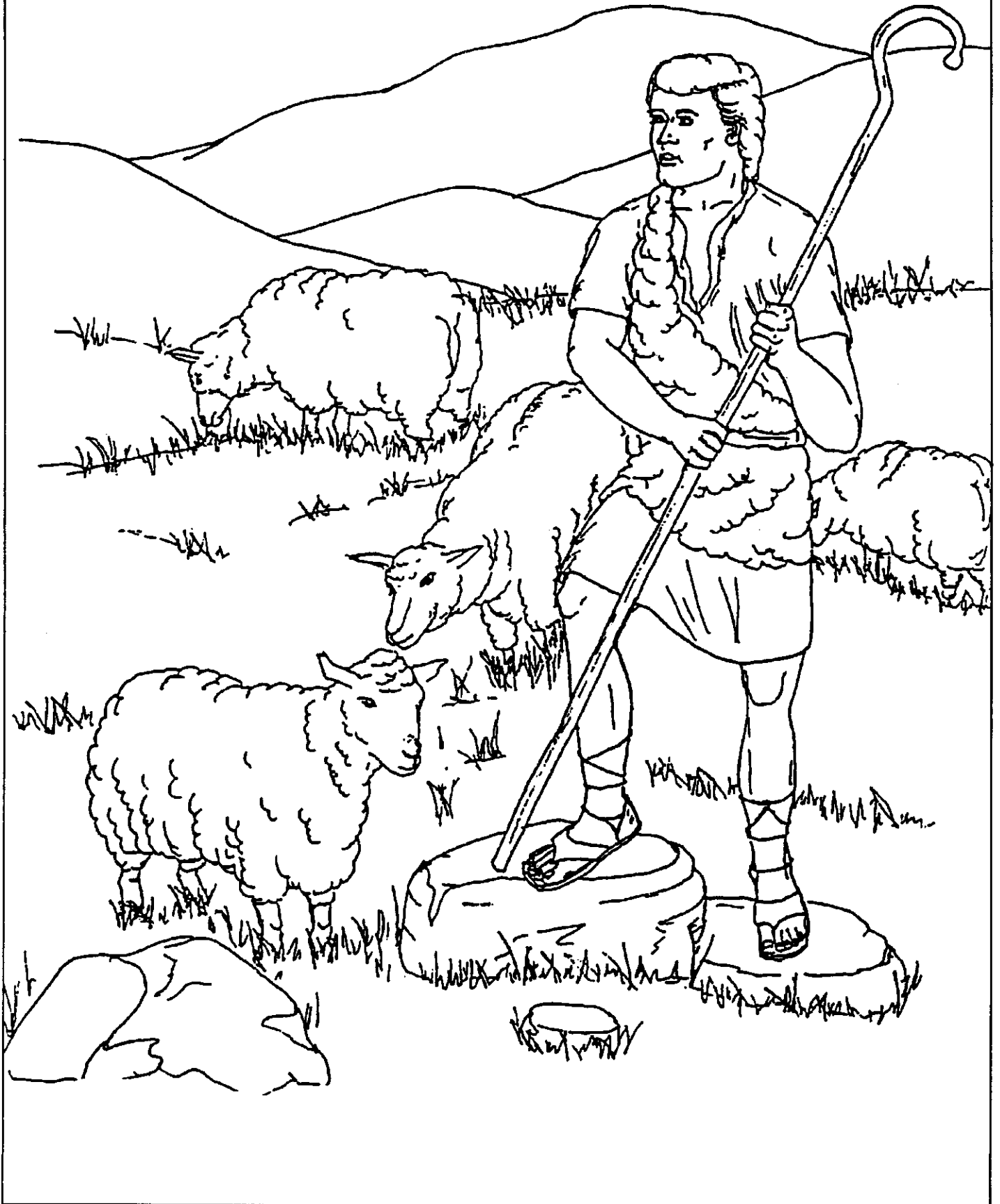
Best Friends



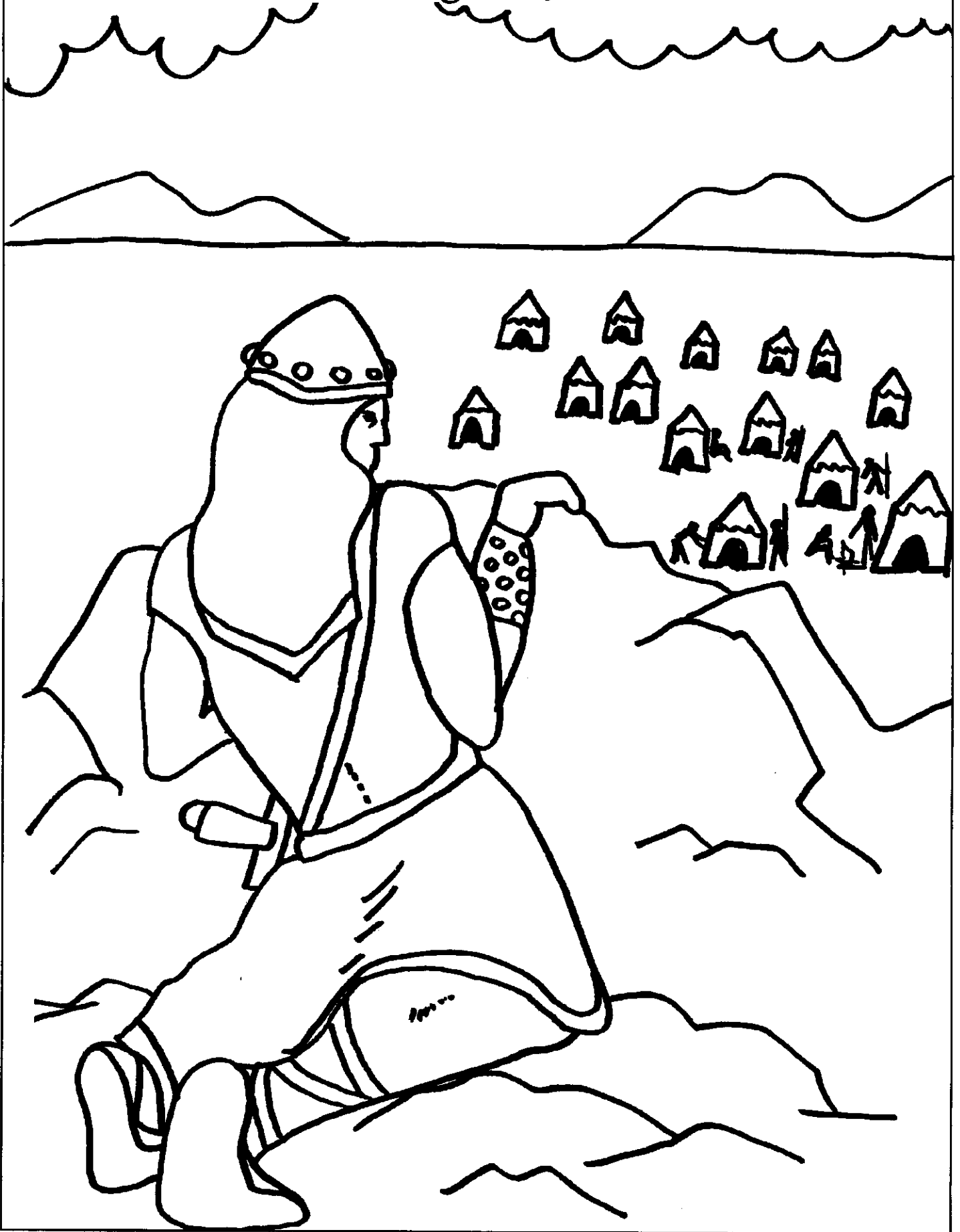
He Is Too Small



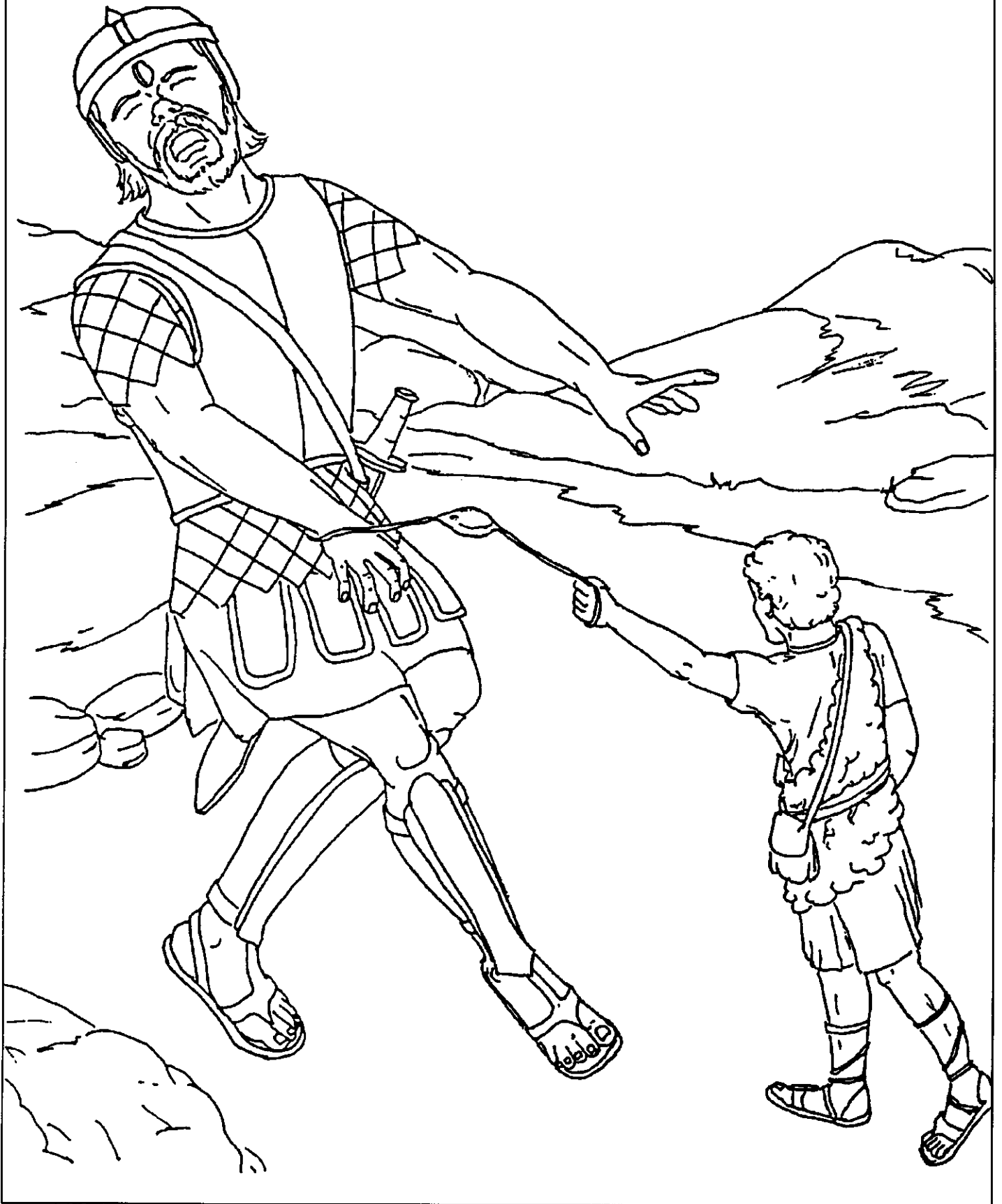
David's Training for Reigning



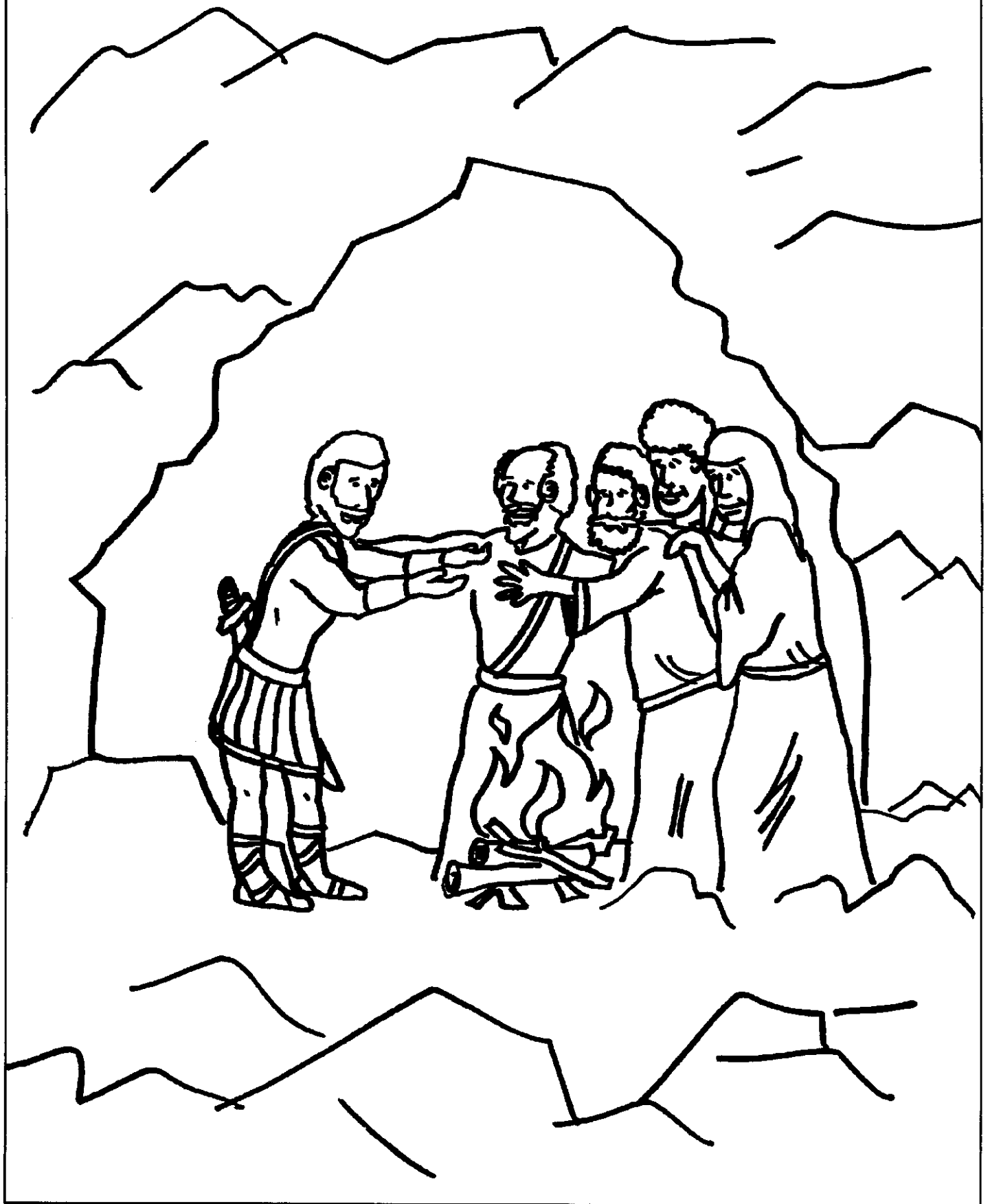
The Courage of Jonathan



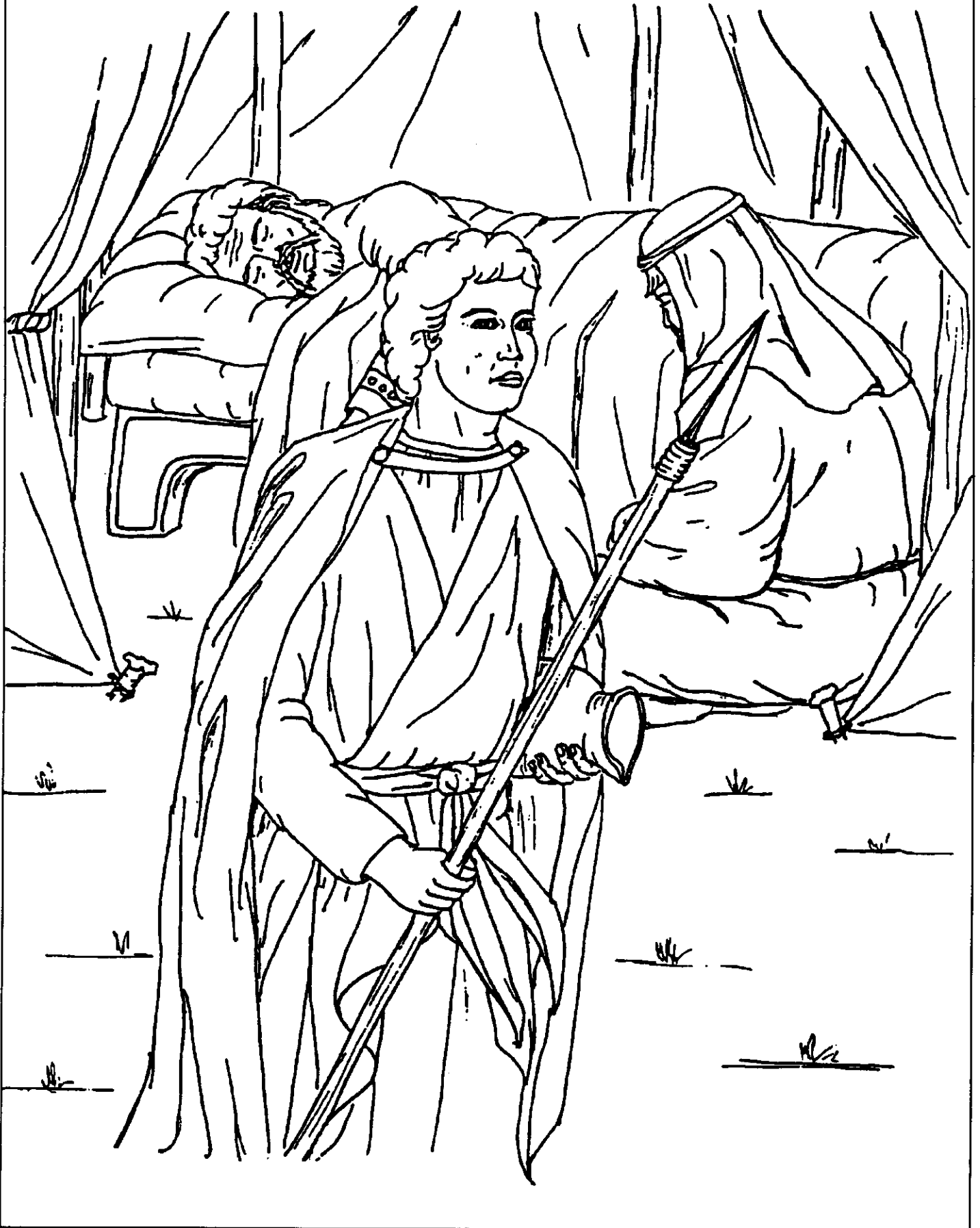
Goliath of Gath



Dave in the Cave



Love Your Enemies



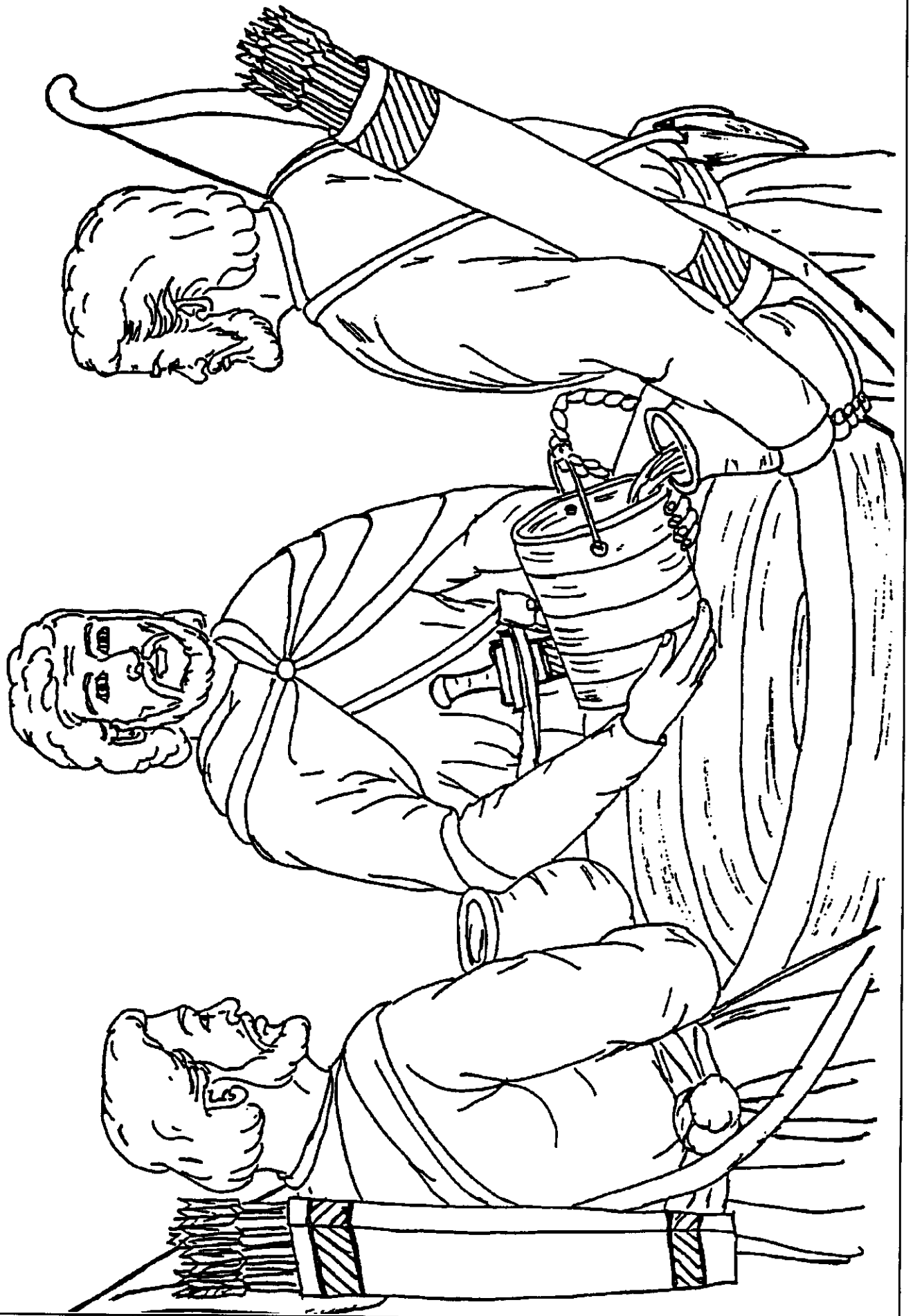
I Rejoice at Thy Word



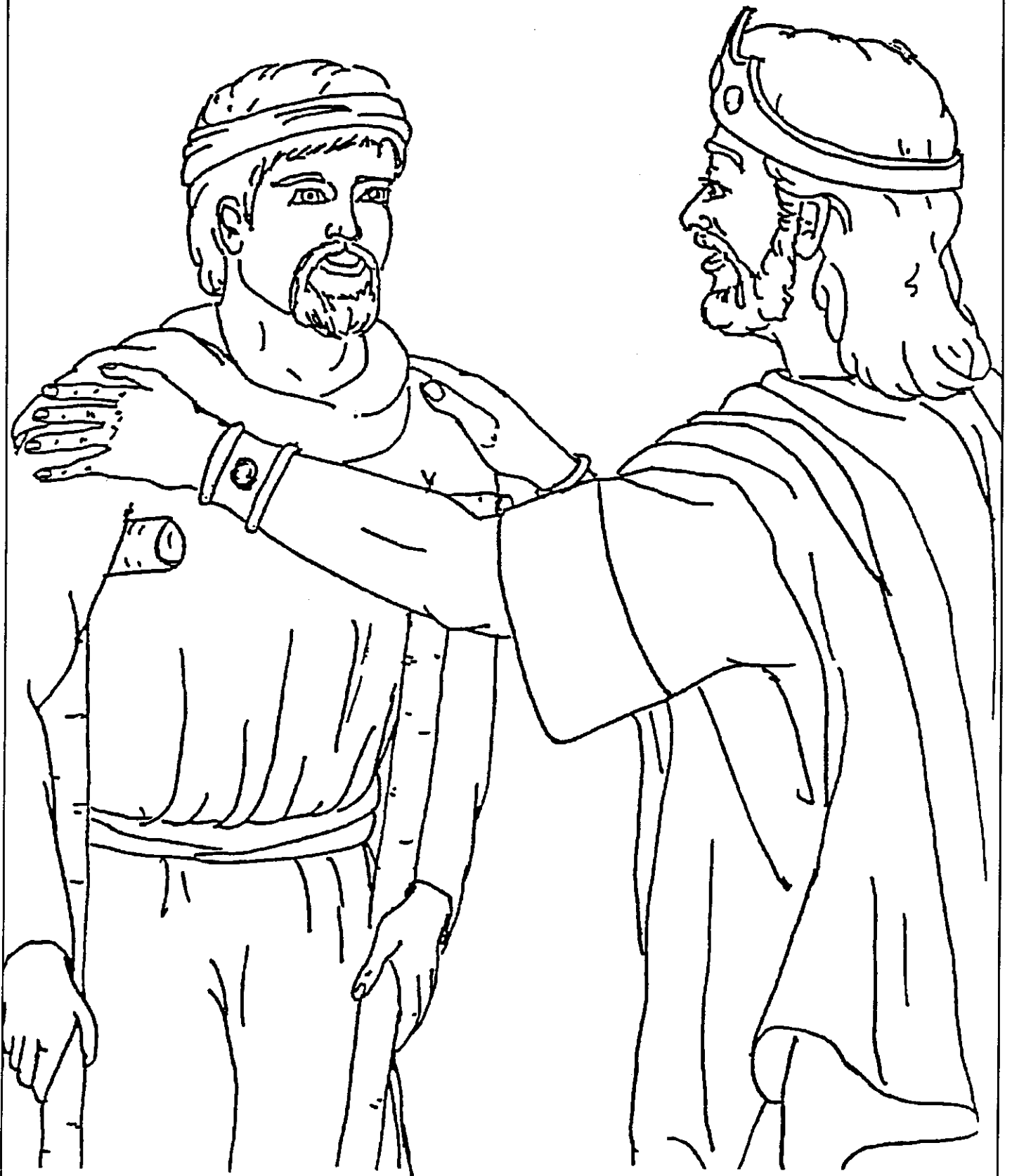
Do Not Give Up



David's Mighty Men



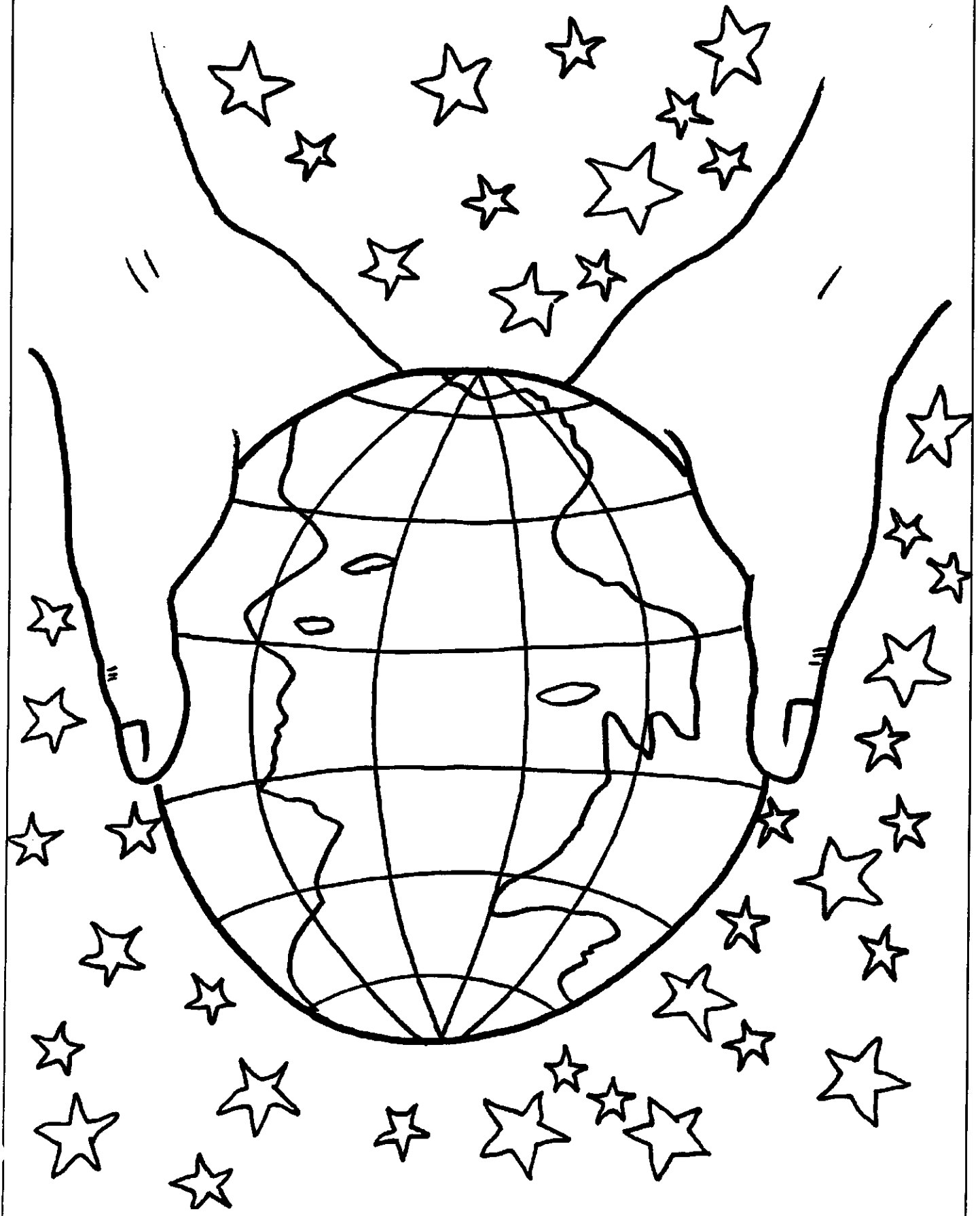
Mephibosheth



Prince Absalom



A Christian World View



Trick or Treat



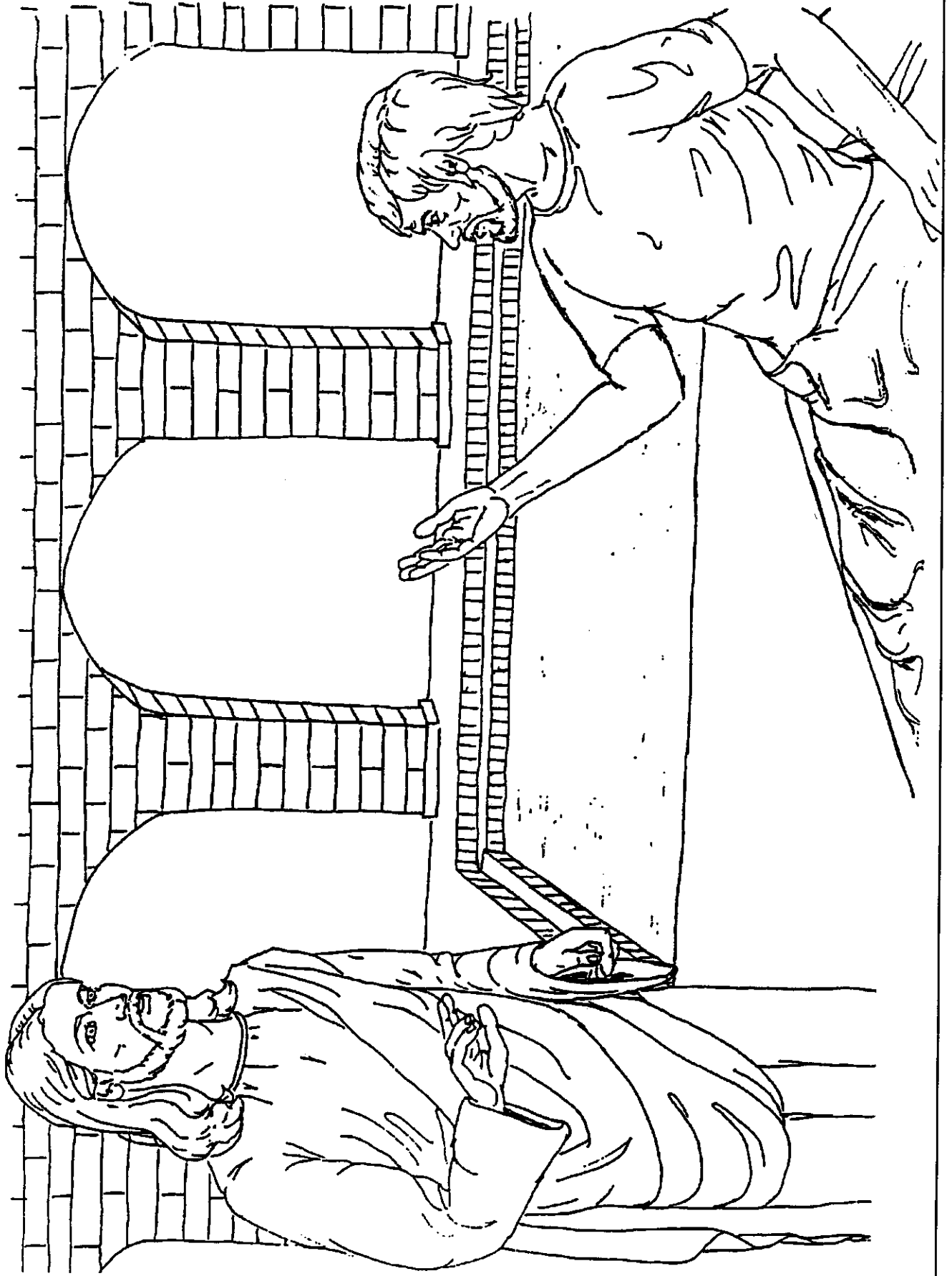
A Wedding at Cana



The Woman at the Well



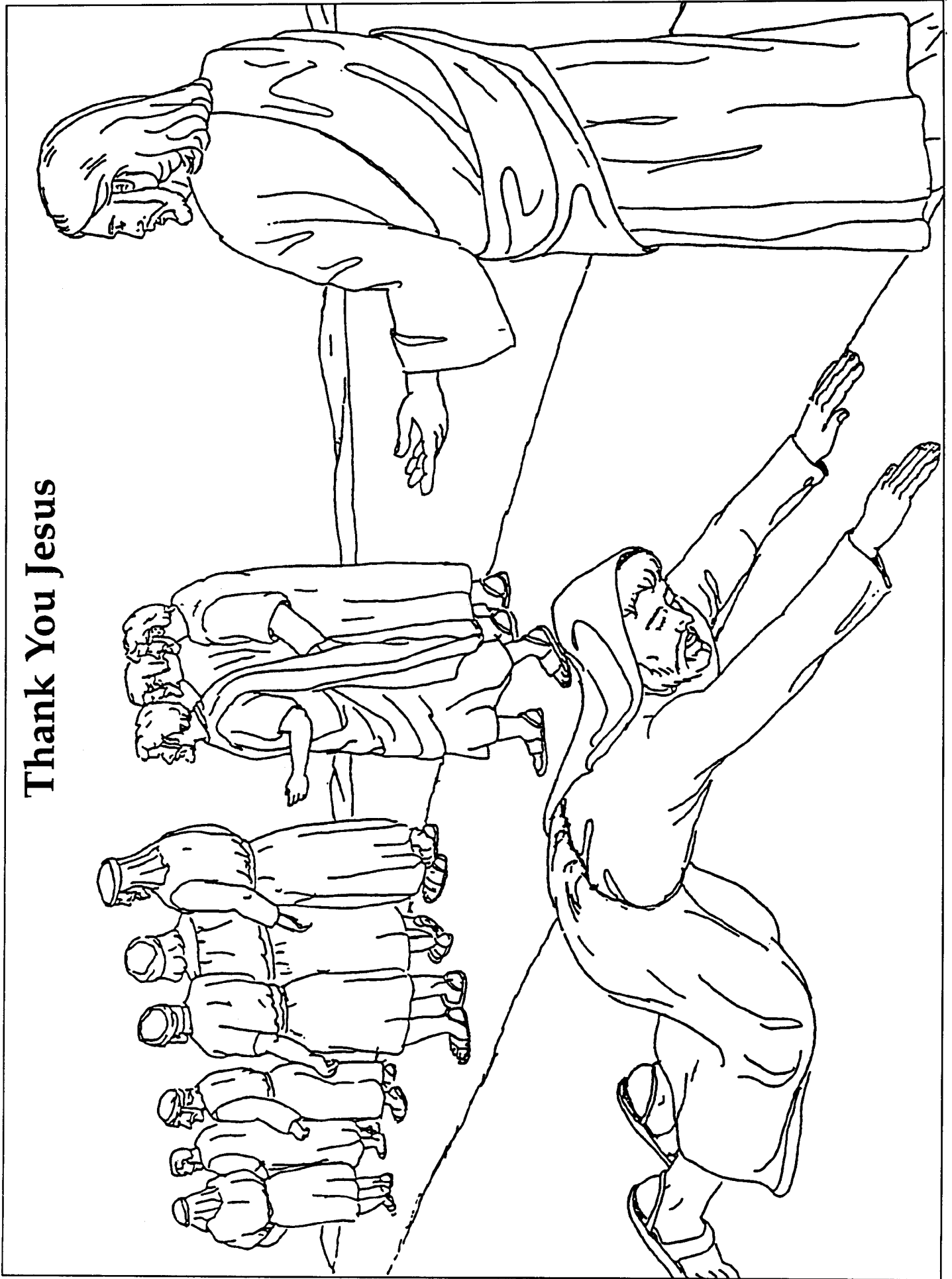
Troubled Waters



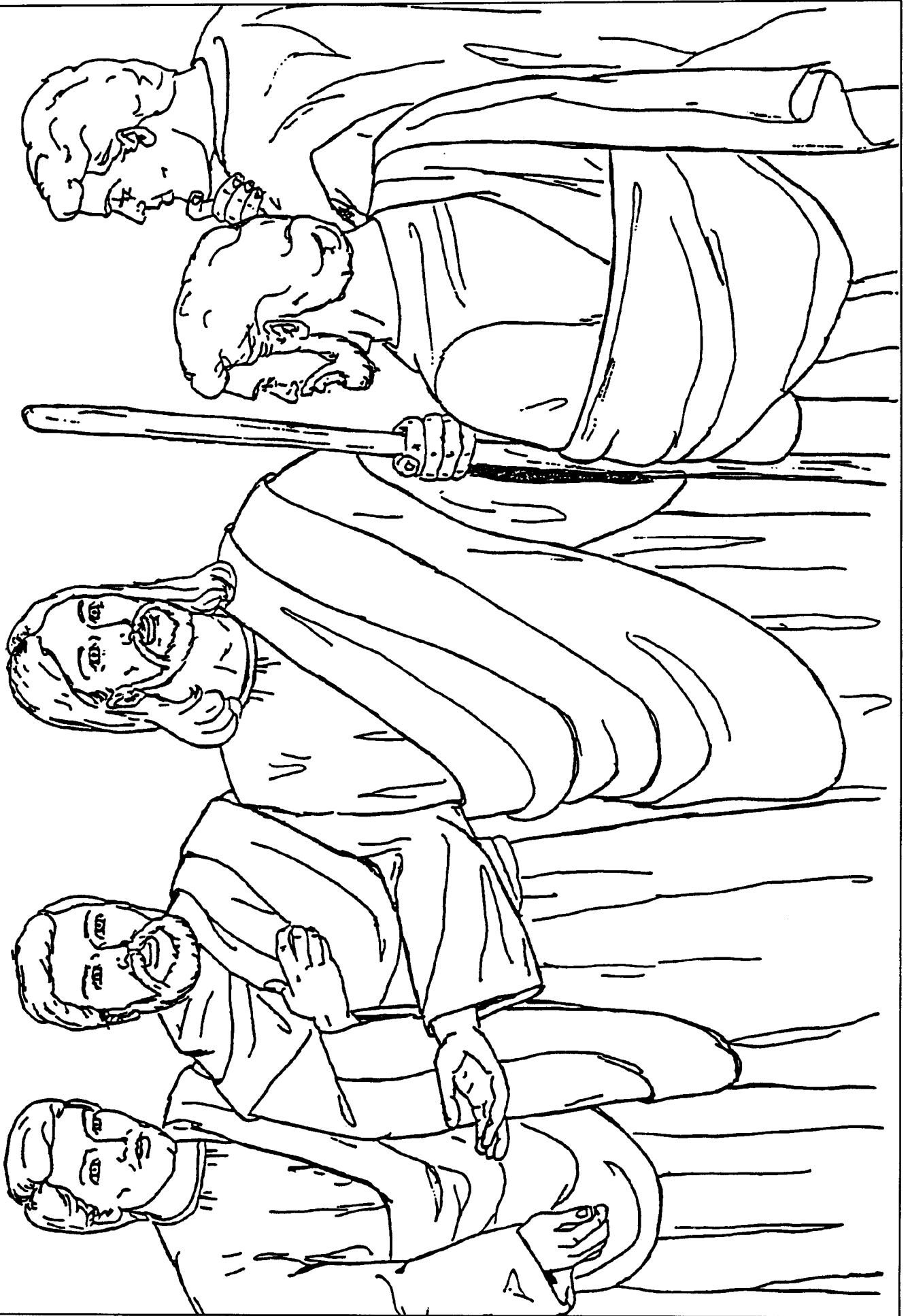
Walking on the Sea



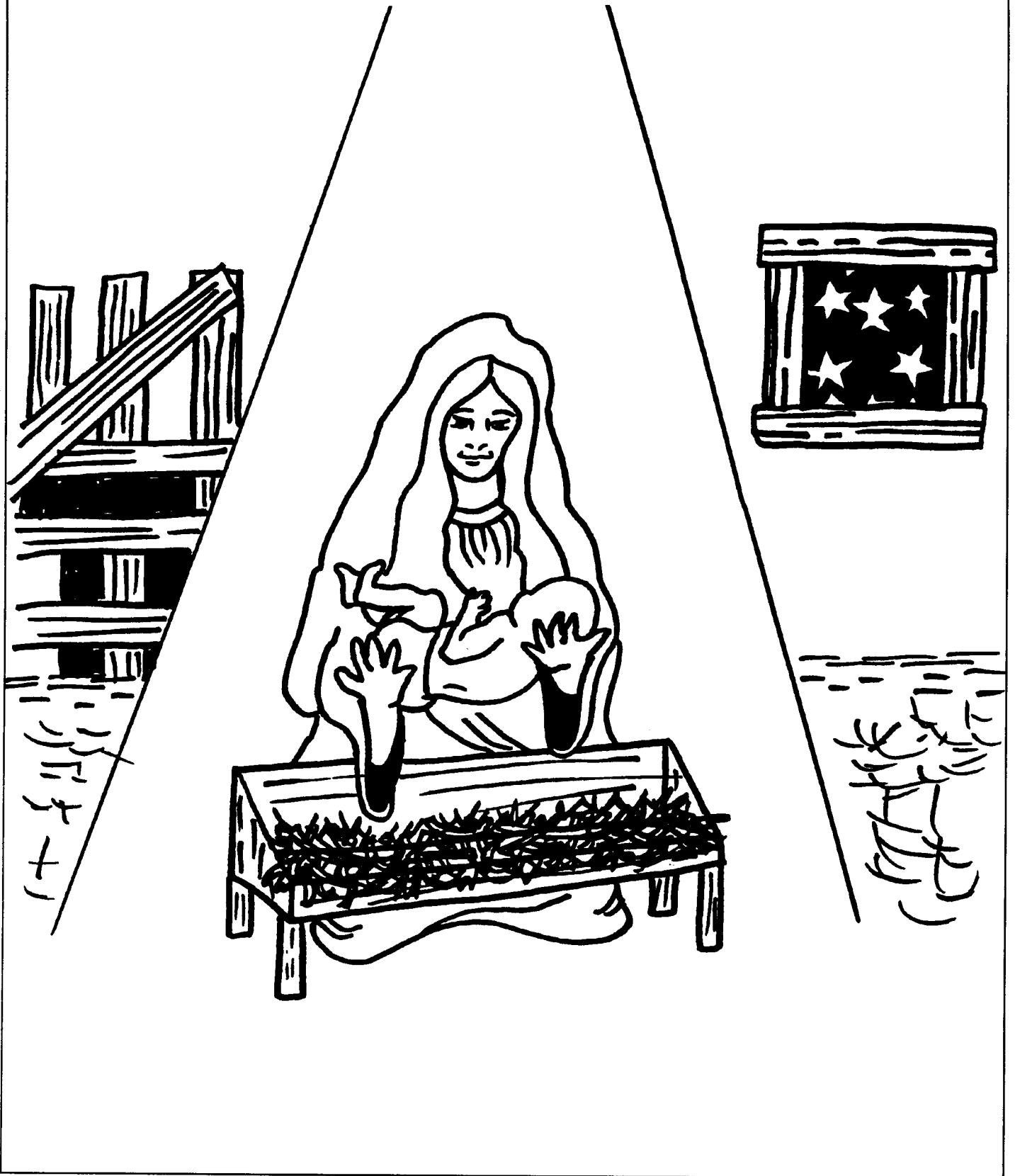
Thank You Jesus



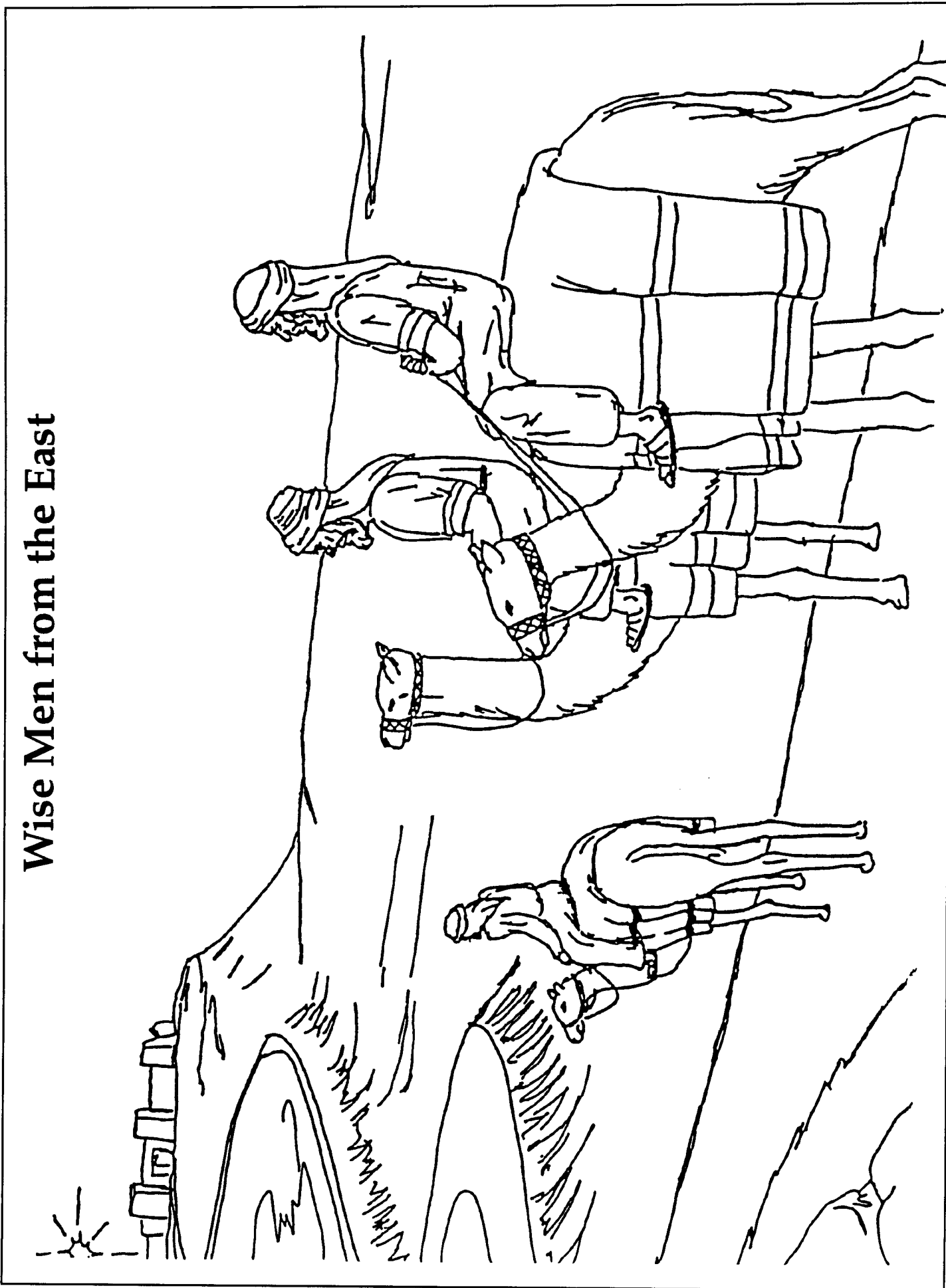
What is a Missionary?



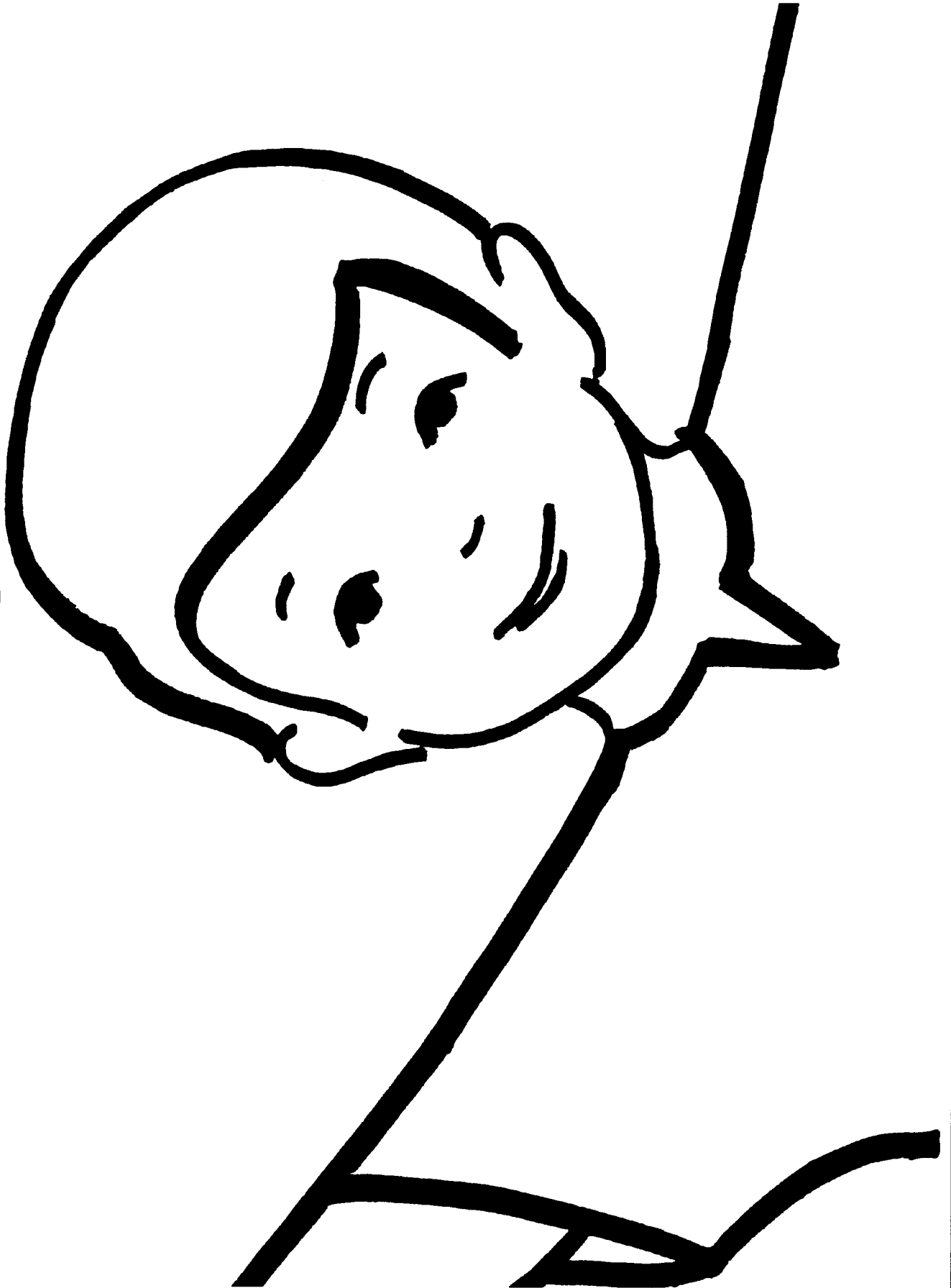
Christmas Is for Christians



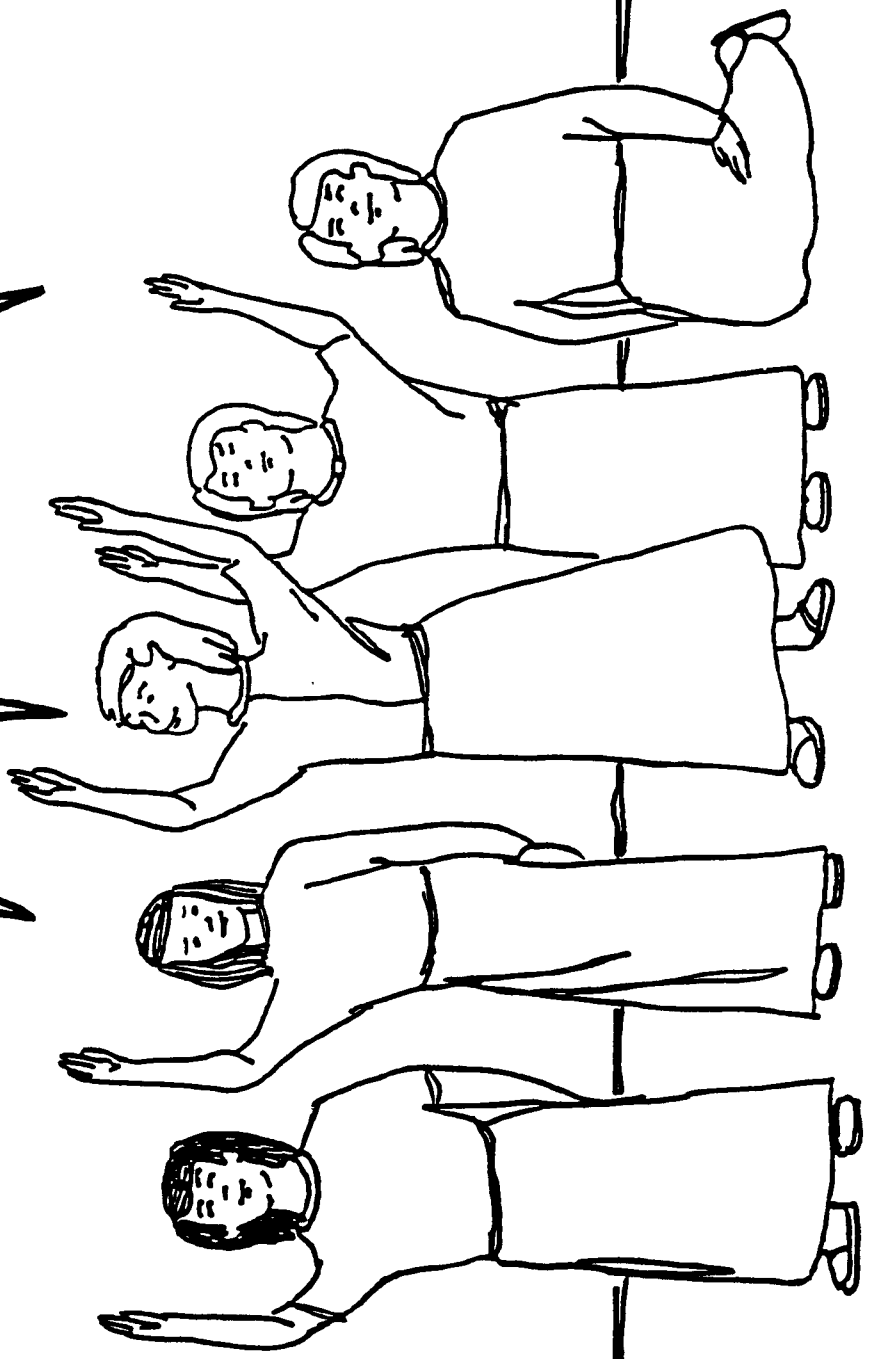
Wise Men from the East



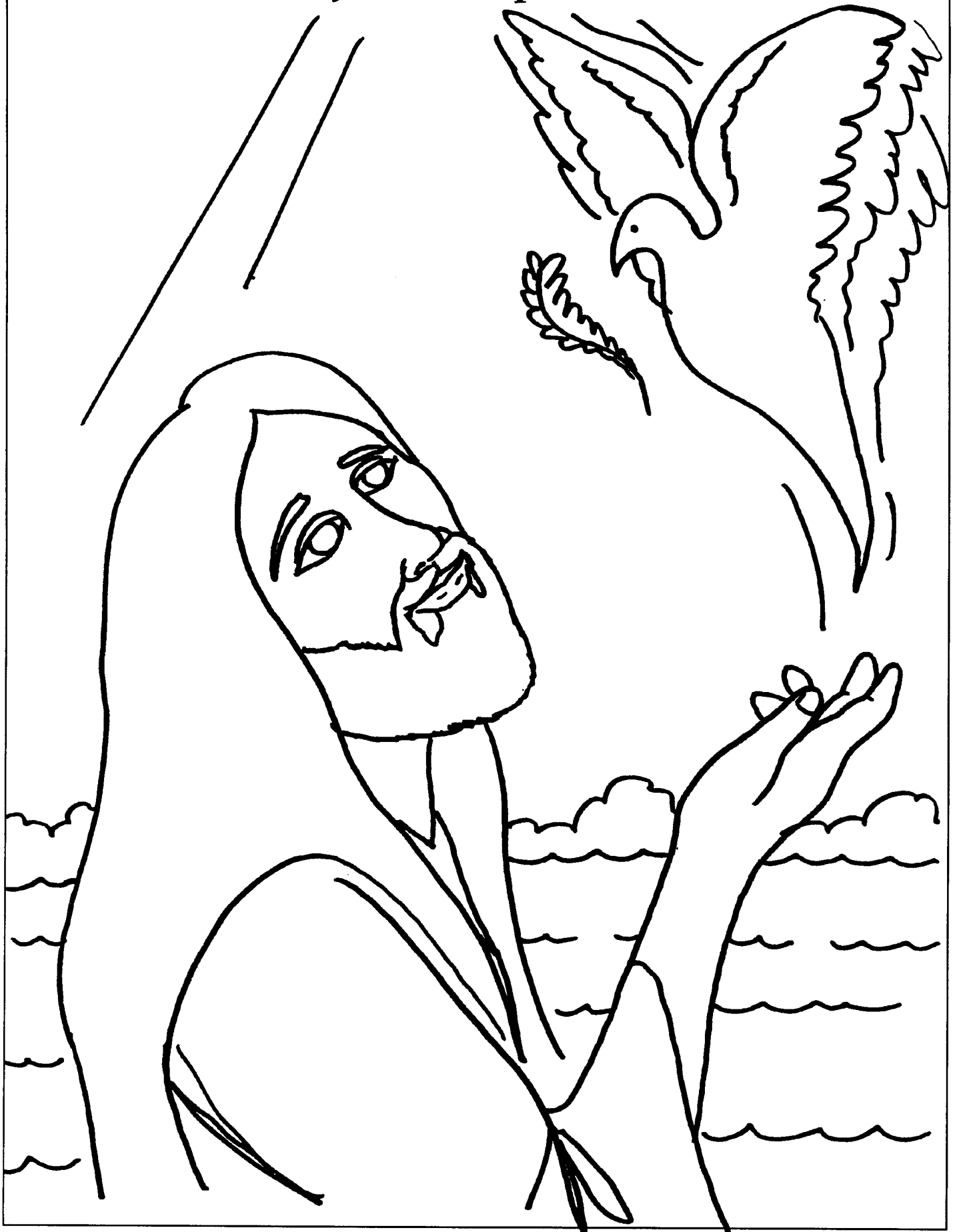
You Are Special



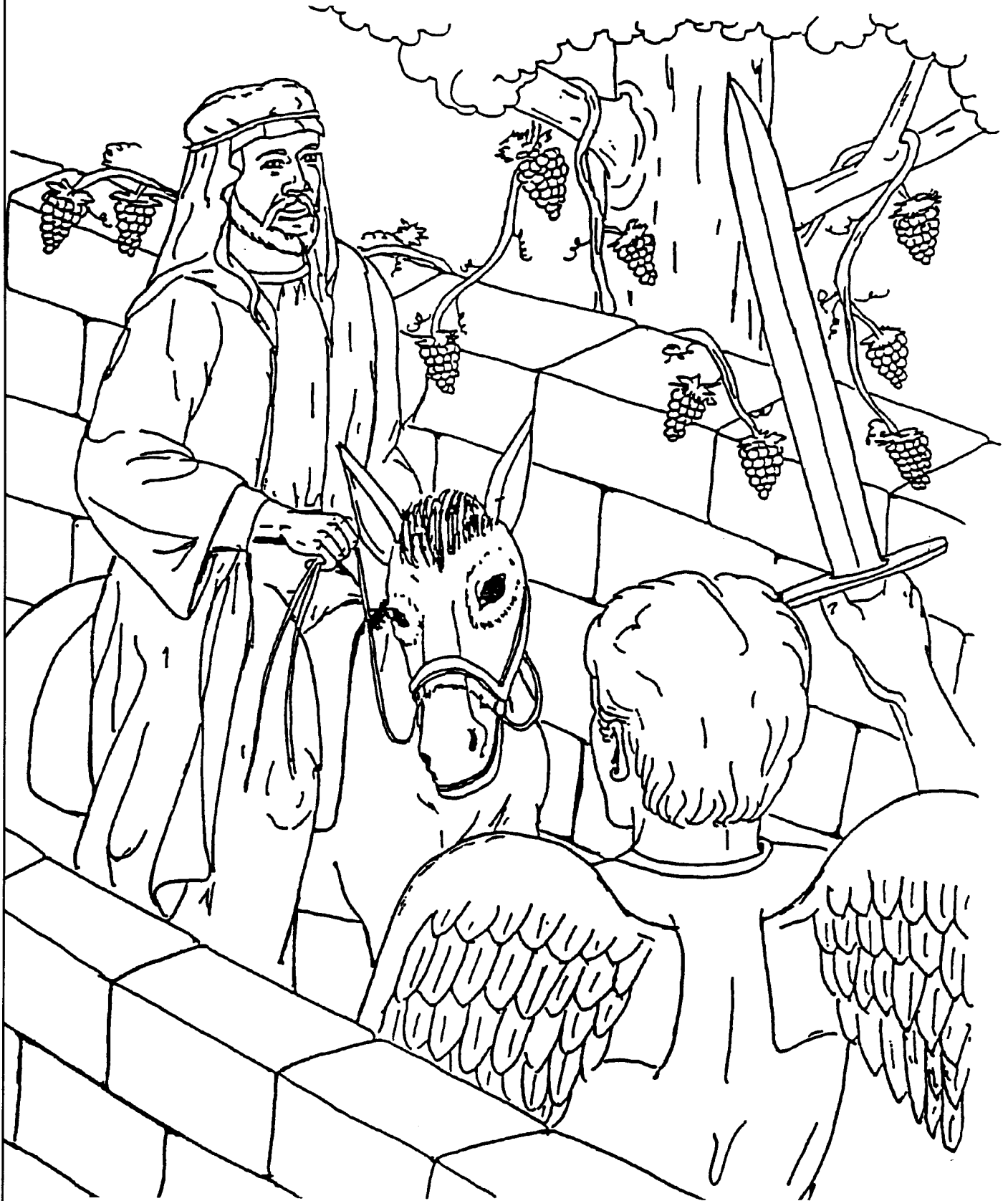
Created to Praise Him



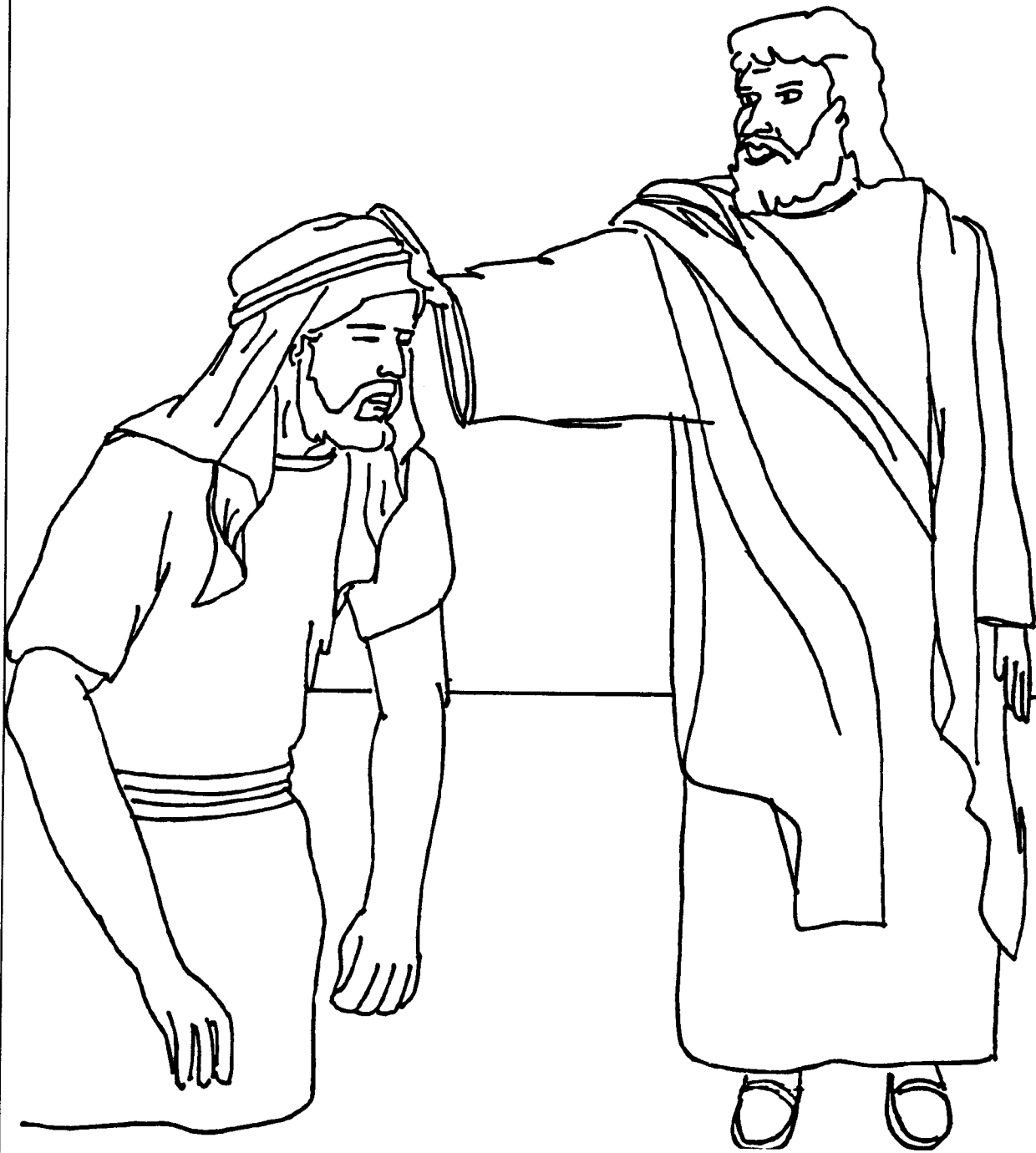
John's Baptism



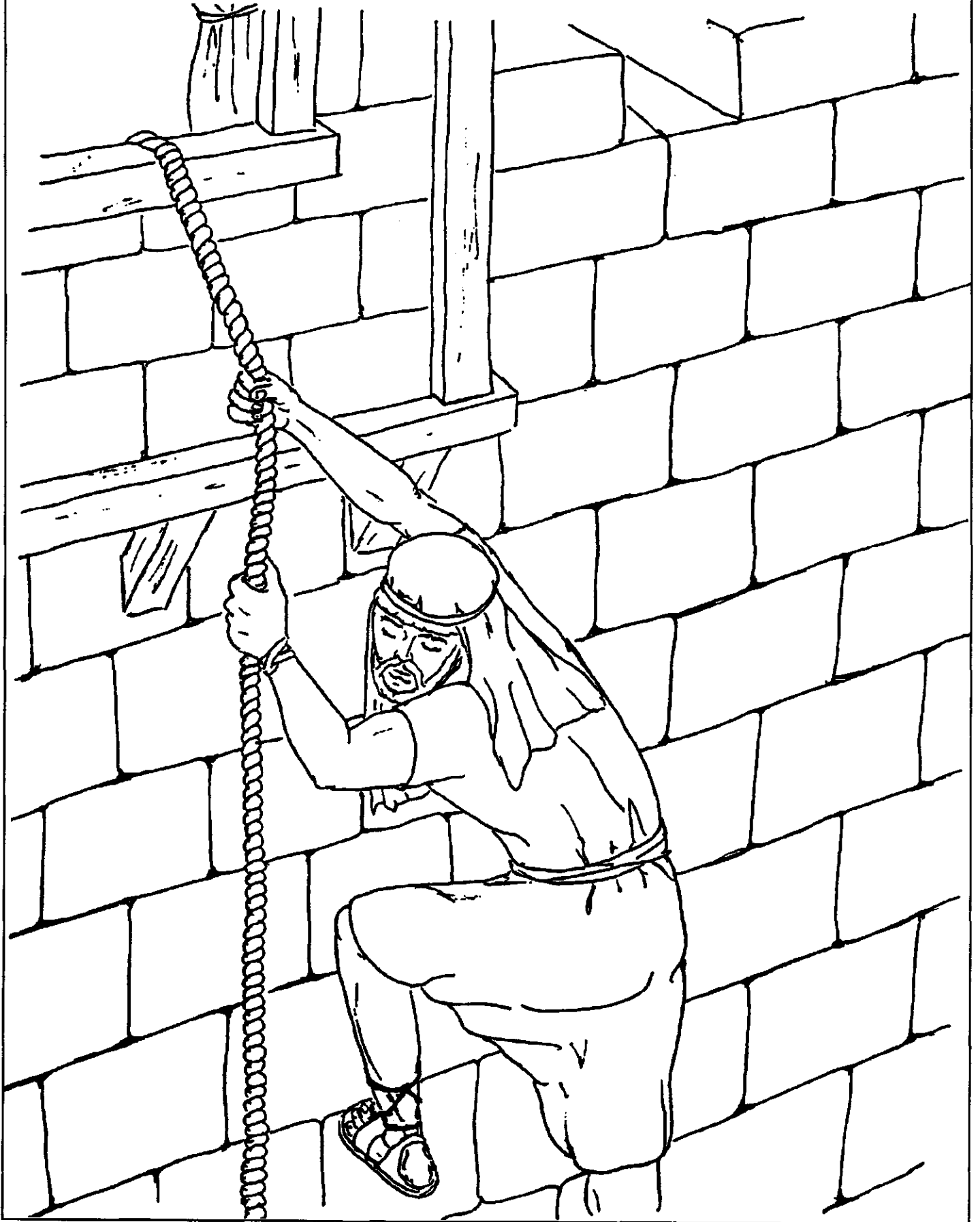
Balaam: The Profit-minded Prophet



Joshua's Call to Leadership



The Wisdom of Rahab

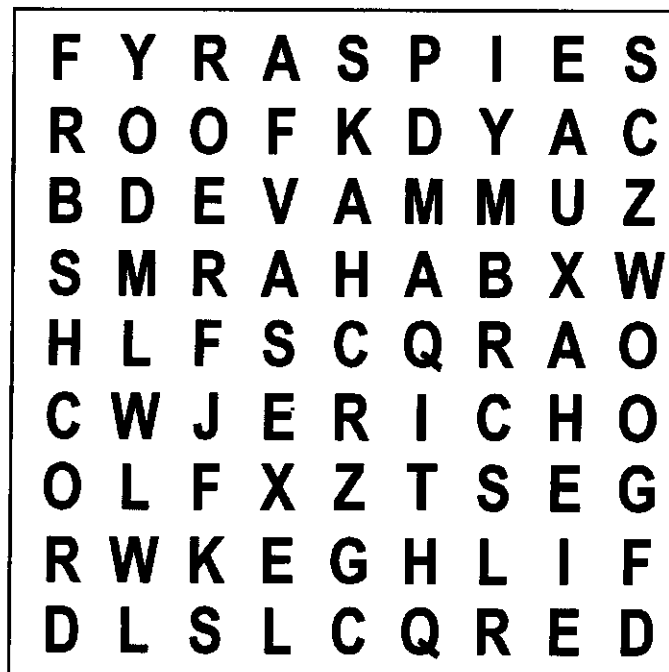




Word Search

The Salvation of Rahab

Find the hidden words in the puzzle below.
Circle the words when you find them.



RAHAB
RED
CORD

SPIES
JERICHO
ROOF



Word Search

The Salvation of Rahab

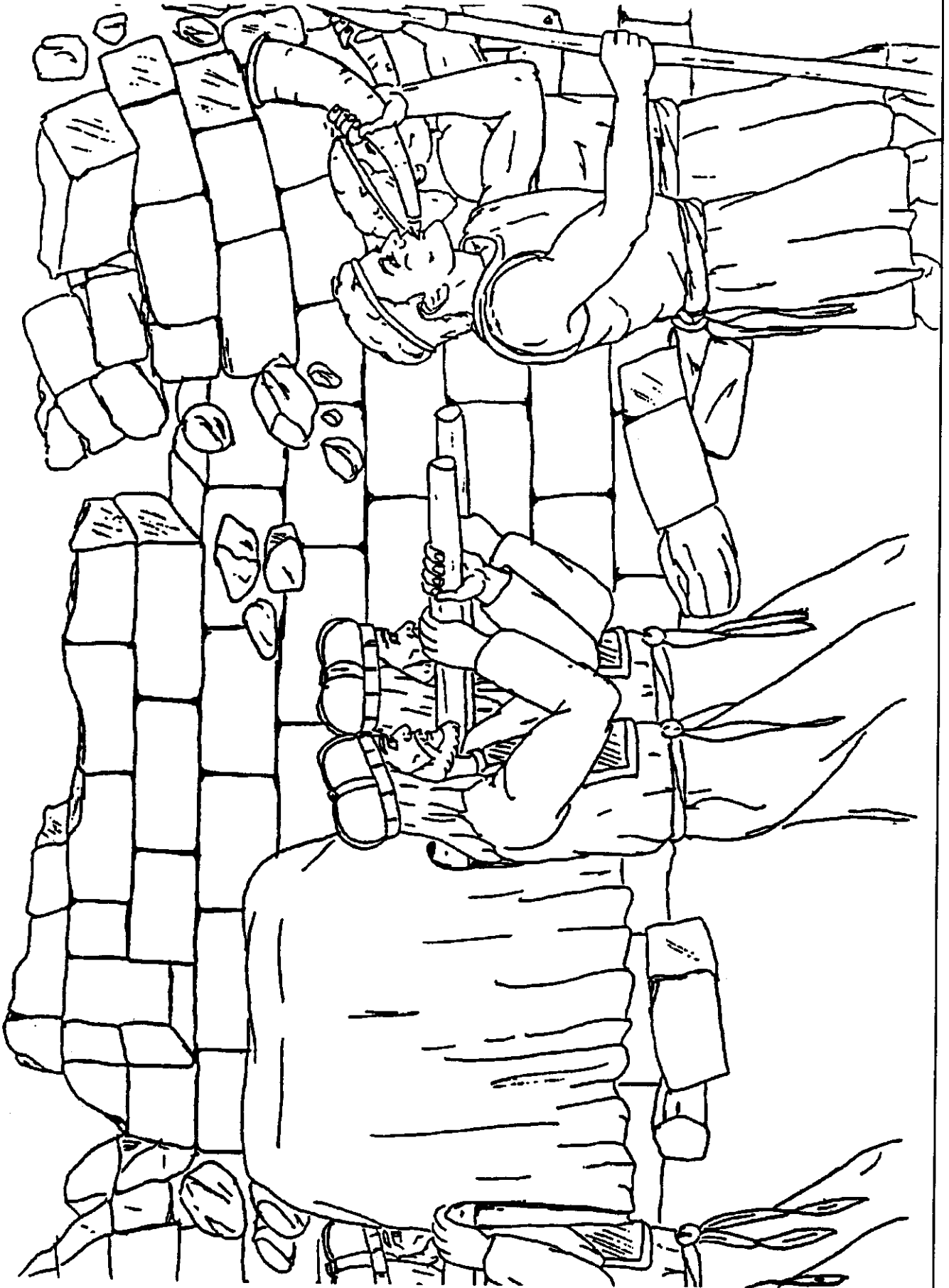
Find the hidden words in the puzzle below.
Circle the words when you find them.

F	Y	R	A	S	P	I	E	S
R	O	O	F	K	D	Y	A	C
B	D	E	V	A	M	M	U	Z
S	M	R	A	H	A	B	X	W
H	L	F	S	C	Q	R	A	O
C	W	J	E	R	I	C	H	O
O	L	F	X	Z	T	S	E	G
R	W	K	E	G	H	L	I	F
D	L	S	L	C	Q	R	E	D

RAHAB
RED
CORD

SPIES
JERICHO
ROOF

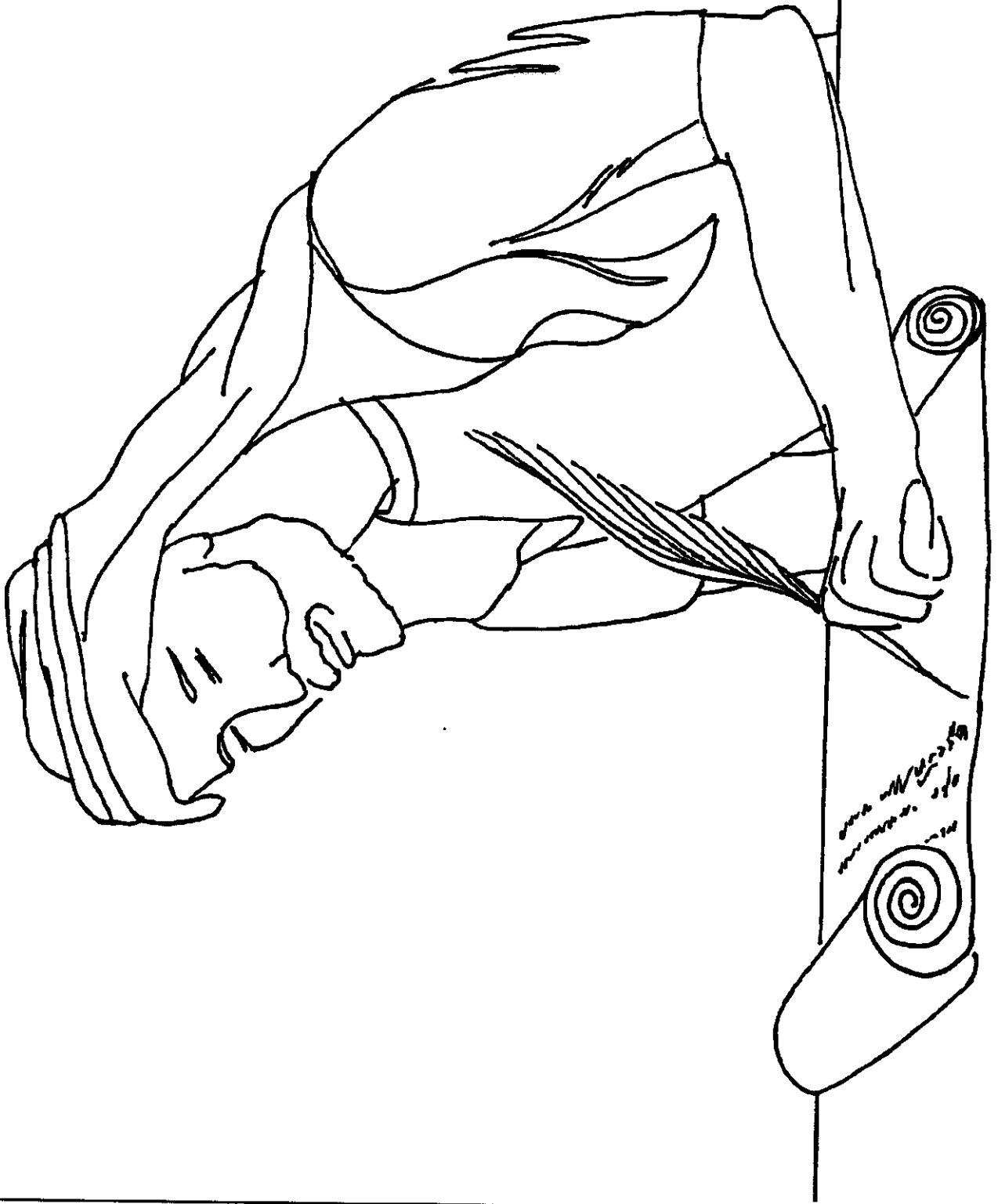
And the Walls Came Tumbling Down



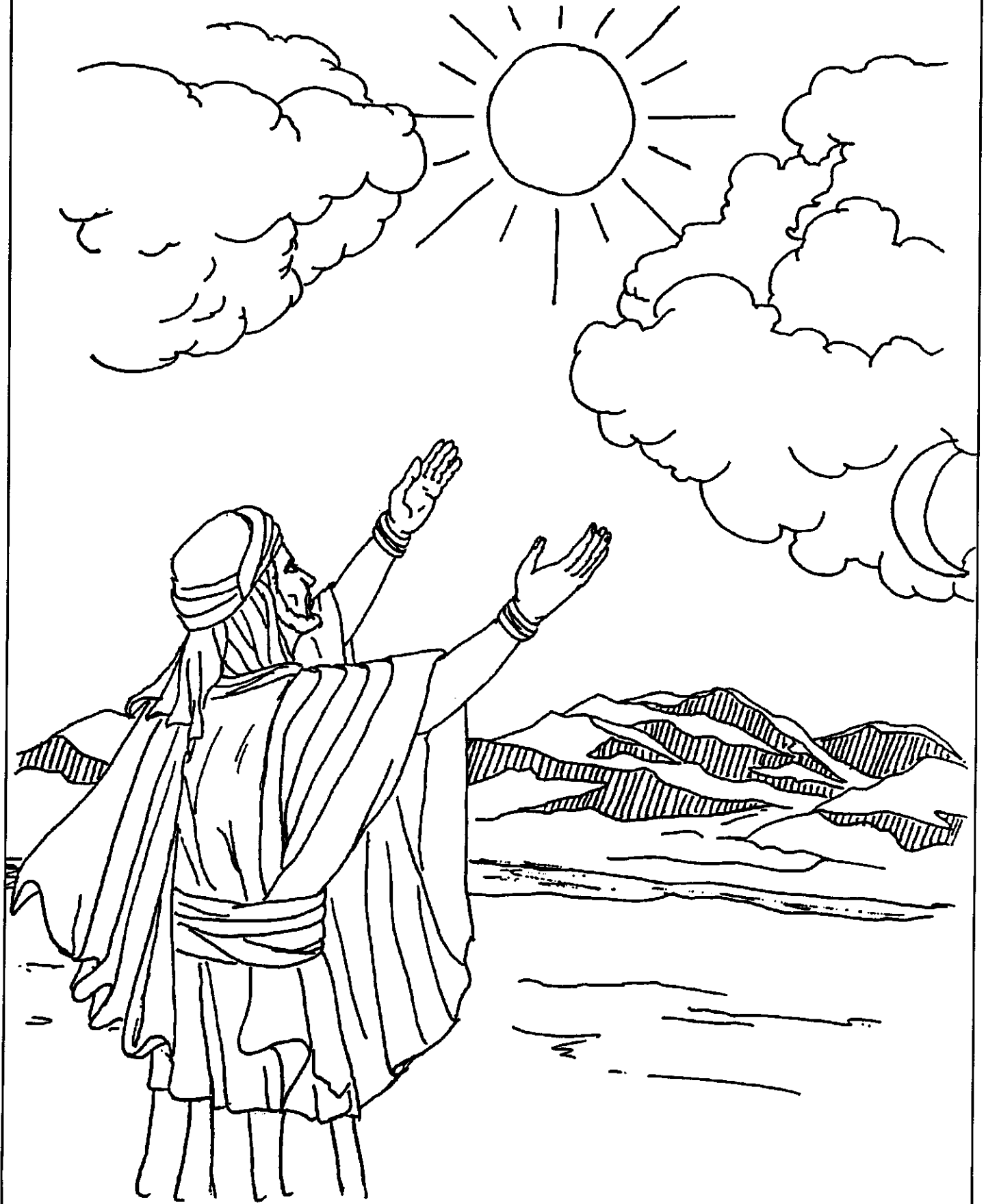
Defeat at Ai



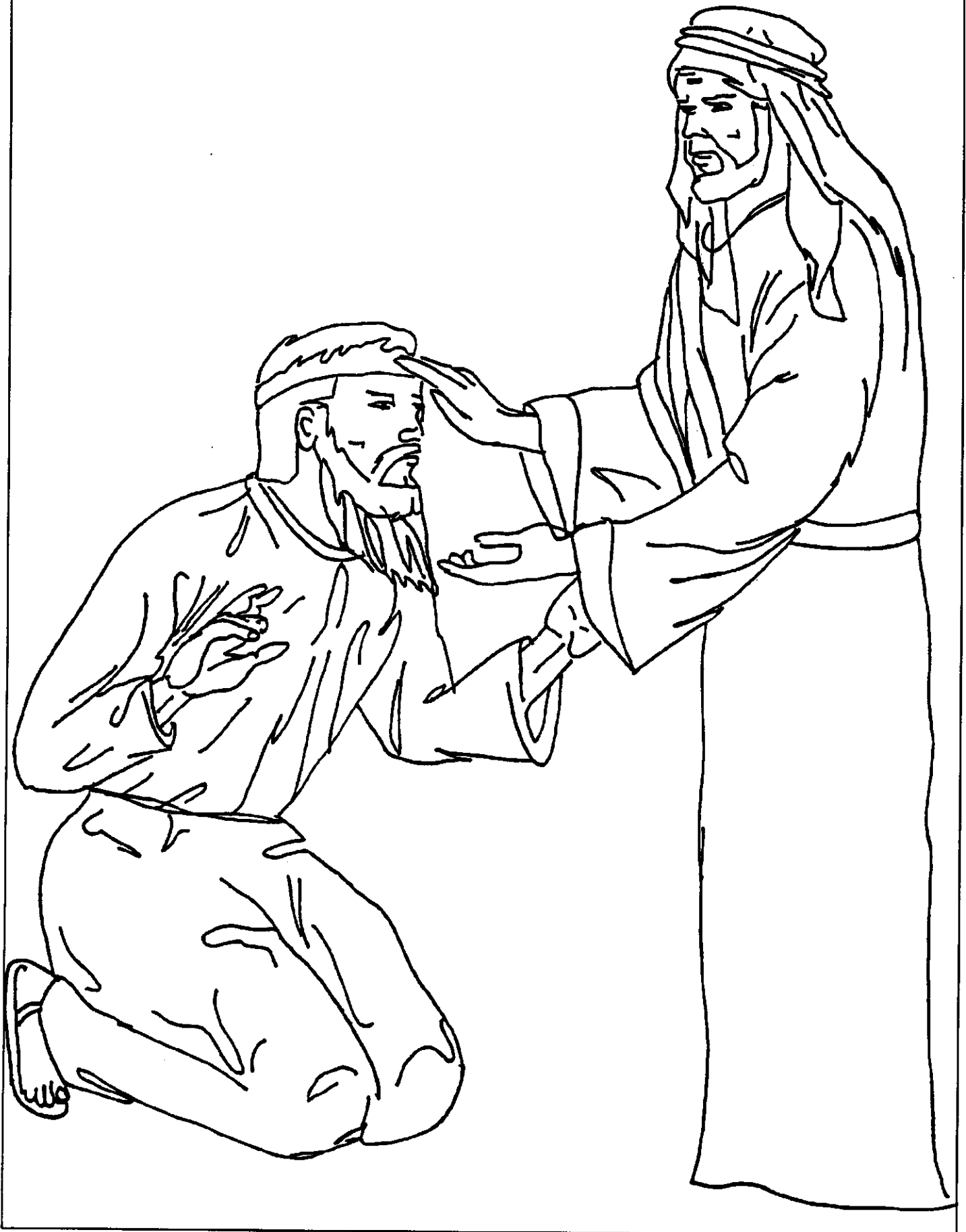
Joshua and the Gibeonites



Raining Rocks



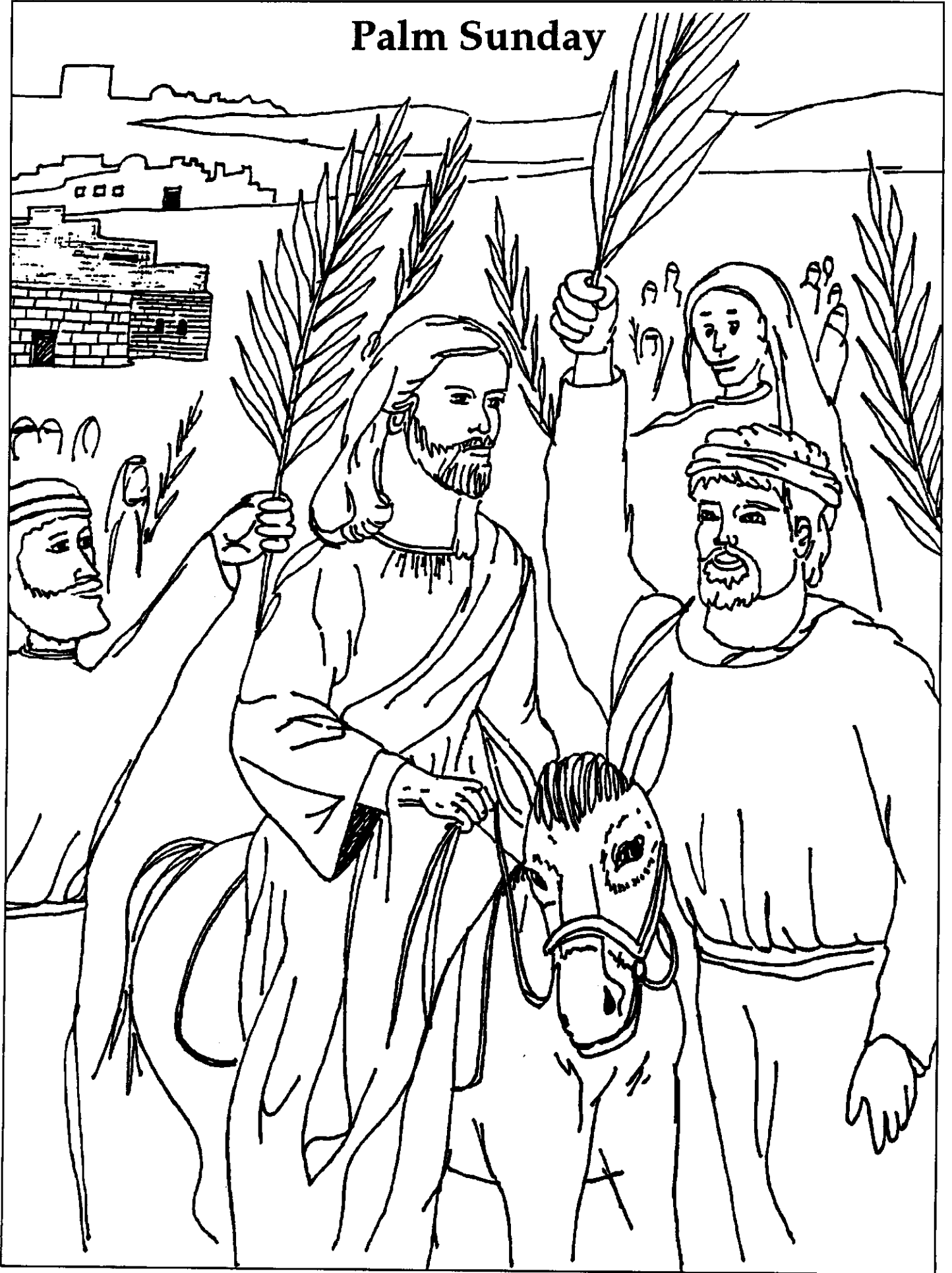
Old Caleb



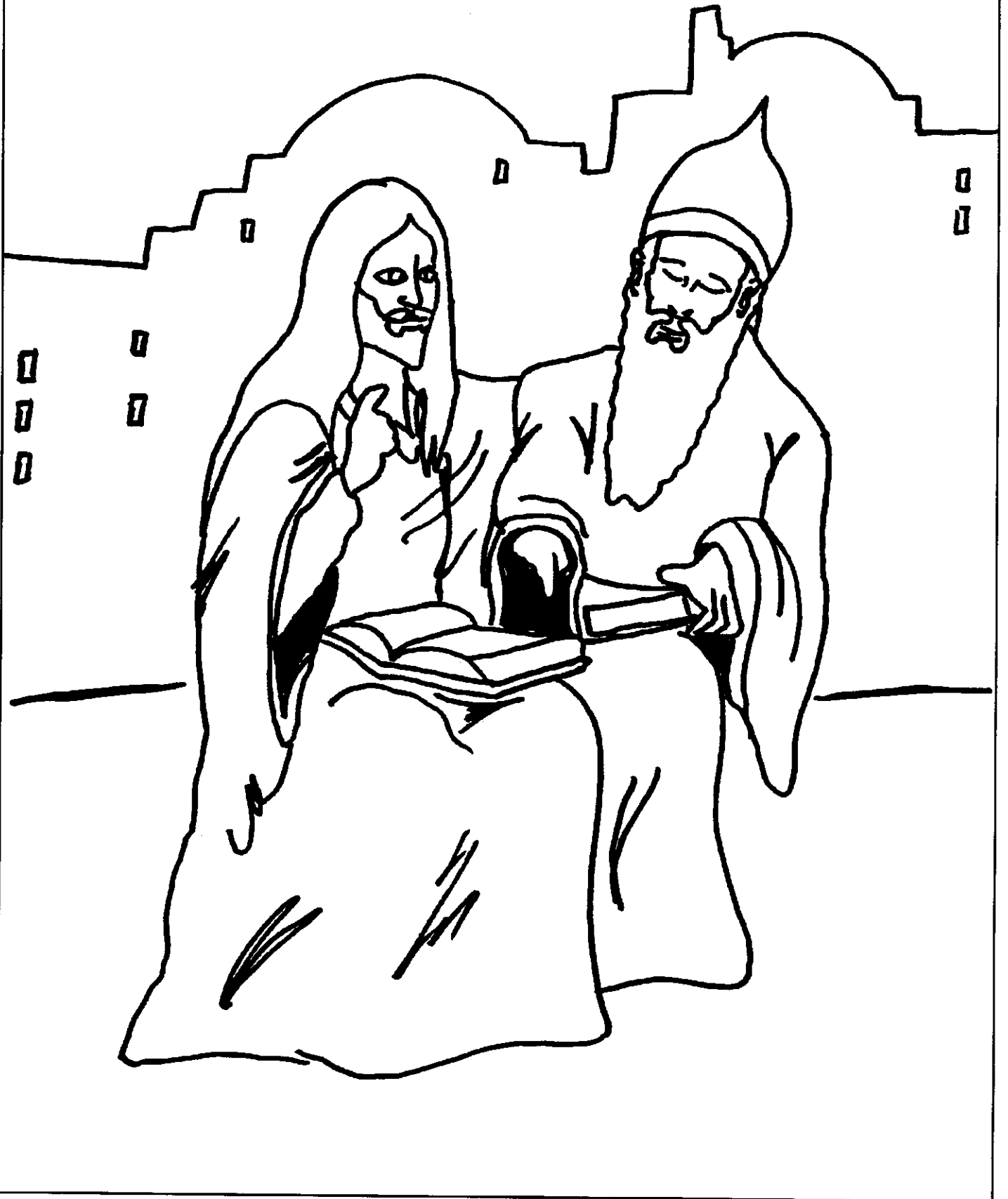
Joshua and Jesus



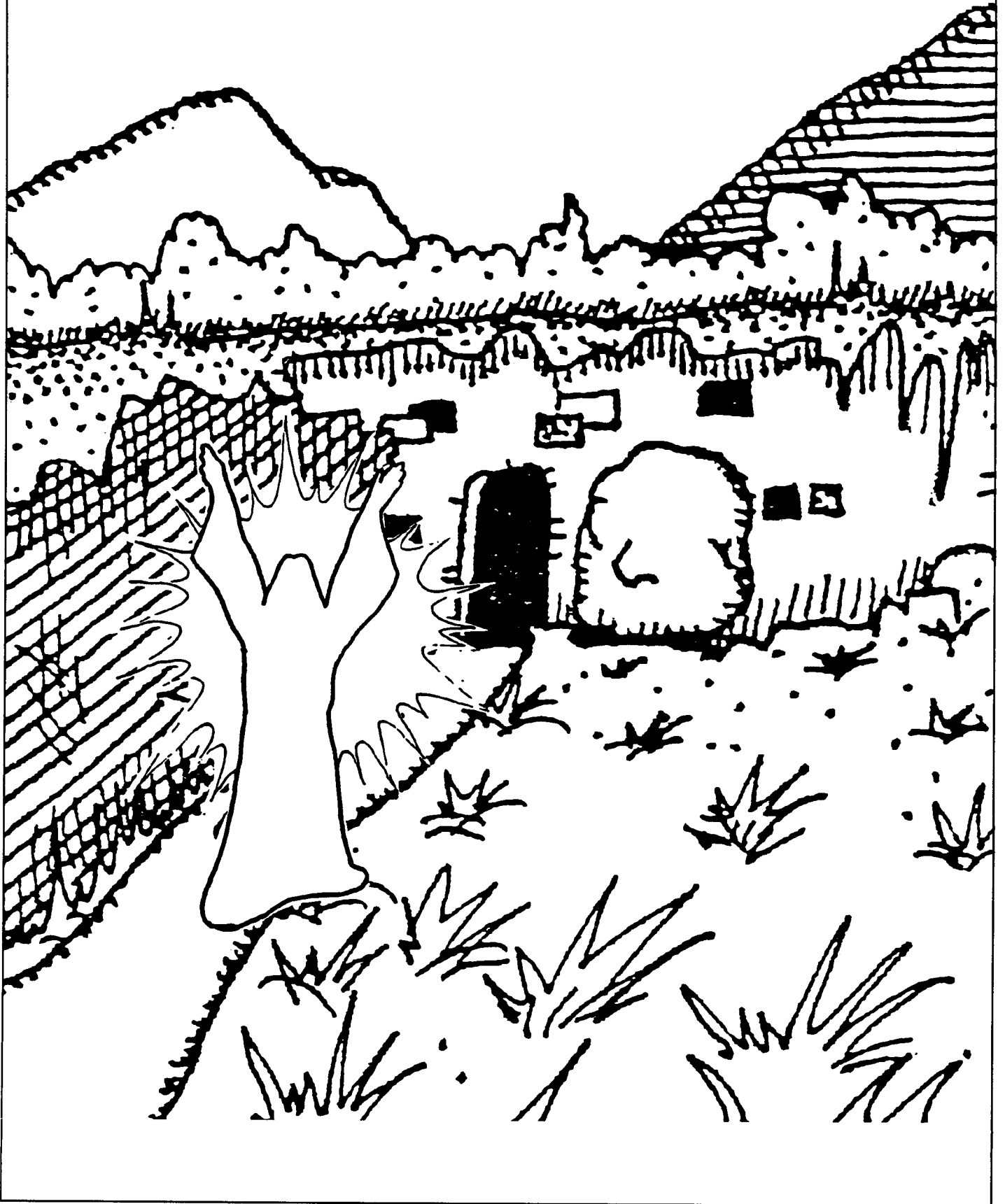
Palm Sunday



Glorify Thy Name



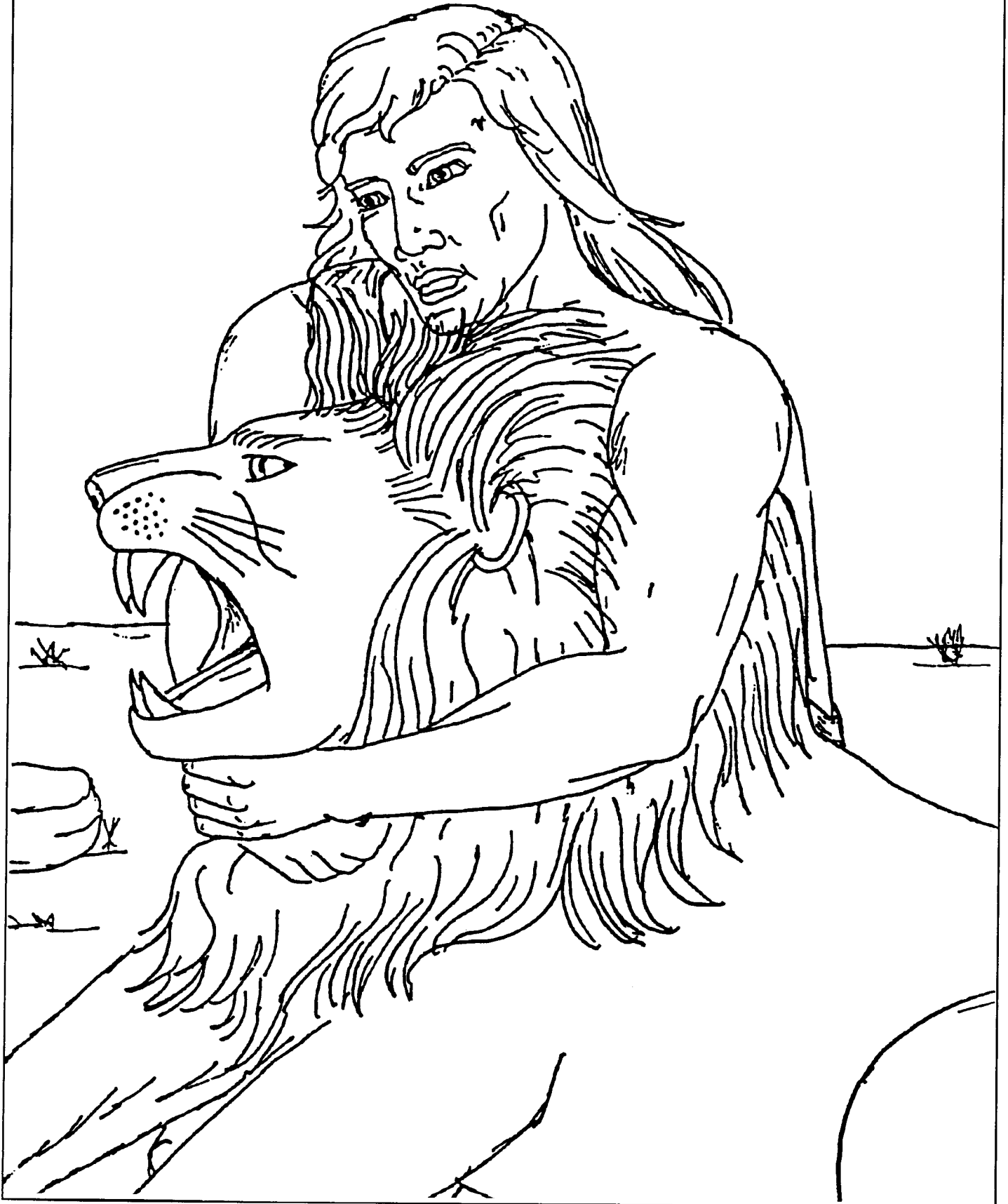
He Is Alive



Jesus Is Coming Again



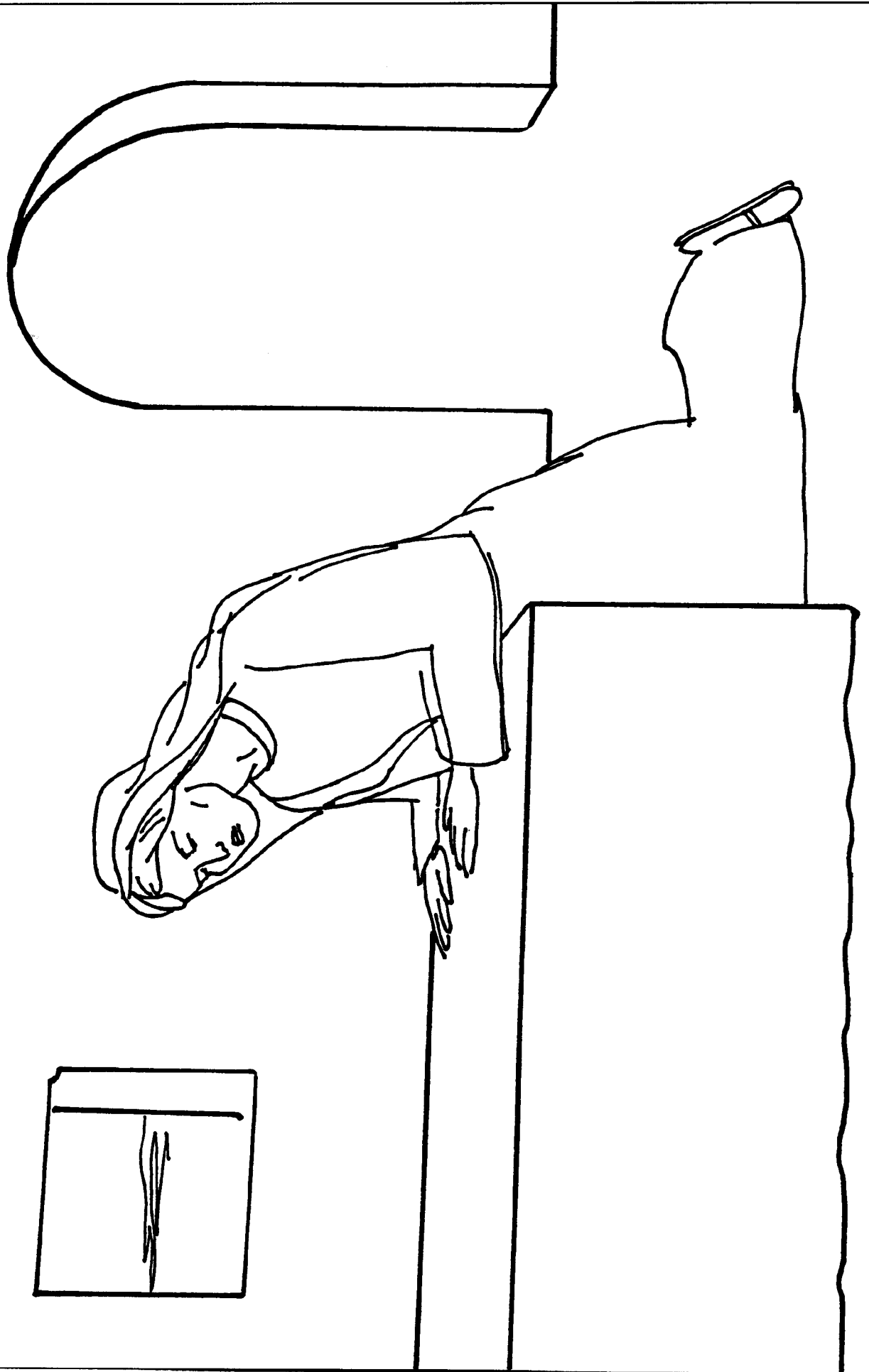
Samson's Special Gift



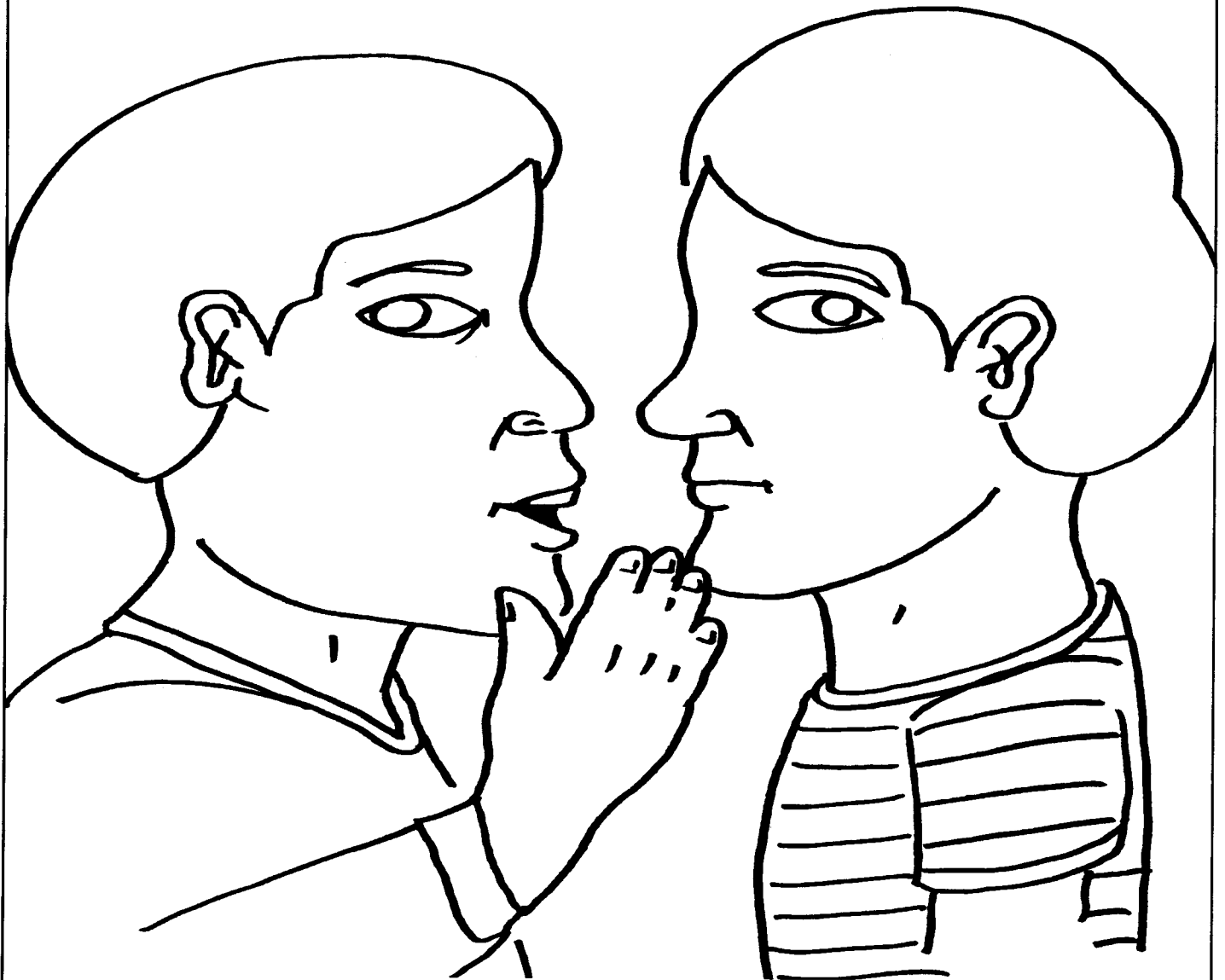
Samsom Brings Down the House



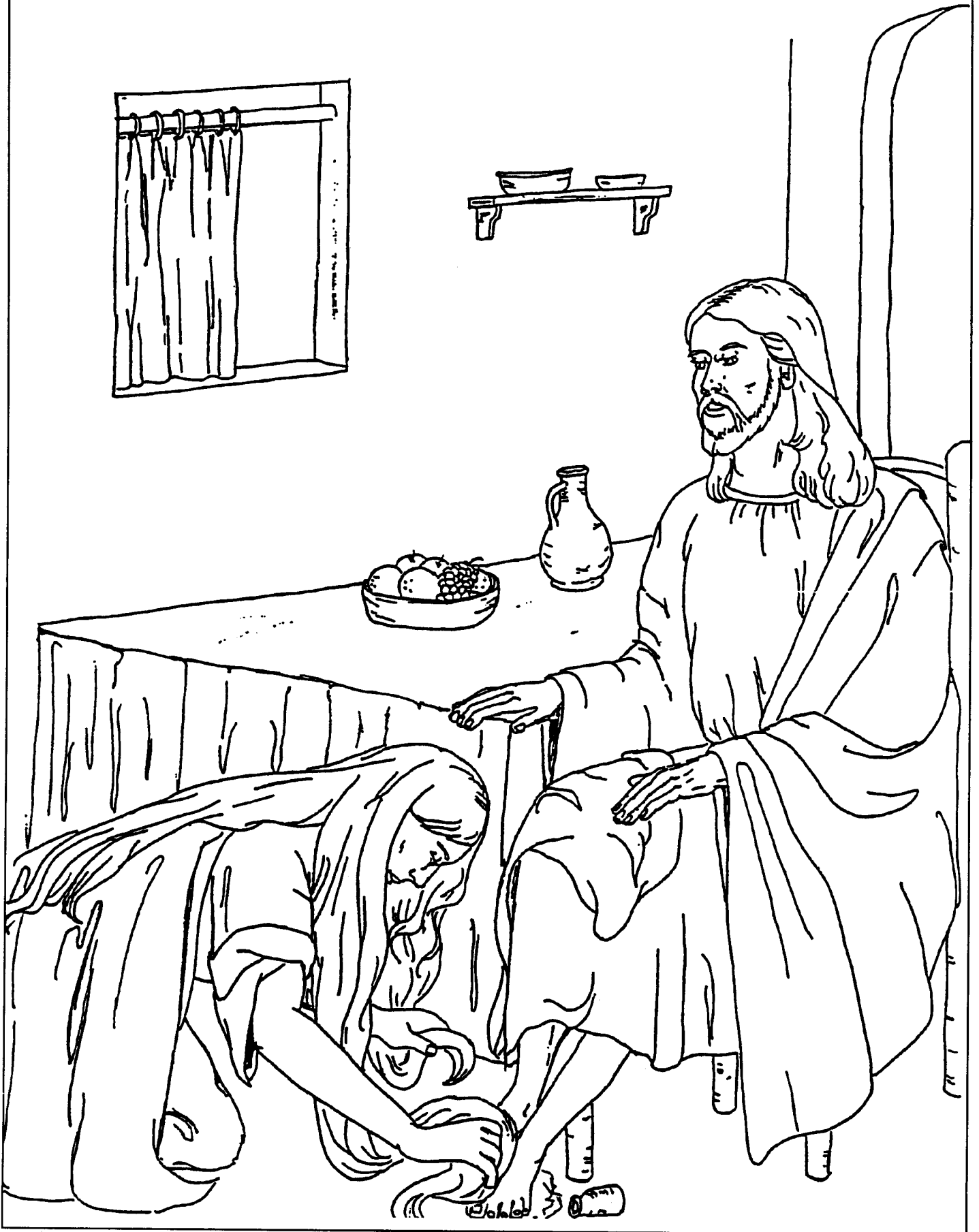
A Praying Mother



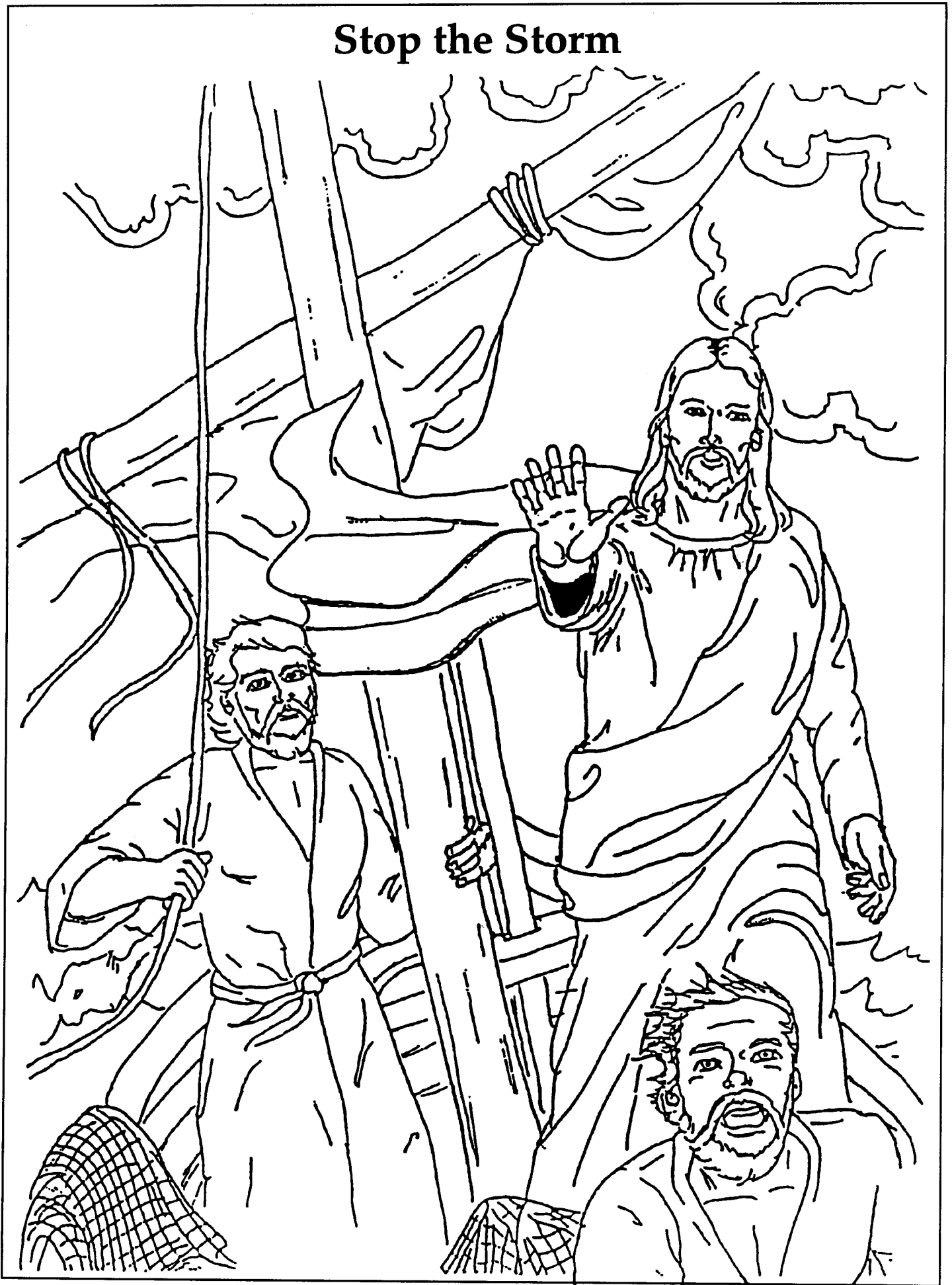
Be Ye Kind to One Another



Love Accepted



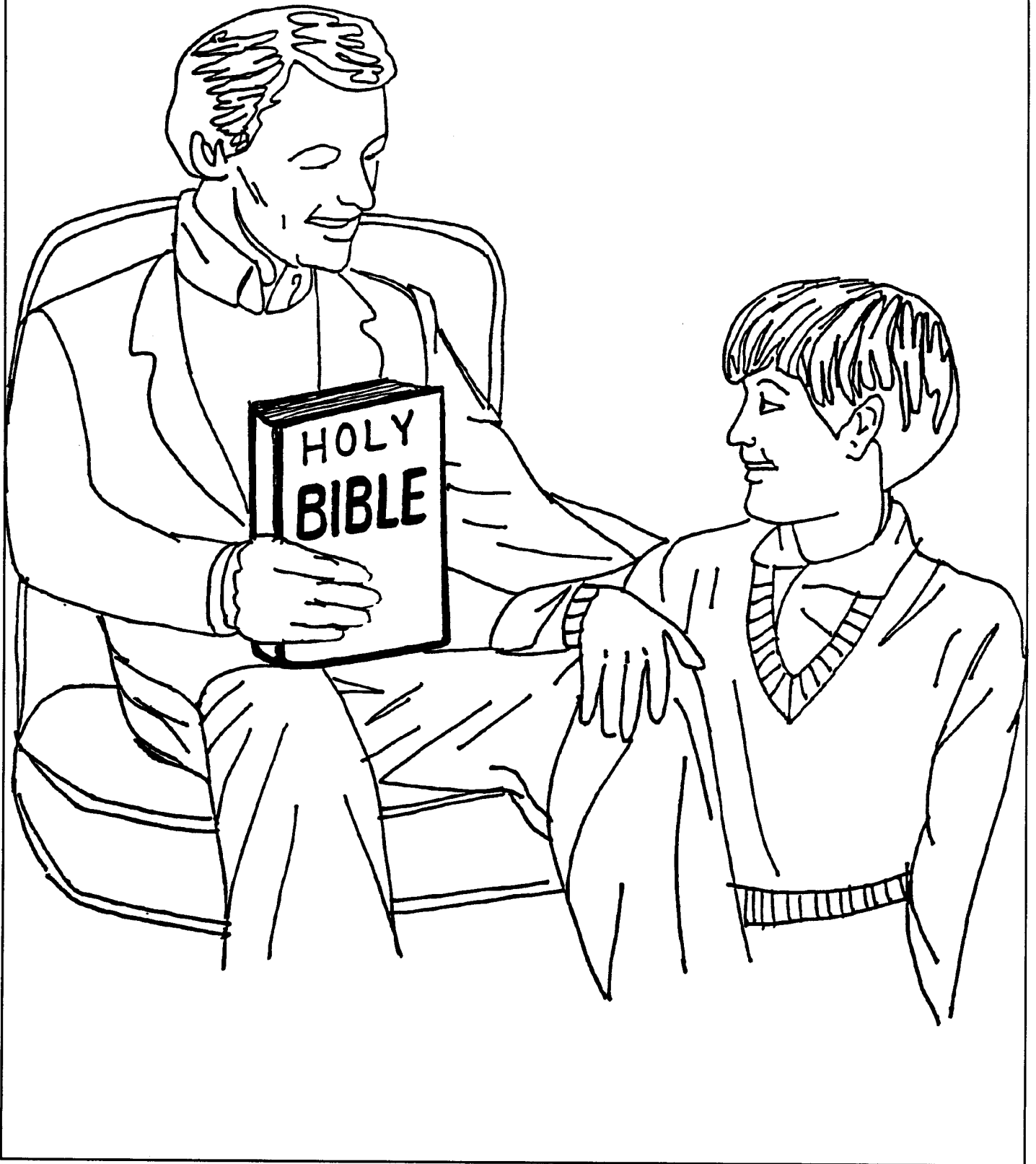
Stop the Storm



The Day of Pentecost



What Is a Father?



The Calling of Gideon

