

The Complete School of the Bible Manual

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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**

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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.

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: _____

Signature _____ Date: _____

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.

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.

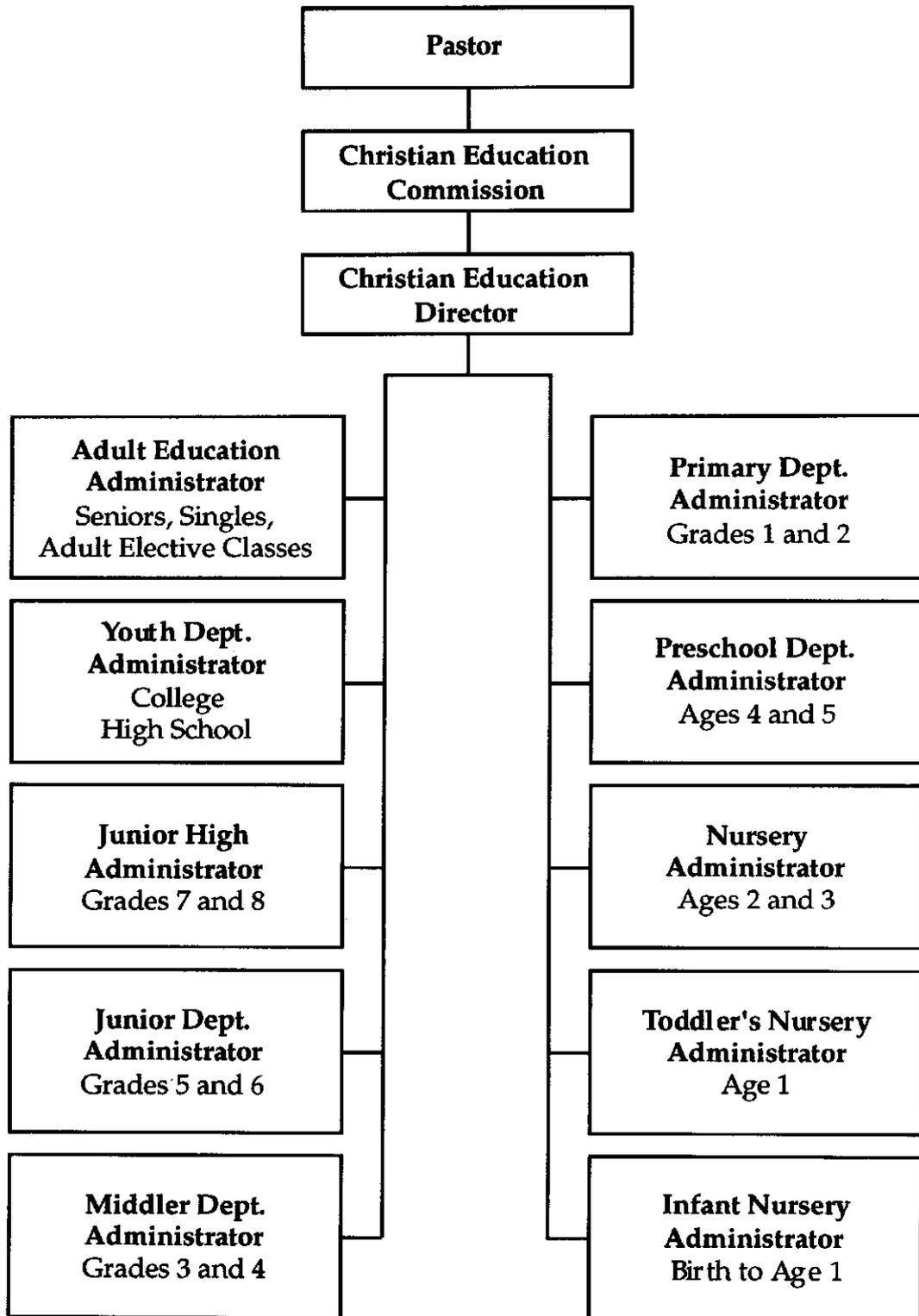
The job descriptions in this section define the responsibilities of the members of an effective ministry team. Sometimes, it may be necessary for a few people to fulfill several responsibilities in the class. However, as the class grows, these responsibilities can be delegated to new leaders as they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

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

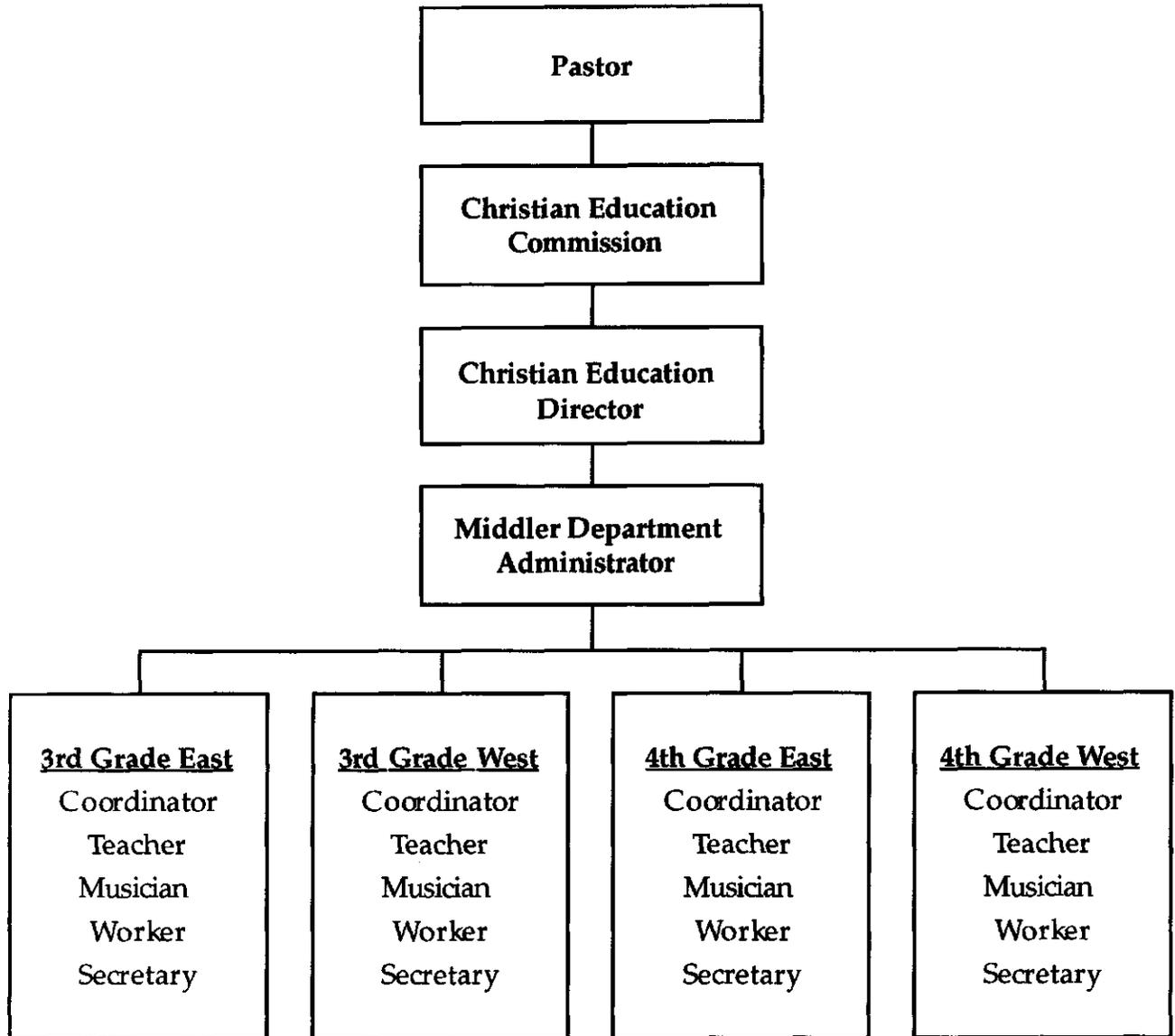
Confusion reigns when there is more than one person thinking they are in charge. The larger the body, the more responsibility needs to be delegated, and the more authority needs to be established on multiple levels. Everyone needs to know to whom they answer, and who has the responsibility to make the 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



Middler 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 Third Grade Students

Physical Development

1. Third graders are still growing, but are not as awkward as they were last year.
2. Their fine muscles are more developed and they have more coordination, now. Challenge the students to draw and work with crafts and music.
3. They still tend to be restless. Their muscles are still developing; many will have a large sugar intake; some may have a lack of firm discipline; and many have a high-impact, fast-paced television diet. Keep things moving in the classroom. Limit segments to nine minutes or less.
4. Third graders can work, but often become impatient with their progress. Give clear directions, and keep the students active. Praise them for their accomplishments.
5. They like to be doers. It is hard for them to sit and just listen for very long. Be sure to have active things for them to do.
6. They should be somewhat talkative. Give the students opportunities to respond, and encourage them to share their thoughts.
7. The girls are maturing faster than the boys. Be careful not to emphasize size or physical maturity. Instead, place an emphasis on character.

Intellectual Development

1. Third grade students are probably acceptable readers. Be sensitive to each student's reading level. Have them read passages as a group.
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. Third 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 good imaginations. Stimulate their imaginations. Let them act things out and talk.
8. They are able to understand more abstract concepts and discover truth by reading. Encourage the students to read the Bible daily for themselves, and to use a simple, but honest translation.

9. They are beginning to think more in terms of a corporate view of life rather than seeing only themselves. Encourage a Christ-centered world view, rather than a self-centered world view.
10. They are beginning to see that there are many opinions on every subject. Teach them that, while everyone has their own ideas, the truth is in Jesus and the Bible, and not in popular consensus.

Social Development

1. Third grade students are more secure in themselves, especially if they are in a strong and loving family. Teach students to gain their security and peace from God.
2. They love appreciation and affection. Praise them, and give them hugs.
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 may be caught up in teasing, jesting, and name-calling. Teach them the importance of kindness and the power of the tongue to heal or hurt.
5. Third graders tend to be selfish. Teach them to share with others; to develop servant's hearts; 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 to self. 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 the students to relate to the opposite sex with respect and kindness, as friends.
9. They are concerned with 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. Third graders know right from 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 in the Bible.
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 "convinces 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. Breathy 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

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,

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.

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!

Third 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. Catechism in Doctrine.
- 9:42 a.m. Scripture Memorization.
- 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 the Children's Crusade

During the Dark Ages, ignorance and superstition were the order of the day. The Dark Ages were dark because the spiritual light of the Gospel had few outlets. The Church had been polluted and corrupted by politicians and religious leaders who were motivated by desire for their own power and wealth. The people did not have Bibles, and were told to rely strictly on the pope and religious leaders for their doctrine.

Between the years of 1096 and 1270 A.D., a total of eight crusades were launched from Europe against the Moslem Turks who had conquered Jerusalem and Palestine. It was considered the Holy Land, because this was the location where Jesus walked on earth. The word "Crusade" means "for the cross." Civil and religious leaders stirred people with tales of the desecration of the land of Christ by pagans, and armies marched and sailed out to the sounds of cheering crowds, seeking glory and maybe a little plunder on the side. Ultimately, they all failed. After the loss of thousands of lives, the Turks were still in control, although there were some temporary gains.

The saddest case of blind religious optimism began in the year 1212 A.D. with a 12-year-old boy named Stephen of Cloyes. He took a letter to King Philip of France, claiming to be directed by Christ Himself to march to Jerusalem. He declared that if he were to lead a group of children, that the sea would dry up, and they would march through on dry land to conquer the Moslem hordes in Jerusalem. Pope Innocent III, who was busy persecuting born-again Christians, went along with the plan. Word got around, and by June, 300,000 children were

gathered to march from France to Palestine. They had little food, no supplies, and no maps. They also had amazingly foolish parents. The army of unarmed children marched off in the general direction of Jerusalem. Only one who completed the march returned, and it took him eighteen years to make it back.

That summer was hot and dry. Many children died during the journey, and some turned back to try to make it back home. When they arrived at the Mediterranean Sea, it did not part as Stephen had predicted. However, they did find two merchants (Hugh the Iron and William the Pig) who offered to take them across the sea on seven ships. They happily climbed aboard. Out to sea, a storm capsized two of the ships, and the children on them drowned.

But the other five ships sailed south instead of west, as promised. The evil merchants were slave traders, and they had made a deal with the Saracens to take the children to Algiers, where they made a huge profit on their hapless cargo. The children became slaves in various parts of Africa and the Middle East. Some were taken west to Baghdad (now in Iraq), where eighteen of them were beheaded for refusing to become Moslems.

About the same time, a ten-year-old German boy raised a group of 20,000 children to march to Jerusalem. They crossed the Alps, suffering many casualties along the way. When they reached Rome, Pope Innocent III persuaded them to wait until they grew up. About 2,000 of them made it back home.

The Children's Crusades show us the problem of vain religious zeal without knowledge. Being led by emotion is not the same as being led by the Spirit. It is

possible to be very religious and sincere and still be wrong. When God guides, He provides.

The Story of Fanny Crosby

Francis J. Crosby was born on a farm in New York in 1820. When she was just six weeks old, she suffered from an eye infection. Her worried father found a "doctor," who told him to treat her eyes with a mustard "poultice." He later found out that the man was not a qualified doctor at all. His "remedy" burned the baby's eyes, and she was totally blind for life.

Rather than become bitter, Fanny's parents and grandmother taught her to focus on the positive aspects of life, and to enjoy it fully. When she was eight, Fanny wrote a poem:

*"O what a happy soul am I!
Although I cannot see,
I am resolved that in this world,
Contented I will be."
How many blessings I enjoy,
That other people don't.
To weep and sigh because I'm blind,
I cannot, and I won't."*

Little Fanny found that the secret of contentment was to focus on the advantages of every situation, and she saw some advantages to blindness. She learned to memorize quickly, since she could not read. Fanny memorized whole books of the Bible, as well as thousands of songs. She enjoyed a full and happy life. While Francis was a young girl, her godly grandmother became her "eyes," describing everything she saw in vivid language. Fanny learned to paint

powerful pictures with words, and she became one of the greatest poets in history.

Fanny went to the Institute for the Blind in New York when she was 15 years old. She went as a student, and then became a teacher there. She spent 23 years there. She met Alexander Van Alstyne, who was also blind. They had a happy marriage, although their one daughter died in infancy.

Although raised in a Christian home, Fanny did not become a Christian until she was 31 years old. She was moved greatly at the singing of *"At the Cross,"* by Isaac Watts. Her happy life was now absolutely radiant, and she began to compose hymns to express her thoughts. She would compose them in her mind, and then quote them to someone to write for her at the first opportunity. During her delightful 94 years of life, Fanny Crosby composed more than 8,000 hymns.

Fanny Crosby was much in demand as a speaker, for she was so happy and positive, and her mind was filled with wisdom from knowing God personally, and from knowing the Scriptures so thoroughly. Even though she died in 1915, she still greatly influences millions of Christians today through her wonderful hymns.

When asked one day if she would like her vision restored if it became medically possible, she replied, "Oh, no. I am excited about the fact that the first face I will ever see will be the face of Jesus!"

Remember that it was this happy blind woman who wrote,

"Perfect submission, perfect delight.

*Visions of rapture now burst on my
sight.*

Angels descending, bring from above,

Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

This is my story, this is my song,

Praising my Savior all the day long.

This is my story, this is my song,

Praising my Savior all the day long."

The Story of Lorne Fox

In the 1940's, one of the world's greatest preachers was Dr. Charles Price, who pastored a large non-denominational church in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Dr. Price was noted not only for his rich insights into the Word of God, but for his keen spiritual sensitivity as a prophet. He also had great faith for divine healing, and thousands of people were miraculously healed of all sorts of diseases in his meetings.

One day a nine-year-old boy named Lorne Fox was taken up to the platform in a wheelchair. He had been a helpless and hopeless cripple all his young life. He had never walked, and his arms hung limply in his lap. His hands were curled up and withered, for they had never been used. Lorne's hands could get no signal from his brain.

Under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, Dr. Price told the boy to rise up and walk. For the first time in his life, he felt sensation in his legs, and he leaped out of his wheelchair and walked, while thousands of people shouted and rejoiced before the Lord. Then Dr. Price did an even more amazing thing. He said to the boy, "Now go to the piano and play it." Of course, Lorne had never touched the piano in his life. He had never really touched anything, and knew nothing about music. But he sat down on the piano bench, and played. The hands that a

few moments before had been useless now flew over the keys with precision and flair.

Lorne continued to play the piano for many years. He went into the ministry himself at a young age, and he used his gift of music throughout his career. As you might expect, his personal testimony stirred many people to believe for their own miraculous healing, and many received their miracle from the Lord.

After Dr. Price died in 1947, Lorne Fox continued to publish the "Golden Grain," a powerful prophetic magazine Brother Price had used to lead thousands of people spiritually. Rev. Fox also worked for years with another evangelist named Willard Cantelon. Brother Cantelon was also a skilled musician, who played the saxophone and banjo with great skill and anointing. In addition to being a great Bible teacher, Brother Cantelon was also an artist. Each evening, he would paint an original oil painting as he preached, and then presented it to the person who had brought the most visitors.

Lorne Fox passed off the scene, but Willard Cantelon went on to touch the lives of millions as a writer and television speaker. His most famous book is "The Day the Dollar Dies." These men were among the company of prophets, who have an unusually strong sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, and faith for the supernatural.

The Story of H. B. Garlock, Rescued From Cannibals

If anyone were to ask missionary H. B. Garlock, "What is the value of speaking with other tongues?" he would answer: "It saved my life."

In the early 1920's when the Garlocks went to Liberia as missionaries, it was known as "the white man's graveyard." It almost became that for him.

A feudal war had broken out between two factions of a cannibal tribe, and a member of the losing side had been captured and eaten by the victors. When a caravan sent by the missionaries for supplies passed through a village of the defeated faction, they recognized a member of the caravan as belonging to the enemy. After capturing him, they beat him nearly to death and put him in their prison house. And the caravan was refused permission to continue.

Garlock decided to try to rescue the carrier. Upon arriving at the village just before dark, he told his men to help him over the stockade (a pole fence surrounding the village), and to hurry to his side when he reached the hut that served as a prison. They were praying desperately.

Walking up to the hut with a display of courage he did not feel, Garlock greeted the two spearmen guarding the door as though nothing was amiss, cut the grass rope which held the bamboo door in place, released the prisoner from the center post of the hut, dragged him outside -- then out of sheer exhaustion sat down on an old elephant skull. His men joined him.

News spread quickly through the village, and soon the small group of men

were surrounded by an angry mob, armed with cutlasses, spears, bows and arrows, and clubs. Momentarily they expected to be torn apart by the screaming crowd.

Finally, the witch doctor went into his act. His long pigtailed were smeared down with cow dung and palm oil. Around his neck hung a string of leopards' teeth, and pouches of jujus and fetish medicines. He was a fearsome sight. Grimacing, making sudden lunges at the missionary, parading before the people reciting victorious battles, he was presenting a challenge to the missionary. Finally, he came over and laid down his wand at Garlock's feet as though to say: "Here is your chance to defend yourself before we kill and eat you."

"I was really on the spot," Rev. Garlock reports. "I only knew a few words of greeting in their language. So I prayed, 'God in heaven, if ever You helped us, help us now.'"

Suddenly, the missionary began to shake. At first he was ashamed for the people to see how frightened he was. Then he realized the power of the Holy Spirit had come upon him. To his mind came the command of Jesus in Mark 13:11, "Take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak...whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."

Stooping down, Garlock picked up the witch doctor's wand, and began with one of the few words he knew in the Pahn language, "Nihlay," which means "I say." Then, he reports, "The Holy Ghost took control of my tongue, and from my lips

poured a torrent of words I had never learned."

A change rapidly took place among those assembled in that cannibal village. The witch doctor sent for a white fowl, wrung its neck, and prostrated himself in front of the missionary. He then smeared blood on the head of Garlock, on the carrier, on his own head, and on the head of the chief. He said, "We see your God fight for you. Please tell us what to do to atone for our mistake."

The villagers provided men to carry the wounded carrier back to the mission station and fed the other members of the caravan. Later, a mission was established there; and there are many Christians there today.

from "Spoken by the Spirit"
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The Story of Andrew Gih

Andrew Gih was born in Shanghai, China. He was the son of a Confucian scholar. His family was Buddhist, and believed it was wrong to kill animals. They were taught that if their good deeds outweighed their bad deeds, they could merit "heaven." His mother was a kind woman with no schooling, so Andrew studied Confucianism under his father. He was taught to worship his ancestors. On certain days, the family would offer food and burn paper money to their dead ancestors. He thought that the keys to life were in the Buddhist religion, with its chanting, self-denial, and strict vegetarian diet.

His father died when he was twelve years old, and left him with the responsibility of supporting his mother. He had to work, and became very bitter at life. He hated people, and was generally hot-tempered. He lived in grief and sorrow. When his uncle died, he thought that suicide might be a solution to the misery of his life.

When some of his friends learned English, he decided he wanted to speak the language, too. While looking for a school, he found Bethel Mission, which operated a school near his home. It was a Christian mission school which also taught the English language. He had no interest in religion, and was very materialistic. He did not believe in God or a devil, and had no desire to go to chapel. When asked why he would not attend, he said, "I live too far away to make it on time." This was a lie.

He was in a Christian school, so he was required to study the Bible. Since the Bible was an English translation, he was happy

to study it. Once, another student asked him if he believed the Genesis account of creation. He said he did not. He had been taught the doctrine of evolution. The students discussed the Biblical concept that all creatures produce after their own kind. There are no mixtures, or creatures in transition from one species to another. Through their intelligent discussions, Andrew became convinced that evolution was a lie, and that there had to be a Creator God who designed and ordered the universe.

Even though he believed in God, he still loved darkness and sin. He believed, but he was still lost. Later, the school invited Miss C. I. Toppel to speak for the school. She was a missionary to India. During the meeting, there was a great move of the Holy Spirit, and many people were convicted of their sins and converted. The Holy Ghost also moved on Andrew's heart, and revealed his true spiritual condition. He wanted to cry out, "What can I do to be saved?" The Spirit pointed him to the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. He lifted up his eyes of faith, and beheld the Son of God, hanging on a cross in his place. He realized that God was calling him to himself. He bowed down, and said, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner." He felt his emotional burdens lifting from his soul, and the peace of God flooded in. He soon had the joy of leading his mother to Jesus as well.

In 1931, he received a call from God to preach, and he began immediately. He had such an intensity for God that, as he spoke, conviction for sin would fall on the people, and the preaching meeting would turn into a fervent prayer meeting. When he married Tse Ying, it was the first

Christian wedding in the city of Shanghai. His wife started preaching also. They both emphasized the work of the Holy Ghost, including the baptism in the Spirit. Their work became a worldwide ministry.

The Story of Mordecai Ham

Mordecai Ham was an American Baptist preacher, born in 1878. He lived a long and joyful life as an evangelist. He was considered a "hell-fire-and-damnation" preacher, who held the crowds in rapt attention in large city-wide crusades, and in extended revival meetings in large churches. The first year of his evangelistic ministry, he prayed hard and worked hard, and saw 33,000 conversions. That is certainly more than most preachers win in a lifetime.

Over the next thirty years, his preaching resulted in more than 300,000 people who not only accepted the Lord as their Savior, but also became planted in local churches. He preached strongly against the liquor and beer industry. The author of the prohibition amendment credited Billy Sunday and Mordecai Ham with emptying most of the saloons in the south. In this respect particularly, he influenced the nation for good.

Of all the hundreds of thousands of people saved under his ministry, undoubtedly the most notable was Billy Graham. Billy lived in Charlotte, North Carolina. There was nothing notably wrong with him. He was a high school baseball and basketball star. He was popular with the girls, and a good student. He was from a Christian home, and did not smoke or drink or cuss. He was a good boy, but at the age of seventeen, he was still not saved.

Mordecai Ham had come to Charlotte for a three-month crusade. Every night

the tent would be filled with worshippers and sinners, sitting on the wooden chairs, benches, and boxes inside and surrounding the tent. It was summer. Billy and his friends had other things to do, and for several weeks avoided the revival. But one night, they had run out of things to do, and they all decided to go to the meeting that everyone was talking about.

Billy was amazed at the grandeur of the meeting. He was used to going to his parents' little church. Here was a crowd of 5,000 people, singing and worshipping God. The choir was wonderful, with all the ladies in white dresses, and the men in white shirts. But when the evangelist got up to preach, Billy felt that the powerful words were directed right at him. He thought about the fires of hell, and the idea was frightening to him.

The next night, he came back with his buddy Grady Wilson. This time, hoping to avoid the gazing eye of the preacher, he sat in the choir, although he couldn't sing a note. When the Mordecai Ham said, "There's a great sinner in this place tonight," Billy thought surely he had been talking to his mother about him behind his back. When the altar call was given, Billy nudged Grady and said, "Let's go." They both went to the altar, and gave their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ. Both of them became full-time preachers who have touched the lives of millions of people around the world.

The Story of Alice Luce

Alice Eveline Luce was born in 1873 in England, the daughter of an Anglican pastor, Rev. J. J. Luce. She grew up hearing the Word of God, although her church was formal and did not believe in the baptism in the Holy Spirit. When she was ten years old, the Holy Spirit convinced her of her sin, and she repented before the Lord, receiving His forgiveness and salvation. From that time on, she felt a strong desire to serve her Lord in full-time ministry. She wanted to help people in practical as well as spiritual ways, so she studied both nursing and theology in college.

In 1896, when she was a 23-year-old college graduate, she had an opportunity to travel to India as a missionary. She went to Azimgarh, and worked in school for women who lived in harems. These women were isolated from society, generally living only for the pleasure of a rich and powerful master. Alice found great joy in teaching these hopeless young women about Jesus.

At the turn of the century, many people experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit. For centuries, there were only small and scattered groups who spoke in tongues, but now there was a great Pentecostal revival that even reached to India. Alice heard that there were two women there who had received this glorious experience, so she made the hot and difficult trip to visit them. Since she was very familiar with her Bible, it did not take them long to point out the Scriptures dealing with Pentecost and tongues and show her that it was of God. She knew in her spirit that it was right, and she began to seek God for this wonderful infilling.

She received the baptism in the Holy Ghost in 1910.

Later, Alice became very ill after drinking contaminated water, and was eventually sent back to England. She then obtained work in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, in 1914. But she again felt the strong desire to work as a missionary -- this time in Mexico. She moved to Texas, and became a member of a new Pentecostal group called the Assemblies of God. She learned the Spanish language, and moved with another lady to Monterrey, Mexico to start a mission.

However, they were in great danger there because of the Mexican Revolution, and were forced to move back to the United States. They discovered that the best way to evangelize a nation was to train native people and send many of them back to their homeland. Alice founded the Berean Bible Institute in 1926 in Los Angeles. The school is still in existence today, under the name of Latin American Bible Institute. Through the years, this school had trained and sent out many strong believers who have carried the full gospel throughout the Spanish-speaking world.

Alice Luce also wrote books and lessons for others to use in teaching the Bible. She was a prolific educator. She also helped the world by promoting a better plan for evangelism. Her plan was to establish self-supporting churches led by native pastors.

Alice never married. Like the Apostle Paul, she labored as a single person, devoting her whole life to the gospel.

The Story of Alexander Maclaren

Alexander Maclaren was born in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1826. He was the son of a godly lay preacher, who wanted with all his heart to see his son enter the Christian ministry. He diligently instilled in his son a love for the Word of God, and instructed him in wisdom through his formative years.

In 1842, the family moved to London, England, and Alex was enrolled in college. He was especially diligent in studying Hebrew and Greek, and was a top student. For the rest of his life, he made it a habit to read from the original Hebrew Old Testament, and the Greek New Testament, every day. He studied the Bible, not just as a source for sermons, but as a source for life and wisdom.

In 1845, he was sent to pastor a small, run-down church in Southampton. After he graduated from college, he took a church called Portland Chapel. This church had suffered under an incompetent pastor who left the church deep in debt, and suffering from a bad reputation in the community. The church had unwisely borrowed money, presuming that they could pay back the debts in the future, rather than being content with what God had provided. The result was a weak, discouraged group of people whose faith was shaken.

Alex took the church, and later testified that this struggling, obscure church was a good training ground for his future ministry. He remarked that others had been given good, solid churches, and did not have to struggle and pray as he did to survive. It was easier for him to see his utter dependence on God, and also the need to study and get a clear word from

God for the people. The church prospered under his leadership, and the debts were paid. In 1856, he married his cousin, Marion, who was a great help in his work for the Lord.

Two years later, he was asked to pastor Union Chapel in Manchester. He was to pastor that great church for 45 years. He believed in staying with the same congregation, and he seldom took other speaking engagements. He even turned down the prestigious Yale lecture series, because his focus was on his own congregation. Maclaren worked hard all week to prepare sermons for his large flock. He always wanted to make sure that they would have something worth coming to hear when they went to Union Chapel.

Alexander loved the great outdoors, but he stayed in this dirty, industrial city. He was quiet and shy; but his calling put him among many people, and so he preached the Word of God faithfully. It was often difficult for this quiet, shy man to be the pastor of a large church. Some people thought he was proud and aloof. But everyone knew that Alexander Maclaren loved his church, and that he loved his God. He often suffered from stage fright, because it was so against his nature to speak in front of people. But his passion for the Word prevailed, and he went on and preached, disregarding his own feelings. He considered preaching hard work, and made it a point to study in his work boots, rather than house slippers. He was a great pastor, who left many great sermons in written form for others to learn from.

The Story of Marinus

During the time of the New Testament and for centuries afterward, the Roman Empire was the dominant world power. The emperor was called Caesar, and the Jews as well as many other national groups were subject to his vast authority. Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem to pay taxes to the Roman Empire, and Jesus taught his followers to pay the taxes to Caesar, even though the Romans oppressed them and later persecuted Christians.

One of the ranks of authority in the Roman army was Centurion. The name comes from the Latin word "centa," which means "one hundred." It is also the root for our English word "century." A Centurion, then, was in command of one hundred Roman soldiers, and was under the command of a Vespasian, who was in turn under a Tribune.

In Caesarea of Palestine there lived a Roman Centurion who loved God and was able to greatly bless the Christian work in his time. His name was Cornelius, and he was instrumental in teaching Peter that God wanted to save Gentiles as well as Jews, and he and his family received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. His story is recorded in Acts 10.

Many years later in the same city, another Christian Roman soldier was being considered for the honor of the rank of Centurion. He was a courageous and mighty warrior, and had won many honors on the battlefield. His family was wealthy and highly respected as leaders in the community. This promotion would be another special milestone in the life of this outstanding young Christian.

As he stood before the magistrate to be promoted to the rank of Centurion, another soldier stepped forward and said, "Marinus is a Christian, so he will not sacrifice to the emperors. He should not be promoted to the rank of Centurion." The magistrate was deeply distressed by this accusation, and said, "Marinus, are you a Christian?"

"Yes, sir, I am."

"Would you refuse to sacrifice to the Caesar?"

"I will serve him faithfully, and I will fight for him, but I worship the Lord Jesus Christ, and will not worship Caesar."

The magistrate said, "I grant you a stay of three hours to reconsider what you have said."

After three hours Marinus was again brought before the magistrate, and again refused to renounce Christ. He said, "I have chosen to hold fast to the God whom I serve, and to His Son, Jesus Christ." He was immediately taken to the executioner and killed. In the greater court of heaven he was awarded an eternal crown of life by the great judge of all, the Lord Jesus Christ.

As a result of his courage, many who witnessed his execution were drawn to the Lord and became Christians. During those years of persecution by the Roman Empire, the body of Christ grew as people saw that this faith in Jesus was more precious to Christians than life itself. The faith of the martyrs inspired many to turn to the Lord; and the Christians were very committed, knowing that it could cost them everything.

The Salvation of Samuel Morris

Many years ago, in the jungles of west Africa, lived a homely little native boy named Kavoo. He was small and sickly, and was not expected to amount to much in his life, even though his father was the chief of his village.

Kavoo suffered greatly in his young life. It was a practice among warring tribes to take the son of a conquered chief as a hostage, to ensure payment of more goods in the future. The son was often tortured until the tribe could come up with the required ransom. The Kru tribe had been defeated several times, and Kavoo had been taken as a child each time to suffer for months, or even years, at the hands of cruel enemies.

When he was fifteen, he was taken by an especially cruel and greedy chief who had him tortured daily with whips of thorny, poisonous vines, which cut his flesh to ribbons and sent searing pain through his body. He became too weak to sit up.

Kavoo's father brought everything his poor tribe had of value. It was all taken by the more powerful chief, who then declared that it was not enough. The desperate father even offered his daughter, but Kavoo insisted that she could not bear the torture. Finally, Kavoo was to be tortured one more time, and then buried up to his neck near an anthill. His mouth would be propped open and smeared with a sweet substance to attract the ants, who would eat him, head first.

As Kavoo was being tied up for his execution, a blinding light suddenly flashed, and a voice from heaven told him to arise and flee. His tortured, weak body

was instantly healed, and he ran like a deer into the jungle. For weeks he walked through the deadly African jungle, guided past the venomous snakes and fierce predators by a supernatural light, illuminating his path all night long. The light led him to a settlement near Monrovia, Liberia. This was the one area in all of Northwest Africa which was safe from the slave trade that flourished back then in the late nineteenth century.

Kavoo got a job as a plantation worker where another Kru tribesman worked. Soon he overheard a white woman teaching about Saul of Tarsus, who was converted when he saw a blinding light from heaven. He became excited, and exclaimed, "That's the same light that brought me here!"

The woman was Miss Knolls, from Fort Wayne, Indiana. She taught him from the Bible, and also taught him to speak and read the English language. Kavoo still suffered feelings of inferiority, after the years of torture he had endured. He prayed and prayed in agony to the Heavenly Father, until the workers in the hut made him go out in the jungle to pray. One night, he prayed until midnight, and then returned to his bunk, still seeking God. Suddenly, the room was filled with light, and the burden lifted. He knew he was adopted by God, and he shouted with joy until everyone was awake. Miss Knoll baptized him in the river, and gave him a Christian name. Since he was her first convert, she gave this homely African boy the name of a Christian banker in Fort Wayne, Samuel Morris.

Soon, Samuel led another boy to the Lord. Amazingly, this boy was also from

the Kru tribe, and he had also been captured by the same chief that had taken Kavoo. He had witnessed the light that

had set Kavoo free, and he was able to verify the amazing story of supernatural deliverance.

Samuel Morris: Coming to America

Samuel Morris began his short life as a native African boy named Kavoo who had been captured and tortured for ransom by a rival chieftain. But a blinding light came out of the sky, and God instantly healed his body, and led him through the jungle to a settlement in Liberia, where he heard the Gospel and was gloriously saved. His name was changed to Samuel Morris by the missionary.

When he heard about the baptism in the Holy Spirit, young Samuel read his Bible diligently, and asked for all the information he could get. It was the turn of the century, and not too many Christians were Pentecostal, or understood speaking in tongues. Finally, someone told him of a man who knew about the Holy Ghost baptism. He was Stephen Merritt from New York. Samuel said, "I will go to New York to see this man."

Samuel went to the docks, and asked a merchant captain for passage to America. The man was a harsh and coarse seaman, and he had no use for a homely black boy. But Samuel stayed by the shore for three days, fasting and praying. God arranged for some of the crewmen to desert, and the captain needed an extra hand. He would work for his fare.

When he got on board, he saw the cabin boy lying on the deck. He had been injured, and could not walk. Samuel, with simple faith, reached out and laid hands on him. The boy was instantly healed. At first, Samuel was treated with rough cruelty by the captain and crew. He became deathly ill working in the rigging, so he prayed and asked God to give him another job. The cabin boy soon asked him to trade jobs and he went joyfully to

work cleaning the captain's filthy quarters. He did every task as unto the Lord, and soon the man realized that he now had a faithful servant. Still, he kicked and beat him at will.

The captain provided the crew with plenty of rum, which resulted in many brawls. One especially wicked Malay crewman was attacking a shipmate with a cutlass, when little Sammy stepped in front of him and said, "Don't kill, don't kill." The man hated black people, and had vowed to kill the boy. But now, he could not. The cutlass froze in his hand, and he simply walked away.

The captain saw that this frail and homely boy was not only a prayer warrior, but a peace maker. He became the first man on the ship to give his heart to the Lord. When the vicious Malay was later on his deathbed from illness, Samuel prayed for him, and he was healed. The big brute became devoted to Sammy, and to his God. Gradually, many of the rough, pagan sailors were won to Jesus by the little African, and they joyfully learned to sing Christian songs and to pray with their spiritual leader.

God began to prosper the merchant ship during the five month trip to New York. In fact, as a direct result of Sammy's prayers, God delivered the ship and crew from a hoard of natives who tried to kill the crew and loot the ship. When they arrived at the harbor in New York, the crew took up a collection to outfit their new friend with the best clothes they could find for him, and wept openly as he left them. Their lives were dramatically changed.

Samuel Morris: Life in America

Samuel Morris began his short life as a native African boy named Kavoo who had been captured and tortured for ransom by a rival chieftain. But a blinding light came out of the sky, and God instantly healed his body, and led him through the jungle to a settlement in Liberia, where he heard the Gospel and was saved. His name was changed to Samuel Morris by the missionary.

Sammy heard about the baptism in the Holy Ghost, and he desperately wanted the experience for himself. He was told that a man named Stephen Merritt from New York could tell him about it. Samuel said, "I will go to New York to see him."

Samuel went to the docks, and obtained passage on a merchant ship in exchange for work as a cabin boy. During the five months on the ship, Samuel won the captain and many of the rough sailors to the Lord with his faithful life and powerful prayers. When he arrived in New York, he found a carriage driver to take him to Mr. Merritt's. Amazingly, the man knew just where to go. Samuel had no money, but he confidently said, "Mr. Merritt will pay the fare." When he arrived, Mr. Merritt was just leaving for a meeting. He told Sammy to wait for him at the mission across the street, and went on. That night, he returned to the mission to see an amazing sight. There was Sammy, praying with great intensity, surrounded by seventeen rough men who were all on their knees asking for God's forgiveness. Although he was still struggling with English, he won seventeen men to Jesus his first day in America.

The Merritt family took this homely black boy into their home, and were

challenged and blessed by his meek spirit and his great faith. Samuel, on the other hand, had never seen such luxury. He had never slept in a real bed, or sat at such a table to eat. The Merritts took him to a clothing shop and replaced the rough clothes the sailors had donated with fine new clothes.

Later, Mr. Merritt took Samuel with him to a meeting, along with two dignified preachers. When they saw him, they expected him to hop out and walk behind the coach. They were indignant when Mr. Merritt allowed him to ride with them. But as they went along, talking about the city and the sights, Samuel finally said, "Please, talk to me about Jesus. I would like to pray." As he prayed, the Holy Spirit came into the carriage, and the hearts of the men were moved as they realized their lack of faith.

When Samuel was asked to speak, he was not impressive, except for his praying. When he prayed, people began to weep with conviction, and would flock to the altar. It was not long before a group in Mr. Merritt's church had taken up an offering to send Samuel to Fort Wayne, Indiana to attend Taylor University and study for the ministry.

In Fort Wayne, the teenager from Africa touched the lives of everyone with his passion for God and his simple faith. He laid his hands on the sick, and they recovered. He worked hard, and studied diligently. But the harsh Indiana winter proved too much for his frail body. He worked very hard, and neglected to dress warm enough when he went outdoors. He went on to see Jesus face to face, still a teenager, in 1893.

George Müller's Prayer Life

George Müller was a nineteenth century English pastor who is remembered today as one of the greatest men of faith and prayer in history. He and his wife began to help the orphans and other destitute people who came to their door for help in their desperate need. While the Müllers were not at all wealthy, they realized that their Heavenly Father was, and they learned to look to Him for the needs of others.

Mr. Müller prayed for hours each day, often for basic daily necessities. One day there was no food at all for the children, but they gathered in the dining hall and prayed a prayer of thanksgiving for God's faithful provision. When the prayer was ended, there was a knock at the door. A baker sheepishly told them that he had felt a strong urge to get up during the night and bake extra bread. Would they be able to use it? As they joyfully carried in the fresh bread, a milkman came to the door and said that his horse-drawn milk wagon had broken down in front of the orphanage, and asked if they would kindly take the milk so he could move the empty wagon to a repair shop. Such testimonies abounded in the life of this unusual man of faith.

Pastor Müller also founded the Scriptural Knowledge Institute for Home and Abroad. Eventually he established 5 homes for orphans which cared for over 121,000 young people over the years. At

one point he was feeding and caring for 2,100 orphans daily.

George Müller felt a deep desire to show people the power of prayer, and he purposed to support his many ministry organizations through prayer. He made it a point never to ask people for money or even to tell them of the needs. He would go to God on his knees, and people would come to him, often saying, "Mr. Müller, I feel impressed to give you this money." Often, the people would be unsaved business people in the community, but they were moved by the Lord to support His work.

Over a period of 63 years, George Müller raised over seven and one-half million dollars for the ministry, just by private prayer. During his ministry he was given nearly \$500,000 in personal gifts, most of which he immediately gave to the institute. When he died at the age of 93, he left an estate of less than \$1,000.

It is said that beside George Müller's bed were found two deep grooves in the hardwood floor where his knees had been for thousands of hours. He read the Bible through more than 200 times, and half of his Bible-reading time was on his knees. He lived a full, happy life, knowing that he had been responsible for thousands of souls in God's Kingdom, primarily because he had learned the power of prayer.

No One Ever Told Me

In 1977, an American evangelist named Euley Hudson was on a preaching trip around the world. He stopped in Hawaii for a few days. He sat for some time in the motel lobby, writing and reading. The manager noticed him, and engaged him in polite conversation. He said, "You are not like other people who come here." The preacher said, "How's that?" "Well, you have been writing for a long time, and I haven't seen you smoke or go in the bar."

Brother Hudson explained that he was a Christian evangelist, and that he was not on vacation. As he spoke about the Lord, the man became amazed about the fact that he thought Jesus was so great. They talked for hours, and the preacher told him about the plan of salvation. As his taxi arrived to take him to the airport, the manager said, "Sir, please tell me one thing. I am 66 years old. I have seen hundreds of thousands of people pass through here. Why is it that no one has told me about Jesus before?"

A few days later, he was in Hong Kong, giving some bread to a very old Chinese woman who spoke excellent English. As he told her about the love of Jesus and the plan of salvation, she began to cry. She said, "Why has no one ever told me about Jesus before?"

Next, he went to Bombay, India. A man came to him and said, "Sir, my daughter is very sick with a fever. Will you come and pray for her?" The family was Hindu, and they were too poor to send the girl to a hospital. In India, life is

devalued. The people take far better care of cows than they do of children, and many die of starvation every day, while the cows are fat and pampered. The 13-year-old girl had been sick for some time, and was dying. But the man had seen the preacher pray for the sick, and he said, "If your God can heal my girl, we will believe that He is the God we should serve."

The preacher had everyone in the room join hands as he prayed. Suddenly, the girl, who had been unconscious, rose up and asked for her clothes. Everyone left the room so she could dress, and then she walked out herself. Everyone there said, "The missionary has brought us the real God." The mother, who was a nurse, said, "I must go to the hospital and get back to work. With tears streaming down her face, she kissed the preacher on the cheek, and said, "Why did no one ever tell us about your God before?" They too had lived their whole lives without hearing the story of Jesus even once. When they heard, and saw the power of God, they quickly and gladly believed.

In his travels to 56 countries of the world, evangelist Hudson has heard that question many times. Why do most Christians go about their daily lives, mingling with all the unsaved people around them, and never ask them if they know Jesus, or if they have heard the Gospel? There are many who would believe, if they could only hear the Gospel and see the love and power of God demonstrated in the life of a genuine Christian.

The Story of "Rock of Ages"

Augustus Montague Toplady was a fine English gentleman who lived about two centuries ago. At the young age of 36, he was dying of consumption. His doctor examined him one day, and said, "Your pulse is becoming weaker." "That is a good sign," said the poet, "that my death is fast approaching; and I can add that my heart beats every day stronger and stronger for glory." Unlike unsaved people who are terrified at the thought of death, he welcomed it as a friend, knowing that it would mean an end of his sufferings, and eternity in heaven.

As he lay on his deathbed, Mr. Toplady wrote the poem "Rock of Ages." He originally entitled it "A Living and Dying Prayer for the Holiest Believer in the World." Now, he was not claiming to be that person. His thought was that even the holiest person in the world had to rely on God's grace for salvation, and could not have the hope of heaven on the basis of his good works.

The great poem, which has become one of the best-loved and most sung hymns in history, included the words:

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
 Let my hide myself in Thee.
 Let the water and the blood,
 From thy riven side which flowed,
 Be of sin the double cure,
 Save from wrath, and make me pure.

Not the labour of my hands,
 Can fulfill thy law's demands;
 Could my zeal no respite know,
 Could my tears forever flow,
 All for sin could not atone.
 Thou must save, and thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring.
 Simply to the cross I cling.
 Naked, come to thee for dress;
 Helpless, look to thee for grace;
 Foul, I to the fountain fly:
 Wash me Savior, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
 When my eyestrings break in death,
 When I soar through tracts unknown,
 See thee on thy judgment throne,
 Rock of Ages, cleft for me.
 Let my hide myself in thee."

The dying poet saw a picture in his mind of a great cleft in the rock, which was a shelter from the driving storms of life. He pictured himself as a fleeting bird, with

no ability to withstand the danger apart from the protection of the Rock.

Many people have been known to sing this great hymn at the time of their own death, or in times of mortal peril. When the steamship London sank in the Bay of Biscay in 1866, a man who survived reported that the passengers were singing it together as the ship went down. A few years later, another ship was on fire in New York harbor, and the people were forced into the water, many without life

jackets. One famous singer was there with his wife. As he was putting her life jacket on, a man rushed up and grabbed it out of his hands. They were forced immediately into the water. Soon, she said, "I cannot hold on any longer." As they struggled in the cold sea, in his agony, he began to sing "Rock of Ages." Many others joined in. Some gained strength to hold on until they were rescued, and others went into eternity with the song echoing in their minds. "Rock of Ages" ministers to many Christians yet today.

The Story of C. I. Scofield

Cyrus Scofield was born in Michigan in 1843. The writer of the Scofield Study Bible had a difficult early life. His mother died giving him birth. As she was dying, she prayed that God would make him a minister. His family moved to Tennessee, where he received an elementary education. As a boy, Cyrus had a thirst for knowledge. He was always asking questions, especially about new subjects. Although his father and stepmother were Christians, he was only superficially religious. He listened to the Bible, but thought of it only in terms of history and stories, rather than the life-changing Gospel.

By the time Cyrus was ready for college, the Civil War had begun. At the age of seventeen, he joined the Confederate Army. He was an excellent horseman, and was frequently given the task of delivering messages under fire. He was awarded often for his bravery.

After the war, he studied law in St. Louis, and was admitted to the bar in Kansas in 1869. He was elected to the Kansas State Legislature, and was later appointed a United States district attorney. He then returned to St. Louis to practice the law profession there. In all of these career moves, Cyrus was still not a believer. He became more involved in sin as his successes came. He had been a social drinker. But his drinking increased, to the point that he was becoming a drunkard.

But his family was praying for him. As a result, God brought a man named Tom

McPheeters into his life. Tom worked with the YMCA. In those days, the YMCA was very evangelistic. It was indeed the Young Men's Christian Association, which existed for the purpose of leading young men and boys to Jesus, and training them for service. Tom prayed for Cyrus, and won him to the Lord.

Cyrus became very active in the church, and was ordained into the ministry in Dallas in 1883, where he was asked to be the pastor of a Congregational church. He studied the Bible diligently. He applied the same thirst for knowledge to the Bible that he had demonstrated in secular life. Since his training was in law, rather than the Bible, he decided to try to develop the kind of Bible that he would have wanted to use as an untrained church worker. He developed the Scofield annotated Bible, with notes and updates built into the King James version. He was influenced by frequent talks with Hudson Taylor, the great missionary to China. He and his wife made frequent trips to England, where he studied in the famed Oxford libraries. When his Bible was finished, it was published by the Oxford University Press in 1909. This was his great achievement, and the work that gave him fame to this day. Though not as learned in Greek and Hebrew as many Bible scholars are today, Scofield is still honored as a pioneer who sought to make the Bible understood by the common man. Though he died in 1919, he is still remembered today for this achievement.

The Story of Squanto

The Pilgrims who came to America on the Mayflower were Christians, whose primary purpose was to escape religious oppression and persecution from the Church of England. Though they met with many hardships, God sustained them, often through miraculous means.

After landing on Cape Cod in 1620, they found a wonderful location which was near a deep bay in the ocean, and was blessed by four spring-fed creeks. There was even a field with twenty acres of land cleared for crops, but it had not been tilled in several years. They were amazed that such a choice spot could be uninhabited, but so it was.

That winter was extremely difficult. They did not have the provisions to last through it, and many died in the harsh New England winter. The leader, William Bradford, lost his wife, who drowned in the sea -- although it is not clear why she died. By March, 47 of the 102 who had come from England had died.

One day, Captain Miles Standish was meeting with the men in the common house when someone said, "Indian coming." "Shouldn't that be, Indians coming?" someone asked. No. It was one lone Indian, who asked if they had any beer. His name was Samoset, and he spoke fluent English. He had ridden with English vessels up and down the coast, simply because he loved to travel. Samoset informed the pilgrims that the territory they had settled had been the home of the Patuxets, a large and hostile Indian tribe that had been wiped out by a strange disease. Other tribes believed it to be the work of an evil spirit, so they left the place alone. It was actually the safest

and nicest location they could have found in America.

The next week, Samoset returned with another Indian, who was the last of the Patuxets. His name was Squanto. In 1605, he and four others had been captured by English explorers, and taken to England where they were questioned. After nine years in England, he came back to the Patuxets with Captain John Smith. As Smith sailed away, another British captain, Thomas Hunt, came to them and lured 20 of them onto his ship. He put them in chains, and took them to Malaga, a port off the coast of Spain, to be sold as slaves. A few of them, including Squanto, were bought by some friars who taught them the Christian faith.

Squanto was then able to get back to England, and in 1619, he returned to his home. There, he was crushed to find that everyone had died. He wandered aimlessly, and then settled in the Massasoit's camp. He had lost all reason for living.

When Squanto learned about the suffering pilgrims from England, his countenance changed. He went to them, and began to teach them everything they needed to know to survive and thrive in this harsh wilderness. He taught them to fish, trap, and hunt. He showed them how to plant corn, using fish as fertilizer. He taught them to harvest maple syrup from the trees, and which plants were edible. He taught them all the skills they needed, and even guided them in their trading ventures.

God had sovereignly prepared this amazing man to be the teacher and guide

these Christians would need to survive. He found his purpose and fulfillment in helping these dedicated and grateful

people, and earned a place in American history as God's man for the hour.

The Story of George Washington's Prayer Life

George Washington was born in 1731, and became known as the father of his country. He was not technically the first president of the United States, because the nation really began in 1776, and the president of the Continental Congress for the first twelve years was a dedicated Christian man of courage named John Hancock. But after the Constitution was ratified in 1789, George Washington became the first official president of the new nation, serving two terms by unanimous vote. The people were so pleased with the military commander who had led the Revolution that they would have gladly made him president for life, but he humbly limited the presidency to eight years.

George Washington was descended from a long line of strong Christians, and was greatly influenced by his godly mother. His lifelong habit was to spend two hours alone each day in prayer and Bible reading. He also loved to talk to others about the things of God. Those who knew him personally always recognized that George Washington was an extremely humble man who was faithful to God in prayer. He considered the Bible to be the absolute essential element in government, and declared that it would be impossible to rightly govern any people without God and the Bible. In his farewell address, he said, "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to good government, religion and morality are the inseparable and necessary pillars and support. Let not that man claim the name of patriotism who seeks to undermine those pillars."

When George Washington was just twenty years old, he began writing down

some of his prayers. He developed a book of prayers, which give rich insights into the heart of this godly man. Here is a sample of his prayers:

"Most Gracious Lord God, from whom proceedeth every good and perfect gift, I offer to thy divine majesty my unfeigned praise and thanksgiving for all thy mercies towards me. Thou mad'st me at first and hast ever since sustained the work of thy own hand; thou gav'st thy Son to die for me; and hast given me assurance of salvation, upon my repentance and sincerely endeavoring to conform my life to his holy precepts and example. Thou art pleased to lengthen out to me the time of repentance and to move me to it by thy spirit and by thy word, by thy mercies, and by thy judgments; out of a deepness of thy mercies, and my own unworthiness, I do appear before thee at this time....Suffer me not to be drawn from thee, by the blandishments of the world, carnal desires, the cunning of the devil, or deceitfulness of sin. Work in me thy good will and pleasure, and discharge my mind from all things that are displeasing to thee, of all ill will and discontent, wrath and bitterness, pride and vain conceit of myself, and render me charitable, pure, holy, patient and heavenly minded."

When George Washington was leading the ragtag American army through the bitter winter at Valley Forge, he devoted much time to private but fervent prayers. He sought not only divine guidance, but supernatural assistance. He wrote later that he had been visited by an angel while there, who told him that he would be successful in the Revolutionary War, and that a "Union" would be established as a mighty nation. He was also told that

within the first century of the new nation, a bloody civil war would come between the North and the South, and that the North would win and preserve the Union.

On the last day of his life, he sent everyone out of his room so he could

spend one more precious hour alone with God. When his assistant came in, he sighed, "tis well." He closed his eyes, folded his arms, and said, "Father of mercies, receive me to thyself," and died.

The Story of Washington and the Tory

During the winter of 1777 and 1778, the young American army was encamped in Valley Forge. The new nation had declared independence from the oppressive British government, and was desperately fighting against overwhelming military power to crush their resistance. It was a bitterly cold winter, and the men were poorly equipped. Few had adequate clothing, and some had no shoes. They shivered in tents, and had little to eat. Many died from exposure, and morale was low. But General Washington kept praying and seeking God for guidance, and the Lord saw them through.

One day, a Tory (an American who was loyal to the British) was captured and taken to the camp at Valley Forge. His name was Michael Wittman, and he was accused of having carried aid and information to the British in Philadelphia. It was proven that he had done great harm to the American army, and he was court-martialed. He was pronounced guilty of spying for the enemy, and was sentenced to be hanged.

The evening before the execution, an old man with long white hair appeared at the camp. He told the guards that his name was Peter Miller, and that he wanted to speak with Mr. Washington. He said, "General Washington, I have a great favor to ask of you. Washington replied, "I shall be pleased to grant you almost anything, for you have done us many favors in the past. Make your request."

Peter replied, "I hear that Michael Wittman has been found guilty of treason, and is to be hanged tomorrow. I have come to ask you to pardon him."

"That's impossible," the general said. "Wittman is an evil man, who has done all in his power to betray us. He has even offered to join the British army. We dare not be lenient with traitors. I cannot pardon your friend."

"Friend?" cried Peter Miller. "He is no friend of mine. He is my bitterest enemy. He has persecuted me for years. He has even beaten me and spit in my face, knowing full well that I would not strike back, since I am a Christian. Michael Wittman is no friend of mine."

"Then why, sir, do you wish him pardoned?"

"I ask it because Jesus did as much for me," was the old man's answer.

Washington turned away, and disappeared into another room. He returned shortly with a paper, which he signed, declaring a full pardon for Michael Wittman.

"My dear friend," he said, "I thank you for this fine example of Christian charity. God bless you."

The Boyhood of Smith Wigglesworth

In 1868 Smith Wigglesworth was a boy of nine who was confirmed at an early age in the Episcopal church. His father was not a church-goer; but he sent his children, because his favorite drinking buddy at the English "pub" was the pastor. Young Smith was deeply moved by the experience of the laying on of hands, and was hungry for God. He could not understand the way other boys were cursing and acting as if there was no eternity. He loved church, and deeply desired to read the Bible. But he could not, because from the time he was old enough to attend school, he had been forced by poverty to work 12 hours a day at the mill.

When he was 13 years old, his family moved to Bradford, England. There he went to the Wesleyan Methodist Church where there was a good move of God among the people. During some special meetings seven boys were asked to give a 15 minute testimony or speech. For 3 weeks Smith lived in prayer, and he was mightily anointed to share when his time came to speak. He quickly gained the respect of the Christians in the area as a young man with a burning zeal for God.

He was full of joy, and had a burning desire to win the lost to Jesus Christ. He was constantly sharing with other boys about Jesus with great enthusiasm, even though he was often mocked and treated roughly by the neighborhood bullies. He loved to carry a Bible, even though he could read only a little.

When he was 16 years old, he joined the Salvation Army, which was the most aggressive soul-winning group in the area. The army members would fast and pray diligently for souls, and dozens of people

came to the Lord every week as a result of their prayerful witnessing. At times the group would pray specifically for 50 or 100 souls for the week, and God always helped them to see the goal accomplished.

While working in the mill, he met a godly man from the Plymouth Brethren Church who taught him about the importance of water baptism, and about the Second Coming of Christ. The man was a plumber, and he took young Smith under his wing and taught him his craft.

When he was 18, he applied for work as a plumber with a local builder. The man said, "Sorry, we're not hiring." But there was something about this young man that caused the builder to give him a chance. He sent Smith to install plumbing in a row of homes, which he finished in a week. The man was amazed, and Smith gained the reputation as an excellent plumber. He began to earn a good wage, but he spent most of his income on orphans or the homeless children who gathered around him to hear him teach about his beloved Jesus. Hundreds of these children were won to the Lord through the zeal of this godly young plumber.

The Salvation Army often asked him to speak for their meetings, even though he was not a very good speaker. In fact, he spent much of the speaking time weeping as words would fail him when he would be overcome by emotion. Smith Wigglesworth worked hard, prayed much, and won many hundreds of souls to the Lord as a teenager. He was a mighty soul-winner for the Lord, and many miracles accompanied his ministry.

Smith Wigglesworth: Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Smith Wigglesworth was a plumber in 19th century England who was a zealous and faithful Christian. He had great faith in God, but had not learned about the Baptism in the Holy Spirit as a young man. One day, an older man hobbled to his home and asked for help. He said, "If my people knew I were coming here, they would never let me come. You have the worst reputation of any man I know of. But I believe you're a good man. Please put your hand on my leg." Smith did so, and found that it felt like a log, not a leg. "It's cancer. My whole leg is cancerous, and I am dying. Please help me."

Smith prayed, and the Lord told him that if he would fast and pray for seven days, his leg would be healed. Four days later, the man came bounding to the house, saying, "I am perfectly healed!" On his next visit, the man gave a large offering to Smith's daughter, because he heard that she was going to Africa as a missionary. He then turned to Mr. Wigglesworth and said, "Have you heard the latest? They are receiving the Baptism in the Holy Ghost in Sunderland, and speaking in other tongues." He invited Smith to go at his expense, for they were both interested in receiving more from God.

Upon their arrival in Sunderland, they were greeted by some friends who had moved there. These Christian friends wanted to protect them from this Pentecostal "heresy," so they gave them false reports about what was happening. Smith said, "Let's pray." He prayed earnestly, and afterwards the friends quietly said, "Don't pay any heed to what we have said. Obey the Lord."

The two men went to a Salvation Army service, saying, "We want to know about the speaking in tongues here." The officer there said, "That's all of the devil." Later, they attended some of the meetings in the Episcopal church where some were testifying about being baptized in the Holy Ghost and speaking in tongues. Smith said, "Let me hear these tongues. I want to receive it just like they did on the day of Pentecost in the Bible." No one would speak in tongues for him; but they were invited to a prayer meeting where people were tarrying for the Baptism. It was a wonderful prayer meeting that lasted until 2:30 in the morning, but he still did not hear anyone speaking in tongues. He had lost his hotel key, so he stayed with an Indian friend in his hotel, where they prayed the rest of the night.

After four more days of prayer, he felt that he should return home. He went to the home of the Episcopal Vicar to say good-bye. The Vicar's wife, Mrs. Boddy, was home. Smith said to her, "I still haven't received tongues yet." She replied, "You don't need to seek tongues. You need the Baptism!" "But I have the Baptism," he protested. "I just haven't spoken in tongues." She then laid hands on him and left the room. The fire of God fell on him, and Smith Wigglesworth cried, "Clean, clean, clean!" He was filled with joy, and could not speak in English. He spoke in tongues as the Spirit gave him utterance. He had received supernatural anointings in the past, and had great faith. He thought before that he had received the Baptism in the Holy Ghost; but now he knew that this was the real Baptism, just like in the book of Acts in the Bible.

The Story of Moses Vegh

Frank Vegh was born in a small Hungarian village in 1900. He was taught in a Reformed school, while his future wife attended a Catholic school. In 1928 they emigrated with their three small sons to Canada, and settled in Windsor, Ontario. In 1933, Julianna Vegh gave birth to their seventh son, and they named him Moses. They eventually raised nine sons and one daughter.

The Veghs were devoted Christians, and Papa Vegh served as a Nazarene pastor for many years. In those days, most preachers had to work in secular jobs, because few congregations could support a pastor full time. From the time Moses was very young, he would walk a quarter mile down the road to his grandmother's house. She had no electricity or running water in the house, but she was a godly woman. Each evening, Moses and one or two of his brothers would sit by the fireplace and listen to Grandma teach them hymns and Bible stories. She instilled in them the fear of the Lord as much as she could, and laid a spiritual foundation which reinforced the Christian heritage and work ethics of their parents.

During World War II, some of the older Vegh boys served in the military. Although they had picked up such vices as smoking and drinking, they always respected their parents; and they would come home at night and kneel by their beds to pray, even when they were drunk. An older brother, Bill, had been sent home from the navy because his foot had been crushed on the ship. One night Bill sawed off his cast, squeezed his foot into a small shoe to hold the bones together, and went to a movie theater with some friends. They saw a war scene in which a church

was being destroyed. As Bill's friends laughed and mocked the church, conviction overwhelmed him, and he ran out of the theater. He gave his heart to the Lord, and began to witness to his brothers.

One evening, while taking some cousins home from a gathering, Bill stopped the '29 Durant car, and announced, "We're going to pray. If there's anyone here who doesn't want to pray, he can get out now and walk." Thirteen-year-old Moses knew that he was the only unsaved person in the car, and that he was talking about him. Bill was fired up about God, and had been praying fervently for his younger brother. Bill finally parked the car beside a side road, and everyone began to pray. Young Moses saw a vision of a long corridor leading to his heart, with trumpeters on both sides. He saw the Lord, and repented of his sins. As the Lord came into his life, he saw demons fleeing in all directions. He had not even realized he was in bondage, until God set him free. The glory of God filled the old car, and he saw his cousins as if it was daylight, even though it was midnight.

They boys got home at 4:00 in the morning. Bill said, "Moses, we're not through yet. You need the baptism in the Holy Ghost. We'll start praying tomorrow." The next day, they went to the old mission and began to tarry for the Holy Ghost. They prayed all day long. Moses saw another vision of Jesus. He was coming to him in a stream of water, and said, "Will you follow me?" He gladly responded with a willing heart to be baptized in water, and immediately he was filled with the Holy Spirit, and spoke in a heavenly language. From that day on,

Moses Vegh spoke in tongues every day,
and had a ministry which was

characterized by supernatural power and
prophetic insight.

The Story of Bill and Moses Vegh

Frank Vegh was a Hungarian preacher who had emigrated to Canada in 1928. He and his wife had nine sons and one daughter.

Before World War II, many preachers, including Pastor Vegh, believed that the radio was "the devil's tool," and taught their people to avoid the carnal device. But brother Lou was very clever with electronics, and he built his own crystal set. The boys would go to their upstairs room and set up the contraption, where they eagerly listened to some of their favorite radio dramas and comedians.

One day young Moses went quietly up to the room to listen to the radio, and he saw his father listening on the headphones to Rev. Charles Fuller and his great choir on their weekly broadcast. He had never heard such music, and tears dropped down his cheeks. Soon, the Veghs had an old used radio in their living room, and listening to the radio became a favorite family activity. Every week, they faithfully listened to Mrs. Beall from Detroit, who presented her program called "America to Your Knees."

Mrs. Beall pastored a strong Pentecostal church, and many of the boys from the congregation went to serve in World War II. She not only prayed for them every day, but she called the nation to prayer. Mom Beall had made a covenant with God. She prayed that God would bring all the boys home safely from the war,

including her own son Jim. Amazingly, not one of the young men on her prayer list was killed.

One of the Vegh boys from Windsor, Ontario, was sent home with a broken foot, but God used that to bring him to salvation. He was dramatically saved, and began to lead his brothers to the Lord as well. With the help of his teenage brother Moses, and some others, Bill began to pastor his own church.

The Vegh boys were hungry for God, and were eager to be involved in spiritual things. They heard that there was a prophet named Brother Heebner in Toledo, Ohio. Bill and Moses fasted and prayed, and made the long trip to Toledo. When they arrived, they found that the man was out of town. They were very discouraged that the prophet would not know that they were coming. They went back to the mission in Windsor, and prayed. One of the young men began to prophesy, and the spirit of prophecy came on all of them. They began to exercise spiritual gifts, even though there was little understanding of such supernatural things in those days.

Several of the Veghs entered the ministry, but Moses was to become the most prominent preacher in the family. He later became the pastor of a great church in Findlay, Ohio. Pastor Vegh is currently serving in Budapest, Hungary with his wife, Betty.

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.

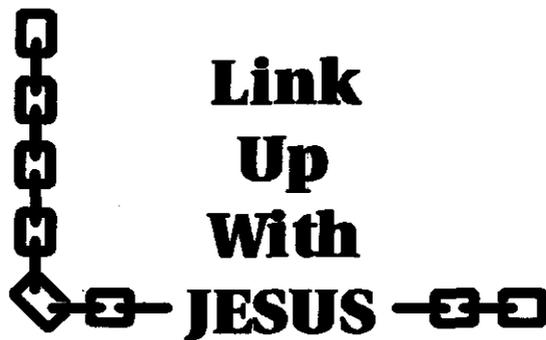
Our promotions are designed to motivate our young people to attend both church and the School of the Bible on a regular basis; to bring their Bibles with them; to bring their tithes and offerings faithfully; to bring their friends to Sunday School on a regular basis; to learn the importance of giving 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.

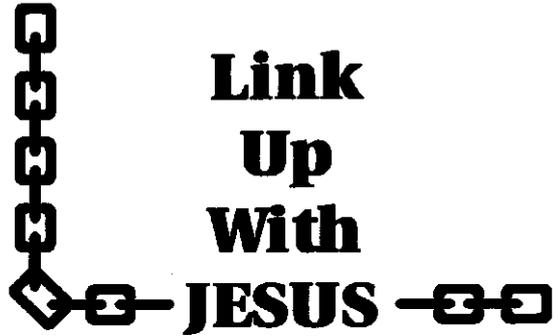
When a student brings his or her Bible, record the date in the appropriate section of the Point Chart, complete the information on the "Brought a Bible" link, and add it to the chain.

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

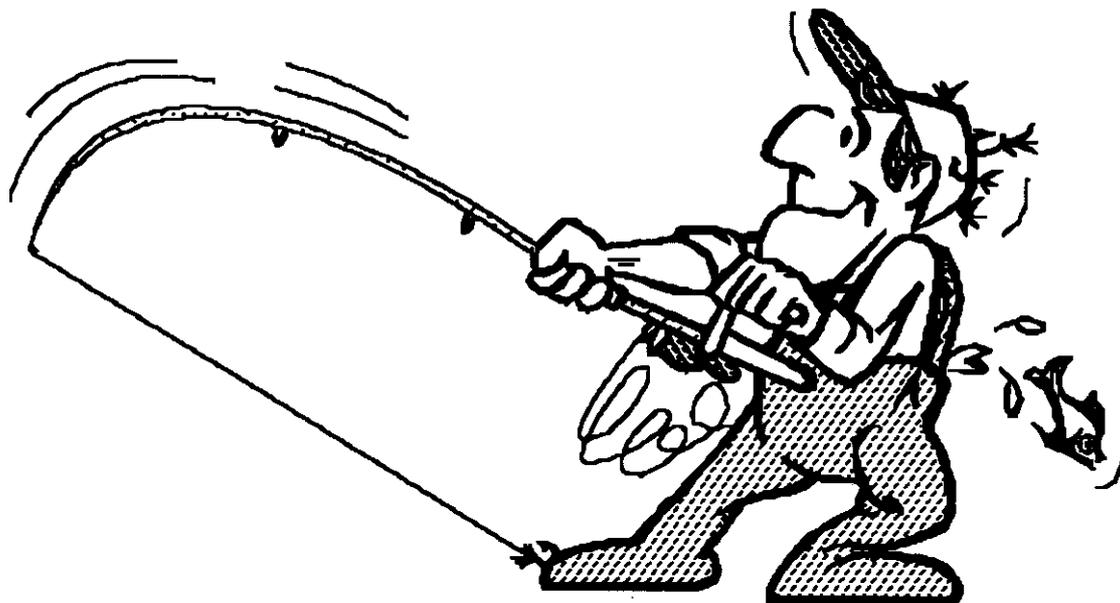
We can fulfill the command of our Lord by ministering to those who are in need.



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.

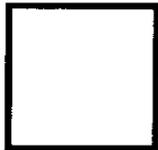

**Link
Up
With
JESUS**


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".

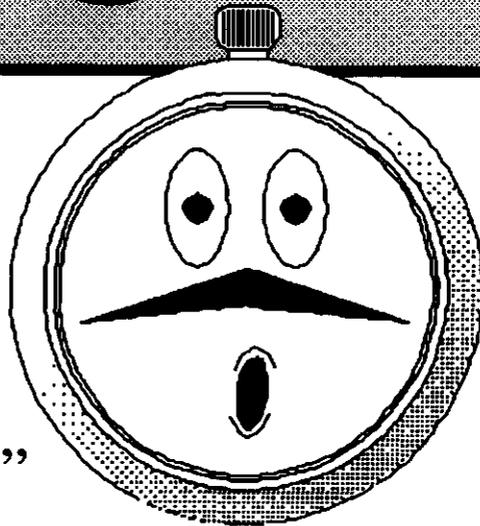


**Time is
getting short**

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.

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Brought the Bible

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

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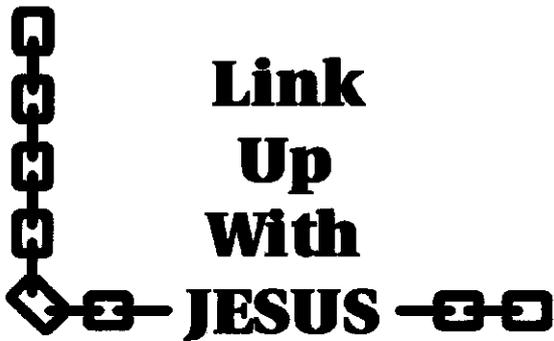
Brought a Friend

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

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Qualified for Bonus Points?

Award 5 links.



**Link
Up
With**

JESUS

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.

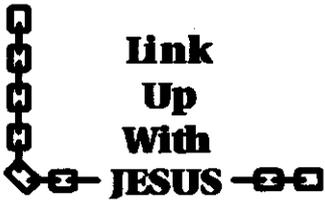
- Matt. 1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS.
- Matt. 1:21 ...for he shall save his people from their sins.
- Matt. 3:2 Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
- Matt 5:44 Love your enemies, bless them that curse you.
- Matt. 5:44 ...do good to them that hate 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.



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Brought a Visitor

Name _____

Date _____



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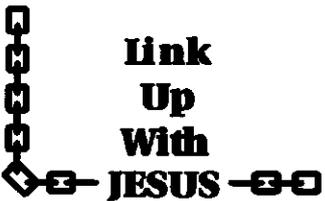


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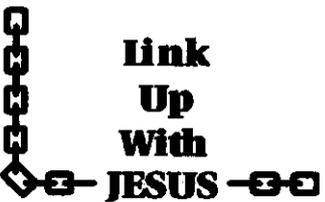


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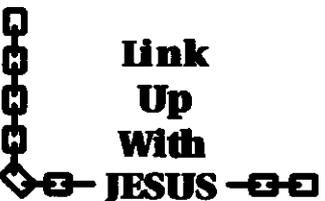


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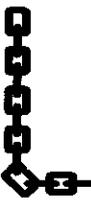
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Verse: _____

Name _____

Date _____



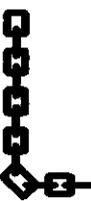
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Verse: _____

Name _____

Date _____



**Link
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With**

JESUS

Attendance

Name _____

Date _____



**Link
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JESUS

Attendance

Name _____

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Attendance

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**Link
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With**

JESUS

Brought a Bible

Name _____

Date _____

Fuel 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



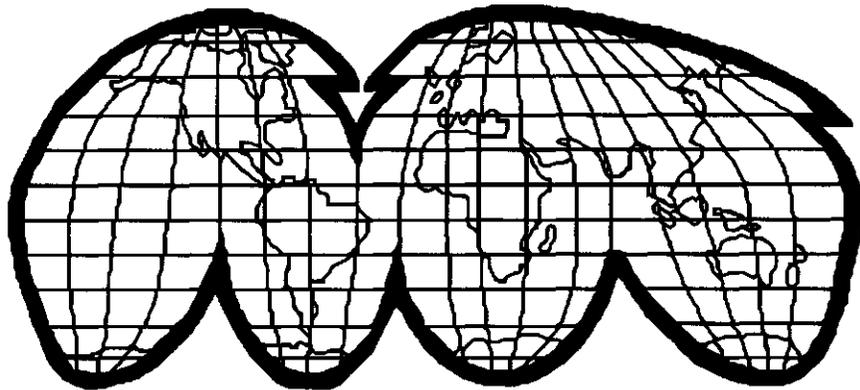
Anyone in the world who needs to know Jesus as their Savior.

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**

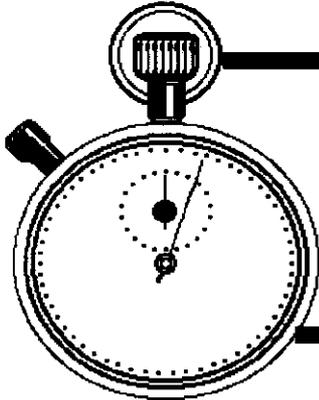
**Students Earning
120 Total
Points Receive:**

**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 *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.



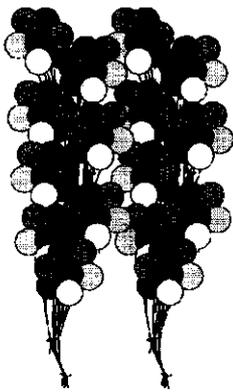
Fuel the Flame

Point Tally

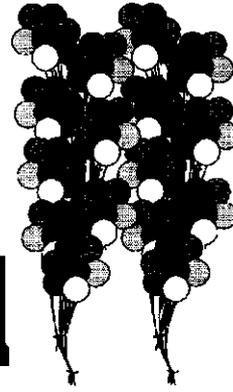
Name _____

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						



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

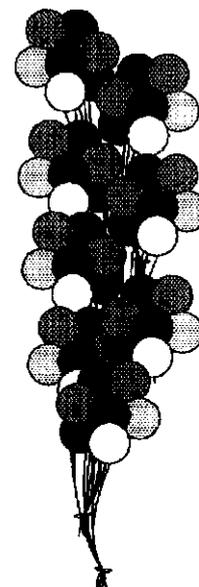
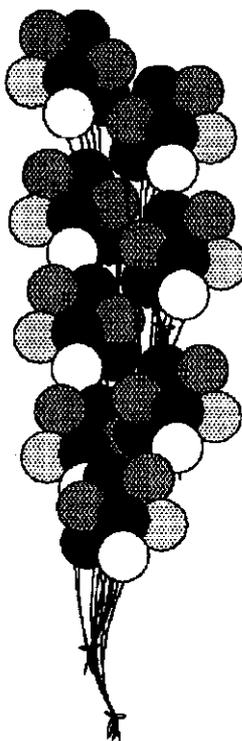
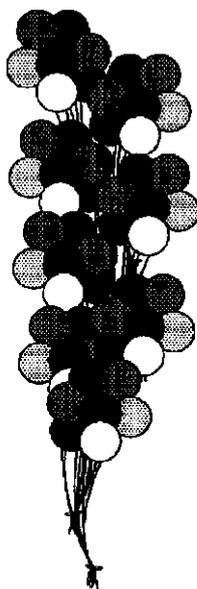
Prizes

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:

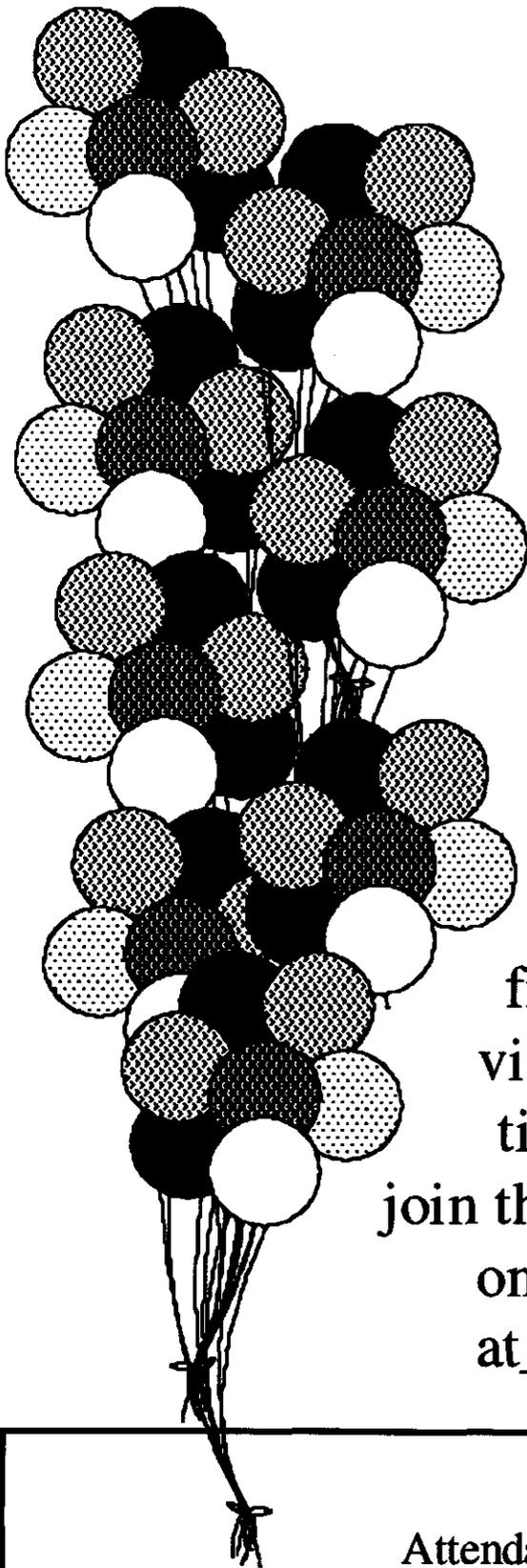
Time:

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

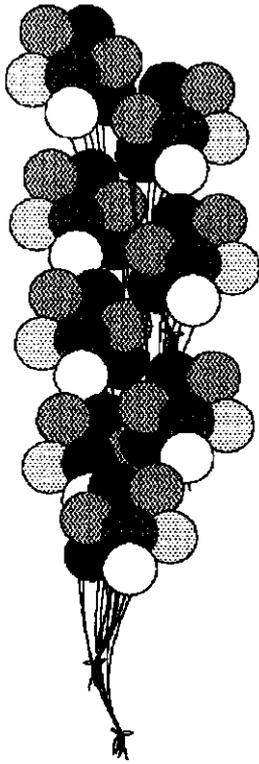


Only
Weeks to
go in the
Fall Fun
Festival
Contest

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.



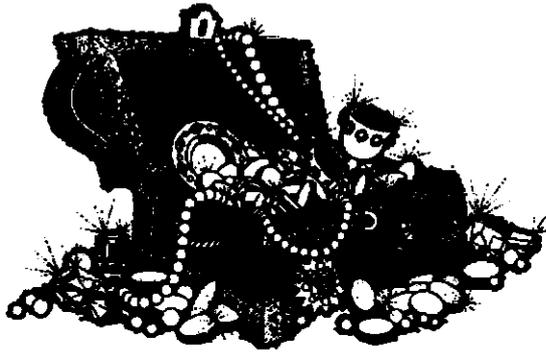
Fall Fun Festival Ticket Certificate

(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!

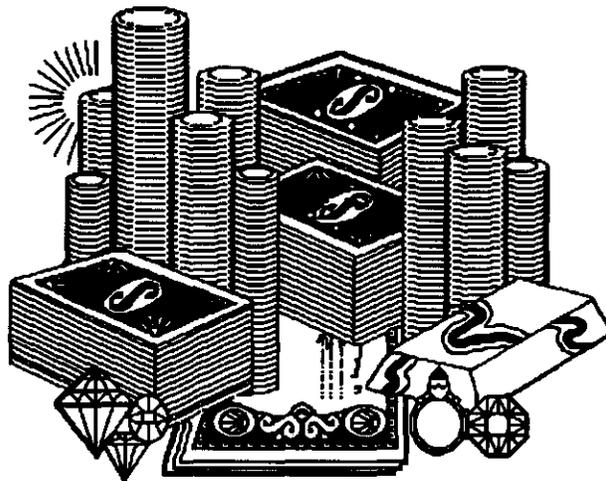
Invite Your Friends to Sunday School!

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.



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.

What is Sin?

Sin is our willful disobedience against God.
It causes us to be separated from God's presence.

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4)

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

God is good and perfect in all He does. God has never been unjust or wrong in His treatment of anyone. He has never made a mistake. All of the problems in the world have come from the disobedience and selfishness of those created by God.

All sin starts with selfishness. When we do something that is wrong, it always hurts us as well as those around us. When God commands us not to do something, it is because He loves us. He knows that in the end it will harm us. God gave ten commandments to Moses for the children of Israel. The first four were about their relationship with God and the importance of loving and honoring God. The other six were about how we should treat other people. When we are selfish and care only about making ourselves happy, we will hurt others.

The opposite of selfishness is love, which seeks to make other people happy.

"Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." (Romans 13:10)

Sin works against relationships and against our bodies, which were made to be temples for the Holy Spirit and not for sin. There is "pleasure in sin for a season", but, that pleasure in sin robs us of our joy, which is a function of our spirit when our lives are flowing in harmony with God.

God hates sin, because He loves the sinner and knows that sin always damages our joy and potential in life. God gave us a conscience -- His law written on our hearts -- the Bible, and the Holy Spirit to teach us right from wrong. God also shows us that the way to deal with sin is not to cover it up or make excuses for it. Instead, we should be honest with God, ask His forgiveness, and ask Him to give to us the freedom to do right.

"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)

What Is Praise to the Lord?

Scriptural praise involves boasting and speaking positively about the Lord, about what He has done and is able to do.

*"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."
(Hebrews 13:15)*

It is very important for all of God's children to make it a habit to praise Him. Praise is bragging on God. We sing praise songs that remind us of God's great power and love. When we see the things He has made and done, we realize that God can do anything.

*"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."
(Jeremiah 32:17)*

When we praise God, and remember that every good thing in our life came from Him, we learn to be humble and to depend upon Him. It is dangerous to think only about ourselves all of the time and try to live our lives for self. We were created for God's pleasure. It is right and good to praise God.

*"It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High..."
(Psalms 92:1)*

There are more chapters in the Book of Psalms than in any other Book of the Bible. It is frequently referred to as the "Song Book of the Bible." Praise helps us to come closer to God. In Psalms 100:4, we are told to "enter into his courts with praise." We are also told in Psalms 22:3 that God lives in the praises of His people.

The Bible says that we praise God with what we say about Him, with songs, and with actions. There are at least seven Hebrew words for "praise," and they involve different movements or vocal expressions. We are told to praise the Lord with "shouting" and "applauding" (Psalms 47:1), with many kinds of musical instruments, (Psalms 150) and even with the dance. David rejoiced and danced before the Lord; but, it was not like most of the dancing people in the world do today. It involved leaping, and twirling, and stepping to celebrate God's victory over His enemies. The principle features were the movement of the feet and hands, and there was nothing suggestive in the movements.

Our word "hallelujah" comes from two Hebrew words: "halal," and "Jehovah." "Halal" was a word used for a joyful celebration time. It means "to boast, to celebrate, to be clamorously foolish, to be vigorously joyful." So "hallelujah" means to "be very expressive and clamorously

foolish in celebrating God." In simple terms, "hallelujah" means "praise the Lord." It is interesting to note that the word "hallelujah" is the one word that is the same in any language today.

We are encouraged in the Psalms to praise, extol, magnify, and honor the Lord every day. Praise is a blessing to God, and it benefits us even more by stimulating our

faith, hope, and trust in God. We should also be careful to avoid praising ourselves, for that leads to pride.

Praise ye the LORD: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.
(Psalms 147:1)

What Does "Incarnation" Mean?

"Incarnation" means "to become a human being,"
which Jesus Christ did for us 2,000 years ago.

Christ Jesus:

"...made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:" (Philippians 2:7)

"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." (Matthew 1:23)

Jesus Christ is God, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. He is revealed in scripture as the Son of God -- showing His deity -- and as the Son of Man -- showing His humanity. He is not "half God and half man." He is "very God and very man." Jesus was not created, and He did not begin life in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago. He always has been.

As part of the Godhead (the Holy Trinity), Jesus became a man and lived among men in order to become the "kinsman redeemer," which God's holiness required for the restoration of man's lost inheritance. Only by becoming a man could He identify with man and give His life as the eternal sacrifice for the sins of the world. It was also necessary for Him

to live a life without any sin, because God's holiness required that the sacrifice be a "lamb without spot or blemish."

Jesus was human. He endured every kind of temptation. He suffered pain, sorrow, and rejection as a man. He was human; but, He was not carnal. He was born to a young woman, named "Mary;" but, He was conceived by the Holy Ghost. He did not inherit the sin of Adam which all of us received from our natural fathers. Since we also inherit our blood type from our fathers, we know that the blood of Jesus was unique. It is that holy blood that saves and cleanses us when we are born again by the Spirit of God. He was not born in sin; and, because He was faithful, He never yielded to the temptation to sin. He was human; but, He was not carnal. Jesus could have failed as a man; but, because He did not, He maintained His purity and integrity and was able to go to the cross as a perfect sin offering, taking on Himself the penalty for all our sins.

Jesus was known by many titles, but He seemed to like the name, "Son of Man," because of His great love for people and His desire to identify with us as His own. He was not the son of a man, but as the incarnate God He was THE Son of Man.

What Is a Spirit?

A spirit is a being with intelligence and personality, but not a physical body.

"...a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." (Luke 24:39)

"God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24)

Christians need to understand that there are millions of non-corporeal -- not possessing a physical body -- beings in the world and in the universe, and they are no less real than any physical being. The Bible speaks of the "natural man," who cannot see or understand anything in the spirit realm. His own spirit is dead, because of his sin. (1 Corinthians 2:14) In his spiritual blindness, man will try to explain any supernatural (non-physical) occurrence in fleshly or carnal terms. He will try to explain things as "extra-sensory perception," "psychic powers," "aliens from outer space," or whatever he can imagine. All of these can be understood if we realize that the Bible is right and plainly talks about angels, demons, and other occupants of the very real spirit world.

God created a large number of spirit-beings long before He created the earth. They are called angels. The word means, "messenger; a spirit being subordinate to God," and is used in the Bible to describe these spirit messengers, or pastors. (Revelation 2-3) One-third of the mighty host of angels in heaven rebelled against

God and followed the archangel Lucifer. They were cast down to the earth, and he is now called Satan, or the devil.

Many Bible scholars also believe that, long before the days of Adam and Eve, God had on the earth a race of beings who became rebellious and wicked along with Satan and his angels. After the

"earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep," (Genesis 1:2)

These now disembodied spirits were able to move about in the earth to create mischief and even inhabit the minds of rebellious humans. They are called "demons," or "evil spirits", in the Bible, and will eventually be cast into hell with Satan and his angels, along with those humans who are not right with God when they die. There are many accounts of demonic activity in the Bible, and demons are still active today. Be sure to note that God has a host of mighty angels, who are able to defend the saints in spiritual conflict as they pray.

Evil spirits love to imitate dead people and fuel the superstitions of ghosts, reincarnation, and witchcraft. We know from the Bible that the spirits of dead humans are not allowed to roam around the earth after leaving the body. They must go either to heaven -- born-again

saints -- or to hell -- those who are lost.
(Luke 16:19-31)

Only God is omnipresent. The Holy Spirit can live in a billion believers and speak in ten thousand churches at the same moment. But Satan cannot be in more than one place at a time. He is a created being. He is called the "god of this world" because he was cast out of heaven onto the earth and given authority over

the earth (for a limited time) when Adam sinned. He is an angel, not God. Every evil spirit being is subject to the authority of Jesus Christ and must leave at the command of any true child of God who speaks in Jesus' name. (Mark 16:17)

What Is Worship?

Worship is ministering to God with our spirit, with singing and with adoration in His presence.

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24)

"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord..." (Ephesians 5:19)

The most important thing in all of life is to know God personally, to know how to enter into His presence, and to relate to Him as His child. One activity which believers will do forever is to praise and worship God. His purpose for man is intimate fellowship with Him, not just service. In praise, we make our *"boast in the LORD,"* (Psalms 34:2) and know that God dwells in the midst of the praises of His people. (Psalms 22:3)

As we magnify God, sing of His greatness, and recount His works with thanksgiving, we actually *"enter into his courts"* (Psalms 100:4) with the sacrifice of praise. While God is omnipresent -- everywhere -- He dwells particularly in the hearts of worshippers, just as He had His dwelling in the tabernacle in the Holy of Holies among His chosen people, the children of Israel.

The Greek word used most often in the Bible is "proskunio," which means, "to kiss toward." Worship to God in the spirit is really illustrated in the natural world by the response of a loving bride with her husband in an intimate relationship. We take God's name, find our glory and identity in Him, and delight to be with Him and read correspondence from Him (the Bible).

We praise the Lord with songs, instruments, clapping our hands, rejoicing, sacrifices, shouting, and joy; but, we worship Him in spirit. To worship Him in truth simply means to worship Him according to the directions given in the Bible, rather than according to our taste and personality. Note also that God does not seek to "be worshipped." He seeks "worshippers." He is looking for a covenant people who will delight themselves in Him and rejoice in His presence. God's goal is an intimate relationship, not oblations and religious ceremonies.

"...in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore." (Psalms 16:11)

What Is the Biblical Pattern for Praise and Worship?

Guiding principles for praising and worshipping the Lord can be found in the Old Testament, especially in the book of Psalms.

"But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:...." (Acts 24:14)

The Apostle Paul was in court, defending his faith. He was accused of heresy by some because of his style of worship. He did not go into detail, other than to say that "...herein do I exercise myself...." (Acts 24:16) He said that he worshipped according to the law and the prophets. In other words, he followed the Old Testament pattern for worshipping God.

Today some believers argue that, since music and instruments are rarely mentioned in the New Testament, to be a New Testament church, we must eliminate instrumental music. God must have changed His mind and does not like music anymore. No. God does not change.

The reason musical instruments are not mentioned in the New Testament is that the topic was already settled in the Old Testament. The largest and central book of the Bible is the songbook -- the Book of Psalms -- where God tells us precisely what He likes. It speaks of singing with instruments, clapping the hands,

celebrating, even dancing with joy before the Lord.

The New Testament takes the old covenant and brings forth the new. It puts light on the types and shadows and corrects many misunderstandings people had. For example, the New Testament takes away the blood sacrifices of animals, because our sins are now washed away eternally by the blood of Christ. The old law of the Sabbath is fulfilled in Christ, who is our Sabbath rest. But, God never changed the songbook. The fact that the New Testament does not deal with music and worship style shows us two things:

1. Nothing needed to be changed.
2. The early Christians clearly understood praise and worship.

It was not necessary to correct errors in their thinking on that topic. Notice that most of the Epistles were written to correct errors in the church.

To learn what expressions of worship are pleasing to God, read the Bible. God delights in our praise and thanksgiving in great congregations, with joyful song and many kinds of instruments. We do not worship according to our own tastes and personalities, but according to His Word. We do not worship to please people. Our

goal is to be pleasing to God. The emphasis in praise and worship is the attitude of the heart and the expression of a valid relationship with God. But, there are physical expressions which the Psalmists encourage us to use regularly. These include bowing, raising the hands (as the evening sacrifice), singing, shouting with joy, clapping the hands, playing on instruments, using tambourines and expressive movements, celebrating with

hilarity, prostrating, and giving offerings to the Lord.

It is scriptural to gather in large congregations in one accord to bless and seek God. We should "enter in," or begin with praise, and then move into worship together. Under anointed leadership, we worship and prepare our hearts to receive a word from God.

What Is Faith?

Faith is a spiritual focus on God, His purposes, and His power.
It leads us to a response of trust and obedience.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1)

Hebrews 11 is called "God's Hall of Fame," or "the Faith Chapter." It is significant that God was never impressed with great deeds or intelligence. He was impressed by men's faith. Jesus never got excited about the goodness of the Pharisees or the wealth of big givers; but, He was often moved by the faith of a poor widow or a child. Faith is not a device to get God to do what we want. Faith is not positive thinking. Faith is a strong sense of trust and dependence on God, even when we do not get what we want. Paul warned against those who thought that *"gain is godliness."* (1 Timothy 6:5) In fact, Pastor James said that

"... hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith..."
(James 2:5)

In other words, when we do not have a life of "ease and plenty," we tend to be more dependent on God and more inclined to pray for our needs.

It is human nature to neglect to pray and to seek after God when life is too easy. So, God allows times of struggle or adversity, even enemies, for our benefit. Because they focused their vision on God

and His purposes instead of on their immediate comfort or gain, many "heroes of faith" in the Bible were delivered out of impossible situations. Many others, through faith, were able to choose eternal life over their safety, and they were killed by those who reacted to their godly witness. These other heroes of faith are called "martyrs," and even today the enemies of the gospel are murdering thousands of Christians.

Faith is not positive thinking, because faith is not a function of our mind. Some people think they can get God to do what they want with positive confession. Note that while a positive mental attitude is generally healthy and good, it does not move mountains or produce miracles. Faith is trust and a response to God in our spirit. When God speaks a promise to our heart -- things hoped for -- faith responds to God and receives it from God, and the physical results follow. Some people try to apply to their need a scripture or a promise God made to someone else, and insist that God must do the same thing for them if they confess and claim it for themselves. This is called "presumption" and is focused on the problem or want, rather than on God.

Faith is not a way to assert our own will. Instead, faith surrenders to God's will and purposes, even when we do not

understand what is happening. In fact, if we could see the final chapter, it would not be faith. Faith is the *"evidence of things not seen."* Faith is honest, simple, spiritual trust. One of the greatest expressions of faith was from a man who

had lost everything and had absolutely nothing in the natural to show for his faith. This man, Job, said, *"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:...."* (Job 13:15) Now, that is faith!

Where Do People Go When They Die?

When a Christian dies, his spirit goes to heaven, while the spirit of an unbeliever goes to a place in the earth called "hell."

"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." (2 Corinthians 5:8)

Death for a human being does not mean the end of existence. It means a separation, or a transition. Physical death is the separation from the body. Spiritual death means separation from God. At the time of death, the body usually is buried in a grave, but the spirit and soul of the person continue forever.

In Luke 16, Jesus told about two men who died. One was a poor man, named Lazarus, and the other was a rich man who had shown no kindness to Lazarus. Their spirits went into the earth to a place called "Sheol", or "the place of departed spirits." There were two parts to this spirit place. The upper part was called "Paradise," and the lower part was called "Hell." The souls in "Hell" suffered from tormenting fire and hopelessness. When Jesus was on the cross, He told one of the thieves crucified with Him, *"Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."* (Luke 23:43) All of those who died in faith before then

had the hope of heaven, but they could not go there until the perfect sin offering had been offered for the sins of the world.

Jesus was the "Lamb of God," and our "High Priest." After Jesus died, He ascended to heaven to offer His blood on the "mercy seat," and He took with Him all the souls who were in Paradise. So, now Paradise is empty. For a Christian to be "absent from the body" is to be "present with the Lord," because the way to God was made. The souls of the lost will suffer in Hell until after the Millennium -- thousand-year reign of Christ on the earth -- and then they will stand before the Lord at the Great White Throne Judgment. They will be cast into the "Lake of Fire," to suffer eternal separation from God and His love.

The souls of the righteous dead are alive and, apparently, are aware of the activities of the church on the earth. At the time of the "First Resurrection," their bodies will be raised from the grave, and they will have an eternal incorruptible body. (1 John 3:2)

What Is the Importance of Water Baptism?

In Christian baptism, we are responding to the covenant we made with God as repentant believers by being "buried with Christ."

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:3-4)

The New Testament clearly teaches the importance of following Christ by being buried in the waters of baptism after we are born again through the blood of Jesus by our faith and repentance from sin. John the Baptist had baptized people "unto repentance," as a means of expressing sorrow for sin. But, Jesus came and asked John to baptize Him. He initiated the first "Christian baptism." Baptism as a child of God is openly renouncing our past sinful life of self-willed rebellion and rising "to walk in newness of life" with Jesus as Lord. (Romans 6:4)

There are a number of scriptures that indicate that Christian baptism is more than an outward sign of an inward work. Paul said,

"...our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Romans 6:6)

Peter said,

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins,...." (Acts 2:38)

As we obey the Lord and identify with Jesus in His death, burial, and resurrection, we acknowledge that we are in Christ, and that we are spiritually washed. We are still human and subject to failure; but, the sin that was once our master has been brought into remission, like a disease that has been brought under control. We are now servants to God, and do not have to live in bondage to the sin that once made us its slaves. In Acts 22:16, when Saul of Tarsus was converted, Ananias said to him,

"...arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Covenant is essential in our relationship with God. In order to have any relationship with Him, there must be a covenant. A covenant is more than a contract. A covenant says, "I give myself to you. I love you more than I love myself."

Under the old covenant, the sign was the circumcision of the males. This is not required to be a Christian under God's new

covenant. The sign of the new covenant is water baptism. That marks us as New Testament believers; and, in obedience, we put a seal on our faith response to the death of Christ on the cross to atone for our sins.

There is freedom provided for us in the atonement; but, as humans, we still need

to "*seek...God's righteousness*" (Matthew 6:33) and grow in grace as we pray, read the Bible, and worship with other believers in the church.

What Is the Purpose of the Lord's Table?

In the sacrament of communion, or the Lord's table, we are expressing our covenant with God and with one another as members of the Body of Christ.

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Corinthians 10:16)

Biblically, the first purpose of communion is to commemorate the event which brought about our redemption and salvation: the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. As the Lord, He is the Creator and Owner of all things. He established an inheritance for us, and made heirs of those who would be born again through repentance and faith. Jesus said,

"This cup is the new testament in my blood..." (1 Corinthians 11:25)

A legal will comes into effect only when the testator dies. The death of Christ fulfilled the demands of God's holiness and justice and became the atoning blood for the people who would make a covenant with God. Jesus fulfilled the Passover law as the perfect Lamb without blemish. He was not marred in His character by any sin in His life. Just as the blood of a lamb was applied to the doorpost of the believer's house to save those in his house from death, so Jesus was the

"...Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29)

The cup of the Lord's table does not become literal blood. This is a belief held by some and is called "transubstantiation." It represents the blood of Christ. The cup is an ongoing reminder to believers that Jesus gave His life's blood for their redemption and that they have a covenant with God because the blood has been applied to their sins. (1 Corinthians 11:26)

The bread represents His broken body, "...by whose stripes ye were healed." (1 Peter 2:24) It also reminds us that we are reinforcing a blood covenant with one another as fellow Christians. As part of "one loaf," we have a "common union" with one another. We are commanded by God to be honest with and loyal to one another, because we are part, or "...members one of another." (Ephesians 4:25)

We are part of God's army together. We are His house (Ephesians 2:20), His vineyard, His Body, and His corporate Bride. We are given specific guidelines in the way we should respond to one another ethically when we have misunderstandings or conflicts. We are commanded to love one another and to speak well of one another. We are a covenant family, and a covenant says, "I am for you, and I'll

never turn against you. I'm blessed to see you blessed, and I seek your success and welfare, because in Christ we are brothers and sisters."

The time for corporate communion is a time for self-examination and for resolving any conflicts which will hinder the moving of God's Spirit among us. It is a time to "judge ourselves," as well as to forgive and restore one another. It is also a time to receive and to minister healing as

we partake of the "*cup of blessing*." Christians who break bread together regularly with this kind of motive will experience greater harmony and unity. This is essential if the church is to be an example to the world of the lifestyle of God's kingdom.

What Is Prayer?

Prayer is talking with God. It should involve thanksgiving, petition, praise, intercession, communion, and listening with submission.

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." (Philippians 4:6)

Prayer is our communication with God. It may be verbal -- audible -- or just in our thoughts and spirit, because God can "hear" our thoughts and "see" into our hearts. (1 Samuel 16:7) God is the only one who can do that. We cannot read one another's minds or know one another's hearts, and neither can the devil. We can talk to God any time, and we should live with an attitude of prayer, or the continual sense of God's presence. We can thus: *"Pray without ceasing."* (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

To pray, we must be in fellowship with God as believers and come before Him in His presence. We

"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise...." (Psalms 100:4)

It is important to begin our communication with God with thanksgiving for what He has already done and with praise for being the wonderful Lord He is. This builds our faith and blesses Him.

Petition is the practice of turning to God with our needs and desires. We are prone to forget God or to be casual in our prayer life when life is easy and we have everything we need. So, God lets us experience need to motivate us to turn to Him. God wants us to turn to Him as our first source of healing, help, and provision. It is not a sin to seek a doctor's help, for instance, but prayer should be our first response to injury or illness, not the last resort. *"Ask, and it shall be given you...."* (Matthew 7:7)

Intercession is the practice of praying for others. It is an indication of maturity and is very important for our own growth. It is especially wise to pray for those in authority over you, because the more your parents, pastors, and government leaders are spiritually strengthened, the more they will protect and bless you. (1 Timothy 2:1-2)

Communion and worship are a part of prayer. Also, we should listen and allow God to speak to us as we seek His face. To seek His face means to pursue a relationship with Him, not just to seek His hand of provision or blessing. The first commandment is that we should love the Lord our God. That is what it is all about. We would be poor conversationalists, indeed, if we spent all of our time talking

and never allowing the other person to reply. Listen to God.

We should also "*...pray with the spirit.*" (1 Corinthians 14:15) When you pray with the spirit, you are not praying with your mind. This is expressed verbally with tongues, and will always have a healthy positive effect on your life. Every believer should also seek to pray "*...in the Spirit...*," (Ephesians 6:18, Jude 20) that is, to allow

the Holy Spirit to direct your praying, whether it is expressed in your natural language, or in tongues.

Prayer is personal communication with God, and it should be a part of our life every day. Jesus taught us to **pray to the Father** in the name of Jesus, although it is not necessarily wrong to pray to Jesus or the Holy Spirit on occasion.

Why Did Jesus Give to Us the Lord's Prayer?

Jesus taught this prayer as a pattern, or example, to give some direction to His disciples in their prayer life.

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."
(Matthew 6:9)

Jesus did not give this prayer to be recited or repeated over and over. In fact, He warned that prayer should not be "*vain repetitions*," but it should be a personal conversation with God. (Matthew 6:7) He told His disciples that the heathens think they will be heard because of their repetition; but, God does not need information. He is looking for relationship and response. It is ironic that some people have taken this very model and used it contrary to Jesus' teaching. He said, "when you pray, pray to your Heavenly Father." Talk to Him as you would to a perfect, loving father.

"Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." (Matthew 6:9) Honor the names of God. Focus on who He is. For every need in life, there is a corresponding name of God. He is Jehovah-Tsidkenu, the Lord our righteousness; Jehovah-Ra-ah, the Lord our Shepherd; Jehovah-Rapha, our healer; Jehovah-Nissi, our banner; Jehovah-Shammah, the Lord is present; Jehovah-Shalom, our peace; Jehovah-Jireh, our provider; Wonderful, Counselor, Everlasting God, Prince of Peace, and

many other names that express attributes of our great God.

"Thy kingdom come." (Matthew 6:10) Kingdom means literally "king's domain." We are not only praying for the coming kingdom with the reign of Christ on the earth, but we are also praying that His complete rule be established in our lives, families, and church.

"Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:10) "Let your will reign supreme in me and in this church as it is perfectly done in heaven."

"Give us this day our daily bread." (Matthew 6:11) Bring your specific needs to God. God knows what we need; but, we need to turn to Him as our source and know that it was His good hand which provided it, and not mere chance.

"Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." (Matthew 6:12) As believers, we continue to ask forgiveness for sins in our lives. We need to continue in humility and repentance and judge ourselves. If we refuse to forgive others, we are disqualified from receiving forgiveness from God for our wrongdoing. (Matthew 6:15)

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil...." (Matthew 6:13) We

need to ask continually for the grace to overcome evil forces that seek to distract us and derail our honest pursuit of God and his purposes. We are not praying, "God, do not let anything happen to me that I do not like," but, rather, "God, do not let pride or bitterness get into my spirit so that I am overcome by the spirit of the age and corrupted in my heart against you."

"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever." (Matthew 6:13) "God, all of it really belongs to you, and I know that you will accomplish your purposes in the earth and will reign forever. You have all power, and all of the honor belongs to you."

"Amen." So be it.

Section 8

Lessons

Abraham, God's Friend

Volume 3

Lesson 1



Bible References

Genesis 11:27-32

Genesis 12:1-9

Matthew 6:33

Galatians 3:6-11

Hebrews 11

1 *"Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee:*

2 *"And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:*

3 *"And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*

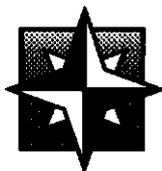
4 *"So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram {was} seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.*

5 *"And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.*

6 *"And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite {was} then in the land.*

7 *"And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.*

8 *"And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, {having} Bethel on the*



Theme

God wants us to be people of faith, as was Abraham.



Scripture Reading

Genesis 12:1-9

west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.

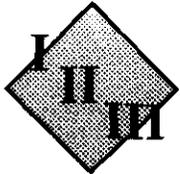
9 "And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south."



Memory Verse

Hebrews 11:10

"For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker [is] God."



Outline

I. Abraham's History.

A. After the Great Flood:

1. Noah's sons had children.
2. Everyone on earth are descendants of these three sons.
 - a. There was some racial mixing, but there are three basic races of people.
 - b. Not everyone in an area was of the same race, but most areas had a dominant group.
3. Ham's descendants dominated Canaan and Northern Africa.
4. Japheth's descendants settled in Europe.

5. Shem's descendants settled in Mesopotamia.
 - a. Abram was from this family.
 - b. He lived in Ur.

B. Spiritual Decline.

1. People were scattering.
2. Humanistic leaders tried to build a tower to unite the people.
 - a. God caused the people to instantly speak many different languages.
 - b. This caused the people to divide and scatter.
3. After a few centuries, most people had turned from the God who had destroyed so many people with the great flood.

II. Abram's Faith.

A. In the City of Ur.

1. This was a Chaldean city.
2. Located near the Persian Gulf (now Iran).
3. 4,000 years ago, it was a fertile, prosperous area.
4. Most of this area today is barren desert.

B. Abram was God's friend.

1. Abram loved God more than anyone else.
2. Many people made idols to worship, but Abram served the one true God.
3. He prayed and sought God.

C. Abram obeyed God.

1. God told him to leave his family and go west.
2. His family was not a good influence.
3. God wanted to build a new nation through Abram.

4. Abram trusted God.

D. Abram traveled to Haran.

1. Haran was a city to the northwest.
2. It was north of Canaan.
3. From there he went south into Canaan.
4. It was also a very lush, fertile area.
5. It bordered on the Mediterranean Sea.
6. This was the land God promised to give to Abram's descendants.
 - a. That is why it is called the "Promised Land."
 - b. It is called "Palestine" today.
 - c. Abraham's descendants, the Jewish people, now occupy most of it.
 - d. Palestinians and other descendants of Ishmael (also a son of Abraham) have fought for centuries with Israelites (descendants of Isaac and Jacob, Abraham's heirs).

E. God made a covenant with Abram.

1. He was to become the father of many nations.
2. God changed his name from "Abram" to "Abraham" to signify that promise.

III. Abraham's Legacy.

A. Elements of Faith:

1. Trust;
 - a. Abram trusted his life into God's care.
 - b. He believed that God would do him good.
 - c. He believed that God loved him.

2. Hope;

- a. Faith receives the promise of good things, even though it cannot see how it will happen.
- b. Faith focuses on God's purposes and acts according to the Word, and not according to sight.

3. Vision;

4. Obedience;

- a. Faith acts in harmony with God's will.
- b. Faith steps out on the basis of God's will, even when it does not see the end result.

B. Those who trust God with their lives are called spiritual children of Abraham.

1. Galatians 3:6-11.

2. Abraham had a covenant relationship with God.

3. We can enter into a covenant with God too, by repenting of our sin and believing on the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord.

4. We can know God, and follow Him.

- a. Those who have this covenant with God are called "Christians."
- b. Jesus Christ is the only way to God.
- c. We can pray to God personally, just as Abraham did.



Spiritual Truths

- Abraham believed God, and trusted Him with his life.
- Faith is much more than just believing in God.

- Faith involves belief, trust, and hope; and it results in obedience.
- Abraham placed his faith in God, and God rewarded his faith.
- Many great nations are direct descendants of Abraham.
- When we enter into a relationship with God by faith, we become spiritual children of Abraham.
- Other people focused their lives on things and people, but Abraham put God first.
- Others worshipped the gods of pleasure or money, but Abraham worshipped the one true God.
- Abraham served God instead of things, and God blessed him with more money and happiness than those people who lived for those things.



Lesson Material

Abraham is called the father of faith. He is one of the most important figures in human history, although humanist historians do not like to mention him, or anyone else who lived by faith in God. The current conflicts in the Middle East are rooted in the sibling rivalry between Abraham's two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. Isaac was the son born to Sarah, Abraham's wife. She was ninety years old when he was born. He was a miracle baby; the result of the promise of God.

Ishmael was born because of Abraham and Sarah's unbelief. When she failed to conceive a child, Sarah gave her servant, Hagar, to be a "surrogate mother" for her. Abraham and Sarah made a tragic mistake by trying to help God. They did not think God could keep His promise, so they worked out a way to produce an heir through human reasoning and effort. The results are still affecting the whole world, because the nations which have come from Ishmael are predominantly Moslems, who worship the false god Allah and practice the false religion of Islam. They view Palestine as their rightful homeland, and often hate the descendants of Isaac (called "Israelites," for Isaac's son, Israel).

But the dominant factor in Abraham's life is his faith in, and relationship with, God. In a day when most people on the earth were focused on getting wealth and pleasure, Abraham sought a personal relationship with God. He was God's friend. Abraham made some mistakes, but overall, he was very pleasing to God. God loved him so much that He blessed him in every way.

In Abraham's culture, children were very important -- especially sons. Sons carried on the family name, and gave them a sense of immortality. Men wanted to be remembered by future generations and longed to be honored. It is interesting to note that, while Abraham sought God instead of the things that most others lived for, he was blessed in every area more than anyone else. He did not have a love for money, but God caused him to prosper with immense wealth. He did not seek pleasure, but he lived a long and happy life. He did not make his own name his most important goal, but God blessed him with fame and honor that continues today. Millions of people honor his

memory, and teach their children to be like him.

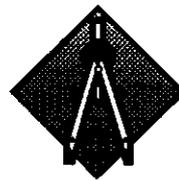
Abraham is the father of the Arab nations, although most of those people do not serve God. He is also the father of the Hebrew people, Israel. The Israelis generally worship and pray to the true God; but, sadly, they reject God's Son, Jesus, who was sent to be their Messiah and Savior. Abraham is also considered the spiritual father of all Christians. Christians not only pray to the true God, but they have entered into a covenant with God much like Abraham did. Even though most Christians cannot trace their genealogy to Abraham like the Jews and Arabs, their testimony and life reflect the heart of Father Abraham.

The key to Abraham's great life was his faith in God. He did not just believe in God as a matter of fact. He trusted his life to God as a matter of choice. He centered his life around God and His will, rather than seeking to get all he could from God and then going his own way. Everyone wants to go to heaven when they die, but not everyone wants to serve God in this life. Abraham trusted God so much, that when God told him to move away from home, he did not even ask why. He obeyed, and God blessed him for it.

Faith is not a function of the mind, or even the heart. Faith is a function of the spirit, which takes a hold of the promises of God and obeys. Faith centers on God and His purposes, and results in obedience. When we really have faith, we will do what God says, even when we do not understand how it will all work out.

Faith is more concerned with God's honor than with self honor. Faith is more concerned with pleasing God than with receiving pleasure.

That is the difference between true and false faith. False faith seeks to get God to do what we want. It seeks to manipulate God, and makes Him our servant. True faith recognizes God as Lord, and seeks to serve Him. When we really put God first and live for His pleasure instead of our own, God delights to give us the desires of our hearts. Abraham lived for God instead of for himself, and he became one of the happiest, greatest people who ever lived.



Methods

Visual

Try to get a map to show the location of Ur, Haran, and Canaan. Remind the class that in those days, these areas were fertile and well-watered. Today, most of these areas are barren and dry.

Spiritual

Talk about Abraham as a living example of the truth of Matthew 6:33. Teach the principles of faith, and the hope of the righteous. Offer to pray with any student who wants to be like Abraham and have a personal relationship with God. Show them that the only way to enter into a covenant with God is by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Bezaleel, the Builder

Volume 3

Lesson 2



Bible References

Exodus 31:1-11
Psalms 22:3
Matthew 18:20
John 14:1-4
Romans 12:4-8
1 Corinthians 3:9
Galatians 5:22-23
Ephesians 2,3
Hebrews 6
1 Peter 2
Jude 20



Scripture Reading

Exodus 31:1-11

1 *"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,*

2 *"See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah:*

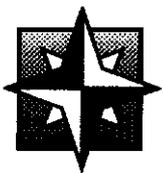
3 *"And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,*

4 *"To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass,*

5 *"And in cutting of stones, to set {them}, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship.*

6 *"And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee;*

7 *"The tabernacle of the congregation, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy seat that {is} thereupon, and all the furniture of the tabernacle,*



Theme

God is building our lives according to the pattern of His Word.

8 *"And the table and his furniture, and the pure candlestick with all his furniture, and the altar of incense,*

9 *"And the altar of burnt offering with all his furniture, and the laver and his foot,*

10 *"And the cloths of service, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office,*

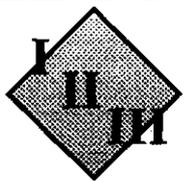
11 *"And the anointing oil, and sweet incense for the holy (place): according to all that I have commanded thee shall they do."*



Memory Verse

Ephesians 2:22

"In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."



Outline

I. Moses.

A. God called the children of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt.

1. Moses was God's leader for the nation.

2. God led them for forty years through the wilderness.
3. They then were ready to enter the Promised Land of Canaan.

B. The tabernacle.

1. God told Moses to take an offering, and build a large tent (temporary temple). This tent was called the "tabernacle."
2. The tabernacle would be a place to offer sacrifices.
3. It would be the center of Israel's spiritual life.
4. It was always at the center of the camp.
5. The tabernacle was a prophetic picture of the Church, and of God's purposes in the earth.

II. Bezaleel.

A. God raised up Bezaleel to be a master craftsman.

1. Bezaleel had an anointing to work with gold, silver, wood, cloth, and other materials.
2. Bezaleel was called of God to make beautiful furniture.

B. Bezaleel was a servant.

1. He obeyed Moses, who obeyed God.
2. Bezaleel did the physical work, while Moses did the preaching.
3. Moses could not do it all by himself.
4. Bezaleel had many other men trained to help him.

III. God.

A. God is the Master Builder.

1. God designed and created each of us.
2. God has a plan for each of our lives.
3. Sin mars that plan, but God can still teach and build us in His image.
4. The longer we live in sin, the less potential we will have in life.
5. It is far better to give your whole life to God, than to waste it living a sinful life.

B. We are God's building.

1. Jesus is preparing a place for us to live. (John 14:1-4)
2. The Holy Spirit is preparing us as a place for God to dwell.
3. He dwells in our hearts.
4. He inhabits our praises. (Psalms 22:3)
5. He is with us in our relationships. (Matthew 18:20)

IV. The Tabernacle.

A. A type (prophetic picture) of the Church.

1. God dwells among His people.
2. God wants a place to meet with His people.
3. We offer our gifts to God, and have special feast times to celebrate our covenant with Him.

B. Symbols of spiritual truth:

1. Gold -- a symbol of the glory of God;
2. Silver -- redemption;
3. Precious stones -- a picture of God's saints (product of heat plus pressure, plus refining -- the process needed to produce diamonds);

4. Wood -- humanity;
5. Incense -- prayer;
6. Blue -- heaven;
7. White -- purity, holiness;
8. Green -- life;
9. Black -- sin;
10. Red -- blood;
11. Bread -- fellowship, covenant;
12. Brass -- judgment.



Spiritual Truths

- God works through people He anoints to do a special job.
- No one has in himself all the abilities needed to operate the church.
- No single individual understands everything in the Bible.
- God uses natural, physical things to illustrate spiritual truths.
- The Old Covenant is a physical picture of the New Covenant.
- The New Covenant fulfills the Old, and the Old explains the New.
- God wants us to have a servant's heart.
- A "symbol" is a physical thing which illustrates a spiritual principle.
- A "type" is a physical person or thing which prophetically points to a spiritual truth.



Lesson Material

Jesus spoke to His disciples and told them that He was going to prepare a place for them. This conversation involves only a few short verses of Scripture. By contrast, there are many, many whole chapters in the Bible which deal with the place God wants us to build for Him in which to dwell; yet, we spend very little time in these passages.

The fact is that the Bible does not emphasize what God is building for us as much as it emphasizes what we are building for God. If we faithfully live for God, heaven will be ours, and we will find out all about it in due time. But we need to emphasize what God emphasizes, and learn to build up ourselves.

Paul taught that we are built up together as a spiritual house for God. That is, Jesus does not just live in our hearts individually, but dwells among us corporately. Peter gave the analogy of "living stones," reminding us again that God builds us together as a spiritual house for Himself. Jude said to build up yourself by praying in the Holy Ghost. (vs. 20)

We are told several times in the epistles to "edify one another." This comes from the root word of "edifice," and it means to "build up." Human nature is prone to hurt and tear down other people, but Christians are called to love and edify each other in love.

1 Corinthians 3:9 says, "...ye are God's building." As individual "bricks," we become conformed to the image of Jesus as He shapes and molds our lives. Together,

we are cemented by the mortar of covenant love, so that we can encourage and forgive each other as God's building grows.

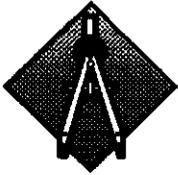
Bezaleel was a type of the Holy Spirit. He was anointed to be a master craftsman. He knew just how to shape things, and how to cover them over with gold, silver, or brass in just the right way. His pieces of furniture were works of art, and were rugged and useful as well.

God gave the instructions to Moses for the tabernacle, but He gave the wisdom and skill to Bezaleel. God uses each of us for specific purposes, and wants us to learn to depend on one another. The world seeks for us to feel independent, but God wants us to be interdependent. That is, we need one another, if we are to get job done in a way that pleases God.

How do we build ourselves in the faith, as good living stones in God's house? First, we must be born again, so that the Spirit of God can live and work in us. We cannot be a strong spiritual house if we build our lives with grass -- fleshly efforts. As Christians, we learn to pray and read the Bible every day. That way, we develop a focus on God and His purposes, and get a glimpse of Jesus. We seek to pattern our lives after His, in wisdom and character. Then, as Jude said, we need to build ourselves up in the faith by praying in the Holy Ghost. This makes our spirit stronger, and decreases our focus on flesh.

We build ourselves up by encouragement, kindness, Bible teaching, prayer, (in our natural language and in tongues) fellowship, and communion. All of the gifts of the Spirit (Romans 12:4-8) are really specific kinds of spiritual anointing to empower us to serve and bless others. The early church was edified

by the apostle's teaching, fellowship with other believers, the breaking of bread, and prayer. The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) also relates to the anointing to help and build up others in the faith.



Methods

Illustrated sermon on gold.

Try to bring something made out of gold to the class. Gold has always been valuable to mankind. But natural gold is used by God as a symbol of His glory. Gold must be refined in the furnace. The heat causes impurities to rise, and they are

skimmed off. The refiner knows the gold is pure when he can see his reflection in it.

Real gold has lasting beauty, and can be easily molded around objects. The ark of the covenant was made from the gnarled, twisted wood of the acasia tree. Bezaleel was such a skilled craftsman that he could take that crooked wood and make a perfect box out of it. But then he covered it completely, inside and out, with pure gold. It was beautifully designed, and had two winged angels on the top.

The ark was a type of Jesus, who would become a man, yet anointed with the glory of God. He lived so that God could be seen in all He did. It is also a type of the church. God wants redeemed people who will be clothed with His glory, and who live so that Jesus can be seen in their daily lives as well as in their words.

A Winning Attitude

Volume 3

Lesson 3



Bible References

Psalms 18

Proverbs 29:18

Luke 16:19-31

John 14:6

Romans 6

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Hebrews 11:6, 10

Hebrews 12:1-6



Scripture Reading

Hebrews 12:1-6

1 *"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset (us), and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,*

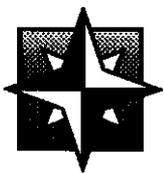
2 *"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of (our) faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

3 *"For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*

4 *"Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.*

5 *"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:*

6 *"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."*



Theme

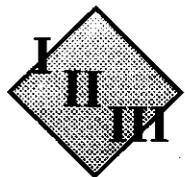
Faith is the key to a winning attitude.



Memory Verse

Hebrews 11:6

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."



Outline

I. Cloud Of Witnesses.

A. Heroes of faith.

1. Hebrews chapter eleven:
 - a. God's "Hall of Fame."
 - b. People who lived and died by faith in God.
2. Abraham focused on eternity, instead of this temporal life.
3. They were not all rich or "successful," but they lived and died righteously.

B. Witnesses.

1. Not the wicked.
 - a. When a wicked person dies, his spirit goes to hell.
 - b. Hell is inside the earth, where it is extremely hot and dark.

2. The godly.
 - a. People who die "in the Lord" go to heaven.
 - b. They are in the presence of God.
 - c. They are examples to us of a life of faith.
 - d. Paul called them "a great cloud of witnesses."

II. Run the Race.

A. Life is comparable to a race.

1. We must have a goal, in order to run successfully.
2. Secular humanists teach that life has no real purpose.
 - a. If there is no God, then there is no higher goal than to try to be happy.
 - b. Since God created us, then we are designed to serve and worship Him.
 - c. The goal is to be faithful to God.
 - d. The result of a life of faith is eternal life with Christ.

B. The key to a joyful life is discipline.

1. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.
2. We do not run with uncertainty.
 - a. We know who we are in God.
 - b. We know why we are alive.
 - c. We know where we are going.
 - d. We have purpose and vision.

C. The humanist vision.

1. Those who oppose Christianity want to remove the Bible and prayer from our education, government, and communication.
2. Without God, people become lazy, selfish, and weak.

3. Weak families and weak people are easy for a socialist state to control.
4. Christianity makes people strong and free.

D. *"Where there is no vision, the people perish...."*

1. Proverbs 29:18.
2. *"Where there is no spiritual vision (or hope), people will tend to become undisciplined and rebellious; but the people who live by God's Word are happy."* (Paraphrased)

III. Looking Unto Jesus.

A. The author and finisher of our faith.

1. Faith is a focus on God and His purposes.
2. Faith is related to wisdom, which is seeing life from God's perspective.
3. Without Jesus, the world was in the darkness of spiritual deception.
 - a. People saw themselves as merely animals with no real purpose or hope in life.
 - b. People worshipped idols, and lived for pleasure.
 - c. People were eternally lost, and did not realize it.
4. Jesus showed us the way to God and eternal life.
5. Jesus died for us, and He IS the way to God.
6. Jesus is *"the Way, the Truth, and the Life."* (John 14:6)

B. Look to Jesus.

1. Do not focus on people, or on self.
2. Know that your hope in life is in Jesus Christ.

3. He is also the example of the best life that can be lived.
4. You can trust Him with your life.

C. Look at Jesus.

1. Jesus endured the cross.
 - a. He kept His eyes on the goal, and it gave Him the courage to endure great suffering.
 - b. He was despised and rejected by men.
 - c. He knew there would be great joy when He finished His work on earth.
2. Jesus had a perfect heart of a servant.
 - a. He lived only to do the Father's will.
 - b. He submitted His will to the Father.
 - c. He never did anything for His own pleasure.
 - d. He is the happiest person in the universe.

IV. Despise Not Chastening.

A. Chastening.

1. The word "chastening" means "disciplinary correction."
2. Part of our training for eternity is to be "spanked" when we need it.
3. We all need to associate rebellion with pain, in order to learn wisdom.

B. Despise not.

1. "Despise" means to "have little regard; to set at naught."
2. Consider the chastening from God as valuable training.
3. God chastens us because He loves us.



Spiritual Truths

- For a Christian, physical death means going to heaven.
- Christians who are in heaven are examples to us of godly living and a race well run.
- Some things in life may not be a sin, but they can weigh us down spiritually.
- As Christians, God calls us to lay aside sin, and run the race of the upward call.
- God's purpose is not to make life easy, but to make us strong.
- The Christian life is not a raft ride down a gentle stream, but a race.
- You cannot succeed in life without discipline, and you cannot be disciplined if you do not have clearly defined goals.
- The world entices us to keep our eyes off of Jesus.
- Wisdom means looking to Jesus, instead of looking to people and circumstances in life.
- Jesus was able to endure suffering and the cross, because He saw the joy that was set before Him.
- Whom the Lord loves, He chastens.



Lesson Material

We have learned about Abraham, the "Father of faith." While the people around him were focused on making a living, Abraham learned how to live. He realized that life was not just this physical existence. He *"looked for a city...whose builder and maker is God."* (Hebrews 11:10)

The writer to the Hebrews (probably the Apostle Paul) had just written the "faith chapter" of the Bible, listing some of the heroes of faith from the Old Testament days. Then he said,

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset (us), and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of (our) faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:1-2)

"Let us lay aside every weight..." Some things in life may not be a sin, but they are spiritual weights to us. What are these weights? They are probably different things for each individual person. We are often hindered, or "weighed down", by the cares of this life. It is easy to get so caught up with making money or with having a good time, that we neglect the spiritual aspects of life. Some people are so caught up with being popular with their peers, that they do not seek to please God. Some

people watch so much television, that they do not have the time to pray or read the Bible.

"...and the sin which doth so easily beset us." As humans, we can easily get caught in the trap of sin. The message of Romans 6 and many other scriptures is that we do not have to continue in sinful habits. God can free us from them. But we must abide in Christ and walk in the Spirit, if we are to walk in spiritual freedom. Sin will keep us from living the overcoming life of joy that God has planned for us. God hates sin, not because He wants to keep us from enjoying pleasure, but because He knows that sin always hurts us.

"Looking unto Jesus..." The secret to Abraham's success in life was that he genuinely loved and sought God. He did not look just at things or people, but he saw the bigger picture. He realized that life was not limited to this physical existence of 70 or 80 years. He looked *"for a city which hath foundations..."* (Hebrews 11:10) He looked beyond this life, and sought to build his life on that which was permanent. He realized that the physical things are temporary, but the things of God are eternal. Abraham wisely kept his focus on his relationship with God, and this was the basis for his faith. So, when God told him to move to another country, he went. He did not know where he was going, but he knew with Whom he was going.

Jesus endured the cross, because He knew the goal. He was able to endure great suffering and rejection, because He understood the purposes of God. He had a vision of bringing many people to salvation and restoring them to the Father. Because of Jesus' eyes on the goal, He was able to take endure suffering. Only

when we keep the goal in mind, can we endure hardship in life.

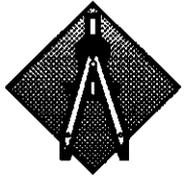
Today, there are many Christians who are being put into prison, tortured, or killed for their faith. It happens every day. We must all know that the evidence of true faith is not that we get what we want from God, but that we are able to trust our lives into God's hands, and that we are willing to suffer and even die for Him. Faith produces obedience and endurance, because faith centers on eternal values and rewards. When you fear God, then you will not fear what man can do to you.

God never promised that life would be easy, but He did promise that He would never leave or forsake us. Life is preparation for eternity. God is our Father, and He loves us enough to discipline us when we are rebellious. God is willing to sacrifice our present comfort, in order to develop our character for eternity.

This is essential to a Christian world view, which is the essence of both faith and wisdom. The humanist sees life only in terms of people, things, and the physical world. Therefore, there is no real hope outside of this short life. History becomes meaningless, and the future is idle speculation. The secular world view is the basis for suicide, abortion, rebellion, socialism, despair, and all kinds of human misery. "After all," these worldly philosophies seem to say, "life is not fair, and you just live for the moment."

The Christian sees God at the center of life, and realizes that we were created for His pleasure and purposes. When we live to please Him, we have purpose and vision in our lives. When we fear the Lord and realize we will have to give an account to Him for the way we have lived life, we make better choices in life. We see

the big picture, and we are equipped to handle the difficulties, because we know that there is more to life than the immediate and physical. We know that God will make everything just and right in eternity, so we can focus on doing His will, rather than trying to make life fair. We do not have to be bitter, and we do not have to be afraid.



Methods

Christian World View

Emphasize that this physical life is temporary, but the things of the spirit are

eternal. Refer to the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16. The rich man enjoyed "the good life" for six or seven decades, and then suffered the torments of hell forever. Lazarus was poor and badly treated, but his faith resulted in eternity with God in heaven. How does this world view affect the decisions we make in life? Can this view keep us from bitterness, or depression?

Weights

Fasten ankle weights or some heavy object to the legs of one of the students. Ask the student to try lifting each leg and then try running with the weights attached. Then have the student attempt the same actions with the weights removed. How can sin in our lives hinder our spiritual walk, and affect the "race" we are to run?

The Bread and Wine

Volume 3

Lesson 4



Bible References

Genesis 14:17-24

Psalms 16:11

Matthew 26:17-35

Romans 14:17

1 Corinthians 11:23-34

Hebrews 7:1-7

17 "And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that (were) with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which (is) the king's dale.

18 "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he (was) the priest of the most high God.

19 "And he blessed him, and said, Blessed (be) Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:

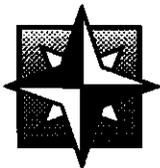
20 "And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

21 "And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.

22 "And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,

23 "That I will not (take) from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that (is) thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich:

24 "Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion."



Theme

Communion is a reminder of our covenant with God.



Scripture Reading

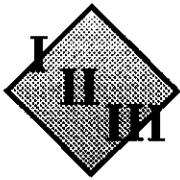
Genesis 14:17-24



Memory Verse

1 Corinthians 11:24

"...Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me."



Outline

I. Melchizedek.

A. King of Salem.

1. Meaning: "King of Peace."
2. Melchizedek was actually a priest who was also called a king.
3. He was a type of Christ and possibly even Christ in a pre-incarnate form.
4. Also called "King of Righteousness."

B. First priesthood.

1. Melchizedek lived hundreds of years before Moses established the Levitical priesthood in Israel.
2. Abraham, Levi's ancestor, paid his tithes to Melchizedek.
3. A priest was one who represented the people before God.
4. A priest was a spiritual leader, like a pastor today.

C. The order of Melchizedek.

1. Qualifications: (Hebrews 7:1-7)
 - a. Without father or mother;
 - b. No natural descendants;
 - c. No beginning;
 - d. No end.
2. No ordinary man could be a priest after the order of Melchizedek.
3. Jesus Christ is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.
 - a. A greater priesthood than that of Levi.
 - b. An eternal priesthood.

II. The Bread and Wine.

A. Covenant.

1. A binding agreement between two parties.
 - a. Sealed with blood.
 - b. Giving themselves each to the other.
2. God and Abraham were friends.
3. God made a covenant with Abraham.
 - a. Abraham loved God, and he had faith in God.
 - b. God promised to make Abraham's descendants like the sand and the stars in number.
 - c. God kept His word to Abraham.

B. The bread.

1. Made from grain.
 - a. Crushed.
 - b. Gone through the fire.
 - c. Broken.
2. Symbol of friendship and life.

C. The wine.

1. Made from grapes that had been crushed.
2. Wine was a symbol of blood.
3. God told Abraham to kill animals, in making the covenant.
4. "May I be as one of these, if I ever break our covenant."
5. In the Bible, wine is also a symbol of joy.
 - a. The greatest joy we can have is in a covenant with God.
 - b. Psalms 16:11.
 - c. Romans 14:17.

III. The Covenant Meal.

A. Abraham and Melchizedek.

1. The priest provided the bread and wine.
2. Abraham paid tithes to his priest.
3. Abraham was reminded of his covenant with God.

B. Christian communion.

1. Jesus broke bread and took communion with His disciples.
2. He commanded them to continue the practice, until He comes again for His church.
3. Christians today continue to commemorate the Jesus' death on the cross with communion.



Spiritual Truths

- Melchizedek was an eternal priest who was greater than Abraham.
- Bread is a symbol of life and friendship.
- Wine is a symbol of the blood.
- When we are born again, we are partakers of Christ.
- When we are born again, we enter into an eternal covenant with God.
- A covenant is more than a contract: it is giving one's self to another for life.
- It is a serious sin to break a covenant.
- Christians should regularly break bread and take communion together.
- While some Christians use wine for communion, others prefer to use grape juice (unfermented wine). The importance is in the symbolism of the blood of Jesus.



Lesson Material

Melchizedek is something of a mystery to Bible scholars. Little is mentioned of him in Genesis, other than the fact that he was Abraham's priest who received his tithes and who broke bread with him. This is the first mention of breaking bread in

the Bible, but it has been a covenant symbol perhaps from the beginning of the human race. The bread and wine Melchizedek brought forth were not for food, but were for the covenant meal.

From the account of Melchizedek in Hebrews chapter 7, many Bible scholars believe that the writer is really saying that Melchizedek was not only a picture of Christ, but that he was actually Jesus Christ Himself, appearing in the flesh to Abraham. This is not that unusual. Jesus did appear to Jacob, and wrestled with him. He appeared to Moses and to Joshua. Jesus appeared in the furnace with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and in other places in the Old Testament (or Covenant). The writer of Hebrews -- probably the Apostle Paul -- implied that he had some other things to say about Melchizedek, but that the people were not ready to hear it yet. Many Bible scholars think that he wanted to say, "Melchizedek was actually Jesus."

God had a covenant with Abraham. Those who sought the Lord and believed entered into this covenant. God's whole purpose from the beginning was to establish a personal and eternal covenant with man. From the time that the first man sinned, God's purpose has been reconciliation and restoration. Adam had broken his covenant with God by disobedience, but God gave him another chance, even though Adam's sin resulted in his physical death.

One of Adam's descendants was Abram, and Abram sought God with his whole heart. God blessed him, and made him the father of many nations. This is the character of God. When we seek Him and put Him first in our lives, He gives us the desires of our hearts. Abram's greatest desire was to be a father, so God made him

a father. He also made him rich and blessed in every way. He lived a long and happy life, because he had a covenant with God.

Bread has long been a symbol for friendship and covenant. The Bible often uses the analogy of plants to represent people. Grain is the product of good, healthy plants. We are all called to "be fruitful." Bread is the product when grain is harvested, blended, crushed, and fired up.

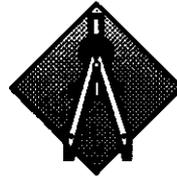
Later, when Jesus was on the earth, He broke bread with His disciples. They already understood the significance of bread and wine, but Jesus brought it into a new dimension. He said, "This is the new covenant in my blood." They were not just partaking of the old covenant as children of Abraham. They were entering into a new covenant with God. They would each have a personal relationship with God, because of the blood of Jesus that was about to be shed for them. They were to see Jesus die and bring forth this new covenant with God that would last forever.

After Jesus broke bread with His disciples, He told them to continue the practice with believers until His second coming. That was nearly two thousand years ago, and we are still waiting for that great event. Until He comes again, believers around the world continue to break bread in local churches and meetings. Each time we do, we are reminded that it is through the blood sacrifice of Jesus on the cross that we can enter into a covenant with God, and thus have the hope of heaven for eternity.

We are also reminded that we are in covenant with other believers, and that we are on the same team. That means that we

should speak well of one another, and maintain close friendships with other believers. We should be patient with one another, and see ourselves as brothers and sisters in the Lord. A covenant relationship with others also means that when one falls, we should do all we can to build up and restore, rather than reject and react.

Who should take communion? Since communion is an important sign of the new covenant, it is important that those who partake in communion have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior. It is very important that Christians practice taking the Lord's Supper, but we should not rush into it until we understand it, and are sure we are ready. (1 Cor. 11:27-32)



Methods

Visiting Deacon/Elder

Ask one of the deacons or elders, or even the pastor, if possible, to come toward the end of the class period with a piece of bread and a cup used in communion at your church. Ask him to explain why they use the kind of bread that they do, especially if they use unleavened bread. Ask him also to explain what they use for the wine, and why. Encourage those who have been saved to partake in communion together as a class.

The Words of My Mouth

Volume 3

Lesson 5



Bible References

Exodus 20:7

Psalms 19:14

Proverbs 10:31; 15:4

Proverbs 26:2; 31:26

Matthew 5:34-37,44

Matthew 7:18-23; 12:34

Matthew 15:10-20

Mark 11:21

James 3:3-10

James 4:11



Scripture Reading

James 3:3-10

3 *"Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.*

4 *"Behold also the ships, which though (they be) so great, and (are) driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.*

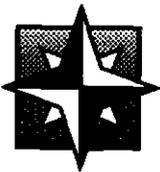
5 *"Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!*

6 *"And the tongue (is) a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.*

7 *"For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:*

8 *"But the tongue can no man tame; (it is) an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.*

9 *"Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.*



Theme

We need to learn to guard both our hearts and our tongues.

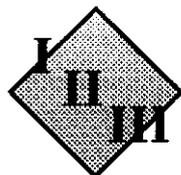
10 "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be."



Memory Verse

Psalms 19:14

"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer."



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. A tiny fire can destroy a city, if it is allowed to spread and is not quenched.
- c. Water quenches fire, as the rain of the Holy Spirit quenches gossip and evil speaking.

B. Mark 7:18-23.

1. We are not defiled by what goes into our mouth as much as by what comes out.
2. The more evil our heart becomes, the more we speak evil.

II. Cursing and Blessing.

A. To bless someone is to pronounce and impart good to them, according to the power you have to bless.

1. "We bless you in the name of the Lord," means, "we impart good to you as representatives of the Lord."
2. "God bless you" is actually a prayer to impart peace to someone.
3. Jesus said, "...bless them that curse you...." (Matthew 5:44)

B. To curse is to do the opposite of blessing; to curse is to impart evil or judgment.

1. Jesus cursed a fig tree because it did not produce fruit, and it withered and died. (Mark 11:21)
2. "Damn it" is actually a curse, seeking the damnation of someone or something. To be damned is to be eternally removed from feeling God's love and to be assigned to hell fire.
3. People who curse have no power to damn anyone. (Proverbs 26:2)

- C. People who are given to cursing (or cussing, as it is called by some) are generally revealing a darkness of heart, and have no power to curse anyone.

III. Profanity and Swearing.

- A. Profanity is using words and speech which focus on unclean or very private things.

1. Profanity uses base-sounding terms for body parts or bodily functions.
2. Profanity focuses on unpleasant or evil things in life.

- B. Swearing.

1. To make an oath, to make a solemn declaration with an appeal to God or other higher power.
2. Jesus said, "...Swear not at all;... But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay...." (Matthew 5:34-37)

IV. Bywords.

- A. Bywords, or "minced oaths," are expressions of cursing or profanity which are "watered down," or softened, but are used in the same vain and improper way.

- B. Bywords are used as adjectives, and only reveal a negative attitude and a tendency to focus on unkind or unclean things.

- C. Bywords which are forms of swearing:

1. Darn it;
2. "Gosh;"
3. "Golly;"
4. "Jeepers;"
5. "Jiminy Cricket;"
6. "Holy Cow;"

7. "Gee."

- D. Should we avoid these words?

1. Yes.
2. "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain...." (Exodus 20:7)
3. Many of these words, and others like them, are derived from the names of the Lord ("God," "Jesus Christ," "Holy Spirit," etc.).

- E. These bywords are minced forms of profanity:

1. "Shoot;"
2. "Fooley;"
3. "Shucks."
4. These words are derived from evil, profane words, and should not be used by clean-hearted people.
5. Some Christians are not aware of the origins of words they commonly use, and use them without realizing what they really mean.



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 lives.
- Life and death are in the power of the tongue.
- People curse others because of the condition of their own hearts, not because of what others have done.

- Christians should return good for evil, and blessing for cursing, and receive blessings accordingly.
- The tongue is a fire, because a little whispered word can develop into bitter division between the best of friends.



Lesson Material

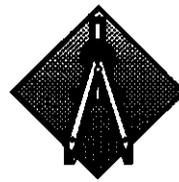
Early in life, children need to know about the power of the tongue, and about the importance of the words we use. Even many sincere Christians are prone to blurt out, "Gosh!" "Geez!" and "Golly!," not realizing at all that they are taking the name of the Lord in vain. We all need to be careful that we do not pick up the habit of inserting vain words into our conversation, when we have not even considered their origin. Jesus said that we do not need to swear, invoking the name of God into our conversation. Just say, "I'll keep my word," and not "By God! I'll keep my word."

There is a difference between cursing, swearing, and profanity; but, they all are indicative of a life that is not in harmony with God, and reflect a harshness of heart that is associated with a selfish, sinful spirit. Jesus taught people to speak straight and true. Paul also spoke on the topic of the use of words, as did James. Our tongue is important. One of the qualities of the virtuous woman is that *"in her tongue is the law of kindness."* (Proverbs 31:26)

Ideally, children are raised in the nurture and admonition of the Lord by two parents, with the added influence of

grandparents and other godly adults. Unfortunately, in our culture, many children find that their primary influence in life comes from a television, and secondly, by a peer group of children from non-Christian homes.

Our children need to be taught to speak properly and kindly. They tend to be quick to pick up on bywords they hear around them, and tend to think it is "cool" to speak in demeaning terms to others. They need to be taught that cruel nicknames and demeaning talk are just as serious as blows with their fists, because words can do even greater damage to people than bruises. We need to judge ourselves when we find ourselves speaking out with vain or coarse language, for it is *"...out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."* (Matthew 12:34)



Methods

Children need to understand what swearing, cursing, profanity, and bywords are, so that they will be better able to avoid them in their conversation. Be careful not to use profane words. They will know what you are talking about, when you describe how they originate.

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 toward their brothers or sisters. Practice calling other children by their first names, and adults by their title -- Mr., Mrs., Pastor, Miss -- and last names.

Benaiah

Volume 3

Lesson 6



Bible References

2 Samuel 23:20-23

2 Thessalonians 3:10

2 Timothy 2:3

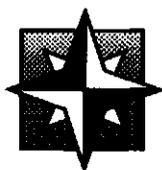
James 4:7

of Moab: he went down also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow:

21 *"And he slew an Egyptian, a goodly man: and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; but he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear.*

22 *"These (things) did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had the name among three mighty men.*

23 *"He was more honourable than the thirty, but he attained not to the (first) three. And David set him over his guard."*



Theme

The greatest heroes of all are godly people.



Memory Verse

2 Timothy 2:3

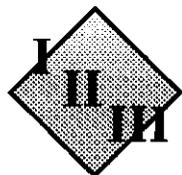
"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."



Scripture Reading

2 Samuel 23:20-23

20 *"And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man, of Kabzeel, who had done many acts, he slew two lionlike men*



Outline

I. David's Mighty Men.

A. David had a team.

1. Great leaders usually have others to help them.
 - a. Other men helped David kill Goliath's four brothers.
 - b. We all need others at times to gain spiritual victory in our lives.

2. Thirty mighty men.

- a. David had chief musicians who helped lead the others.
- b. He also had military leaders.
- c. The Bible lists the thirty mightiest men in David's army.
- d. They achieved more than others.
- e. Secular humanism seeks to make us think we are all equal.
- f. We are each valuable to God, but some people achieve more in life and will have a greater reward in eternity.

B. Pursuing excellence.

1. God recognizes achievers, and rewards faithfulness.
2. Not everyone who is called is faithful.
3. Not everyone who starts the race finishes.
4. It takes work and self-denial to achieve.
5. God will not bless a lazy person with great skill or strength.

II. The Three Mightiest Men.

A. Benaiah was mighty, but there were three men who were mightier than he.

1. Adino.

- a. He killed 800 with a spear at one time.
- b. He was a powerful and skilled fighter.

2. Eleazer.

- a. He killed Philistines until his friends could not pry his sword loose from his hand.
- b. He inspired others to victory.

3. Shammah.

- a. When everyone else ran from a troop of Philistines, he stood his ground.
- b. He defended a bean patch, and did not give in.

B. At Bethlehem.

1. When Adino, Eleazer, and Shammah heard that David longed for some water from the well at Bethlehem, they got him some.
2. They broke through the Philistine army in broad daylight and then fought their way back again, to bring David a drink.
3. Three men took on a whole army to bless their king.

III. Benaiah's Exploits.

A. The son of Jehoiada.

1. He was called the "*son of a valiant man.*" (2 Samuel 23:20)
2. We tend to pick up character traits from our parents.

B. Benaiah slew two lion-like men of Moab.

1. Moab was an enemy nation.
2. Benaiah faced two vicious, powerful men at once.
3. Have you ever faced more than one problem at a time?
4. Satan is our enemy.
5. We can only overcome his attack through faith and prayer.

C. He slew a lion in a pit on a snowy day.

1. He was "in the pits," facing a fierce lion.
2. It was a cold, snowy day.
3. The pit was slippery.
4. He had courage and strength, and he overcame the adversity.
5. Satan is like "a roaring lion."
 - a. Sometimes we are tempted by sin when we are emotionally down.
 - b. We can resist the devil and overcome temptation, if we take courage and place our attention on God. (James 4:7)

D. He killed a giant Egyptian with a staff.

1. Egypt is a biblical type of sin.
2. Sometimes the enemy is bigger than we are.
3. The Egyptian had a spear, while Benaiah had only a wooden staff.
4. He took the spear away from the giant, and ran him through with it.

E. Allegory.

1. Today, we do not face physical lions or giants.
2. Our enemy is not Philistines, but the devil.
3. We face opposition from the secular world system, our own sin nature,

and the forces of the kingdom of darkness.

- a. The world.
- b. The flesh.
- c. The devil.



Spiritual Truths

- We are all valuable as God's creations, but we are not equal in achievement or ability.
- We can become faithful and productive in life, or we can waste our days seeking pleasure.
- No one becomes excellent at any skill without hard work and discipline.
- We do not all have the same opportunities or abilities.
- Humanism focuses on rights, and makes us the same as everyone else.
- We each have unique gifts and opportunities in life.
- We all face battles in life that we cannot overcome alone.
- We do not face physical giants in life, but we do face spiritual ones.
- We can overcome adversity through faith and hope and faithfulness.
- God is bigger than any problem we will face.
- We can resist the devil, when we are submitted to God.



Lesson Material

Secular humanism is a philosophy of life that opposes Christianity at nearly every level. While they view life as an accident of chance, or a random collision of energy and matter, we view life in a different way.

One result of humanism is the idea that we are merely a product of our environment, and that we are all the same. The movement to eliminate boys groups, women's colleges, etc. is not about equality, but is an attempt to make everyone the same. The fact is that we are different. God designed us to be male or female, and it is wrong for boys to act feminine or for girls to try to be like the guys. God created us with diversity, and each of us should become the best that we can be -- according to our God-given potential in life.

Humanism always leads to socialism, which is based on the idea that everyone should be treated and rewarded equally. However, some people have more ability than others. Some work harder, and should be receive a greater reward. Socialism says that it is wrong for one person to have more than another. Yet, the Bible says, *"...if any would not work, neither should he eat."* (2 Thessalonians 3:10)

David had a special group of men in his army who were ranked above the others. Those who did the greatest exploits were recognized and rewarded. The mightiest of them did almost superhuman feats, requiring great strength, fighting skill, and courage. In fact, they needed

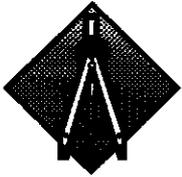
supernatural grace from God to do what they did. God rewards faithfulness, diligence, and achievement. He does not just "zap" certain individuals with great musical or athletic skills. Those who excel work diligently, while their peers sit and watch television.

God's Word records the names of these men who excelled in Israel's greatest hour, for all of history to remember. They are heroes and good role models. The secular world provides fictional heroes to promote their agenda of encouraging fantasy. When children are exposed to a lot of science-fiction or fantasy characters, they are always drawn to a self-absorbed focus on power and selfish gain. The violent fantasy found in some movies, cartoons, and rock music leads to rebellion, anger, and antisocial behavior.

Godly heroes are real people. Children who focus on real heroes should know about the discipline and sacrifice that motivated excellence. The mighty men of David excelled because they lived for something beyond themselves. They had the courage that comes from spiritual conviction and from a love for others. Their unselfish spirit, together with their diligence in exercise and practice, made them overcomers and good role models.

While we do not face physical armies and giants like these heroes did, we do have an enemy who is like a lion. Satan wants to destroy everyone he can, and it is usually by destroying moral integrity. We are all tempted to sin. Temptations are situations designed by Satan to turn us from God. We need to be diligent to know the Word and to keep up a consistent prayer life. That is how Jesus overcame the devil, and it is the only plan that works for us.

Benaiah killed a lion in a pit on a snowy day. The pit reminds us of low times in life. Have you ever been "in the pits?" A lion is a picture of temptation. Satan does not tempt us because he wants us to have a good time. He tempts us because he knows that sin can destroy our character, our witness, and our lives. It is easier to yield to temptation than to overcome it, especially when we are in a pit. Slippery snow makes it that much more difficult. But courageous Benaiah overcame, even when he was down. He did not give up. You, too, can overcome, if you submit to God and resist the devil.



Methods

Visualize and personalize

The physical exploits of Benaiah and the other mighty men of David create

great mental pictures in the minds of young people. If you try to use flannelgraph or drawings, you will probably be less effective than just describing the scenes and letting the students visualize them in their minds.

Describe the lion-like men of Moab. They were vicious, shaggy, powerful, and wicked. Imagine one very powerful and godly soldier facing two great enemies, and using his sword with the skill and power than can come only through diligent exercise and practice. Try to inspire students to practice and develop an outstanding skill, such as a musical instrument, art, or speech. What are some skills we can use for God? What skills will help us to be spiritual overcomers?

Be animated and excited as you describe these true stories. Then make sure the students realize that our giants and lions are spiritual adversaries, and that our sword is the Bible. We can be overcomers and do spiritual exploits, if we will seek God with all of our hearts through prayer and become diligent in every part of life.

A Valley Full of Ditches

Volume 3

Lesson 7



Bible References

2 Kings 3

Psalms 27

Psalms 105:4

Proverbs 13:20

John 2:5

1 Corinthians 14:29-32

9 "So the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah, and the king of Edom: and they fetched a compass of seven days' journey: and there was no water for the host, and for the cattle that followed them.

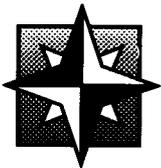
10 "And the king of Israel said, Alas! that the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab!

11 "But Jehoshaphat said, {Is there} not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may inquire of the LORD by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here {is} Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah.

12 "And Jehoshaphat said, The word of the LORD is with him. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him.

13 "And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him, Nay: for the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab.

14 "And Elisha said, {As} the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee.



Theme

God can speak to His people through His preachers and prophets.



Scripture Reading

2 Kings 3:9-16

15 *"But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him."*

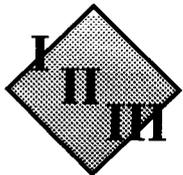
16 *"And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Make this valley full of ditches."*



Memory Verse

Psalms 105:4

"Seek the LORD, and his strength: seek his face evermore."



Outline

I. The Kings.

A. Jehoshaphat.

1. King of Judah.
 - a. Ruled long after the nation of Israel was divided.
 - b. Jehoshaphat was a descendant of King David.
2. Joined again with the Northern Israeli king.
 - a. He had worked with King Ahab, and was almost killed.
 - b. He should have kept away from the evil kings of Israel.

B. Jehoram.

1. King Ahab's wicked son.
2. He put away the idols his parents served, but he still did not seek God.
 - a. This is like a person who quits drinking, but still does not serve the Lord.
 - b. He continued to live in sin.

C. The king of Edom.

1. Edom was the nation descended from Esau, Israel's brother.
2. The Edomites were generally wicked people who did not serve the Lord.
3. They were usually enemies of the Hebrew people.
4. This time, Edom stood with Israel against Moab.

D. Mesha, the king of Moab.

1. When King Ahab was killed, Moab rebelled against Israel.
2. The nation of Moab descended from Lot, and was a heathen nation.
3. The king and the people were very wicked.
4. They had been conquered by Israel, and were heavily taxed by them.

E. The alliance.

1. When King Jehoram went against Moab, he had to go through Judah and Edom to get there.
2. He persuaded the kings of Judah and Edom to help him.
3. They all hoped to gain financially.
4. They wanted the strength of numbers.

II. The Prophet of God.

A. No water.

1. Edom was a very dry, desert area.
2. It is now known as the Arabian desert.
3. The people and cattle were dying of thirst.
4. Jehoram said, "God led us here so we would die."

B. Jehoshaphat.

1. "Is there a prophet of God around?"
2. He wanted to hear a word from God.
3. He should have prayed before he rashly promised to help Jehoram.

C. Elisha.

1. Elisha the prophet was in the group from Judah.
2. He had been the servant of the great prophet, Elijah.
3. Elisha was close to God, and could hear what God was saying.

III. Bring Me a Minstrel.

A. Elisha was asked to get a word from the Lord for the three armies.

1. He did not respect the king of Israel, because he was not a man of God.
2. For the sake of good King Jehoshaphat, he would prophesy.

B. A musician was called.

1. Elisha wanted an anointed musician to play.
2. The use of music in worship helps us to come into God's presence.
3. Many of the prophets were excellent singers and musicians.
4. Many of the prophecies of the Bible were actually sung by the prophets.
5. By the anointing of the Spirit, they would sing the "song of the Lord."

C. "Make this valley full of ditches."

1. This was a strange word of wisdom.
2. Nevertheless, the people obeyed the word of Elisha.
3. They dug ditches.

D. The Results.

1. In the morning, as the priests offered a meat offering to the Lord, water came and filled all the ditches.
 - a. The people and cattle were saved.
 - b. Everyone drank his fill.
2. The Moabites saw the water in the sunlight.
 - a. It looked like blood.
 - b. The water reflected the sun's light.
 - c. They thought that the three nations had fought among themselves.
 - d. They came celebrating, expecting to take the possessions of the dead enemies.
 - e. The allies took the Moabites by surprise, and killed many of their soldiers.
3. When the kings sought a word from God, they received it, and were saved from death.



Spiritual Truths

- It is better to put your trust in God than to rely on human strength or numbers.
- We should be careful not to choose ungodly friends, because they will lead us into danger.
- We should pray for a word from God before we get into a tough situation.
- Going our own way can lead us into trouble.
- Difficult situations often motivate us to seek the Lord.
- Godly music is a great way to make ourselves more sensitive to God's presence.
- Musicians are important members of the ministry team.
- God often tells us what to do without explaining how the situation will work out.
- "Faith" is obeying, even when you do not see how your obedience will work.
- When you do what God told you to do, and you do it God's way, you can expect God to take care of the results.



Lesson Material

Jehoshaphat was basically a good king. He was a descendent of King David, one of the greatest men in history. David served God with all of his heart. As a boy, he had been rejected by his brothers. Instead of sending him to the battlefield or letting him work with his seven older brothers, he was put out with the sheep to do a servant's work. Instead of becoming bitter and angry, David decided to get close to God. He prayed, and worshipped, and sang. He worked out, practiced music, and educated himself. He became very strong, very skilled, and very spiritual. He loved God, and God loved him. He was favored by the Lord, and became a great and wealthy king. God also promised that there would always be a descendant of David's on the throne. Today, there is still a descendent of David on the throne. His name is Jesus.

Jehoshaphat prayed to the Lord, but he was not as spiritually strong as David. His weakness was his desire for approval. He hung around with the wrong kind of friends, who hindered his spiritual walk.

As Christians, we should witness to unsaved people. But we should be careful not to become influenced by them. Solomon had said, "*He that walketh with wise {men} shall be wise: but a [companion of fools shall] be destroyed.*" (Proverbs 13:20) Young people need to be especially careful not to be influenced by ungodly peers. They should seek out Christians and be close to their parents and godly adults. The secular world scoffs at the notion that

we should be close to adults, but they can be our best friends -- especially our parents.

King Jehoram became the king of Israel, which was made up of ten tribes which had split off from the kingdom after Solomon's death. The northern kingdom never had a single godly king. These kings served idols, like the rest of the heathen world. Only the nation of Judah served the true God. They had problems from time to time, because they had a tendency to be influenced by the heathen nations around them.

After Jehoram's father Ahab died, the nation of Moab decided to rebel. Moab was a wicked nation to the south, which had been conquered by Israel. Conquered nations generally paid heavy taxes to the stronger nations. They were taxed so heavily to keep them from getting too strong, as well as to enrich the conquerors. Heavy taxes have historically been a tool to keep people weak and dependent on the state.

When Jehoram went to fight with Moab, he went through Judah and Edom to get there. He asked these kings to help him defeat Moab. Jehoshaphat had almost lost his life a few years before, when King Ahab asked him to help him against Ramoth-Gilead. You think he would have learned to say no, but he did not. He wanted so much to win friends that without even praying to seek the Lord's will, he eagerly offered to help Jehoram.

On the way to Moab, the great army got into trouble. There was no water in the desert, and they were in danger of dying of thirst. There was no rain, and they had not planned things out very well. Sometimes we get into trouble in life, because we do things our own way. God wants us to learn to depend on Him.

When things became desperate, Jehoshaphat asked if there was a prophet in the group. Apparently, God had not forgotten His people, even though they had forgotten Him. Elisha the prophet was there, and was summoned to the king. He said, "I do not have much respect for these other kings, but for Jehoshaphat's sake, I will get a word from God. Bring me a musician."

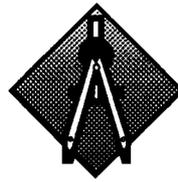
A prophecy is not necessarily foretelling the future. "Prophecy" is speaking for God. Sometimes people work up something in their own minds, or even hear something from an evil spirit. These are called "false prophecies." The Apostle Paul taught that we should always be careful about prophecy. He encouraged churches to have more than one prophet, so that the others could "judge" the word. (1 Corinthians 14:29) Speaking a word from God is serious business, and we should realize that it is a terrible thing to say "thus saith the Lord" if He did not say it.

Elisha wanted to hear from God, so he asked for a musician. Music is an important part of church life, and musical instruments have always been valuable to worshippers. When King Saul was tormented by demon spirits, he called for a minstrel, and David was hired to play anointed music. Demon spirits cannot stand anointed music. But the human spirit can be more sensitive to God's Spirit when anointed music is played. Isaiah and Ezekiel also were musicians.

The word of the Lord was, "Make this valley full of ditches." Now, if you are in a desert, and dying of thirst, you do not dig ditches. You dig wells. The water table may be fifty feet down, if there is one at all. Everyone knows that ditches will not solve a water shortage. But that was the

command from God, so the people spent the day digging ditches in the sand.

The next morning, the priests were offering the morning sacrifice, when suddenly, water came flooding in to fill the ditches. There was no rain, clouds, or even wind. There was no explanation, except that God had sent tons of water and filled all the ditches. Not only did the water save the lives of the people and their cattle, but it was the key to the defeat of the Moabites. The Moabite army saw the ditches in the morning sunlight and thought they were streams of blood. The Moabites assumed that the three nations who were allied against them had turned on each other (which sometimes happened in those days), and the Moabites came expecting to reap a harvest of easy spoil. When they came to the camp, they were met by a ready army; and the Moabites were so badly defeated, that the king of Moab offered his own son as a human sacrifice to his demon god, Chemosh. After the battle was over, the Israelites returned to their homes.



Methods

Friendship Discussion

Discuss friendship, and the influence we have on each other. Consider the principle of Proverbs 13:20, and note that those who think about God and spiritual things will lead others to think about them, too. Those who think only about natural things will lead others to have wrong values and make poor decisions.

Obedying God

Many miracles in the Bible were performed with strange commands, such as throwing salt in water, or spitting on the ground to make mud balls to heal blind eyes. Naaman was told to dip seven times in a muddy river. How many other miracles can you name which came about by obeying unusual commands from God? A key phrase came from Mary, when Jesus told servants to fill six pots with water when wine was needed at a wedding reception. She said, "...*Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.*" (John 2:5)

Death in the Pot

Volume 3

Lesson 8



Bible References

2 Kings 4:38-41

Ecclesiastes 12:11-12

Lamentations 3:40

Matthew 4:4,19

John 6:35

John 10:10

Romans 1



Scripture Reading

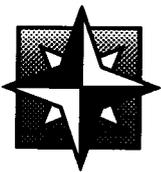
2 Kings 4:38-41

38 *"And Elisha came again to Gilgal: and (there was) a dearth in the land; and the sons of the prophets (were) sitting before him: and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets.*

39 *"And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred (them) into the pot of pottage: for they knew (them) not.*

40 *"So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O (thou) man of God, (there is) death in the pot. And they could not eat (thereof).*

41 *"But he said, Then bring meal. And he cast (it) into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot."*



Theme

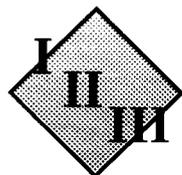
Secular humanism is a false philosophy which leads us away from God and truth.



Memory Verse

Lamentations 3:40

"Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD."



Outline

I. Elisha.

A. God's prophet.

1. A man who could hear from God for the people.
2. God's messenger.
3. A faithful servant of the Lord.

B. The sons of the prophets.

1. Compare to Bible school students.
2. Ministers, or prophets in training.

II. Death in the Land.

A. A dry time.

1. Famine.
2. Food was scarce.

B. Historically, the church has gone through dry times.

1. Revival is like a spiritual "rain" that refreshes.

2. The forerunner to every revival in history has been prayer.
3. When our prayers go up to God, the "rain" of the Spirit comes down.

III. A Wild Vine.

A. Elisha called the men to gather plants for a large stew.

1. A hungry man saw a wild gourd.
2. He gathered gourds from the vine.
3. They were poisonous.

B. Death in the pot.

1. The stew they cooked made the people sick.
2. The gourds contained poison.

C. Elisha's solution.

1. Throw meal into the pot.
2. Everyone knows that throwing cornmeal into the stew will not affect poison.
3. The normal solution would be to throw it out.
4. However, God miraculously neutralized the poison, and the people were saved from death.

IV. Analogy.

A. The Word of God is bread for our spirits.

1. We need to eat the Word.
2. We need to hear Bible preaching and teaching as food for the soul.

B. A pastor is a shepherd.

1. He feeds the flock from the Word of God.

2. He protects the church from the weeds of false doctrines, and worldly philosophies which tend to get into the "pot."
3. Solomon warned us to be careful about what we learn outside the local church.
 - a. Ecclesiastes 12:11-12.
 - b. Be careful about going beyond words given by "one shepherd."
 - c. Make sure what you learn is consistent with the Word of God.

C. Poison vine.

1. The world is full of false ideas about life, which can lead to death.
2. Secular humanism is a philosophy which says that life just happens, and that man was not created.
 - a. If we were not created, then we are not accountable.
 - b. "There is no judgment."
 - c. So, there is no such thing as sin, or right and wrong.
 - d. Values, then, must be relative and based upon the individual.
 - e. Life "just happens."
3. Humanism is the philosophy, based on evolution, that leads to:
 - a. Abortion;
 - b. Suicide;
 - c. Drunkenness;
 - d. Adultery and divorce;
 - e. Homosexuality;
 - f. Wickedness in general.

D. Throw some meal into the pot.

1. Get into the Word of God.
2. Base your values on the Bible, and it will lead to life and health.



Spiritual Truths

- The decisions we make in life reflect our spiritual and moral values.
- Evolution is a religious doctrine that cannot be proven, because there is no firm scientific evidence to support it.
- People believe in evolution because they want to believe they are not ultimately responsible for their actions and choices in life. The alternative is to acknowledge that we have a Creator and, therefore, a Judge.
- The doctrine of evolution leads us to believe that "life just happens," so the most important thing in life is to avoid pain and have a good time.
- The Word of God teaches us that the most important thing in life is to glorify God and to worship Him forever.
- When we gather ideas based on what we want to hear, we will believe lies that lead to death.
- There is a way that seems right to a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death.
- The role of the pastor is to protect the sheep from the poison weeds of false ideas which lead to spiritual death.
- Humanism and evolution lead to destructive values, and result in all kinds of wrong moral decisions, such as abortion, homosexuality, and suicide.



Lesson Material

Elisha received his training as a prophet by being with Elijah during the last part of his earthly ministry. He loved God, and was called to fulfill the office of the great man. He asked God for a "double portion" of the spirit of Elijah, which would be the inheritance of the eldest son. It seems that God granted the request. Of all the miracles performed by these two spiritual giants of the faith, eight are recorded for Elijah, and sixteen for Elisha.

Many of the things done by these men were "unorthodox" in the eyes of others, but they obtained results. They did whatever God told them to do, and God honored their faith and obedience. Elisha apparently taught a number of young ministerial students, for he was the leader of a "school of the prophets."

In Gilgal, times were hard. There was a famine in the land. People were desperate for food. Elisha told the men to gather food for a large pot of stew. One man picked gourds from a wild vine he found. It was not a plant anyone was familiar with, but when you are hungry, you do not complain. They decided that any food was better than none.

They were wrong. Poison can kill you more rapidly than starvation. The wild gourds were poisonous. The men became sick, and they cried out to the prophet. Elisha told them to throw some meal into the pot, and then eat. There was nothing special about the meal. The meal was only crushed grain. It does not matter if it was oatmeal, corn meal, or Malto meal. The

fact was that they obeyed God, and God used it to illustrate a spiritual truth.

Physical food has always been a type of the Word of God. Jesus said,

"...It is written, Man shall not live [by bread alone], but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4)

He also said, *"...I am the bread of life."* (John 6:35) Our spirit is fed and affected by what we take into our minds, just as our bodies are affected by what we take into our stomachs. Some foods are healthy, while some foods are "junk foods." Junk food is generally more exciting to the taste buds, but it is often full of fat and empty calories and is unhealthy. Beyond that, some foods are poisonous. That means that they can kill us quickly if we consume enough of them. Solomon said,

"The words of the wise {are} as goads, and as nails fastened {by} the masters of assemblies, {which} are given from one shepherd. And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books {there is} no end; and much study {is} a weariness of the flesh." (Ecclesiastes 12:11-12)

In other words, be careful about what you hear. The job of your pastor is to protect you from false ideas, as well as to feed you the Word of God.

Even Christians today are subject to the "wild gourds" of false philosophies, which spring from the "wild vine" of secular humanism. This is the belief that life is "secular," or without God. When we view life from a humanistic viewpoint, we will make completely different judgments and decisions. Basically, the appeal of

secularism is that we think we are not accountable for the way we live our lives. If there is no Creator, then there will be no judgment. They believe that man is just an animal and life ends at the grave. Therefore, the most important value in life is to have pleasure without pain. This is the reason humanists excuse and even encourage abortion, for example. If there is no creator, then it is better for babies to die, than to come into the world "unwanted." Humanists reason, "Let us kill them, so they will not be abused."

Even Christians are affected by the poisoned vine of humanistic values. Some say, "Since God wants me to be happy, I am sure He wants me to get a divorce from this mean person and seek true love." This is not biblical reasoning. God hates divorce. He does not tell people to commit adultery, either. When we realize that we are created, then we realize that the most important thing in life is not our happiness, but God's glory. Ironically, when we are committed to God's glory, we tend to live happier lives than those who live in pursuit of happiness.

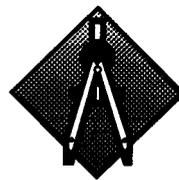
There is death in the pot of humanistic thinking. The basis for suicide is really the rebellion that takes responsibility for the end of our lives. But God, the Creator, is the one who appoints the time of death. He said, "Thou shalt not kill." Abortion and suicide are two examples of the results of the value system of secularism.

Put the Word of God into the pot of ideas. Jesus said,

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have (it) more abundantly." (John 10:10)

God's principles lead to life, peace, and joy. When we consider life, we should observe it from the standpoint of eternity. Otherwise, we will have a "temporal values system." Basically, a temporal values system means that a person will base decisions based on immediate and physical considerations. "Will this make me feel good now?" Therefore, "If it feels good, do it."

By contrast, a Christian world view distinguishes life as part of God's eternal plan. We were made for eternity, and will give an account for the way we live our lives. Therefore, the goal of life is not pleasure or temporal gain. The first considerations are, "What does God want me to do? Will it glorify God? Will it help others?" A humanist world view places one's self as the center of life. Therefore, a humanist will steal or hurt others if he feels it will benefit him. But a Christian sees God as the center of life, and himself as a servant. Therefore, a Christian will not steal, lie, or covet what someone else has. Instead, he will give to others, tell the truth, and seek the best for others. It all comes down to what your belief system is.



Methods

Illustration

Bring a large mushroom, or weed, if possible, and ask the students to tell you if it is good to eat. Obviously, we cannot tell just by looking, unless we are experts. Even then, it is hard to tell. One family went out gathering mushrooms in Michigan. To be safe, they took some

samples to a local expert and asked if what they had gathered were mushrooms, or if they were toadstools, which are poisonous. The expert said, "These are quite safe. But I recommend that you cook a small batch first." In other words, he was not positive.

Analogy

Explain the principle of analogies. God often uses natural things to illustrate spiritual principles. Note that we can learn many lessons from the natural world. Jesus often used analogies in His teaching. When He talked to farmers, He related

people to plants. To fishermen, He said, "*...I will make you fishers of men.*" (Matthew 4:19) He used physical things to illustrate spiritual truths.

Compare the wild vine to secular humanism, and the gourds to the temporal values we develop when we have a secular world view. Use everyday decisions to show the difference between a secular mind-set and a Christian world view -- temptations to steal, lie, cheat, and so forth. Ask the students "How would our behavior be different, if we believe there will be no judgment?"

A Child Shall Lead Them

Volume 3

Lesson 9



Bible References

2 Kings 11:1-4

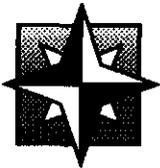
2 Kings 12:1-2

Psalms 34:11

2 *"But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons (which were) slain; and they hid him, (even) him and his nurse, in the bedchamber from Athaliah, so that he was not slain.*

3 *"And he was with her hid in the house of the LORD six years. And Athaliah did reign over the land.*

4 *"And the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the rulers over hundreds, with the captains and the guard, and brought them to him into the house of the LORD, and made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of the LORD, and showed them the king's son."*



Theme

God used Joash, even as a child.



Scripture Reading

2 Kings 11:1-4

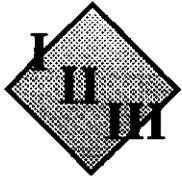
1 *"And when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal.*



Memory Verse

Psalms 34:11

"Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD."



Outline

I. The Wicked Queen.

- A. When King Ahaziah died, his mother wanted to become the queen of Judah.
 - 1. Queen Athaliah wanted everything for herself.
 - a. She desired power.
 - b. She was a worshipper of Baal, a false, demonic god.
 - 2. She had all of her son's children killed, so that she would be the only heir to the throne.
- B. God's promise to David.
 - 1. He promised David that he would always have a direct descendant on the throne.
 - 2. Athaliah was a heathen, who married into the family.
- C. God keeps His promises.
 - 1. God protected the Davidic line.
 - 2. There is still a direct descendant of David on the throne today.
 - a. Jesus Christ.
 - b. Jesus is King of the whole earth.
 - c. Someday, everyone will recognize that He is King.
 - d. Most people today do not know Him.

II. The Provision.

- A. Jehosheba hid one of Ahaziah's sons.
 - 1. Jehosheba was a family member.
 - a. Daughter of King Joram.
 - b. Sister of Ahaziah.
 - 2. Jehosheba hid baby Joash.
- B. He was hidden in the temple for six years.

III. The Plan.

- A. Jehoiada the priest called for the guards to come.
- B. He brought out Joash.
 - 1. The priest told them who he was.
 - 2. He gave them a plan to protect him.

IV. The Coronation.

- A. Joash was introduced to the people as the rightful heir to the throne.
- B. The people gladly made Joash king.
 - 1. The high priest anointed Joash with oil.
 - a. A symbol of God's favor and grace.
 - b. A spiritually significant act.
 - 2. The people applauded the new king.

V. The Reaction.

- A. Athaliah heard the noise.
- B. Athaliah went to the temple.

1. Obviously, she did not go there often, or she would have discovered that Joash was alive.
 2. She found Joash.
 - a. He was surrounded by the guards.
 - b. He was being honored as the new king.
- C. Athaliah knew that this would not be a good day.
1. Athaliah cried out, "Treason, Treason!"
 - a. She thought the people had deceived her.
 - b. Actually, she had deceived herself into thinking that she could take God out of the land of Canaan and give it over to Baal.
 2. They took her outside of the temple.
 - a. It was not right to kill people in the temple.
 - b. She was killed outside of the King's home.

VI. The Rightful and Righteous Rule.

- A. King Joash ruled for forty years.
- B. King Joash did right in the sight of the Lord as long as his mentor (spiritual father) Jehoiada was alive.
1. King Joash took care to listen to God.
 2. King Joash took instruction from Jehoiada the priest.
 3. After Jehoiada died, King Joash began to do wickedly.



Spiritual Truths

- God will not stand by and watch His people turn their hearts from Him.
- There is always a price to pay for evil.
- God will always keep His promises.
- God will use people (like Jehosheba and Jehoiada) to do His work on this earth, even though He could have merely stuck down Athaliah before she destroyed the other sons of Ahaziah.
- God's house is not to be defiled.
- God is a God of order.
- It is human nature to respond to unrighteously acquired power by seeking more power.
- There are long-term consequences for marrying outside of the faith.
- When the wicked rule, the people mourn.
- When the righteous rule, the people rejoice.



Lesson Material

Upon the death of her son Ahaziah, the king of Judah, Athaliah decided that she wanted to be the ruler of the land. King Ahaziah had several offspring that

would be in line for the throne, so Athaliah secretly sent out a decree and had all of King Ahaziah's children killed. Thus, through the use of murder and treachery, she would become the only person left who could take the throne and rule the land.

In those days, leaders were not elected. Actually, God was the one who had chosen David to be king of Israel. Because David was such a faithful servant of God, God made a covenant with him and promised that he would forever have a direct descendant on the throne. People today may wonder about that; but, it is still true, because Jesus Christ was a direct descendent of David, and He is the fulfillment of that promise. Jesus will be on the throne forever. He is the King of kings, even though most people on earth today do not yet recognize Him as such. Someday, they will -- for one day, every knee in the human race will bow to the King and every tongue will confess that He is the Lord.

Athaliah was the daughter of Omri, the wicked king of Israel. She had married King Joram of Judah. Joram was not serving the Lord, and probably married her for political reasons. But Athaliah was an evil influence in the land and was so selfish that she killed her own grandchildren to gain power and wealth for herself.

However, one person did not accept what Athaliah was doing, and that was Ahaziah's sister, Jehosheba. Jehosheba took baby Joash, one of King Ahaziah's sons, and hid him in the bedroom of the temple. There he remained hidden along with his nurse for six years. Queen Athaliah did not go to the temple, because she was a worshiper of Baal. Baal was the god of heathen nations, and was

worshipped in her homeland, Israel. People were attracted to Baal worship because the center of this false religion was focused on selfish gain and pleasure. Also, when they worshipped false gods, the people did as they pleased, because their gods did not judge them. Often, people indulged in wicked practices in the name of religion.

After the six years had passed and Joash was seven years old, the priest, Jehoiada, took Joash out of hiding. He brought in the captains of the army and the guard from the temple, and showed them the rightful king. All of the people and the army hated the evil queen and were especially angry when they found out the truth concerning the fate of the other descendants of their former king. The captains and the guards agreed to the plan that was laid out by Jehoiada to make Joash the new King.

Very detailed provisions were made for the placement of the guard and the protection of Joash. Nothing was left to chance. The people were brought to the temple and introduced to Joash. They rose up in unity to proclaim him to be their new king. Joash was anointed and proclaimed as the new king. The people all cheered, "God save the king!"

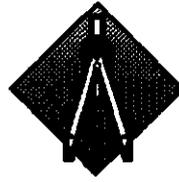
When Athaliah heard all of the noise coming from the people and from the guards at the temple, she went over to find out what was going on. Remember that she did not normally go to the Lord's house. When she arrived, she was shocked to find her grandson, Joash, was alive and had been anointed as the king. She also knew what that would mean for her. Her sins had caught up with her. She knew that there was a price that would have to be paid.

Athaliah was taken away from the temple, because it was not right to shed the blood of a human in the temple of the Lord. She was taken to the side of the King's home, where she had been living, and was there put to death by the sword. Joash became the King of the land.

Joash was a good king, and reigned for forty years. He was wise — not only did he listen to the words of the Lord, he also received the counsel of the priest, Jehoiada, who had the ear of God. God wants us to listen to Him, and often will speak to us by providing individuals whom He anoints with His message. If it were not for the anointed people of God who listened and obeyed, such as Jehoiada and Jehosheba, then Joash would not have been alive and would not have ascended to the throne. That would not have been God's plan. God always makes a way for His plans to come to pass.

Exhort your students that God has a plan for their lives, also. God is right now making provisions for their safety and their direction. God has already placed people such as their parents, their pastor, and their Sunday school teacher into their lives, to help bring them the Word of God and direction for their lives.

Remind the students how exciting the Bible is. There are no books or movies that they can read or see that can compare to the adventure and excitement that they will find in the Bible. If they read it, God will use it not only to excite them, but to minister direction to their lives.



Methods

Allegory

Compare this factual, historical account to the struggle for power today. Athaliah can be compared to Satan, who has no right to rule, yet reigns in the hearts of many people. He seeks to destroy the influence of the rightful King, who is Jesus Christ.

What is a King?

A king is not like a president or prime minister. In those days, kings were the final human authority. Most kings could do anything they wanted within the limits of their power and wealth. The nation of Judah was still very wealthy, and the kings were wealthy as well. The king made the final decision, and the people obeyed.

When we speak of Jesus Christ as the King of kings, this means that He is the final authority of all life. Most of the people on earth try to "be their own person," and like to make their own decisions. When we are born again and confess Jesus as Lord, however, we are saying that Jesus has the right to make the final decisions. Our goal is to please Him and not just ourselves. We are His property. We are not our own. Basically, "King" relates to the highest authority, and "Lord" means "owner." Jesus Christ is not only our Savior, but He is also our Lord and King.

Prop for illustrated lesson:

Find or make a gold crown. The gold is a symbol of glory, and a crown is a symbol of power. Athaliah gained the crown by

being greedy and by hurting other people to get what she wanted for herself. How can we gain a crown? God promises a crown of life to those who overcome the wicked influences of the world. He will give crowns of righteousness to those who

overcome sin and the devil. When we receive crowns, we will lay them at the feet of Jesus, because we will want to recognize Him as the King of kings, and the Lord of the universe.

A Treasure Chest

Volume 3

Lesson 10



Bible References

Exodus 25:1-8

2 Kings 12:4-15

Psalms 96:7

Romans 12:1

Ephesians 2

1 John 2:15

4 "And Jehoash said to the priests, All the money of the dedicated things that is brought into the house of the LORD, (even) the money of every one that passeth (the account), the money that every man is set at, (and) all the money that cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of the LORD,

5 "Let the priests take (it) to them, every man of his acquaintance: and let them repair the breaches of the house, wheresoever any breach shall be found.

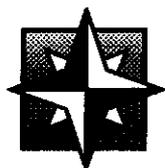
6 "But it was (so), (that) in the three and twentieth year of king Jehoash the priests had not repaired the breaches of the house.

7 "Then king Jehoash called for Jehoiada the priest, and the (other) priests, and said unto them, Why repair ye not the breaches of the house? now therefore receive no (more) money of your acquaintance, but deliver it for the breaches of the house.

8 "And the priests consented to receive no (more) money of the people, neither to repair the breaches of the house.

9 "But Jehoiada the priest took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one cometh into the house of the LORD: and the priests that kept the door put therein all the money (that was) brought into the house of the LORD.

10 "And it was (so), when they saw that (there was) much money in the chest, that



Theme

It is a joy to give to God's work.



Scripture Reading

2 Kings 12:4-11

the king's scribe and the high priest came up, and they put up in bags, and told the money that was found in the house of the LORD.

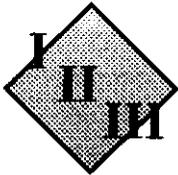
11 "And they gave the money, being told, into the hands of them that did the work, that had the oversight of the house of the LORD: and they laid it out to the carpenters and builders, that wrought upon the house of the LORD."



Memory Verse

Psalms 96:7

"Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength."



Outline

I. The King's Reign.

- A. Joash (Jehoash) was crowned the king of Judah.
 - 1. He was rescued when Athaliah ordered the execution of all heirs to David's throne.
 - 2. Jehoiada the priest anointed him king at the age of eight.
- B. Jehoash reigned for 40 years.

- 1. He was a good king.
- 2. He listened to the advice of the priest, Jehoiada.

II. The Problem.

- A. The temple (God's house) was in a state of disrepair.
 - 1. There were breaches in the structure.
 - a. A breach is a broken place, or gap.
 - b. There were holes and cracks in the walls.
 - c. The roof was leaking.
 - 2. No money had been spent on repairs.
- B. The priests were keeping all of the money that came in for themselves.

III. The King's Response.

- A. King Joash told the priests to repair the house of God.
 - 1. Gather together all of the money.
 - 2. Give it to trusted workmen.
 - 3. Have them repair the temple.
- B. The priests did not obey.

IV. The King's Orders.

- A. King Joash became stern with the priests.
 - 1. "Do not take any money for yourselves."
 - 2. This decree was to be in effect until the house of God had been repaired.
- B. The priests agreed to not take any money.

C. They also agreed to repair the house of God.

D. Jehoiada the priest took a chest.

1. He drilled a hole in it.
2. He put it inside the door of the temple for offerings.

E. The people responded.

1. The chest became full to overflowing.
2. The building repair fund was successful, because the people wanted to see the temple repaired.

F. The King's scribe and the chief priests were told to gather the money and have the work done.

V. God's House is Repaired.

A. The money was given to the workmen.

1. Carpenters.
2. Masons.
3. Stone cutters.
4. Artists and craftsmen.

B. The priests and craftsmen did not dicker over the price.

1. The priests gave the craftsmen what they asked for.
2. The craftsmen were honorable in their rates.
3. The subcontractors charged a fair price for their work.



Spiritual Truths

- When God needs something done, He selects a man to take charge.
- We need to learn to trust God's people with that which is given to them.
- It is God's will that the people give to build God's house.
- Our respect and care for the physical church building reflect our respect and love for God.
- In biblical times, the tithe was generally used to support the ministry, while offerings were used to build the temples.
- The true temple where God dwells is us, His people.
- A breach is a broken place, or gap.
- We demonstrate faith and obedience by tithing, but we demonstrate our love for God with offerings.
- God wants us to build church buildings with offerings, as He builds His kingdom in the hearts of people who willingly offer themselves to Him.



Lesson Material

Joash is a popular Sunday School lesson character, because he was a king at the age of eight. This can stimulate the imagination of most children. Kings were given immense power and wealth, even in a declining nation such as Judah. We need to realize that, although Joash was king, he was really under the influence of Jehoiada, a godly high priest. Joash never lost his respect for his spiritual father, and was a good king as long as Jehoiada was alive. Joash was like many other people. They do well when they are supervised, but on their own, they do not really have the strength of character to take a stand for God. Joash turned to evil when he no longer had Jehoiada to guide him.

Joash did right, except that the high places were not taken away. That is, the nation worshipped the true God, but there were still many opportunities for people to worship idols. Judah was like a carnal church or a carnal Christian. They try to serve God enough to gain them entrance into heaven, but they also hold onto sinful thoughts and behaviors. The more we flirt with the world, the more spiritual danger we are in. In fact, the Bible says,

"Love not the world, neither the things (that are) in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2:15)

Probably because of the vision of the high priest, King Joash told the priests to take some of the money that came into the temple and spend it on repairs. The temple had deteriorated over many years

of use. There were breaches -- gaps -- in the walls.

It was probably difficult for the priests to take money given for their support and spend it on repairs. It is likely that they were taking in just enough on which to live. The priests in those days were not landowners. They lived from the tithes of the other tribes. They had no other income. If the people did not faithfully tithe, it meant hardship for them and their families. The priests apparently took the tithe money and said, "Now how much of what came in this week can we set aside for repairs?" When it came down to it, there simply was not enough money coming in. They were not necessarily evil. They just did not feel that they could afford to fix the building out of their own meager income.

From the time of Moses on, it seems that the tithes were generally used to support those in full-time ministry. Building programs mentioned in the Bible were financed with freewill offerings. God had caused the Egyptians to give to the Israelites when the Israelites left Egypt, and then God asked for an offering from that income. God could have opened a gold and silver mine, or He could have rained down the materials from the sky. But God chose to bless the people financially, and then teach them to give free-will offerings.

God never built temples for His people. He always gave them the plans, and commanded them to build a house for Him. God financed it with their offerings. In the New Testament, we are called the temple of God. We are preparing our hearts as a place for God to dwell. As Christians, we reflect the glory of God to the world.

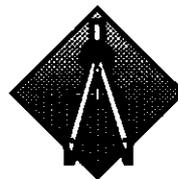
We also build buildings as places to worship God. These are not just convenient places to meet and carry on church meetings. These church buildings reflect the way we feel about God. We show our respect for God and others by taking care of our bodies and by being clean and well-groomed. We show respect for God by building the best buildings we can for houses of worship, and then by keeping them clean and neat.

We are to build these buildings with offerings, because God is reminding us that His dwelling is within the hearts of people who have willingly given themselves to Him. We offer praise and thanks to God because we have a willing heart. God's kingdom is made up of those who give themselves to Him -- not because they are forced to, but because they love Him.

When the king saw that the temple was still in disrepair, he went to the priests again and had a meeting. This time, the priests agreed not to take their pay until the temple was repaired. Jehoiada took a chest, and drilled a hole in it. The people were informed that this was a "building fund," and that all the money received in this offering would go to repair the temple.

When the people saw this opportunity to give to such a cause, they responded generously. When challenged, godly people will give to a specific need like this. Even mediocre Christians will sometimes give to help the building project. The fact was, the people were willing to give when challenged, and the building was repaired.

It is good to give to a need, but the best way to give is in response to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. What a blessing to know that you are meeting a specific need! It is an added joy to obey the Lord and to see good accomplished because of your giving. God is a giver, and He wants us to be more and more like Him. The closer you are to God, the more you will enjoy giving. That is what love is all about.



Methods

Offering box.

Bring in a box and cut a hole in it. You can use a nice chest which can be used over again, or something as simple as a cardboard box with a hole cut into it. Have the students bring money for God's house. Teach them the importance of giving to God. Be sure to explain the difference between the tithe and the offering. The tithe is the ten percent of our financial increase, and it belongs in the local church. Tithing shows our faith and obedience. Offerings are the gifts we give beyond the tithes as an expression of our love for God. Give the class a few weeks after the lesson to save up money, and receive another love offering for God's house. If you know of a specific need relating to the church building, you can, with the church leadership's approval, designate the offering to meet the need. This will allow the students to see the result, when it is accomplished.

It Cannot Be Destroyed

Volume 3

Lesson 11



Bible References

Psalms 1

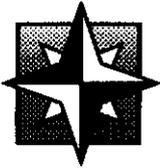
Jeremiah 36:20-32

Matthew 24:35

23 "And it came to pass, (that) when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast (it) into the fire that (was) on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that (was) on the hearth."

27 "Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, after that the king had burned the roll, and the words which Baruch wrote at the mouth of Jeremiah, saying,

28 "Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burned."



Theme

The Bible is God's Word, and it has endured the test of time.



Memory Verse

Matthew 24:35

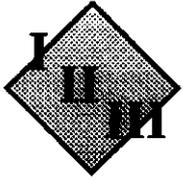
"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."



Scripture Reading

Jeremiah 36:22-23,27-28

22 "Now the king sat in the winterhouse in the ninth month: and (there was a fire) on the hearth burning before him.



Outline

I. The Word of the Lord.

A. Jeremiah.

1. Jeremiah lived in Jerusalem hundreds of years before Jesus came to earth.
2. The northern kingdom of Israel had been destroyed by Assyria.
3. Judah had been unfaithful to God and was about to be conquered.
4. Jeremiah was given a warning by God for the people, but the people did not listen to him.

B. A prophet.

1. A prophet is a person who is chosen by God to be His spokesperson.
2. Most prophets had words of warning from God and were not popular.
3. The prophets did not usually tell people what they wanted to hear.
4. Many prophets were killed by their own people.

C. Jeremiah's word from the Lord.

1. It was a word from God to the nation of Judah.
2. It warned the king and the nation that judgment was coming, if the people did not turn back to God.
3. The warning had been written down by Baruch.
 - a. Baruch was Jeremiah's scribe and assistant.
 - b. A scribe was like a secretary.

4. Jeremiah was in prison and could not give the word personally.
5. It was read in the temple to the leadership of the nation.

II. God's Word Rejected.

A. King Jehoiakim was given the scroll.

1. He did not bother to read it himself.
2. He had his scribe read it.
3. The king chose to destroy the Word.
 - a. He took a penknife and had it cut into pieces.
 - b. He then threw the Word into the fire to be consumed.
 - c. He thought he had won the battle.

B. God's Word will not be destroyed.

1. Jeremiah gave the prophecy again to Baruch.
 - a. This time, with even stronger wording.
 - b. The warning predicted the destruction of the king and of the land.
2. The word of God will never be destroyed.
3. The king, all his house, and Jerusalem would be destroyed.
4. God was raising up the wicked nation of Babylon to chasten His people, Israel, for their idolatry.

III. God's Word Should Be Honored.

A. The Bible is the holy Word of God.

1. The Bible was written by God through His prophets and apostles.

2. The Bible was given for the immediate growth of the people who received it.
3. The Bible was given for the future generations of people, who would read and learn from it.
4. God will not let His Word be destroyed.

B. God wants us to read His Word.

1. The king in this story from the book of Jeremiah failed to listen to God's warnings that were written to him.
2. We need to listen to the Word that God has for us in the Bible.
3. We, too, can be led down the path of destruction, when we fail to let God's Word reside in our hearts.

IV. God's Word Should Be Treasured and Heeded.

A. Read from the Bible every day.

B. Study God's Word.

1. Begin with the Gospel of John, the Psalms, and Proverbs.
2. Encourage your parents to read the Bible with you during family devotions.
3. Ask your parents questions about the Bible.

C. Meditate on the Word.

1. Personalize the passages that relate to your life.
2. Visualize yourself doing God's will and living a victorious Christian life.



Spiritual Truths

- God's Word can never be destroyed.
- Those who try to take away from God's Word will pay a heavy penalty for their sin.
- We are to read the Word of God and keep it in our hearts.
- It is foolish to choose to ignore the Word of God, because we will still be judged by it.
- God's Word warns us of the judgment that is coming to those who do not humble themselves before the Lord and repent.
- The Word of God is designed to give us direction for our lives.
- Those who fail to heed God's Word will be lost in their sin.



Lesson Material

This lesson is designed to point to the need of each of your students to take God's Word to heart. There is a lesson in every volume of this curriculum which deals with the need to honor God's Holy Word. This year, we focus on the attempt that was made to destroy God's Word, and the provision that God made to protect it.

When Jehoiakim was king of Judah, the nation had been drifting from God for many years. They had seen the northern kingdom destroyed as a result of their nation's sin a century before, but they failed to learn the lesson. The people and most of the kings continued to deny the Lord and practice idolatry.

Jeremiah had been sent to prophesy that the nation was heading toward destruction, and that the people would be carried off into captivity. God instructed Jeremiah to have the words written and placed on a scroll, so that the Word could be read over and over again to those who needed to hear it and turn from their evil ways.

But Jehoiakim did not listen to the warnings of Jeremiah or of God. He did not even take the time to read the scroll. He gave the task of reading it to a scribe who could not understand what it meant. As the scribe read each part of the scroll, Jehoiakim cut it off and then burned it in the fireplace. The king thought that this would take care of Jeremiah, the prophet. King Jehoiakim would not hear the Word, so he felt he could forget what had been read to him.

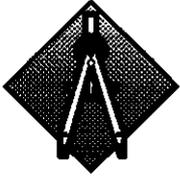
What Jehoiakim failed to understand was that these were not the words of Jeremiah. These were the words of God Himself, and God's Word cannot be destroyed. Under the inspiration of God, Jeremiah had the Word written again; only this time, God added some further tribulation which would befall the king because of the way he had threatened God's Word and God's servant. You see, Jeremiah was not Jehoiakim's problem. Jeremiah was simply God's servant. God was the One warning Jehoiakim about his bleak future, and Jehoiakim's act of closing

his ears to the warning did not change the problem.

We often think that a "negative" word about sin or judgment is something to be avoided. Some people only want to hear "positive" sermons about love and peace. There were other preachers in Jerusalem preaching peace and prosperity, and they were popular and successful. Jeremiah preached judgment and defeat, and he was thrown into prison. But Jeremiah was right. The people needed to repent. It was God's love that prompted Him to give words of warning and rebuke. If the people had feared the Lord and repented, they would have been spared the horrible tribulation that was coming.

Jeremiah's dire warnings were not heeded, and the horrible prophecies came to pass. Thousands of families were slaughtered. Jerusalem was completely destroyed, and many people, including Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were carried off into Babylon. The fabulous gold-plated temple was destroyed. Jehoiakim was killed, and his body was thrown into a ditch to rot. Jeremiah had the Word written again, and it stayed as a reminder to all who read it that God will not be mocked by man. We must learn to honor the Word of God.

This same lesson is still true today. God's Word is holy. We are to honor the Bible as the Word of God. We should read from it on a daily basis. The Word of God will touch our spirits and hearts, as well as our minds. When we do what the Word says, we will live better lives.



Methods

Flannel

Flannel works well with this lesson, as you show the scene in Jehoiakim's home as he reads and then burns the Word of God. Have a Bible ready to show the students that God's Word is still relevant today, and we are not to disregard, destroy, or hurt it.

Visualize and Personalize

Have the students read Psalms chapter one, and visualize themselves as not walking in the counsel of the ungodly or standing in the way of sinners, etc. Encourage the students to see themselves as strongly established in the Spirit, like a tree planted by the river. Personalize it by reading "I shall be like a tree.... my leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever I do shall prosper."

I Want to Serve Him

Volume 3

Lesson 12



Bible References

Matthew 23:11

Acts 6:1-6

1 Timothy 3:8-13

2 "Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples (unto them), and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

3 "Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

4 "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

5 "And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:

6 "Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid (their) hands on them."



Theme

The role of the deacon in the church.



Scripture Reading

Acts 6:1-6

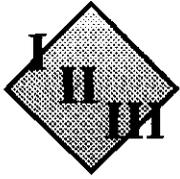
1 "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.



Memory Verse

Matthew 23:11

"But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant."



Outline

I. The Need for Deacons.

- A. Deacons were selected because a need arose in the early church.
1. The church was growing rapidly.
 2. The apostles and those that were around them were unable to meet the needs of all of the people.
 3. People were complaining.
 - a. The Greek widows were getting almost no attention.
 - b. They felt that they were being left out by the Hebrew apostles.
 4. The apostles knew that they had to do something.
 - a. They did not feel that they were called to spend their time serving in the soup kitchen.
 - b. Their calling was to preach God's Word.
- B. The first deacons were selected.
1. The apostles asked for seven men:
 - a. With a good reputation;
 - b. Full of the Holy Spirit;
 - c. Full of wisdom.
 2. The first deacons would take care of the ministry of serving. The apostles could then be free to spend their time in the study of the Word and prayer.

II. The Selection of Deacons.

- A. The deacons met the qualifications established by the apostles.
- B. The deacons were a mixture of the nationalities present:
1. Hebrews;
 2. Greeks.
- C. It pleased the people that these men were selected.
- D. Stephen was one of the first deacons.
1. He served and preached the word of God.
 2. Many people were saved as a result of the preaching of Stephen.
 3. Stephen was stoned by the Jewish leaders because of his preaching in the name of Jesus.
 4. They were angry and jealous of the joy and power in this humble man.
 5. Stephen was more effective in the ministry than many preachers, although he did not consider himself a preacher.
- E. Deacons were called to serve the people.
1. "Deacon" comes from the Greek word *diakoneo*. This word means:
 - a. To be an attendant;
 - b. One who serves;
 - c. One who meets the needs of others.
 2. A deacon is responsible for the physical needs of the body of Christ.
 - a. They may be asked to serve communion.
 - b. Deacons care for the poor.
 - c. Collecting and distributing the alms.

- d. Collecting the offerings and the tithes.
 - e. Many other areas directly related to the physical needs of the church.
 - f. Deacons often help repair the home of a widow or care for a pastor's lawn, in order to free his time to devote to the sermon.
3. The highest calling of a deacon is the take care of tasks, so that the preacher will have more time for the study of the Word and prayer.

III. The Qualifications of a Deacon.

A. Deacons were to have certain characteristics as described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13:

1. Sober minded -- serious about his walk with God, self-controlled;
2. Not one who lies or uses double-talk -- honest;
3. Temperate -- able to control his appetites and desires;
4. Not greedy -- living for money's sake;
5. One who holds to the mystery of Christ in his heart -- genuinely born again;
6. Having a pure conscience -- sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit and quick to make things right with anyone he has wronged;
7. Not one who easily yields to temptation;
8. Deacons are to be experienced;
9. Blameless -- good reputation and moral character;
10. Husband of one wife;
11. Ruler of his children.

B. Their wives are to be:

1. Grave -- honorable, honest;
2. One who does not slander anyone; else -- not a gossip, but an edifier;
3. Sober -- discreet, serious;
4. Faithful in all things.



Spiritual Truths

- God will always provide the right people to do the jobs which He requires to be done in the church.
- The word "minister" means "to serve."
- Serving meals to the needy or painting a widow's house is "ministry."
- God has given some people a gift for cleaning the church building, or making things nice, whether or not they have the title of a deacon.
- We should all have a servant's heart, whether or not we are a deacon.
- Deacons are called to take care of physical needs, but are also to be spiritually-minded.
- Deacons provide a function of service that allows the Pastor to focus on the spiritual needs of the people.
- A deacon is called to serve.



Lesson Material

Each local church will have some variation in their structure as it relates to the specific duties of an elder and a deacon. What we have attempted to do with this lesson is to give the students an understanding of the scriptural role of the deacon, and the historical account of the office itself. We have also listed the qualifications of the deacon as found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

If your church has deacons, you might want to contact them about being a part of the class when this lesson is taught. You may even invite them to teach the class on the role of the deacon and how that role functions in your local church. As the students better understand the role which everyone plays, God can begin to direct them to some future area of ministry that they may perform in the church.

The most common problem in the modern Western church is that we tend to see the church as just another organization, rather than the body of Christ. Many churches see the board of deacons as a ruling committee that exercises authority over the pastor or the finances of the church, especially when the members of this board are relating to a new pastor. Biblically, the office of deacon is not a ruling office, but a place of service.

The first deacons were called out by the apostles because of a physical need. People were complaining that the Greek widows were being neglected. There was still concern about ethnic discrimination. The preachers found themselves so busy with taking care of physical problems, that they

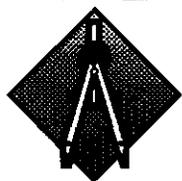
did not have the time to develop their teaching ministry effectively.

God instructed the apostles that they were to continue in prayer and giving the Word of God to the people. They could not meet the physical needs of all of the people as the church continued to grow. The other aspect of this need arose because the church was now expanding into different cultural areas, and it became necessary to expand the base of nationalities of those involved in leadership.

The deacon is also to be full of the Holy Spirit. He is called to be a servant of the physical needs of the congregation; but, he is also called to be a spiritually mature person who is always in much prayer over his function and always praying for the congregation and the pastor.

The Apostle Paul was a spiritual overseer for many pastors, including Timothy and Titus. He gave specific instructions to these pastors about choosing the men who were to serve under them as elders and deacons. A large church needs many support ministries to effectively meet the needs of all the people.

This lesson focuses on Stephen as the most notable example of a deacon. Undoubtedly, he was faithful in serving and helping the apostles, but he was so zealous for God and anointed, that he aroused jealousy in the religious leaders of the day. This deacon witnessed to many people and healed the sick. As a believer, he was so full of God that he angered those who were just full of "religion." Stephen was stoned to death, but he died a hero. What a way to go! Note, as well, Philip was also a deacon who developed quite an evangelistic ministry.



Methods

Role Model

As mentioned in the "Lesson Material" section, it is recommended to try to have a deacon from your church present during

class to answer questions or give a personal testimony about his work in the church. Allow time for questions about the role of the deacon in your local church, or about the qualifications for becoming a deacon. Try to find a deacon who loves to serve, and has a servant's heart.

King Uzziah

Volume 3

Lesson 13



Bible References

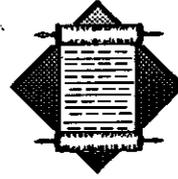
2 Chronicles 26

Proverbs 16:18

Proverbs 30:7-10

Isaiah 6

Hebrews 9:9



Scripture Reading

2 Chronicles 26:1-4, 16-21

1 *"Then all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who (was) sixteen years old, and made him king in the room of his father Amaziah.*

2 *"He built Eloth, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers.*

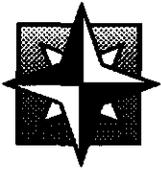
3 *"Sixteen years old (was) Uzziah when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also (was) Jecoliah of Jerusalem.*

4 *"And he did (that which was) right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah did."*

16 *"But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to (his) destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense.*

17 *"And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, (that were) valiant men:*

18 *"And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, (It appertaineth) not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of*



Theme

Pride goes before destruction.

Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither {shall it be} for thine honour from the LORD God.

19 "Then Uzziah was wroth, and {had} a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar.

20 "And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he {was} leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him.

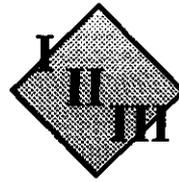
21 "And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, {being} a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son {was} over the king's house, judging the people of the land."



Memory Verse

2 Chronicles 26:5

"And he sought God in the days of Zechariah...and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him to prosper."



Outline

I. Uzziah's Nation.

A. After King Solomon's reign, the nation of Israel divided.

1. Israel had become a great nation under kings Saul, David, and Solomon.
2. However, Solomon had allowed idolatry in the nation.
3. Many people turned their hearts away from God.
4. Solomon became carnal in the last years of his life, and was not fervent in prayer.
5. God raised up Jeroboam as a king for ten of the tribes.
6. David's descendants continued to reign over the tribe of Judah and the city of Jerusalem.
7. This became the nation of Judah.
 - a. It was known as Judea in the time of Jesus.
 - b. It is known as Palestine today.

B. Judah and Israel were usually enemies, although they were originally from the same family of brothers.

1. All of the kings of the northern kingdom of Israel were wicked, from the time of King Jeroboam on.
2. Some of the kings of Judah were righteous, some wicked, and some went from one extreme to another.

II. Uzziah's Heritage.

- A. Uzziah inherited the throne from his father, Amaziah.
- B. Amaziah was the son of Joash.
 1. Amaziah turned away from the Lord late in life.
 2. He was killed by some of his own people, through a conspiracy.
 3. Because of some military defeats, Amaziah became very unpopular.
- C. Uzziah (pronounced "ooz'ia") was the eleventh king of Judah.
 1. Uzziah became king at the age of 16, about the year 783 b.c.
 2. He ruled as king for 52 years.
 3. For many years he was greatly influenced by Zechariah.

III. Uzziah's Prosperity.

- A. He was greatly influenced by the godly prophet, Zechariah.
 1. Zechariah reminded the young king that God was his source.
 2. As long as Uzziah sought the Lord, Uzziah was blessed.
- B. Uzziah received military and financial blessing.
 1. Uzziah built a powerful army and made Jerusalem a strongly fortified city.
 2. He conquered enemy nations and was greatly respected throughout the world.
 3. He was greatly blessed by God.
 4. Many people helped him become strong and successful.

IV. Uzziah's Downfall.

- A. When Zechariah died, King Uzziah began to turn from God.
 1. The same thing happened to his grandfather, Joash, when Jehoiada the priest died.
 2. Joash did some evil things against God, when Jehoiada was no longer alive to influence him.
- B. When Uzziah was successful, he became proud.
 1. Success brings new temptations to focus on self.
 2. Some people stay close to God when they suffer, but fall away from the Lord when they are blessed, because they stop praying and seeking God.
 3. Problems help motivate us to seek God's help.
- C. Uzziah's sin of presumption.
 1. King Uzziah thought he had the right to exercise the function of a priest.
 2. The priests warned him that he was disobeying God.
 3. As he took the censor, God struck him with the dreaded disease of leprosy.
 4. He died of leprosy, after years of suffering in seclusion.



Spiritual Truths

- We all need the influence of godly elders.

- The older we become, the more we will tend to influence the lives of other people.
- Many people start out well spiritually, but end in disaster, because they become centered on themselves.
- God loves to bless us, but He knows just how much success and prosperity we can receive before we become selfish and carnal.
- No one should be a spiritual leader in the church, unless God puts him in that position.
- Pride is an excessive focus on one's self, and is a great enemy of faith.



Lesson Material

Nations and people rise and fall according to their response to God. This is the greatest lesson of history. Unfortunately, many young people today are being taught a revisionist form of history that leaves out the central figure of the story of the human race: Jesus Christ. Our calendars are even based on the place of Jesus in history. "B. C." stands for "before Christ," and "A. D." stands for "anno domini," Latin for "the year of our Lord."

The nation of Israel always prospered according to its responses to God. When the people and leaders humbled themselves before the Lord, and sought His face, they were protected and blessed. Prosperity always followed revival. But,

inevitably, pride and spiritual decline always followed the prosperity. When life was easy, it became easy to neglect spiritual things. The people became centered on themselves, and were attracted to moral sins and then to idols.

This can be illustrated both in the life of Israel and in the lives of its leaders. Israel's greatest days were under the leadership of David. David loved God more than any other king. He led the people in continual and exuberant worship. The more the people worshipped and served God, the more they were blessed, protected, and prospered. Israel became a great world power.

Solomon started out humble, but in the end, his success led to his downfall. He became proud and vain, and he began to allow idolatry to pollute the land. As a result, God allowed, indeed caused, the nation to split, with the majority of the twelve tribes following the ungodly King Jeroboam. But the tribe of Judah stayed with the dynasty of David, because God had promised that David would always have a descendent on the throne. David's greatest descendent is on the throne right now. His name is Jesus.

Uzziah was the eleventh king of the new nation of Judah. Although Judah never rose to the prominence and wealth that the united kingdom had under David and Solomon, it was at its peak under Uzziah. Because of the good influence of the prophet Zechariah, Uzziah sought the Lord. He prayed faithfully and was humble before the Lord. He had seen disasters befall the nation when the leaders were carnal, and he trusted God. He became very successful, because the people responded to his leadership. It is easy to follow a man who follows God, because God is such a good Master.

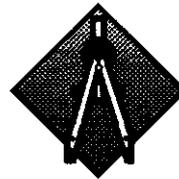
Success brings new problems, however. There were two great factors in the fall of Uzziah. The first was the death of his beloved and respected mentor, Zechariah. Without the influence of this good prophet, Uzziah began to let his devotional life dry up. He lost his ability to see God in every situation, and he turned from the faith.

The second factor was success. It is easier for us to fast and pray when we are facing adversity or suffering, just like it is easier to be a diligent runner, when you perceive the threat of danger. All of us have a tendency to do our best praying when we have troubles -- and then we wonder why a loving God allows troubles! God knows that when life is easy, and we get whatever we want, we tend to become selfish and spoiled. Suffering builds our character.

Uzziah became lifted up with pride after he became rich and successful. In many nations, the king also had religious power. Uzziah decided that he should have that, too. He would do the priest's job. He took a censor (a pot in which to burn incense) to offer in the temple. But the priests were horrified, and warned him not to do it. Uzziah offered it anyway; and when he did, God immediately struck him with leprosy. It was the result of his sin. He lived with the pain and loneliness of a leper for the rest of his miserable life.

What do we learn from Uzziah? First, do not become bitter when you go through hardships. We all do. We need them to

motivate us to pray. God wants us to love Him and to seek Him with a fervent heart. Secondly, when God blesses you with wealth, good looks, popularity, or success, do not become proud. Remember that every good thing in life is a gift of God, and He will hold us accountable for what we do with what He has given us. Use your blessing to bless others. Do not use your beauty or gift to get others to serve or admire you. When God gives us a gift, it is always to enable us to serve others. God's gifts are not given to gain power over others. Keep your focus on God, and keep praying.



Methods

Discussion

Discuss "gifted" people who used their gifts for selfish purposes. Then discuss several "gifted" people who have used their opportunities or talents to help others. Note that those who use blessings for others are much happier than those who take advantage of their blessings.

What is pride? Why does pride lead to destroying lives and relationships? Note that Jesus used His gifts and abilities for the sake of others, and He became the most beloved and successful person in history.

Ebedmelech: African Bible Hero

Volume 3

Lesson 14



Bible References

Jeremiah 38

Jeremiah 39:15-18

Matthew 5:10, 44

1 Corinthians 6:20

1 Corinthians 13:13

Galatians 5:22-23



Scripture Reading

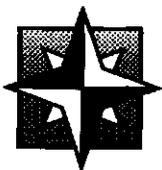
Jeremiah 38:1-10

1 *"Then Shephatiah the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah the son of Pashur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashur the son of Malchiah, heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken unto all the people, saying,*

2 *"Thus saith the LORD, He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live.*

3 *"Thus saith the LORD, This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it.*

4 *"Therefore the princes said unto the king, We beseech thee, let this man be put to death: for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt.*



Theme

God will bless those who bless His servants.

5 "Then Zedekiah the king said, Behold, he (is) in your hand: for the king (is) not (he that) can do (any) thing against you.

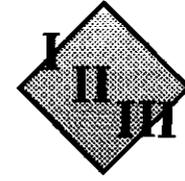
6 "Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that (was) in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon (there was) no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire.

7 "Now when Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs which was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon; the king then sitting in the gate of Benjamin;

8 "Ebedmelech went forth out of the king's house, and spake to the king, saying,

9 "My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon; and he is like to die for hunger in the place where he is: for (there is) no more bread in the city.

10 "Then the king commanded Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, saying, Take from hence thirty men with thee, and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon, before he die."



Outline

I. Jeremiah the Prophet.

A. Prophet.

1. Jeremiah had a word from God for the people of Judah.
 - a. A prophet is a person who has a special calling to hear what God is saying.
 - b. God often used prophets to warn His people when they were falling away spiritually.
2. Jeremiah prophesied just before Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem.

B. Jeremiah's message.

1. Jeremiah warned God's people that they would be conquered.
 - a. God raised up Babylon as His "rod" to chasten the people of Judah for their idolatry.
 - b. The people had turned from God, and had neglected spiritual things.
2. Many years previously, the nation had been spared from defeat by the Assyrians, because of the prayers of King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah.
 - a. Most prophets in Judah were preaching prosperity and blessing.
 - b. They were sure that God would not allow them to go through such suffering.



Memory Verse

Matthew 5:10

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

3. Jeremiah told the people to yield to the Babylonians.
 - a. Those who fought would be killed.
 - b. Those who went into captivity would survive.

II. Jeremiah's Suffering.

A. Jeremiah grieved over the suffering of his people.

1. Jeremiah knew that many of them would die.
2. Jeremiah knew that the "prosperity preachers" were wrong.
3. Jeremiah knew that the people should prepare for the hard times ahead.

B. King Zedekiah rejected Jeremiah's message.

1. Jeremiah was not telling the people what they wanted to hear.
2. The king had the prophet lowered into a deep, dark, empty well.
3. It was very muddy and cold.

III. Ebedmelech.

A. Ebedmelech was an Ethiopian.

1. An African man.
2. One of the African heroes of the faith.

B. A eunuch.

1. He was a slave in a foreign land.
2. Eunuchs were unable to marry or have children.

C. A slave (servant).

1. "Ebedmelech" means "servant of the king."
2. A slave does not belong to himself.
3. A servant lives for someone else.
4. We should see ourselves as God's servants. (1 Corinthians 6:20)

III. Rescue.

A. Ebedmelech interceded for Jeremiah.

1. He was an important official in Jerusalem, because he was able to talk to the king personally.
2. He was a godly man, for he defended the man of God while others rejected him.

B. Lifted up.

1. Ebedmelech took men and lowered ropes to Jeremiah.
2. He used rags to cushion his armpits.

C. Edify.

1. The world likes to ridicule preachers, but we should honor them.
2. "Edify" means to "build up."
3. When we love God, we will want to bless His servants who preach the Gospel.

D. Ebedmelech's reward.

1. Since he trusted God, God protected him through the captivity.
2. His life was spared after he blessed Jeremiah.
3. Jeremiah 39:15-18.



Spiritual Truths

- Godly preachers tell the people the truth, rather than what the people want to hear.
- God can use times of suffering to bring His people to repentance.
- God knew that only suffering and captivity would cure His people of the sin of idolatry.
- Jeremiah was a faithful prophet, but he would not be considered "successful" by the world's standards.
- Not all of the heroes of the Bible were Jewish.
- God can save and use anyone of any race who will trust and obey Him.
- God loves to use obedient people to help other people.
- When someone is rejected or "in the pits," we should try to lift him up.
- God loves to reward and bless those who are kind to others.

particularly to African people. Ebedmelech was a man who overcame suffering and adversity to become a compassionate leader.

Ebedmelech was not only a slave who was taken to live his life in a foreign land, but he was also made a eunuch. Because of this, he was a slave who could never have a wife or children. He was only to serve the desires of his owner, with no hope of freedom or fulfillment.

Ebedmelech could have become a very bitter man, but he overcame the adversity by turning to the God of the Jewish people. Rather than concentrate on his personal rights, he yielded his rights to the Lord, and learned to be content in spite of the hardships. He served his master faithfully, and became a trusted member of the king's court. He was able to advise the king himself.

Ebedmelech could be called the African Daniel of the Bible. Daniel was probably a boy in Jerusalem when this incident occurred, for soon afterward, young Daniel was himself captured and taken far away to Babylon to become a slave to Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel also refused to become bitter. He did not complain about the violations of his rights. He made the best of his situation and lived a long and happy life. He found fulfillment in his relationship with God, and he became one of the greatest men who ever lived.

We all are tempted to complain when people do not treat us right -- when our rights are violated. But people who spend their time trying to make life "fair" only become more and more bitter. Rather than trying to make life fair, we should be the best we can be, whatever the circumstances. Jesus said,

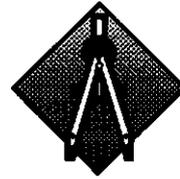


Lesson Material

Ebedmelech is not a well-known Bible character, because he is only briefly mentioned. But his story is significant,

"...Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." (Matthew 5:44)

Because he had suffered in life, Ebedmelech had a compassionate heart. He was sensitive to the needs of God's servant, Jeremiah. The old well in which he was placed was dark and cold. Jeremiah could not survive in the mire for very long. Ebedmelech immediately appealed to the king, and obtained permission to rescue the prophet. Later, God Himself gave Ebedmelech a special reward for his kindness. He was promised that he would not be killed when Jerusalem was conquered, although most of the people who lived there were killed. God favored him, and he lived out his life in peace. He did not have children, but he obtained a place of honor in history. Ebedmelech is in heaven today, rejoicing in the goodness of God, who allowed that African man to be taken to Jerusalem to meet the Lord through the Israelites.



Methods

Wisdom Discussion

The non-Christian world often claims that poverty and hardship cause crime, while financial security causes people to be good citizens. This is unbiblical and clearly false. In fact, the greatest people are those who have overcome some kind of adversity in life.

Hardship can make you bitter or better, depending on your focus. If you make the "I" your focus, you will become bitter.

What causes crime? -- Sin; Selfishness; Lack of the fear of the Lord.

How can we overcome adversity? -- Faith, hope, and love. (1 Corinthians 13:13)

How can I tell if I am really a child of God, or just have religion? -- By the way you respond to adversity in life, and by the way you treat those we might consider less important or "beneath" us. By manifesting the fruit of the Spirit found in Galatians 5:22-23. And most importantly, whether or not we have asked Jesus to come into our life to be our personal Lord and Savior.

Jeremiah and the Potter

Volume 3

Lesson 15



Bible References

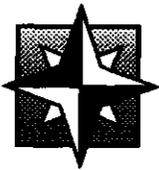
Psalms 119:67

Jeremiah 18:1-10

2 Corinthians 5:17

1 Thessalonians 5:3

2 Timothy 2:20



Theme

God loves His children enough to chasten them when they disobey.



Scripture Reading

Jeremiah 18:1-10

1 *"The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,*

2 *"Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.*

3 *"Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.*

4 *"And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make {it}.*

5 *"Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,*

6 *"O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay {is} in the potter's hand, so {are} ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.*

7 *"{At what} instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy {it};*

8 *"If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.*

9 *"And {at what} instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant {it};*

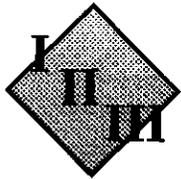
10 "If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them."



Memory Verse

Psalms 119:67

"Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word."



Outline

I. Judah.

A. Judah was part of a divided nation.

1. The nation of Israel split during the reign of Rehoboam.
 - a. Sin weakened the nation.
 - b. Sin causes division.
 - c. Israel became two weak nations.
2. Ten tribes followed Jeroboam.
3. Judah and Benjamin stayed with David's dynasty.
4. After years of idolatry, the northern kingdom was destroyed by Assyria.

B. Judah's sin.

1. The southern nation also became spiritually cold.
2. Many people served idols.

3. They stopped honoring God's Sabbath.

II. Jeremiah.

A. God's last prophet before the fall of Jerusalem.

1. God raised up Babylon to destroy Jerusalem.
2. It was the only way to bring Judah to repentance.
3. The people would suffer in captivity for 70 years.

B. The weeping prophet.

1. Jeremiah knew what was coming.
2. What Jeremiah saw prophetically made him mournful.
3. He was not popular.
4. He was right.

III. The Potter.

A. God's illustrated sermon.

1. Allegory: a story that represents a spiritual truth.
2. The potter represents God.
3. Clay represents the people of God.

B. Clay pots.

1. Clay is very fine, pure soil.
2. Soil that consists of larger particles is called "sand."
3. When mixed with water, clay becomes soft.
4. A sculptor or potter can shape it into a bowl, pot, or other vessel to hold liquids.
5. To be dried, the pot is put into a furnace.
6. If there are air holes or impurities, these bubbles will expand in the

furnace heat and cause the pot to break, or even explode.

7. Clay that is "fired" becomes strong, but it can never be molded again.
 - a. It can be broken.
 - b. If so, it is discarded.

C. Marred.

1. A potter takes a piece of soft clay, and spins it on a potter's "wheel."
2. He can then shape it into a round pot, bowl, or jar.
3. If it becomes marred or damaged, he can beat the clay down to a ball and start over again.

D. The allegory.

1. Israel had been "marred" by sin.
2. God was about to cause them to be crushed and imprisoned, so that He could mold their hearts again.
3. God would make them "new creations." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

- God uses calamity to bring people and nations to repentance.
- True repentance leads to restoration and forgiveness.
- It is better to be broken and molded again while you are still young.
- Going through the "fire" of adversity will make you stronger, but impurities in the vessel will cause it to break in the fire.
- God wants to make us "*vessels...to honor.*" (2 Timothy 2:20)



Lesson Material

Israel was a divided nation. After becoming the most powerful nation on earth under the leadership of David and Solomon, it was hard for the people to realize that their days of glory were over. God wanted to bless them and continue to give them prosperity and peace, but the people had drifted from Him in their hearts. They neglected spiritual things and began to allow more and more idols into the land. Solomon was godly when he was first anointed as king, but later in his life he allowed his wives to bring in many heathen practices, including the worship of idols. This was repulsive to God, and led to spiritual decline.

For many years, Israel existed as two rival nations -- Israel and Judah. Israel comprised the northern ten tribes which served idols, while Judah wavered spiritually between godliness and



Spiritual Truths

- Jeremiah was not a popular prophet, but his prophecies were always fulfilled.
- Sin eventually leads to various kinds of division, both in the family and in the church.
- People or nations who willfully disobey God eventually come under some kind of bondage.

ungodliness. God raised up the nation of Assyria to destroy northern Israel, but spared Judah because of the faithful prayers of King Hezekiah and the prophet, Isaiah. But after many years, Judah, too, fell into spiritual decay and drifted from God.

God had given His people the command to keep the Sabbath, which was a needed day of rest from secular pursuits. However, this command was neglected. God patiently sent prophets to warn the people, but these prophets were not heeded. Finally, God let Jeremiah know that it was time to prepare for the great captivity. The people would suffer under great tribulation, but it would result in national repentance and the eventual deliverance of the nation of Israel.

There were many preachers in Jerusalem who proclaimed boldly that God would protect them from King Nebuchadnezzar. They preached prosperity and safety, and the people loved to hear their messages. The only problem was that they were wrong.

The apostle Paul also wrote that in the last days some would preach, *"Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them..."* (1 Thessalonians 5:3)

God is our Father. This means that He loves us, but it does not mean that He will only allow good things to happen to us. On the contrary, He loves us enough to let us suffer the consequences of evil, so that we learn repentance. When we get everything we want -- when life goes our way all the time -- we become spoiled, lazy, and selfish. Many times the best thing for our character development is the "rod." Suffering develops character, because it teaches us to pray and to depend on God as our source. Affluent cultures have

historically been the weakest spiritually, while suffering peoples tend to be "rich in faith."

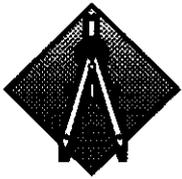
God spoke to Jeremiah one day to visit a potter. He watched as the craftsman skillfully spun a ball of soft clay on his wheel, forming it into a large bowl. When the bowl became damaged, the potter did not try to repair the damage. He took the bowl off the wheel and beat it back into a round lump of clay, and started over.

Clay is made of very fine particles of earth. Larger particles form sand, and extremely large particles are called "rocks." There are various kinds of clay. The clay found in the state of Indiana is usually gray and very fine. There are also types of red clay, which tend to be more coarse. Modeling clay is mixed with oil, so that it stays soft. Clay mixed with water will dry out. When it is very dry, it can be baked in a kiln, or hot oven. Today's kilns can be as hot as 3,000 degrees Fahrenheit. "Fired" clay vessels are very strong and will keep their shape. They can be shaped into bowls, pots, vases, and so forth. Good clay pots can even be used for baking food.

All potters know the importance of purity. Since the kiln is so hot, vessels must not have any air bubbles or impurities. That is why the potter did not try to patch his clay vessel. He had to beat it down and start over, lest a crack or air bubble get into it. In the heat, air expands. If the air bubble is completely enclosed, it will crack the piece, or even cause it to explode, if the pressure becomes too great.

This is a great illustration of life. God showed the prophet that He is the Master Potter and that we are clay in His skilled hands. He knows that there are impurities in our lives. We need the brokenness of repentance in order to become a vessel

unto honor in His house. We can smooth over our problems so that no one will notice, but when we go through the fire, those impurities will cause serious problems. Spiritual purity will enable a person to go through the "fiery trials" without cracking up. In fact, these trials will make him stronger.



Methods

Visual

If you have access to clay, you might use the same method God used to teach

Jeremiah. Mix the clay with water, and form something. Let it dry, and bring it to class. Also, bring a fired clay vessel or a ceramic tile to show how strong it is. Use a small piece of soft wet clay and beat it as you speak about impurities.

Song

Now, sing the song *Have Thine Own Way, Lord*, which is an old hymn written from thoughts from Jeremiah 18. The students will gain a whole new understanding of this song and of the spiritual truth it represents.

The Spiritual Realm

Volume 3

Lesson 16



Bible References

Exodus 22:18

Deuteronomy 18:9-12

Matthew 17:18-21

Matthew 24:4-5

Mark 16:17

John 10:10

Acts 16:16-18

2 Corinthians 4:18

Galatians 5:19-21

Ephesians 5:18

1 John 5:18



Scripture Reading

Deuteronomy 18:9-12

9 "When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations.

10 "There shall not be found among you (any one) that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, (or) that useth divination, (or) an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,

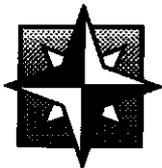
11 "Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

12 "For all that do these things (are) an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee."

Acts 16:16-18

16 "And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:"

17 "The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation.



Theme

There is both good and evil in the world, and we are to avoid the evil.

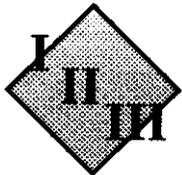
18 "And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour."



Memory Verse

Mark 16:17

"And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues."



Outline

I. The Spiritual World.

- A. God created both a physical and a spiritual world.
- B. The physical world.
 1. The earth, animals, people, plants, etc.
 2. The things we can see, touch, feel, hear, and smell with our natural senses.
 3. Our physical bodies.

C. The spiritual world.

1. Angels, spirits, demons.
2. The soul and spirit of humans.
3. We are created as beings who are both physical and spiritual.
 - a. Spirit.
 - b. Soul -- personality.
 - c. Body -- physical.

D. Physical things decay.

1. They are temporary. (2 Corinthians 4:18)
2. Spiritual beings do not cease to exist.
3. We were created for eternity.
4. God wants us to live with Him forever in heaven.

II. Avoid Evil.

A. When people turn from God, they often seek the occult, in order to fill a spiritual void in their lives.

1. People who do not have the Holy Spirit are subject to wrong spiritual influence.
2. There are people who are led by evil spirits, just as there are people who are led by the Holy Spirit.
3. It is dangerous for us to associate with those who seek power through spiritual darkness.

B. God commanded His people to stay away from:

1. Human sacrifices;
 - a. Wicked people tend to cause suffering for others.
 - b. Devils love to kill and destroy.
 - c. Christianity believes one should do good for others, while Satanism encourages people to hurt others.

2. Divination;
 - a. To determine things by lot, or luck.
 - b. Tarot cards, Ouija boards, tea leaf readings, and divining rods are forms of divination.
 - c. Demon spirits often control the outcome.
 3. An observer of times;
 - a. One who practices magic.
 - b. Practices deception and trickery.
 - c. Soothsayer.
 4. Enchanter (sorcerer);
 - a. One who whispers a spell.
 - b. One who watches people, to manipulate and control them.
 5. Witch;
 - a. One who casts a spell.
 - b. One who comes under the influence of the kingdom of darkness.
 - c. One who seeks power from the devil.
 - d. Most witches think that their power comes from an invisible "force."
 - e. They do not believe in a real devil.
 - f. They are deceived into thinking that their power comes from within, or from the stars.
 6. Charmer;
 - a. To fascinate, to join.
 - b. A hypnotist.
 7. One who consults with spirits.
 - a. Psychics.
 - b. One who gets information by means of evil spirits.
 - c. Satanic counterfeit of the Holy Spirit's "word of knowledge."
 8. Wizard;
 9. Necromancer.
 - a. One who attempts to communicate with the dead.
 - b. A medium, or channeler.
 - c. He really communicates with demon spirits, who often pretend to be the ghosts of dead people.
- C. God's standard:
1. We are not to be involved in things which are evil.
 - a. Seances.
 - b. Astrology.
 - c. Witchcraft.
 - d. Satan worship.
 - e. Mystical illusions or power fantasies (games such as Dungeons and Dragons).
 2. We are also to avoid the influences of those people who are involved in these things.
 - a. Paul dealt with the girl with the spirit of divination in Acts 16.
 - b. He ordered the spirit to leave her.
 3. We need to avoid participating with others who are involved in:
 - a. Sensual and satanic music;
 - b. Halloween rituals and costumes that focus on death, evil, or witchcraft;
 - c. Things that deceive the mind and distort our thinking -- drugs and alcohol.
 - (1) The English word "pharmacy" comes from the Greek word for "witchcraft."
 - (2) Drugs and alcohol deceive the mind, and open our human spirit to deception and demonic influence.

III. We Are Called Out By God to Be Separate.

- A. We are to live our lives as an example to others.
1. How can we be an example to non-believers, if we are doing the same evil things that they do?
 2. How can we tell them the Good News, when we are as caught up in the world's system as they are?
 3. How can we affect others, if they are the ones affecting us?
- B. We need to avoid even the appearance of evil.
1. We are not only judged by what we do, but by where we go.
 2. When we participate in things that have the appearance of evil, even if we are "not really involved," then we are telling the world that we are not any different than those who are participating. In essence, we say by our lifestyles that those activities are acceptable in God's eyes.

IV. Demon Possession.

- A. When people rebel against God, they can be taken over by demon spirits.
1. Many people are afflicted, oppressed, and even controlled by these spirits.
 - a. Demons have no physical body of their own.
 - b. They may live in the bodies of people who do not have Christ living in and controlling their lives.
 2. Rebellion makes people subject to demonic control.

- B. The Holy Spirit protects us from demon spirits.

1. Christians cannot be demon-possessed. (1 John 5:18)
2. Darkness cannot live where there is light.

- C. Christians have the authority to command demon spirits to leave another person.

1. "In the name of Jesus."
2. If you are His child, then you have been given authority over evil spirits.
3. We must be spiritually prepared for this type of spiritual warfare. (Matthew 17:18-21)



Spiritual Truths

- God does not want us to be associated in any way with spiritual darkness.
- Satan's goal is to destroy people. God's desire is to bring life.
- The world loves to portray witches as good and kind, but God calls them evil.
- Supernatural power comes either from God or the devil, and not from within man.
- Halloween is a holiday based on witchcraft, and has no Christian function or meaning.

- "Trick or Treat" is really a form of extortion -- "Give me something free, or I will vandalize your home."
- The purpose of demonic movies, video games, cartoons, and books is to lure people away from God and into Satan's kingdom.
- We cannot witness to others of the love and grace of Christ, if it is not first demonstrated in our own lives.



Lesson Material

This lesson should be taught on the Sunday preceding Halloween, to equip Christian young people who are in a culture that is influenced by this holiday. For people in those nations who do not practice Halloween, there are probably others ways that people relate to demons and the kingdom of Satanic darkness. The biblical principles apply in every culture.

Galatians 5:19-21 lists witchcraft as one of the "works of the flesh." "Flesh" refers to the practices of people who live life concentrating on temporal values, instead of seeking wisdom and those values which are eternal. When people live for this physical life only, they will tend to think of pleasure as the goal of life and will live to gratify themselves. The result is all kinds of evil, because they do not fear the Lord.

People who live by the precepts found in the Bible view life as a preparation for eternity. They think of God as the judge of their life, so they are accountable for what

they do in life. This mentality is the basis for faithfulness in work, unselfishness in behavior, and love, joy, and peace.

Those who live for the flesh seek pleasure for themselves, usually at the expense of others. God is love. He seeks good for people and teaches us to be kind and loving in life. When we come under God's authority, we also come under His protection. Satan cannot control us, when God is the Lord of our lives. But those who rebel against God's authority will find themselves subject to many kinds of bondage, including satanic and demonic bondage.

God created everything in the universe. We need to understand that there is a spiritual world, as well as a physical one. Before God ever created the earth, sun, and stars, He created millions of spiritual beings called angels. They are real, but they do not have physical bodies. At times, however, they do manifest human form when necessary, to minister to mankind or deliver a special message from God. Then, God made physical things from matter. We do not often see the spiritual things with our natural eyes, but they are just as real. In fact, physical things all decay and pass away. They are temporary, but spiritual things are eternal.

Many people are deceived into thinking that there is no spiritual world. They try to explain supernatural things in terms of the physical. What are some supernatural events which affect the natural world? God performs miracles, or speaks through prophets. God sends angels to help people in response to prayer. God responds to faith by healing the sick or even raising the dead. Also, there are spiritual beings at work for Satan, called demons. They work through people to make them psychics, or mediums,

channelers, astrologers, etc. Many people think that the power behind witchcraft is the invisible "force" of the universe, or that it is within the human mind. They are deceived. The power behind witchcraft is a real devil, who has a host of real demon spirits.

Satan works hard to make witchcraft attractive. He influences people to create some very cute cartoons and movie characters, which glamorize witchcraft. He creates images of clever and kind "extra terrestrial beings" to encourage children to be open to ugly inhuman beings (demons). He helps people create a fantasy world where people have power over other people through various forms of chance, or self-will. Magical (supernatural) power is his promise, but his goal is to destroy people by bringing them into bondage.

One form of witchcraft that many people are unaware of is drugs, including alcohol. Drugs basically work to tell the brain something that is not true -- usually, to induce a feeling of well-being, or happiness. Sometimes doctors can use drugs to help by telling the mind that there is no pain, so the patient can rest. But often drugs are used to give a false sense of peace, or well-being. This decreases the ability of people to think clearly, and often leads to death.

We should not be drunk (intoxicated with alcohol or drugs). Instead, we should be filled with the Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18) The Holy Spirit gives us real power, not just an illusion. He also gives real peace, not just a feeling of peace. We get spiritual power by submitting to God's authority, and not through rebellion. Rebellion only leads to bondage, because it keeps us from God's presence. In fact, rebellion is like witchcraft, because it makes us subject to satanic influence. (1 Samuel 15:23) Satan

cannot control people who are under the blood of Christ. Darkness cannot dwell in a person who is full of light. Christians may be attacked by the demonic realm, but they cannot be possessed or controlled, if they are walking in the Spirit.

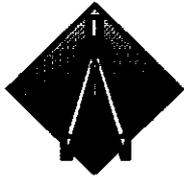
Christians need to seek God and His power in life. Those who do not are often drawn into the world of the occult, or its influence. Millions of people read their horoscopes daily, not realizing that it is a form of deception and manipulation. Since they are not controlled by God, they think they are influenced by the stars.

Psychics are people who receive information from demon spirits. Sadly, they usually do not realize it. Some even think they have a "gift from God," or have "extra-sensory perception." It is an illusion, designed by the devil to keep them from the truth. They are bound, and they bring other people into bondage.

We should avoid all of the things related to the kingdom of darkness, including the celebration of Halloween. Halloween is an ancient celebration of death and the occult new year. It is rooted in witchcraft. Even the practice of "trick or treat" is anti-Christian. We are taught to give to others, but this focuses on getting something for nothing through extortion. That is the literal meaning of "trick or treat." The ancient Celts believed that spirits became flesh on that night, and would harm or kill them if they did not give them food.

Witchcraft is not innocent fun. It is deadly serious, and it leads to bondage. God loves us, and the devil hates us. He only came to steal, kill, and destroy. Jesus came to give us life. (John 10:10) As Christians, we choose life. We live for eternity, not for the moment. We want to

please God in life, and we want to live with Him forever.



Methods

Lecture

While our purpose is to expose evil for what it is, we also need to keep our focus on that which is good. Whenever we teach that there is a real devil who wants to deceive us, we also teach that Jesus is the Truth, and that God loves us. Jesus often said, "*Do not be deceived,*" because He knew that in the last days, there would be

much deception. (Matthew 24:4-5, 24) Let the class be fully aware that there is a supernatural world, and that God is in ultimate control. Being aware of the demonic realm should motivate us to get as close to Jesus as we can get.

Examples

Ask the students if they have watched cartoons or movies which focus on magic or witchcraft. They may be surprised to realize that a large number of the movies they have seen actually glorify the occult, and subtly lead to non-biblical conclusions. Many of Hollywood's leaders are committed to promoting humanism and witchcraft, and do it through cartoons and even "G"-rated movies. Much secular rock music is also a rich breeding ground for the promotion of witchcraft.

Evil King Manasseh

Volume 3

Lesson 17



Bible References

Deuteronomy 18
2 Chronicles 33:1-10
Psalms 14
Romans 1
Galatians 5:19-23
1 Thessalonians 5:22

1 *"Manasseh (was) twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem:*

2 *"But did (that which was) evil in the sight of the LORD, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.*

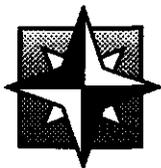
3 *"For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he reared up altars for Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them.*

4 *"Also he built altars in the house of the LORD, whereof the LORD had said. In Jerusalem shall my name be for ever.*

5 *"And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD.*

6 *"And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.*

7 *"And he set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen before all*



Theme

Lessons from a man who did not have a heart for God.



Scripture Reading

2 Chronicles 33:1-10

the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever:

8 "Neither will I any more remove the foot of Israel from out of the land which I have appointed for your fathers; so that they will take heed to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses.

9 "So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, (and) to do worse than the heathen, whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.

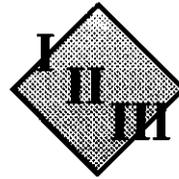
10 "And the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken."



Memory Verse

1 Thessalonians 5:22

"Abstain from all appearance of evil."



Outline

I. King Manasseh.

A. King of Judah.

1. Son of Good King Hezekiah.
 - a. A direct descendent of David.
 - b. He was not like King David, though.
2. He became king at the age of twelve.
3. He reigned for fifty-five years.

B. He reigned in Jerusalem.

1. After the destruction of Israel.
2. Long before the fall of Judah.
 - a. God had spared the nation from disaster, by killing 185,000 Assyrian soldiers who were attacking Jerusalem.
 - b. The Jewish people believed that they were going to be protected and favored.
 - c. In their prosperity, they did not seek the Lord.

II. Manasseh's Record

A. Manasseh was of the most evil leaders who ever lived.

1. Manasseh was evil, even though his father was a man of God.
2. Hezekiah nearly died before Manasseh was born.
3. Hezekiah begged God to extend his life, and God gave him fifteen additional years.

4. He died when Manasseh was still a boy.
5. In his old age, Hezekiah failed to train this son in the faith.

B. Manasseh's sins.

1. Manasseh built the high places (for idol worship) which his father had destroyed.
2. Manasseh built altars for Baal.
3. Manasseh worshipped many gods.
4. Manasseh had some of his own children tortured and sacrificed to demon gods.
5. Manasseh used astrologers and psychics for guidance, instead of the prophets.
6. Manasseh was involved with witchcraft and sorcery.
7. Manasseh led many people to serve false gods.
8. Manasseh refused to listen to God.

III. Repentance.

A. Manasseh was later captured and tortured by the Assyrians.

1. When life was easy, Manasseh had been wicked.
2. When Manasseh suffered, he was brought to repentance.

B. Manasseh's prayer.

1. The king cried out to God in his suffering.
2. When life became difficult, he became humble.
3. God forgave Manasseh, even in spite of all his wickedness.
4. God miraculously allowed him to return to Jerusalem and continue his reign.

5. God will forgive even the most wicked sinner.

C. Genuine repentance.

1. Manasseh was sincere, because he continued to serve the Lord from the time of his repentance.
2. He fought idolatry and wickedness, but the people still served idols.

D. Manasseh's son, Amon, became the new king at the age of twenty; and Amon was evil.

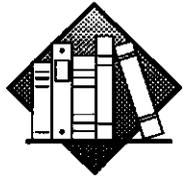
1. Amon refused to humble himself.
2. Amon's own servants were so disgusted with him that they assassinated him.



Spiritual Truths

- God will forgive even the most wicked sinner -- if he genuinely repents.
- God will not forgive even a nice person, unless he repents of his sins.
- It is possible for a good father to have a wicked son, if the son decides to rebel against God.
- It is possible for a wicked father to have a good son, if the son turns to the Lord.
- Secular humanism tends to make people vulnerable to various forms of witchcraft.
- Humanism is a form of idolatry.

- People who refuse to live for God cause their children, and other people around them, to suffer.
- Sin makes us selfish and harmful to others.
- God's grace makes us loving and giving, and causes us to desire to assist others.



Lesson Material

The Bible is full of factual accounts concerning all kinds of people. We are blessed and inspired with stories written about Abraham, David, Moses, and all the other heroes of the faith. However, we can also learn wisdom from the wicked people of the Bible. The Bible depicts every kind of person. Some of the stories are rather graphic. The most sublime expressions of kindness and love are portrayed in the Bible, along with some of history's most violent or sordid tales.

Manasseh was called one of the most wicked men in history, yet God allowed him to sit on the throne in Jerusalem for over half a century. Why? Because the people he ruled were also wicked, and they deserved a leader like Manasseh. Also, God allows people to make their own choices in life. Even though Manasseh was raised in a godly palace, he made the choice as a boy to rebel against God. His father was very old when he was born, and probably did not spend much time with him. Most of Israel's kings were not good fathers -- even those kings who were good men.

Manasseh did evil in the sight of the Lord. The Lord sees all of the evil that we do. Remember that God sees everything, and He will hold us accountable for the deeds we do in life. The realization that we will be judged by the Lord at the end of this life is called "the fear of the Lord," and this is a very healthy and positive way of looking at life.

Manasseh, on the other hand, was a secular humanist. "Secular" means to leave God out of your thinking, and "humanist" means to see man as the center of life, rather than God. Humanism makes man his own god and is therefore a form of idolatry. Today, there is a great cultural war going on between humanism and Christianity. Humanism seeks to get the world focused on physical and natural things and promotes such things as "tolerance," self-will, socialism, witchcraft, and a multiplicity of religions (gods).

Manasseh refused to bow to the true God of the universe, so he opened his mind to many "gods." He followed astrology and listened to psychics. He sought cosmic harmony in the world and did whatever he thought would bring him personal pleasure and power. He sacrificed his own children to gain power from demon gods and followed the fashions and trends of the secular world. All of his wickedness resulted from a basic world view that focused on self and physical things.

A secular world view can lead to witchcraft, which is a "work of the flesh." People who reject the idea of one personal, loving God tend to accept many gods. It is ironic that people who refuse to come under the authority of the one true God will tend to become influenced by and bound by many false gods. People who refuse to worship God tend to worship

money and pleasure. These are the primary gods of our culture today.

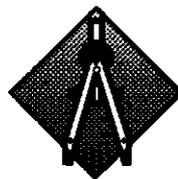
Idolatry leads to bondage. For most people, it is a personal thing. Many of the substances which people use for pleasure, such as tobacco, alcohol, or drugs, become addictive and destructive. Manasseh's wickedness and idolatry made him weak and resulted in a literal bondage. He was captured and tortured by the enemy nation of Assyria.

Someone in Judah was praying for Manasseh. When we pray for the wicked leaders in our land, God hears and answers. Perhaps many people were praying for him to get his heart right with the Lord. God used the enemy nation to bring Manasseh to repentance. God does not make anyone get saved, but He can put extra pressure on someone, when we pray for them. It was only when Manasseh was hurting that he cried out to the Lord. When things were going well for him, he was extremely wicked. When he was going through trials, he repented.

Amazingly, God forgave him when he prayed. That is, amazing from our perspective. We often do not understand how or why God would forgive someone as wicked as Manasseh. But our God is merciful. It does not matter how wicked we are -- God can forgive us. The blood of Jesus is great and pure enough to atone for all of the sins of the human race. We can be forgiven, but we must repent and believe.

We are all influenced by our families, especially by our parents. But God does not have any grandchildren. We each must decide whether or not we will become

children of God. You can live in a home which does not serve the Lord and yet walk with God, or you can be raised in a Christian environment and rebel against the Lord. We all have a choice. Manasseh was wicked, even though his father was a godly man. Manasseh repented and served God late in his life, but his son Amon still chose to be so wicked that his own employees killed him. Manasseh's grandson, Josiah, chose to serve the Lord; and he was a good king.



Methods

Discussion

Why does a secular world view -- living life as if there were no God -- lead to wickedness and witchcraft? (Note Psalms 14, Romans 1) The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. If we do not think we are accountable to God for the way we live, we will tend to live for the moment, instead of for eternity. We will tend to live for self, instead of for God and others. A focus on God tends to make us loving and responsible.

What kinds of attitudes do we tend to have when we view life from the perspective of an evolutionist? What kind of choices do we tend to make when we leave God out of our reasoning? Why do people want to believe in evolution, even though there is no firm scientific evidence to support the theory? Because they want to sin, without thinking they will have to answer to the Creator.

Esther

Volume 3

Lesson 18



Bible References

Esther 1

Esther 2

Proverbs 31:30

Matthew 5:16

Luke 12:48

the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite;

6 *"Who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away.*

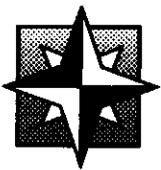
7 *"And he brought up Hadassah, that (is), Esther, his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid (was) fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter.*

8 *"So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was brought also unto the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women.*

9 *"And the maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness of him; and he speedily gave her her things for purification, with such things as belonged to her, and seven maidens, (which were) meet to be given her, out of the king's house: and he preferred her and her maids unto the best (place) of the house of the women.*

10 *"Esther had not showed her people nor her kindred: for Mordecai had charged her that she should not show (it).*

11 *"And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know*



Theme

God gives us gifts for a reason.



Scripture Reading

Esther 2:5-11

5 *"(Now) in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name (was) Mordecai,*

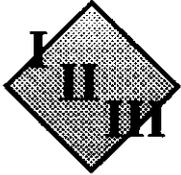
how Esther did, and what should become of her."



Memory Verse

Proverbs 31:30

"...beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised."



Outline

I. God's People in Captivity.

A. Judah conquered by Babylon.

1. The nation of Israel had divided after Solomon's reign.
2. The northern kingdom (Israel) had been conquered and destroyed in 722 B. C.
3. The southern kingdom (Judah) was conquered by the world empire of Babylon in 586 B. C.
4. Daniel was one of the young men taken to Babylon from his home in Jerusalem.
5. The captivity lasted 70 years.

B. Return to Jerusalem.

1. On the night that Daniel interpreted the handwriting on the wall for the Chaldean king Belshazzar, the

empire of Babylon was conquered by the Medes and the Persians.

2. Cyrus the Great began to rule (Persian Empire).
 - a. Cyrus allowed 50,000 Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple.
 - b. Zerubbabel, a descendant of David, was the leader of the group.
3. Later, Darius the Mede ruled.
4. Daniel was still a government official under the new administration.
5. Many Jews stayed in Babylon, although they were often mistreated.
6. Some Jews had obtained work in the government, as had Daniel and Mordecai.

II. King Ahasuerus.

A. King Ahasuerus' real name was "Xerxes."

1. Son of Darius I, who died in 486 B.C.
2. Xerxes ruled the Medo-Persian empire while Jerusalem was being restored by many of the Jews.

B. Personality of Xerxes.

1. Xerxes was a warrior king and was very fierce and ruthless.
2. He could order the death of anyone.
3. He often had people murdered.
4. Anyone who approached the king's throne uninvited was executed, unless the king offered his royal scepter -- an ornate rod kings carried.
5. King Xerxes was eventually killed by one of his own guards.

C. Queen Vashti.

1. Queen Vashti was a very beautiful woman.
2. When the king was having a feast, he ordered the queen to come, so he could show off her beauty to his guests.
3. Queen Vashti refused to come.
4. The king banished her from the palace for life.

D The search for a new queen.

1. A long process began, to find a beautiful virgin for the king.
2. Each girl was to be prepared for a year, before meeting with Xerxes.

III. Esther.

A. A beautiful girl.

1. Hebrew name: "Hadassah," which means "myrrh."
2. "Myrrh" was synonymous with "beauty."
3. Her Persian name was "Esther," meaning "star."
4. Beauty is a biblical symbol (or type) of holiness.
5. The world seeks to make us "stars."

B. A godly girl.

1. An orphan, raised by an older cousin named Mordecai.
2. He was a good man, who trained her to pray and love the Lord.
3. She had beauty as well as an excellent spirit.

C. A gifted girl.

1. God raised up Esther to be the queen.

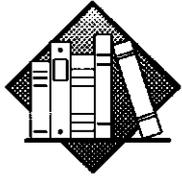
2. God had a purpose, for He knew that only a queen could save His people from the danger that was to come, about five years later.
3. God gives gifts, such as beauty or ability of opportunity; and He will hold us accountable for what we do with these gifts.



Spiritual Truths

- God allowed the suffering of captivity for His people, knowing that it was the only way to bring them to repentance.
- You can be godly and live a good life, even under a wicked ruler.
- As the "bride of Christ," we should be willing to allow the world see the beauty of His holiness and His love within us.
- God is much less concerned with our physical beauty than He is with the beauty of our character.
- Physical beauty is a gift from God and should not be used to manipulate others to serve us.
- God always holds us accountable for the way we use and develop our gifts.
- God gives gifts in life to enable us to serve others. Sin causes us seek to selfishly use our gifts.
- Physical beauty and purity are biblical types for spiritual holiness and godly character.

- You cannot be like Esther, if you are vain and selfish.



Lesson Material

The story of Esther is a classic which often stirs the imagination of young girls. They visualize themselves as the beautiful orphan girl who is pampered, sought-after, and who wins the crown to live in glory and luxury. It is very important to understand that the physical beauty of Esther was a gift from God, just as the strength of Samson was a divine gift. God only gives gifts to enable us to effectively serve others.

The temptation that every gifted person has is the desire to use that gift for selfish gain. People who are exceptionally beautiful or intelligent are naturally favored in life. Although it is politically correct today to say that everyone is equal, the fact is, we are unequal in many ways. People are naturally drawn to those who are good-looking. There are advantages to having above average intelligence or being from a wealthy family.

Life is not fair. Some people will always have more advantages than others. Some people we may know or hear about have power simply as an accident of birth. Xerxes was king, because his father had been the king. He did not earn the throne. But, because he was given great responsibility in life, he also had to give an account to God for what he had received. God does not look simply at our achievements and successes in life to judge us. He will judge us according to

what we could have done in life. You can sit and complain, wasting much of your life, or you can be the best person you can be and develop the gifts God has given for the service of others. God will judge us according to the faithfulness with which we used and developed our gifts -- talents, opportunities, abilities, characteristics.

Esther's real name was Hadasseh, which means "myrrh." She was physically attractive. She was gifted with "good" features, and she also had a good spirit. It is possible for a girl to be very attractive to others, even if she does not have perfect physical features, if she does have the joy of the Lord and a loving spirit. Some "beautiful" people become selfish and spoiled, because they are favored in life and learn to use their beauty to get their own way.

Actually, the idea of a "Miss America" ideal beauty is a myth. There is no such thing as the "most beautiful girl in the world." No standard for the physical ideal exists. Two hundred years ago, heavier women were considered ideal. Overall beauty is more dependent on health, demeanor, and joy, than on the details of eyes and nose, etc.

Esther was an orphan. She was also a member of an oppressed minority which had been brought into the country as slaves. As Esther grew up under hardship, she could have become bitter. However, she developed an excellent spirit in spite of her difficulties. Her older cousin, Mordecai, took her in as a daughter, and gave her a strong father image. If a girl does not have a father to be her protector and provider, she needs a godly man to give her that sense of worth and to give her wise counsel. If she does not have a godly father-figure in the family, perhaps her mother can encourage her to receive

counsel from the pastor or a godly father in the church.

Under the secular government of the Persian empire, Hadassah's name was changed to "Esther," or "star." It is amazing, but the world often sees the beauty in a young person who is brought up in a Christian environment, and seeks to make that person a star. "Stars" in modern times are people who use their gifts (beauty, wealth, or talent) to exalt or enrich themselves. Once a person is established as a star (usually by entertaining others), he is able to demand a lot of money for his services, and can enjoy the adoration of "fans." In fact, stars can become "idols," which are people who are adored or admired in a way that only God should be.

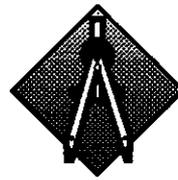
Sadly, there are "stars" today, even in the church. They are people who use their ability to entertain to make themselves wealthy and extremely popular. There is always a danger of becoming proud, when a person is used in the ministry. Those who are used by the Lord in music can be especially vulnerable to this temptation. They need to keep their prayer life strong, and their focus on serving others.

God knew that the Jews in Persia (now Iran) would be in danger, and only a queen would be in a position to save them from death. God gave Esther physical beauty as a gift to enable her to do that work in life. When God gives gifts, He always does so to enable us to better serve others. God never gives us gifts just to make us feel "gifted," or to make us better than others. We are always accountable for gifts. *"...For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required...."* (Luke 12:48)

God used the situation with Queen Vashti to open the door for Esther's role as queen.

Vashti was a real person, but her story can be viewed as an allegory of the church. The king wanted to show her beauty, and she refused to obey. God wants the world to see the beauty of holiness in His bride, the Church. We should be willing to:

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)



Methods

Discussion

How much emphasis is placed on physical beauty in your society?

Does physical beauty relate to the level of happiness in life? (No.)

Is there a physical ideal for girls or boys? (No.)

Is there a spiritual ideal? (Yes. Jesus is our perfect example of character and virtue.)

Why is it wrong for a Christian to seek to become a "star?"

Do you know of a "star" who used beauty for selfish advantage and became an unhappy person? (Normally, we do not know of the personal misery of the glamorous stars in the entertainment world. We often see only what the promoters want us to see.)

A Queen Is Chosen

Volume 3

Lesson 19



Bible References

Esther 1

Esther 2

Psalms 29:2

Isaiah 43:11

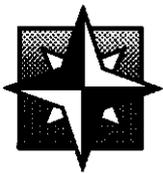
Isaiah 53:2

Luke 12:48

John 15:16

1 Corinthians 1:31

Philippians 4:13



Theme

God wants us to be part of the bride of Christ.



Scripture Reading

Esther 2:15-20

15 *"Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her.*

16 *"So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which (is) the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.*

17 *"And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti.*

18 *"Then the king made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, (even) Esther's feast; and he made a release to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the state of the king.*

19 *"And when the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai sat in the king's gate.*

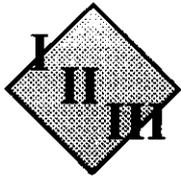
20 "Esther had not (yet) showed her kindred nor her people; as Mordecai had charged her: for Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him."



Memory Verse

Isaiah 43:1

"...Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine."



Outline

I. The Beauty Contest.

A. A new queen is chosen.

1. King Xerxes (also called "Ahasuerus" in Hebrew) exiled Queen Vashti.
2. He ruled the Medo-Persian Empire, which was the world power at that time.
 - a. The king could do as he pleased. He had great power.
 - b. He was not a godly or kind man.
3. A search began to find a beautiful virgin who would please the king and become his wife.

B. Preparation.

1. Each girl selected by the search committee was to be cleansed and pampered for one year, before she was presented to the king.
2. In our lives, we are to grow spiritually, to prepare us to become part of the bride of Christ, which is the Church.
 - a. Those who are genuinely born-again Christians will become part of His bride.
 - b. Natural cleansing is a picture of the moral purity that God wants to develop in our character.
 - c. Physical beauty is a type of holiness. (Psalms 29:2)

II. Esther's Excellent Spirit.

A. Esther was one of the Jewish captives.

1. She was raised by her older cousin, Mordecai, who was a godly father-figure.
2. He taught her wisdom, modesty, and moral purity.
3. Esther was gracious and humble.

B. Esther obtained favor.

1. She had a gift of physical beauty.
2. She also had the beauty of good health, and a good attitude.
3. She was obedient and submissive.
4. She was helpful and considerate of others.
5. Hegai, the keeper of the women in the palace, favored Esther because of her good attitude.

C. Esther's strategy.

1. Esther had a servant's heart.
 - a. She only went, because she was told to by her guardian.
 - b. She did not seek glory or favor for herself.
 - c. She believed that God wanted to use her in this position.
 - d. She did not care if she did not win the competition, because she was only obeying the Lord.
2. Esther let Hegai decide what she should do and take with her to meet the king.
3. She was not self-willed.
4. She trusted leaders to guide her.

III. Chosen.

A. The king was delighted with her.

1. She was not vain and self-centered, as so many beautiful people sometimes are.
2. She showed respect, and had a submissive attitude.

B. Chosen by God.

1. Esther knew that God had given her favor.
2. She did not focus on herself, but saw herself as God's servant.
3. She realized that God had a purpose, and that she was sent to do a work.

C. Application.

1. If God gives you a gift, realize that it is to enable you to serve others.
2. If you are favored in life, remember that God is the one who allows that to happen.

3. Jesus said, "...I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit...." (John 15:16)
 - a. This is not speaking about salvation, but the call to service.
 - b. Jesus will save anyone who will repent and believe.
 - c. He calls different believers to different ministries.



Spiritual Truths

- Jesus will save anyone who will repent and believe on His name.
- We are all loved and valued by God, but we are not all called to the same office or ministry in life.
- Physical beauty does not make anyone more valuable to God.
- God does not give all of us the same opportunities or abilities, but "*unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much [required].*" (Luke 12:48)
- Jesus is the One who chooses and ordains various people for their specific place of service.
- Every good thing we have is from God.
- Every good thing about us is the result of God's grace.
- God is able to turn the heart of the ruler in response to believing prayer.



Lesson Material

The story of Esther seems to trigger in the minds of young girls the same storybook fantasies that Hollywood thrives on, such as *Cinderella* or *Snow White*. The heroine is always beautiful, the prince is always handsome and kind, and they all live happily ever after. We even have contests to select the most beautiful girls for fabulous prizes. All of this leads children to think that physical beauty determines their self-worth, and this is not true.

God does not have a physical ideal. He has a character ideal, and that is Jesus Christ. When Jesus came to earth, God in His wisdom made Him physically unattractive. (Isaiah 53:2) The reason people were drawn to Jesus was His kindness, wisdom, and love. The beauty of Esther was a type of holiness, and this should be our focus and goal.

Young girls often have a fantasy about being chosen by a handsome prince, or being selected to be the queen of something. But we need to realize that Esther had a quality that was like Jesus. Although she was attractive, she also had a servant's heart. That is, she did not use her beauty to get people to serve her. Her goal was not to be popular, rich, or powerful. She only wanted to obey her guardian, as well as obey God. She did not know what was to happen in the future, but she knew that God could use her in the office of queen. As long as she kept her focus on God and His purposes, she could keep a right spirit. If Esther had centered on her own beauty or charm, or on the

high position she attained in life, she would have become a vain, selfish person. She would have failed like King Saul and others who started out on the right track, but failed in the end of their lives.

God's Word promotes vision. Vision relates to hope: a positive expectation for good. As a boy, David had a vision of being close to God and being a skilled athlete and musician. He exercised daily, worked hard, and practiced music diligently. He also developed a regular prayer life. Because of his vision, he overcame the temptation to become bitter, and he achieved his goals through God's grace. Vision focuses on what God can and will do through me, and is far different from the self-centered focus of a fantasy.

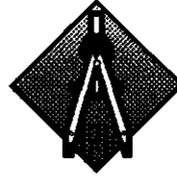
Another principle to relate from this account is the reality that we are not all the same. Humanists try to emphasize that everyone is equal, and therefore the same. The fact is, we are not all the same. First of all, some of are boys, and some are girls, and they should not be confused. Christians should recognize the movement to destroy the role of each gender and treat them as if they were the same, as an attack on biblical values and on humanity.

We are not all going to be chosen to be a queen. Most of us experience rejection in life and struggle with low self-esteem. Many well-meaning "experts" try to combat low self-esteem by promoting high self-esteem. These experts try to make us believe things about ourselves which are not true. But to lie to oneself is foolish and unscriptural.

The key to dealing with rejection and low self-esteem is humility. Paul had much to be proud of, but he determined to only glory "in the Lord." (1 Corinthians

1:31) His focus was not on what he could do, but that he could *"do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me."* (Philippians 4:13) The more you focus on God, the more you realize that your life has purpose and meaning.

Esther was pretty, but she saw her role as that of a servant. She did not use her beauty to become a "star," but she thought, "what does God want me to do?" She kept her focus on God and others, and therefore did not become vain and spoiled. Her goal was to help others, and people were drawn to her. God gave her favor with Hegai and the king, because He had a purpose. She was also popular with people, because they could sense that she was not self-centered. She knew that she was loved by God and by her guardian and, therefore, was not insecure. She felt free to love and help others, and that made her even more popular. The more we try to be popular, the more concerned we will be with what others think of us. This naturally makes our thinking self-centered. The ones other people love most are those who do not try to be loved. They try to help others.



Methods

Self-acceptance

Ask each student to list the things they cannot change about themselves. (Physical features, birth order, family, height, etc.)

Determine to thank God for each of these things and to view them as reminders that we belong to God. Each of us has been created as a unique individual for a specific purpose.

Now list the things you can change about yourself. (Attitudes, skill levels, cleanliness, health and strength, habits, etc.)

Determine to be the best person that you can be. Ask God to lead you with regard to what skills you should develop. Be faithful to exercise and practice these things. Remember that we are being prepared for eternity. We prepare as children for later areas of service, but we are also preparing to reign with Jesus forever. We do not train for eternity by learning to get what we want, but by learning to serve others.

Appealing to Authority

Volume 3

Lesson 20



Bible References

Esther 4

Esther 5

Psalms 100:4

Proverbs 21:1

Romans 13:1

1 Timothy 2:1-2

1 Timothy 5:1

Hebrews 4:16



Scripture Reading

Esther 5:1-8

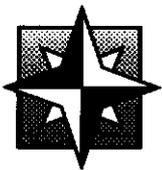
1 *"Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on {her} royal {apparel}, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house: and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the gate of the house.*

2 *"And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, {that} she obtained favour in his sight: and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that {was} in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre.*

3 *"Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? and what {is} thy request? it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom.*

4 *"And Esther answered, If {it seem} good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him.*

5 *"Then the king said, Cause Haman to make haste, that he may do as Esther hath said. So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared.*



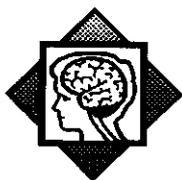
Theme

God puts authority figures in our lives to protect us.

6 "And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine, What {is} thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: and what {is} thy request? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed.

7 "Then answered Esther, and said, My petition and my request {is};

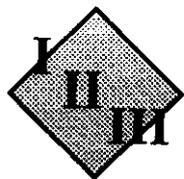
8 "If I have found favour in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition, and to perform my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and I will do to morrow as the king hath said."



Memory Verse

Hebrews 4:16

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy...."



Outline

I. The Need.

A. Haman sought to destroy the Jewish people.

1. Haman was a wicked government official.

- a. He was in office because he sought power and success for himself.
- b. Not all people in government are good and godly.

2. Haman hated the Jews, because Mordecai would not bow down to him.
3. He persuaded King Xerxes to sign a decree that the Jews would be killed on a certain day.
4. Not even the king could reverse his royal decree, once it became law.

B. Mordecai, Queen Esther's guardian and father-figure, notified her.

II. The Preparation.

A. Esther prayed and fasted.

1. She knew that she needed God to influence the heart of the king.
2. The Spirit of God is able to influence those in authority. (Proverbs 21:1)

B. Esther had her friends and family pray.

1. During serious situations, you need others to help you pray.
2. They should be those who can relate to the need.
3. They should know what or whom to pray for.

III. The Approach to the Throne.

A. Esther went to the throne room to talk to King Xerxes.

1. The penalty for coming into the throne uninvited was death.
2. The king had the right to spare the life of the person, by extending the

golden scepter (the symbol of his authority).

3. When we pray, we are coming into the throne room of the King of kings.
 - a. God is the highest authority in the universe.
 - b. He has absolute power.

B. Esther went to the king in humility, willing to die for her people.

1. She did not come to assert her personal rights.
2. She was not seeking anything for herself, but rather for her family.
3. There is a vast difference between coming brazenly and coming boldly.
4. We can come boldly to the throne of grace, if we know that we are in right standing with God because of the blood of Jesus.
5. We approach God's throne:
 - a. With thanksgiving; (Psalms 100:4)
 - b. With praise; (Psalms 100:4)
 - c. With boldness. (Hebrews 4:16)

C. God wants us to come to His throne and pray.

1. As His children, we can go to God any time and give our petitions.
2. God loves when we pray unselfish prayers.

IV. The Appeal to the King.

A. Esther had a servant's heart.

1. Esther showed that she wanted the king to be successful.
2. Esther also had a love for her people.
3. Esther was not selfish or vain.

B. Appealing vs. demanding.

1. Esther did not demand protection.
2. Esther did not focus on her rights.
3. If you think the authority over you is in the wrong, you need to appeal with a right attitude.

C. The highest authority.

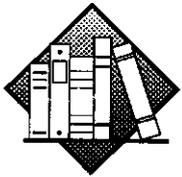
1. If an authority, such as a teacher or even a parent, does something wrong, then you need to go to another, or higher authority to appeal.
2. Always submit to the highest authority. (Romans 13:1)
3. God is the highest authority of all.
 - a. If someone wants you to do something immoral -- sinful -- you do not have to do it.
 - b. The Bible is the highest authority, and it tells us that our bodies belong to God.
 - c. We always obey parents and those in authority, unless that authority disobeys a command from God.



Spiritual Truths

- We should honor and obey our parents, teachers, pastors, and other authorities.
- More than anyone else, we should honor and obey God and His Word.
- God places people in authority over us to protect us from harm and from evil.

- It is wise to let God work through those in authority, and let them make the final decisions.
- If an authority is wrong, we should appeal with a spirit of meekness.
- If an authority sins against us, we should go to another authority to appeal for protection.
- God is the highest authority in the universe, and He loves us.
- We do not come boldly to God's throne because we have rights, but because we know we are His children.



Lesson Material

There is a two-fold emphasis in this lesson. First, we recognize some valid spiritual principles concerning prayer; and secondly, we learn from Esther wisdom in appealing to authority.

Ahasuerus (Xerxes) was a very powerful, but wicked king. He ruled a world empire, and had immense power. When the founding fathers established the government in the United States, they recognized the danger of giving too much power to one man, so they divided the power between three branches of government. Historically, when kings became too powerful, they became very corrupt and took advantage of the people.

When we pray, we need to recognize that we are coming into the presence of the King of kings. Prayer is an awesome

privilege that we often take for granted. In our generation, there is a sad lack of the fear of the Lord among those who have had much exposure to the Gospel. We learn that God loves us, and we tend to think that we can treat Him lightly and get away with it. While it is good to teach the love of God, it is equally important to teach the fear of the Lord. God is holy, and He is awesome.

Prayer is not just making God aware of our needs and wants. Prayer is talking with God, and involves listening with respect and adoration. When we approach God in prayer, we need to know that we are coming before an infinitely greater King than Xerxes, even though King Xerxes ruled the world.

There are two very important aspects of coming to God. First, we come with praise and thanksgiving. (Psalms 100:4) Praise reminds us that He is great and good, and that nothing is too hard for Him. Thanksgiving reminds us of all the good things He has already done, and also serves to build our faith. It is wrong to come before the King without a thankful heart.

Secondly, we should come boldly before the throne of grace. (Hebrews 4:16) This is not the boldness of the rebel who knows his rights, but the boldness of a child who knows he is loved. We can come boldly, but not arrogantly. Esther came before the throne with meekness, but she had been a faithful and submissive wife. She did not come with a self-seeking desire to see her own needs met. She came to humbly seek help for others.

God loves it when we pray unselfish prayers. This is called "intercession." God is pleased when we show concern for the needs of others, rather than viewing Him

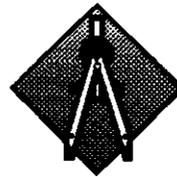
as a cosmic Santa Claus and viewing prayer as a wish list. Also, when we pray as a servant, we seek God's honor and pleasure, rather than our own.

The second basic truth in this lesson deals with appealing to human authority. God has placed authorities in our lives for our protection, and we should let them make the final decisions for us. But what if a person in authority is wicked and selfish and makes a decision that will harm us? This is an increasingly common situation. Today, child abuse is on the rise. What do we as Bible teachers advise?

Esther was under an authority who had made an unwise decision that would result in great harm to others. Esther appealed first to the highest authority. She went to God with prayer and fasting. She also had other friends to help her. They knew the need. Then, Esther went to the king with a spirit of meekness. She appealed for protection, and gained his favor.

What should a child do when a person in authority violates the word of a higher authority? First, we need to understand the principle of highest authority. We are to always obey the higher authority when two authorities disagree. Usually, our parents and teachers only want us to do good things. But if someone is bound by sin, he may use his position of trust to do something morally wrong. We are not bound to obey any command that violates God's law, because God is the highest authority. When placed in a dangerous position, a child should learn to appeal on the basis of scriptural conviction, and then go to another authority if necessary. That is, if one parent violates a child, he or she should go to the other parent for protection. They should not keep it a secret.

There is a temptation for a well-meaning teacher to step in when they think they detect signs of abuse, but we need to be careful. It is possible to misread signs, and some good parents are being falsely accused and prosecuted by government officials. The job of the teacher is to teach the children to deal with problems by appealing to authority, unless there is positive knowledge of sexual or other abuse. In this case, the administrator and pastor should be informed, and they should talk with the parents and contact the proper authorities, as individual state laws dictate.



Methods

Prayer

Offer to pray as a group for a few specific needs of major importance that the group can relate to, such as an illness in the immediate family, or a personal problem. Avoid overusing the "unspoken request" tradition that has become common in many church groups.

Have the group pray in a circle, and encourage the students to concentrate on the needs of others in their prayers, rather than on their own needs.

Praise Reports

A "praise report" focuses on God and what He is doing. Sometimes our praise reports are really just "positive affirmations," and do not really glorify God. Self-centered positive statements are acceptable in secular classes, but praise reports are not. Give the class a little quiz,

and see if they can identify true praise reports.

1. I got a good grade on my English test.

2. I had a good time at the class party Friday.

3. God helped me to witness to a friend. (Yes.)

4. I got over my cold.

5. Jesus touched me, and healed me. (Yes.)

6. My sister is feeling better now.

7. I love the Lord, because He has been so good to me. (Yes.)

Haman and Mordecai

Volume 3

Lesson 21



Bible References

Esther 5

Esther 6

Esther 7

Esther 8

Esther 9

Psalms 68:5

Proverbs 12:2

Proverbs 16:18

Proverbs 21:1

John 10:10



Scripture Reading

Esther 6:4-12

4 "And the king said, Who {is} in the court? Now Haman was come into the outward court of the king's house, to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

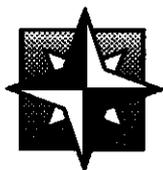
5 "And the king's servants said unto him, Behold, Haman standeth in the court. And the king said, Let him come in.

6 "So Haman came in. And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour? Now Haman thought in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself?

7 "And Haman answered the king, For the man whom the king delighteth to honour,

8 "Let the royal apparel be brought which the king {useth} to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head:

9 "And let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man {withal} whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city,



Theme

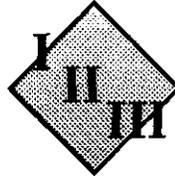
God is able to save His children from their enemies.

and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour.

10 "Then the king said to Haman, Make haste, (and) take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew. that sitteth at the king's gate: let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken.

11 "Then took Haman the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour.

12 "And Mordecai came again to the king's gate. But Haman hasted to his house mourning, and having his head covered."



Outline

I. Mordecai.

A. Esther's guardian.

1. Esther was an orphan, as were many of the captive Jews in Persia.
2. Her older cousin, Mordecai, raised her as his daughter.
3. He was a good father to her and taught her wisdom and virtue.

B. Mordecai saved the life of the king.

1. Two men plotted to assassinate the king.
2. Mordecai overheard them, and warned the king.

C. A type of the Holy Spirit.

1. God said that He would be a "father of the fatherless." (Psalms 68:5)
2. A type is a prophetic picture.
 - a. Mordecai was a real man, but we see how the Holy Spirit can work by the example of his life.
 - b. He reflected the love and wisdom of the Spirit.
 - c. We should obey the Holy Spirit.

II. Haman.

A. A wicked official in the kingdom of King Xerxes.

1. Haman was bitter, because Mordecai the Jew would not bow down to him.



Memory Verse

Proverbs 12:2

"A good man obtaineth favour of the LORD: but a man of wicked devices will he condemn."

- a. When selfish people are given authority, they become proud.
 - b. They want more and more power and glory for themselves.
2. Haman had a gallows built to hang Mordecai.
 - a. It was 50 cubits high.
 - b. 50 cubits is about 75 feet, or 24 meters high.

- B. Haman persuaded the king to decree that anyone could kill Jews and take their property on a certain day.
 1. Not even the king could reverse the law, once it was made.
 2. It began with one bitter man.

- C. Haman was a type of the devil.
 1. Satan hates us, and wants to kill people.
 2. He only seeks to kill, steal, and destroy. (John 10:10)

III. Haman's Humiliation.

- A. God turned the heart of the king. (Proverbs 21:1)
 1. Haman was building a gallows for Mordecai.
 2. God kept the king awake, so that he would hear about the record of Mordecai.
 3. God loves to work quietly to bless those who are faithful to Him.
- B. Haman came to ask the king for Mordecai's life.
 1. The king wanted to honor Mordecai.

2. He asked Haman, "What should I do to honor a man that should be honored?"

C. "Pride goeth before destruction...." (Proverbs 16:18)

1. Haman assumed that the king wanted to honor him.
2. He gave an answer according to his own desire.
3. The king said, "Good. Do that for Mordecai."
4. Haman was devastated, but he had to honor his "enemy."

IV. Haman's Defeat.

- A. The next day, Haman was summoned to the queen's feast.
 1. Esther identified him as the enemy of her people, the Jews.
 2. Haman was terrified.
 3. The king walked out in a rage.
- B. Haman threw himself on the queen's couch, begging for mercy.
 1. The king walked back in, and it looked like Haman was trying to attack the queen.
 2. Then another leader entered and told the king that Haman had a huge gallows built in his front yard on which to hang Mordecai.
 3. King Xerxes said, "Hang Haman on it."
 4. That was the end of Haman.

V. The Feast of Purim.

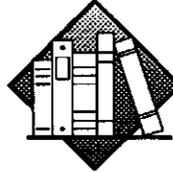
- A. The king made a new decree, announcing that the Jews could protect themselves from attack.
- B. Each year, the Hebrew people celebrated the deliverance of the Jews from Haman's scheme.
 1. This celebration is called the feast of Purim.
 2. Christians celebrate salvation from sin when they receive communion.



Spiritual Truths

- Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.
- God promised to be a Father to the fatherless.
- All Christians are adopted.
- You can always trust the Holy Spirit to give you the right counsel.
- God always leads us to be pure and holy.
- We all have an enemy who wants to destroy us.
- Satan cannot get to us when we are safely under God's authority and protection.
- A man's pride will bring him low.

- Those whose goal is hurting others will be the ones who end up hurt in the end.
- Worship and Bible-reading help us to avoid the trap of pride.



Lesson Material

The Bible is a fascinating account of history, revealing both the best and worst of people. The story of Esther beautifully shows the eventual triumph of good over evil. We need to realize that, although wickedness may prevail for awhile, it will always eventually lead to destruction. If we live under God's authority, we will also enjoy His protection for eternity.

Mordecai was one of the best "fathers" in the Bible, although he was an adoptive parent. We do not even know if he had a wife or children of his own. He took in his young, orphan cousin, and raised her with kindness and wisdom. He reminds us of some of the qualities of the Holy Spirit. He was gentle and loving, and always sought the best for his girl. He never took advantage of her. Sometimes knowing one has been adopted can be a difficult thing to understand. Adopted children should not dwell on the circumstances that led to their adoption, but should be reminded that they were chosen.

All Christian believers are "adopted" by the Lord when they are born again. When we confess our sin before God and repent and believe, we become part of God's family. We were by nature selfish sinners, but now we have been given grace to love

and serve God in sincerity and truth. We are also chosen by Him to work in certain ways for His glory.

Haman was one of the dark villains of the Bible. His problem was that he was so self-centered, that he was willing to watch thousands of people suffer and die to satisfy his own ego. When he was given a high office, he wanted more power. When he was given honor, it made him hungry for more. That is human nature, when sin dominates. The more money and power evil men have, the more they crave. Money and fame never satisfy. Only Jesus can satisfy the basic needs of the human soul.

When the selfish Haman received honor and power, he craved more. He was angry because Mordecai refused to bow to him, so he wanted to kill him. He led the king to sign a decree that would allow one day be dedicated to the murder of Jewish people. He also built a gallows on which to hang Mordecai.

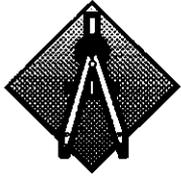
God has a wonderful way of dealing with the proud. As Haman was preparing the gallows for Mordecai, God caused the king to have insomnia. He had some official records read to him by a sleepy assistant. He happened to hear the account of the time that Mordecai had saved his life, and he was reminded that Mordecai had received no reward.

Sometimes you do good and it seems that there is no reward. You see others flaunt their wickedness, and they seem to prosper. Mordecai may have gone through a time of struggle with this. He had saved the king's life, but there was no reward, while this rotten man, Haman, was being promoted over him. It was not fair. Apparently, Mordecai did not complain.

He trusted God, and believed that God would do right in the end.

He was right. In God's timing, Mordecai was honored. In fact, Haman came to ask for the life of Mordecai just after the king had been reminded of Mordecai's kindness. He asked Haman, "What should be done to the man the king delights to honor?" Haman, who was full of selfish pride, assumed that he was to get more honor. He suggested a grandiose display of public acclaim, and was appalled when he heard that the hated Mordecai was the one to be honored. The King decided that Haman was to be the one to escort Mordecai through the city, to proclaim that this was how the king treated those he loved to honor. What a difficult thing it was for Haman to parade his "enemy" around the city on the king's horse, proclaiming his honor!

This was not Haman's day. He still had the invitation to the banquet prepared for him and the king, and it was at this banquet that the queen exposed Haman's wicked plot. This was not a good time for the king to find out that he had built a tall gallows for Mordecai. This is not the end of the story. As circumstances would have it, someone told the king about Haman's wicked plot, just as he was throwing himself at the queen for mercy. The king had him hanged on the very gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. What a wonderfully humiliating twist of events for this proud man. God seems to delight in bringing down the proud and lifting up the humble.



Methods

Puppets

Re-enact the banquet scene, and have different puppets portray Haman, the king and queen, and the chamberlain. The nervous Haman, who is a dark, scowling puppet, should be an interesting character to display with plenty of shaking and groveling. Try not to be too graphic. A hanging scene would not be edifying! Simply have the chamberlain drag him off, as he begs for mercy.

Discussion

Define pride as an undue focus on self; an exalted self-esteem. Note that the opposite of pride is humility, which is a character quality of Jesus. Look up some key scripture verses on pride and comment on them. What does God think of the proud? How do we guard against pride in our own lives? (Prayer, Bible study, worship, and gratefulness to God and to people who help us.) Note that a focus on creation and judgment helps us to avoid pride, while the doctrines of evolution, humanism and self-esteem promote pride and rebellion.

Give Thanks



Bible References

Psalms 107:1

Romans 1

1 Corinthians 15:57

Ephesians 5:20

1 Thessalonians 5:18

2 Thessalonians 1:3

2 Timothy 3:2



Scripture Reading

Ephesians 5:20

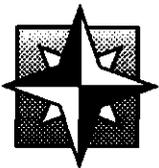
"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

2 Thessalonians 1:3

"We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth."

1 Corinthians 15:57

"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."



Theme

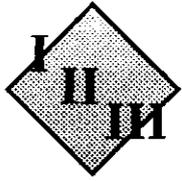
Being thankful at all times and in all circumstances.



Memory Verse

Psalms 107:1

"O give thanks unto the LORD, for He is good: for his mercy endureth for ever."



Outline

I. What Is Thanksgiving?

- A. An expression of gratitude for blessings received.
- B. A means of expression telling someone:
 1. You appreciate them;
 2. You are pleased with what they have done.

II. Why Give Thanks?

- A. The Word of the Lord tells us to give thanks.
 1. **In** everything. (Ephesians 5:20)
 2. **For** everything. (1 Thessalonians 5:18)
 3. **To** the Lord. (Psalms 107:1)
- B. Give thanks, no matter what the circumstances.
 1. 1 Corinthians 15:57.
 2. Paul gave thanks when he was in jail.
 3. Peter praised God and gave thanks when he was persecuted.

III. To Whom Do We Give Thanks?

- A. Give the Lord our thanks.
- B. Give our parents our thanks.

- C. Give thanks to anyone who does something for us.

1. Our friends.
2. Our teachers.
3. Our country.

IV. When Are We to Give Thanks?

- A. We should thank God at all times.

1. No matter what the circumstances.
2. No matter how we feel.
3. God is always worthy of our thanks.
 - a. For what He has already done.
 - b. For what He has promised to do.

- B. When we are blessed by others.

1. Even in a small way.
2. Even when we know their intent was to do well, but we do not feel thankful.

- C. Giving thanks is a testimony to others of our Christian character.

1. It is an expression of the love that Jesus has for us.
2. It is an expression of the appreciation that we are to have even in our hardships, which develop strength in our character.
3. It is an example to others of how they are to live their lives.



Spiritual Truths

- Every good father wants his children to appreciate what he has done for them.

- Unthankfulness is always associated with evil and selfish lifestyles.
- Our giving of thanks to God is to be determined neither by how we feel nor by our present condition.
- We are to give thanks to God in all circumstances.
- Gratitude is an important part of biblical worship.
- God is worthy to be thanked and praised.
- We worship God for who He is, and we thank Him for what He has done.
- Thankfulness helps us develop the qualities of humility and faith.



Lesson Material

In the United States, we celebrate a special holiday called "Thanksgiving." It was established by the early Christian settlers (the Pilgrims from England) to thank God for providing for them in miraculous ways when they first came to what is now known as New England. They came primarily to settle where they could practice their Christian faith without being oppressed by the increasingly secular government. Thanksgiving has its foundation and origin in Christianity.

Of course, God never intended for thanksgiving to be only an annual event. It should be a daily part of our lives. We should give thanks continually to the Lord, and cultivate a grateful heart in

thanking others every time they do something kind or helpful for us.

The Apostle Paul warned about the wickedness in the last days. When he listed the characteristics of wicked men, he mentioned "unthankful." (2 Timothy 3:2) Unthankfulness is a part of selfish behavior. People who center on themselves and their own pleasure tend to think that the world owes them a living, and they do not appreciate anything. Because they live for their own benefit, they expect others to continually serve them. They may even be religious, but their prayers are always "gimme, gimme, gimme." They never seem to get enough, and they hate to give.

Romans chapter one speaks of people who have given themselves to the pursuit of pleasure. Part of the problem is a lack of thankfulness. They focus on self, and on the creation, rather than on the Creator. They worship themselves, in a sense. They willfully reject God, because they do not want to be accountable to Him.

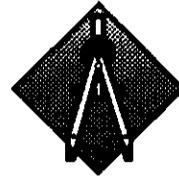
The attitude of thankfulness has nothing to do with the amount of things we own. There are those who own many possessions, but are bitter and ungrateful because they believe they "deserve" more. The world uses advertising to stir up covetousness in people's minds. We must avoid being influenced by the world's standards.

While there are some people who are always complaining and wanting more in life, there are others who have little, but who appreciate what they have. Those who show gratitude are appreciated by others. Grateful people enjoy life much more than those who are always looking to gain more.

We develop a grateful heart by the habit of giving thanks, even for little favors and blessings. Even when we have difficulties, we should look for the positive and find something for which to be thankful. When we are blessed, for instance, we should thank God for providing well for us. When we go through times when we do not seem to have enough, we should thank God for building our character and for His reminder that we need to pray more often. People who are ungrateful and self-centered will never be satisfied. Grateful people are able to give thanks in all things, and in every situation. Gratitude is an attitude which develops from the habit of thanksgiving.

In heaven, there will be no sickness, and there will always be plenty to eat. In heaven, no one will die, and we will live with our Lord and Master. We will have everything, and we can give all of our thanks to Jesus. We have such a short period of time on this earth, in comparison to the time we will spend in eternity. We need to begin thanking Him now for everything. Even in the midst of difficult circumstances, we have the glorious promise of life eternal in Jesus. This is our reason to give thanks in all things. God does not ask us to live our lives wearing "rose colored glasses." He does ask us to look beyond our circumstances and see the good things we have. We should remind ourselves of the

promise and hope that we have for the future.



Methods

We are to be thankful in *all* things. Have the students tell you those things for which they are thankful. Encourage them with the importance of expressing their thankfulness to others. Spend time talking about giving thanks to friends and to Jesus. Encourage everyone to make the giving of thanks a part of every prayer they offer to the Lord. After all, we are to "*enter into His gates with thanksgiving...*" (Psalms 100:4)

History Lesson

If you can find one written from a Christian perspective, study the history of America's first Thanksgiving. Be aware that many modern history books have sought to eliminate all references to God, so you may have trouble finding an accurate account. The first Thanksgiving was purely Christian in nature and purpose. They were simply thanking God, Who had kept them alive through very hard times. They saw God as their source, and were drawn closer to Him.

Pure Religion

Volume 3

Lesson 23



Bible References

Matthew 5

Matthew 6

Matthew 7

Luke 10:30-37

John 13:35

Romans 12:2

Galatians 5:22

Philippians 4:8

James 1:27



Scripture Reading

James 1:22-27

22 *"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

23 *"For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:*

24 *"For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.*

25 *"But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth {therein}, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*

26 *"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion {is} vain.*

27 *"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, {and} to keep himself unspotted from the world."*



Theme

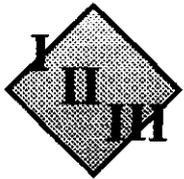
Pure religion is seen in our walk and our works.



Memory Verse

Matthew 5:8

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."



Outline

I. Pure Religion.

A. Pure -- not contaminated.

1. Some religions mix the secular with the spiritual.
2. They mix spiritual truth with fleshly efforts, or carnal purposes.
3. Pure religion is unselfish and loving.
4. True Christianity is not gained by works, but is demonstrated by works.

B. *"To visit the fatherless and widows..."* (James 1:27)

1. Real Christians care about hurting people.
2. Sin makes us mean to those who are weak or hurting.
3. The Spirit of God makes us gentle and kind.
4. Love cares about others more than self.

C. *"In their affliction..."* (James 1:27)

1. Jesus in our hearts makes us want to reach out to others when they need assistance.
2. Sin causes us to seek those who are esteemed or rich, so we can improve our social status.
3. Real Christians love those whom others reject.

D. *"...and to keep himself unspotted from the world."* (James 1:27)

1. The world desires to influence our minds with secular attitudes.
2. Romans 12:2 *"...be not conformed to this world..."*
3. Satan wants us to have a temporal values system.
4. The world uses certain cartoons, movies, television programs, and other forms of entertainment, as well as certain school curricula, to develop a false values system based on the temporal world.
5. Wisdom is viewing life from God's point of view.
6. Satan wants us all to think about evil, but God said to think on good things. (Philippians 4:8)
7. The world wants to influence us to be selfish, unkind, and evil.
8. We must guard our hearts and minds from evil influences.

II. Relationship and Works.

A. Jesus in our hearts changes the way we live.

1. The fruit of the Spirit is love. (Galatians 5:22)
2. As we meditate on Him, we become more like Him.

B. When we are genuinely born again, our lifestyle changes.

1. John 13:35 -- Others will see our love for each other.
2. Unselfish love is the primary evidence that we have pure religion.



Spiritual Truths

- The opposite of love is selfishness.
- Our character is revealed through our actions.
- Sin in the heart causes us to derive pleasure at the expense of others.
- Sin is "my good at your expense."
- Love is "your good at my expense."
- God does not want us to defile our Christianity with the values of the world.
- When we have pure religion, we will want to help hurting people.



Lesson Material

Not only does the Word of God make a distinction between true and false religion, it also shows us the difference between pure and defiled religion. Many people

want to go to heaven, but they do not want to serve God. They know that the Bible is true, but they center on themselves anyway. They are people whose lives are a mixture of the spiritual and the carnal.

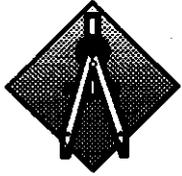
Jesus was pure, because His whole life centered on doing the will of His Father. He had no other purpose. He did not seek His own pleasure, but that of the Father. The purity of Jesus' heart was seen through His works. He always cared about others, and sought to benefit them.

Carnality (a focus on temporal, non-spiritual values) in the heart results in a self-centered lifestyle. Sin makes us seek to benefit ourselves at the expense of others. This is especially seen in children or adults who play "practical jokes" on those who are smaller or weaker. Only a sinful heart derives pleasure out of the embarrassment or discomfort of others. When Jesus is in our hearts, we will want to help those who are in need. Sin causes us to take from others. Jesus causes us to be givers.

In the story of the Good Samaritan found in Luke 10:30-37, we see an example of defiled religion. The Levite and the priest worshipped the true God, but did not have enough of the love of God in their hearts to care about the man who was hurting. They were focused on their careers, or on their activity of the day. The Samaritan (a member of a nation that was looked down on by the Jews) demonstrated more godly character than the religious men who passed by. He showed that he loved God by caring for a stranger.

We should not judge one another, because we cannot see people's hearts. However, the Bible does teach us to judge ourselves. Do I really love, or am I primarily concerned with what I want in life? Do I care about the "little guy" that

others make fun of, or do I foolishly join in the laughter, at his expense? Am I living for Jesus, or am I living for myself, like most other people in the world?



Methods

Bible Story

Use the familiar story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10 to show the contrast between pure and impure religion.

Field Assignment

Ask each student to find a smaller child to bless during the week. They should also

be encouraged to think of any sibling or neighbor whom they have treated unkindly in recent months, and go to that person to apologize. The following week, ask them to be ready to give a testimony of the results.

Experiment

Take with you to class a container of distilled water. Explain that there is nothing in it but water. Ask the students if the water is pure. Then, mix in some chocolate. Ask the students if the water is still pure. They will answer that no, it is not still pure. Ask a student to sample the mixture. Even though he may like chocolate, he will more than likely not like the mixture. It is neither pure water nor pure chocolate.

Mary, Do You Hear Me?

Volume 3

Lesson 24



Bible References

Isaiah 7:14

Luke 1

1 Corinthians 1:26-31



Theme

The birth of Jesus was foretold to Mary.



Scripture Reading

Luke 1:26-35

26 "And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

27 "To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name (was) Mary.

28 "And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, (thou that art) highly favoured, the Lord (is) with thee: blessed (art) thou among women.

29 "And when she saw (him), she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

30 "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

31 "And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

32 "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

33 "And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

34 "Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

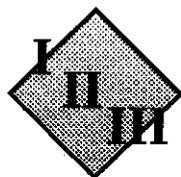
35 "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."



Memory Verse

Luke 1:32

"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest...."



Outline

I. The Promise.

- A. God promised to send a Messiah.
 1. Isaiah 7:14.
 2. "Messiah" means the "anointed deliverer and leader."
 3. The Jewish people were under political and military bondage.
 4. The Jewish people had no freedom, and were cruelly oppressed by the wicked rulers of the Roman Empire.
 5. The Jewish people also had a sin problem, and needed salvation from their sins.
- B. The Messiah would be born into a human family.
 1. God specified the conditions of the birth.
 2. A virgin birth (having a mother, but having no human father).
 3. His name shall be called "Emmanuel," which means, "God with us."

- C. The Jewish people knew the day must be coming soon, as all of the signs from the prophecies were being fulfilled.

II. The Reason for the Promise.

- A. Everyone in the human race is born with a sin nature.
 1. Our sin nature is the natural desire within us to be rebellious, evil, and selfish.
 2. Humanity's sin began when Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the garden of Eden.
 3. Sin separates us from God, because God is holy.
 4. The just penalty for sin is death.
 5. The price of sin must be paid before any sinner can be restored to God.
- B. God designed blood covenants, so that people might obtain atonement for sin.
- C. God knew only the eternal sacrifice of His own Son could redeem mankind from sin.
- D. Jesus would have to come to earth.
 1. He became a man, and lived among us.
 2. He offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sins.

III. The Choice.

- A. God chose Mary.
 1. She met the criteria.
 - a. She was a virgin.
 - b. She loved God.
 - c. She was a descendant of King David.

2. Mary was engaged to be married, but had not yet married Joseph.
 - a. In those days, to be "espoused," or engaged, was a legal covenant that was much more binding than engagements are today.
 - b. Mary was really his wife, but they did not yet have physical union and did not live together.
 - c. During that time of engagement, the husband usually prepared a place for them to live.

B. God chose Joseph.

1. Also of the lineage of David.
2. A man who loved God.

IV. The Announcement.

A. An angel visited Mary.

1. The angel's name was Gabriel.
2. Gabriel came to Mary in Nazareth, a city in Galilee.

B. Gabriel told her she had been selected by God.

C. Mary's reaction.

1. She was afraid.
2. She was not sure what to say.

D. The angel reassured her:

1. "Do not be afraid;"
2. "You have been chosen by God."
 - a. "You will conceive a child."
 - b. "He will be called Jesus" (which means "savior").
 - (1) The Son of the Highest.
 - (2) One who will sit on the throne of David.

- (3) One who shall rule over the house of Jacob.
- (4) One whose kingdom will have no end.

V. The Intervention of the Spirit.

A. Mary questioned the angel.

1. She had never been physically intimate with a man.
2. How could she become pregnant?

B. The angel answered:

1. The Holy Spirit would come upon her;
2. He would cause her to conceive;
3. The child shall be the Son of God.



Spiritual Truths

- God knew before the creation that man would sin against Him.
- God is holy and cannot tolerate sin in His presence.
- God's holiness demands the death penalty for sin.
- We all inherited a sin nature from our fathers.
- Jesus did not have a human father, so He did not inherit a sin nature.
- The Holy Spirit caused Mary to conceive this child.

- We can all be “born of the Spirit,” but only Jesus was actually “begotten” of God.
- Throughout the first 4,000 years of human history, God planned to send His Son and establish the blood covenant.
- The Old covenant with its animal sacrifices is a picture of the death of Jesus Christ.
- Mary was chosen to do a job, but she gave all the glory to God.
- We should not become proud, when God uses us as a servant.
- We should glory in the Lord, but not in ourselves.
- God uses ordinary people to do His work.

to them the government established by King David. They were expecting the “Son of God”, because they had been told the Lord would send His Son. They knew that this Messiah would be born of a virgin. But they thought the Messiah would save His people from the power of Rome. They did not realize that He would come to save them from their sins. They expected Him to come in power and splendor. Instead, He came in meekness and humility.

The line of David was prophesied to be the birth line of the Messiah. Mary and her fiancé Joseph were both from this genealogy, and therefore met the qualifications.

Mary had a cousin, whose name was Elizabeth. Elizabeth was married to a priest, and they became the parents of John the Baptist, the one who would go before Jesus to announce His coming to the people.

When the angel first appeared to Mary, he complimented her. The angel knew the importance of this message and how honored Mary would be to be selected as the one who would be the mother of the Son of God. Mary's first reaction was fear. Mary was frightened by this large, bright being that stood before her and talked to her. The angel sensed that fear.

The angel told Mary that she had been selected as the one to bear the Messiah, the Son of God. Mary did not show her fear any more, but questioned how such an event could take place. She was thinking in the natural, and knew that she could not conceive a child without physical intimacy with her husband. She was still a virgin, possibly as young as fifteen years old. The angel assured her this event would take place through a divine intervention by the Spirit of God. The



Lesson Material

The Jewish people were under bondage to Rome. They had suffered persecution and even the desecration of their temple. The nation was in the hands of religious leaders that were not being true to God's ordinances. Many of the people had turned away from the Lord. In these circumstances, God fulfilled the prophecy that was given many times throughout the Old Testament -- that He would send a Messiah, a Savior, Who would deliver the people.

The people were looking for a Messiah who would defeat the Romans and return

Holy Ghost would come upon her, and she would conceive a child. Thus she would still be a virgin, as the prophecy had foretold.

Can you imagine yourself in Mary's position? If a large, bright being appeared before you and told you something that was humanly impossible, would you believe it? How would your students react if such a thing happened to them? What if they were told that tomorrow they were going to be able to walk on water? Would they believe it or would they incredulously refuse to believe? This was what Mary had to face. She chose to believe. She sensed this was a holy messenger of God, and that she had been chosen.

Being selected to be the mother of the Son of God was a large responsibility, and Mary had to face many difficult situations before the child was born. The most difficult was confessing to Joseph that she was pregnant. Certainly people around her would notice, and it was against the law to have a child before a marriage. The laws of those times stated that one could be put to death for being pregnant without having a husband. Would they stone her? There were questions about how she would raise the child. How could *she* raise the Son of God? Yet during all these events, she had peace, because she had faith. The same God Who did the miraculous in bringing about her conception had the ability and power to take care of all the other issues.

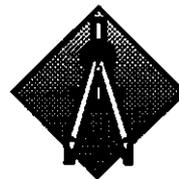
When Mary met with her cousin Elizabeth, they both glorified and magnified God. Such a young girl might have been tempted to become proud to be used by God for such an historic event. But Mary had an excellent spirit, and recognized that she was a servant. She was simply a vessel for God to use, and all the

glory should go to Him. This is the attitude we all should have, if God uses us to lead other people. We should guard our hearts against pride, and avoid bringing attention to ourselves.

Today, millions of people adore, venerate, and even worship Jesus' mother, Mary. This is completely contrary to her life's testimony, and it violates the teaching in the Word of God. Only God should receive worship. We are told to pray only to the Father, in Jesus' name.

We respect Mary, because she was a good servant of God, just as we respect all of the Christians who have died and are now with the Lord. Her story is one of faith and courage, and we should learn from her example. But she gave all of the glory to God, and did not allow any of the glory to go to herself. She acknowledged that she was a sinner in need of a Savior, just as the rest of us are sinners.

Mary and Joseph had a good marriage, and went on to have other children, after Jesus was born. Joseph was the father of all of Jesus' other brothers and sisters. Jesus, God's only begotten Son, grew up in a normal, working family. God uses ordinary people to do His work. He still uses people to do His will and to show Christ to the world.



Methods

Skit

Have a member of the teaching team practice with one of the students for a

short, ad-lib skit to illustrate the situation Mary faced.

Angelic Teacher: "Billy, God has decided to judge the nation of _____, and He wants to destroy its capital city _____. The Holy Spirit is going to anoint you like Samson. You will have great strength. You will be able to fly and no weapons can harm you. You will be zapped three months from now."

Billy: "Wow! I am going to be rich and famous! After I zoom over and beat up that country, I am going to take over the school. I will spank the principal, and then I will win the world boxing championship and make millions of dollars! Then, I will make action movies and make billions of dollars..."

Angelic Teacher: "Uh, maybe we should use an earthquake instead. I will get back to you on that."

Lesson: God chooses to use people to do His work. It is important for us to always give Him all the glory, and have the heart of a servant.

Video

There are several videos available which portray this story. Use only a short segment which deals specifically with the visitation of Mary by Gabriel. Ask the students to discuss what they have seen and the importance of this meeting with the angel.

The City of David

Volume 3

Lesson 25



Bible References

Micah 5:2

Luke 2:1-21

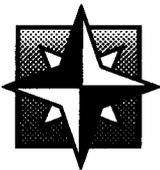
3 *"And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.*

4 *"And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)"*

5 *"To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.*

6 *"And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.*

7 *"And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn."*



Theme

Jesus was born in Bethlehem.



Scripture Reading

Luke 2:1-7

1 *"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.*

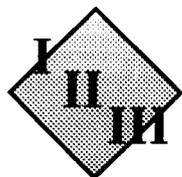
2 *"((And) this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)"*



Memory Verse

Luke 2:7

"And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger...."



Outline

I. Taxation.

A. The decree.

1. The decree was issued by Caesar Augustus.
2. The emperor wanted more money for himself.

B. All the world was to be taxed.

1. The Roman Empire, ruled by Caesar, controlled the then known world.
2. The Romans were not taxed, because they were free people.
3. The people under bondage paid heavy taxes to the oppressive Romans.

II. The Pilgrimage.

A. There was no adequate census of the people at this time.

B. Many people moved around.

1. Some were nomads, who moved from area to area to graze their flocks.
2. Nomads lived in the desert and never stayed in one place.
3. Joseph and Mary lived in Galilee, which was in the northern part of Palestine.
4. Bethlehem was the home of their ancestor, David.

C. Caesar decreed that all people should go to the city of the birth of their ancestors.

1. Thus all people would be in a city.
2. The Romans could then get a census and thereby tax the people.

D. Joseph was of the house of David.

III. Bethlehem.

A. The birthplace of King David.

B. It was prophesied to be the birthplace of the Messiah.

1. Micah 5:2.
2. Bethlehem is called a little city among the thousands of cities in Judah.
 - a. From her would come a ruler.
 - b. This ruler would be one whose *"goings forth have been from old, from everlasting."* (Micah 5:2)
 - c. Jesus has always existed.
 - d. Jesus' physical body was incarnated in Bethlehem, but He actually had no beginning.

C. Caesar did not know that he was helping fulfill prophecy when he ordered the census.

IV. The Birth.

A. When Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem, there was no room in the inn.

1. Inns were not like the motels we have today.
 - a. They were usually larger homes with extra rooms.
 - b. People brought their own bedding and food.
 - c. Most inns had stalls and feed troughs for the animals.
 - d. Many people often stayed in one room.
2. Mary and Joseph were forced to use the stable, instead of a room.
 - a. Because of the census, all of the rooms were taken.
 - b. They could not sleep outside, because of the impending birth of Jesus.

B. The Baby was born.

1. Joseph and Mary wrapped Jesus in swaddling clothes.
 - a. Like a ribbon that is wrapped tightly around a newborn baby.
 - b. The baby looks like a mummy when wrapped.
 - c. It was the common practice of the day.
 - d. The wealth of a person was determined by the quality and colors of the material in the swaddling clothes.
2. They named the child, "Jesus."



Spiritual Truths

- Events throughout all of history only relate together and make sense, when we see that Jesus is the central figure of all history.
- Taxation is a reminder that we are not really free people.
- God can use ungodly, unbelieving men to unwittingly cause prophecy to be fulfilled.
- God delights to use small things and simple people to accomplish His plans in this earth.
- The Birth of Christ was not His beginning; He has always existed, even before time began.
- "Incarnation" means that God "became a man."
- Jesus was not-half man and half-God; He was very man and very God.
- When Jesus became a human being, He emptied Himself of His glory and relied on the Holy Spirit and prayer.
- Jesus will not force Himself into our lives and hearts if we do not make room for Him.
- Jesus came the first time in humility. He will come again in power and great glory.



Lesson Material

From the beginning of time, God knew that the human race would need a savior. The only way a blood sacrifice could atone for the sins of the whole world would be by a divine sacrifice. The lamb to be sacrificed had to be pure and spotless before the sins of man could be imputed onto it. No sacrifice would be worthy to pay for the sins of humanity, unless He was perfect. Since everyone in the human race inherited a sin nature from his father, only one who was born without a human father could be the "Lamb of God." But, in order to be a "kinsman redeemer," he had to be a human.

God satisfied these principles by sending His own Son, the second Person of the Trinity, to become human. This member of the divine Godhead would come into the world as a baby, but His mother would be a virgin. Mary would be a vessel for God to use in this salvation plan, but the glory would belong to God alone.

After four thousand years of human history, God chose the time and the place for the long anticipated incarnation. God had given many prophetic messages about this great Messiah, Whom He would send. Moses, David, and many of the prophets had glimpses concerning the details of the life of the coming King. Isaiah wrote in great detail about His life and death, seven hundred years before Jesus was born. Even earlier, David had given details of the crucifixion, even though crucifixion had not yet been invented. Micah boldly

named the very city where Jesus would be born.

In all, the prophets of old gave more than three hundred predictions about the birth, life, and death of the Messiah. Jesus Christ fulfilled every one of them. Sadly, most of the Jewish people who were looking for this Savior rejected Him, primarily because they misunderstood God's plan. They were looking for a military leader to save them from Rome, and thought that He would come the first time in splendor and glory. They did not realize that He would come first as a servant, and as a Lamb to be slaughtered for the sins of the world. They also thought that the Messiah would set them free from Rome. But Jesus came to set them free from sin. Jesus did not kill even one Roman soldier.

When Caesar, the supreme ruler of the Roman empire, needed money to support his massive army and his luxurious lifestyle, he did not collect it from his own citizens. Roman citizens were considered the only free people. All other national groups were considered peasants, or even slaves. The Jewish people had been enslaved about five centuries earlier by the Babylonians, who had themselves been conquered by the Medo-Persian Empire. Alexander the Great then conquered that kingdom for Greece. Eventually, the Roman Empire became the dominant power and conquered them. That is why, in the days of Jesus, most people spoke the Greek language, but were under a Roman government.

Caesar decided to command everyone under his rule to return to their ancestral town on a certain date, so that the Romans could get an accurate census. This would allow the Roman government to take as much money as possible through taxation

of those who were under the census. There was not anything the people could do about it. It was their lot in life to pay the taxes, or else. It was not a happy time.

But God used all of this to place Mary in the right place at the right time. Jesus, the King of the universe, was to be born in the little town of Bethlehem. Not only did God use a humble little girl as His vessel, but He used the small town of Bethlehem as the setting for one of the greatest events in the history of the world. God delights to use little things and humble people, in order to do great things.

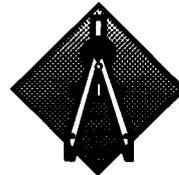
When Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem, they found the inns full. This is a familiar scene to most of us, but do we grasp the analogy here? How many people come to the moment of opportunity, when Jesus offers to come into their lives, and they are too full of the world to let Him in? The Bible teaches that our bodies were designed to be places where the Holy Spirit could live, but He cannot dwell with the darkness of rebellion and sin that fills our minds and hearts. Only when we realize our desperate need for Him, will we open up our lives and allow Him to come in. Remember that Jesus is Lord. Jesus does not want to have just a small part of our lives. If we invite Him into our hearts, it is not just to be as one of many parts of our lives. He is to be Lord of all.

Jesus was born in a stable and laid in a feed trough. He came in humility, showing the world that God is not impressed with the glory of man, but He is pleased with humility.

When Jesus was born that night, his earthly parents wrapped him in swaddling clothes (tight bands of cloth) and laid him in the manger. It was a common practice to wrap the newborn babies in that

manner. The wealth of an individual was often determined by the quality and colors of the cloths used in the swaddling clothes. Jesus was wrapped in common swaddling cloth. When Jesus came to this earth, even though he was born as King, He entered this world with a humble beginning. Thus, Jesus has always identified more with the common man than with the rich man. He was not born with a "silver spoon in his mouth." Jesus was born into the home of a carpenter; and He later worked alongside His father as a carpenter, before He began His ministry.

What is the purpose of celebrating Christmas? Christmas is a time to reflect on the greatest love gift of history and the way God chose to restore man to Himself. The best way we have of responding is by giving our lives, without reservation, to Jesus. The second way we can honor God is to give to others. The world has turned the season into a time of greed and indulgence, but Christians still celebrate God's love gift by giving.



Methods

Illustrated lecture

Use props such as a cradle, a manger nativity scene, and a picture of the city of Bethlehem to go through the story of the birth of Jesus. Gather the students close together and invite discussion as you relate the story. Ask some of the children to help read from the scriptures and talk about the meaning of the prophecy in Micah.

Skit

Ask the students to dress up as Mary and Joseph, and portray the "no room in the inn" scene. Then, ask the students to

share what they believe happened that day in Bethlehem, and why it is so important that Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem.

J-O-Y



Bible References

1 Samuel 5:6

Nehemiah 8:10

Job 5:17

Psalms 16

Psalms 30:11

Psalms 37:4

Psalms 126:5

Psalms 144:15

Proverbs 3:13

Proverbs 15:13

Proverbs 17:22

Proverbs 28:14

Proverbs 29:18

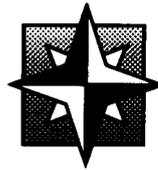
Habakkuk 3:18

John 16:20

Romans 14:17

Galatians 5:22

Hebrews 1:9



Theme

Jesus is the source of real joy in life.



Scripture Reading

Psalms 16:1-11

1 *"Michtam of David. Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust.*

2 *"{O my soul}, thou hast said unto the LORD, Thou {art} my Lord: my goodness {extendeth} not to thee;*

3 *"{But} to the saints that {are} in the earth, and {to} the excellent, in whom {is} all my delight.*

4 *"Their sorrows shall be multiplied {that} hasten {after} another {god}: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.*

5 "The LORD (is) the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot.

6 "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant (places); yea, I have a goodly heritage.

7 "I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.

8 "I have set the LORD always before me: because (he is) at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

9 "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.

10 "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

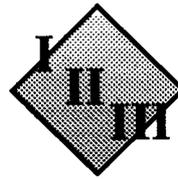
11 "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence (is) fulness of joy; at thy right hand (there are) pleasures for evermore."



Memory Verse

Habakkuk 3:18

"Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation."



Outline

I. Pleasure.

A. Definition.

1. Gratification, agreeable sensations, the state of being pleased.
2. Positive or agreeable sensations: a sense of delight.
3. Pleasure relates primarily to the senses.

B. God's presence is the best source of pleasure.

1. We were created in the image of God.
2. We were created to give pleasure to Him.
3. When we are in right relationship with God, His presence will be a great source of pleasure.
4. If we are not in a right relationship with God, His presence will bring conviction and fear.
 - a. Adam was afraid of God's presence, after he sinned.
 - b. The Philistines were plagued with hemorrhoids when the ark of the covenant -- God's presence -- was in their cities. (1 Samuel 5:6)

II. Happiness.

A. Definition.

1. An emotional state of well-being.
2. A pleasant, positive state of mind, expressed in smiles, laughter, and kindness.

3. A sense of being blessed.
4. Happiness relates primarily to the soul -- the mind, will, and emotion.

B. Sources of happiness:

1. If God is Lord of your life; (Psalms 144:15)
2. If you have wisdom; (Proverbs 3:13)
3. Obeying God's Word; (Proverbs 29:18)
4. The fear of the Lord; (Proverbs 28:14)
5. Being corrected by God. (Job 5:17)

C. David was a happy man.

1. He was rejected by his peers.
2. He was hated and hunted by his employer -- his father-in-law.
3. He had many enemies, and fought many battles.
4. However, David learned to delight himself in God.

D. A merry heart.

1. Is good for your health. (Proverbs 17:22)
2. Makes you look pleasant. (Proverbs 15:13)
3. A merry heart means a positive, cheerful outlook on life.
4. A sense of humor.

III. Joy.

A. Definition.

1. A positive sense of delight and rejoicing in spirit, which can only come from a right relationship with God.
2. Joy is a response of the human spirit.
3. God's kingdom is characterized by:

- a. Righteousness -- right standing with God;
- b. Peace -- comfort of the Holy Spirit, relating to faith and hope.
- c. Joy -- feeling good in the Spirit.
4. Joy is a fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22)

B. The joy of the Lord.

1. The joy of the Lord will enable you to endure hard situations. (Nehemiah 8:10)
2. We need to find our joy in the Lord Himself, and not simply in the blessings of the Lord.
3. God calls us to delight ourselves in Him. (Psalms 37:4)

C. Joy in the morning. (Psalms 30:5)

1. Suffering for Jesus' sake will always turn into great joy. (John 16:20)
2. God turns our mourning into dancing -- joy. (Psalms 30:11)
3. Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. (Psalms 126:5)



Spiritual Truths

- Pleasure is primarily a response of the flesh, and is temporary.
- Happiness is an emotion of the soul.
- Joy is a function of the spirit, and is a response to God.
- Joy is one of the evidences that the Holy Spirit is in your life.

- You can have joy in your heart, even when you are going through difficult times.
- We need to find our joy in the Lord, not just in the blessings of the Lord.
- Joy is not related at all to circumstances.
- The joy of the Lord will sustain your heart, even when your situation is unhappy.
- God loves us, and wants us to delight in Him.
- Joy is the result of doing the will of God, not the result of seeking joy.
- Joy comes from putting Jesus first in your life, and serving Him with all your heart.

David was living in hardship and desperation, but he had an abiding joy.

What was the difference between poor David and rich Saul? The difference was in their relationship with God. David delighted himself in the Lord, but Saul had become proud and had focused his life on the wealth and blessings of God. Saul had started out humble and anointed. God had chosen Saul to be king. King Saul had it all, but the Spirit of the Lord left him, because he rebelled against the Lord. In spite of his wealth, popularity, and power, Saul was miserable. He had no joy, because he was not walking in the Lord's paths. He was doing what he wanted to do.

Many years later, the nation of Judah (Southern Israel) was conquered by Babylon. The city of Jerusalem was destroyed. After seventy years in captivity, thousands of the Jewish slaves were allowed to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple of the Lord. Later, Nehemiah, a Jew who had become a prominent leader under a Persian king, led a great group of workers home to rebuild the wall of the city. The work was difficult and there were enemies who opposed them, but Nehemiah said, "*...the joy of the Lord is your strength.*" (Nehemiah 8:10) In other words, "When you are doing something good for God, and His joy is in your life, you will be stronger."

Many people are religious, but not right with God. Religion is man's attempt to find God and heaven. Usually, people will try doing good things (works) to become good enough for God. But this generally results in frustration, because we cannot be good enough in our own strength. We need to be born again. We must receive a miracle of God's transforming power in our lives and become children of God. Then God's grace will enable us to live the



Lesson Material

King Saul was in his luxurious palace, surrounded by gold, wealth, obedient servants, wives, and subjects. He was the supreme ruler of a powerful nation. He could have anything he wanted. But King Saul was miserable. He had lost the anointing of God, due to His pride and arrogance. He had the honor of the people, but he had lost favor with God. God was not with him any more.

David was an outcast. Because King Saul was jealous of David's anointing, David was hunted as a common criminal. He was living in caves and hiding from his own countrymen. He was hated by the other nations, and rejected by his own.

way we should, and we will have a joyful life. The key is that God does it through us. Our fleshly attempt to become righteous is called "legalism." God living through us by His power is called "grace."

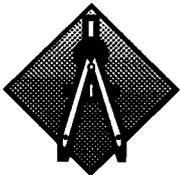
It is ironic that we are the most entertained generation in history, yet we are generally unhappy. That is because pleasure cannot be an end in itself. Those who live for pleasure (called "hedonists") say, "I will not deny myself anything. I will live for myself." They are generally unhappy people. On the other hand, Jesus never did anything for his own pleasure or entertainment. He worked and served, His whole life. He gave Himself completely to others. What was the result? Jesus is the happiest person in the universe. (Hebrews 1:9) Watching television and playing games brings temporary pleasure, but they do not result in joy. Joy comes when you do good and accomplish worthwhile tasks. Helping and loving produce real joy.

paint large letters, "J", "O", and "Y". The "J" stands for Jesus, the "O" stands for others, and the "Y" stands for "yourself." Ask students hold the letters, in the "y-o-j" order, and explain that a "yoj" is really pretty meaningless. Then put them in the right order. Talk about the fact that the problem of sin is selfishness. We try so hard to be happy, but if we will seek God's will, we will find true joy. When you get your priorities in the correct order, you will find the greatest joy. If you put yourself first, you will have a hard time making friends, and you will not please God.

Other Examples

What other Bible characters were joyful, even when they were in very difficult situations? (Examples: Joseph, Daniel, Paul and Silas in jail, Paul in prison.)

What other Bible characters were miserable, even when they were wealthy and blessed? (Examples: King Ahab, Jezebel, King Herod, Pharaoh.)



Methods

Visual

Gather some cardboard, poster board, or other stiff paper material. Cut out and

Wait Upon Him

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Lesson 27



Bible References

Habakkuk 2:1-3

Psalms 37:7

Psalms 37:34

Proverbs 20:22

Isaiah 25:9

Isaiah 40:31

Acts 1:4-5



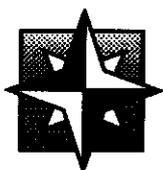
Scripture Reading

Habakkuk 2:1-3

1 *"I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov'd."*

2 *"And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make (it) plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it."*

3 *"For the vision (is) yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."*



Theme

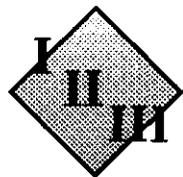
We must learn to wait upon the Lord.



Memory Verse

Isaiah 40:31

"But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength..."



Outline

I. Habakkuk Learns to Wait for an Answer.

A. Habakkuk had been crying out to God:

1. Because of the sins of the people;
2. Because of the iniquity in the land;
3. Because of the delay in God's answer.

B. God showed Habakkuk the future.

1. The persecution that was yet to come to the people.
2. The Chaldeans, who were to be used as instruments of judgment by God.

C. Habakkuk then waited for an answer.

1. He was shown that he must wait in faith.
 - a. As a spiritual watchman.
 - b. One who waits on the tower for a message.
2. God gave Habakkuk a vision.
 - a. Habakkuk was told to write the vision on a table (scroll).
 - b. He was also told that the vision was not for that day, but for the future.
3. Visions are often for the future.
 - a. We need to not hurry the timing of God.
 - b. There was an appointed time for the vision to come true.
 - c. The vision will come true -- God does not lie.
 - d. The vision will not tarry, but we must.

II. We Must All Learn to Wait Upon the Lord.

A. God's timing is not always the same as our timing.

1. God knows what is best.
2. The Lord knows that there are sometimes situations and things which need to happen, before we receive an answer to a prayer or the completion of a vision.

B. We grow spiritually, in our time of waiting.

1. Isaiah 40:31 says they that wait on the Lord shall:
 - a. Renew their strength;
 - b. Mount up with wings as eagles.
2. Psalms 37:34 says to *"wait on the LORD, and keep his way."*
 - a. He will exalt you.
 - b. You will inherit the land.
 - c. You will see the wicked cut off.
3. When we wait on the Lord, He promises to save us. (Proverbs 20:22)
4. When we wait on His promises, He sends his Holy Spirit to us. (Acts 1:4-5)

C. God wants us to learn to wait upon Him.

1. He will not forsake us.
2. He will not let us down.



Spiritual Truths

- God is a God of patience.
- When we wait for God's timing, His solution to our problem will be better than if we try to solve our problems on our own.
- We are to wait as does a watchman on a tower, ever diligent and looking for the promised solution that God will deliver.
- When God promises to do something, He will do it. His answer may not be when we expect it, but He will keep His promises.
- We grow in the Lord, as we exercise ourselves in patience.



Lesson Material

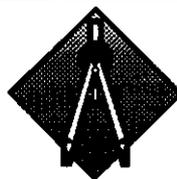
This is a simple lesson, but one with significant meaning. Impatience is a problem with a lot of people. As we grow in our relationship with the Lord, we need to learn that we cannot become impatient with God. If the truths of this lesson can be learned now, then it will be much easier as we grow older to cope with the trials and tribulations that we will one day face.

Habakkuk had to learn to deal with his patience, or lack thereof. God taught Habakkuk that he had to wait as a

watchman must wait on a tower. Sometimes it may seem like no answer is in sight, but that does not change the watchman's diligence in always keeping an eye open for the answer -- for the message. We must not grow weary in our waiting, but rejoice in it. As we wait for God to reveal His solutions, God can mold us and make us better than we were. Learning to wait on God can add to our spiritual life.

In Habakkuk's case, he was told to write down the solution that God would give him, and then Habakkuk was not to look for the manifestation of that promise for a while. It would all happen as God said it would, but in God's timing -- not Habakkuk's. God says that the solution "will not tarry." That means that it will not come too late. It will come when God is ready for it to come.

God does the same thing with situations in our own lives. We will pray for something and feel that God is not answering us, or we will feel that God has given us a solution and then it does not happen right away. We need to "wait upon the Lord." Wait for healings to take place. Wait for answers to problems. Wait for God to deal with someone else's life, after we have prayed for them. It will happen in God's timing.



Methods

Puppets

You may perform a short skit with the puppets about Habakkuk, and his waiting

on the Lord to deal with the iniquities of the people. A more modern day puppet sketch, which involves young people who cannot wait for God to answer their prayers, is also recommended. Demonstrate the need to wait for God. Describe what can happen when we take it upon ourselves to find an answer, instead of waiting for God to give us the solution. Portray the consequences that must then be paid. A possible example might be -- Tommy has had his bike stolen by Billy. Tommy then prays that God will allow him to have his bike returned, and help Billy come to know the Lord. Susie comes

by and tells Tommy to go to the police. Rather than waiting on God to answer him concerning what to do, Tommy goes to the police. About this time, Billy comes back with the bike while Tommy is gone, and meets Susie. Billy says that he is looking for Tommy, to apologize for taking Tommy's bike and to return the bike. Billy also mentions that he has some questions about Jesus. Just then, Tommy comes in with the police. As the police question Billy, the opportunity is lost at that moment for Tommy to tell Billy about the Lord. Waiting on the answer from God is important.

The Burden of Amos

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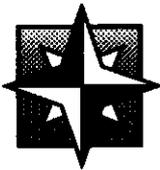
Lesson 28



Bible References

Psalms 33:12

Amos 1-9



Theme

God is a holy God, and will hold people and nations accountable for their sins.



Scripture Reading

Amos 3:1-8

1 "Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying,

2 "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

3 "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

4 "Will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no prey? will a young lion cry out of his den, if he have taken nothing?

5 "Can a bird fall in a snare upon the earth, where no gin [is] for him? shall [one] take up a snare from the earth, and have taken nothing at all?

6 "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done [it]?

7 "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.

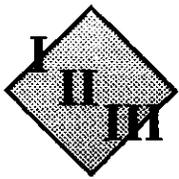
8 "The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy?"



Memory Verse

Amos 3:8

"...the Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy?"



Outline

I. The Prophet Amos.

A. Times.

1. 300 years after King David.
2. The divided kingdom of Israel.
 - a. Uzziah was the king of Judah.
 - b. Jeroboam was the king of Northern Israel.

B. Home.

1. Amos lived in Tekoa, a small rural town five miles from Bethlehem and ten miles from Jerusalem.
2. On a hill, not far from the plains, by the Dead Sea.

C. Occupation.

1. Amos was not a professional preacher.
2. He was a herdsman.
 - a. He raised cattle, or possibly a special breed of sheep.
 - b. He was a simple farmer.

3. Amos also raised and cultivated fig trees.

II. The Call of God.

A. God had a message for the Northern Kingdom -- Israel.

1. The kings were wicked.
2. They had established the worship of false idols to replace the true God.
3. The people had also turned their hearts away from God.
4. God had sent them warnings through other prophets.
5. Amos was one of several prophets God called to warn Israel about the coming judgment of God.
6. God is loving and patient, but He is also perfectly holy.
7. Sin results in death.
8. National sin results in national destruction.

B. A prophet.

1. A prophet is one who is called by God to give a message from God to people.
2. A prophet is a messenger.
3. Prophets are people who are close enough to God to hear His voice.
4. People who are immoral or wicked cannot hear from God.

C. God called Amos.

1. He did not go to school to study the ministry.
2. He did not consider himself a prophet.
3. But he had a message from God to deliver to Israel.
4. Amos traveled to Bethel, which was the center of Baal worship in Northern Israel.

5. Amos was not sent by King Uzziah. He was sent by the Lord God.
6. Amos boldly went to the center of the place of wickedness.
7. It is believed that Amos returned home alive.
8. Amos was faithful to deliver God's message, and he is honored to this day, approximately 2,700 years later.

III. The Message of Amos.

A. The burdens. (Chapters 1-2)

1. Amos' message was of coming judgment against eight nations, including Israel and Judah.
2. *"For three transgressions...and for four."* (Amos 1:3)
 - a. This means that they had been sinning a long time.
 - b. This was the fourth and final warning.
 - c. Judgment would come soon.

B. Sermons. (Chapters 3-6)

1. Amos was not building a preaching career.
2. Amos had a word from God, and he had to give it.
3. He used farming terms and illustrations.
4. His prophecies of destruction and doom all came to pass.
5. God judged the nations for their sins.
6. But the message had hope:
 - a. Repeated promises of salvation from death, if the people would turn to the Lord;
 - b. God will forgive even the most wicked people if they repent;
 - c. *"Seek ye me, and ye shall live."* (Amos 5:4)

7. *"Seek not Bethel...Seek the Lord..."* (Amos 5:5-6)
 - a. "Bethel" means "house of God."
 - b. Do not just seek for a church. Seek God, and He will plant you in a church.

C. Visions given to Amos: (Chapters 7-9)

1. Grasshoppers -- picture of plagues, natural disasters;
2. Basket of summer fruit;
 - a. Very ripe; late in the season.
 - b. Rotten.
 - c. Shows that the end is near;
3. Restoration.
 - a. Promise that God would restore worship and order as in David's day.
 - (1) "David's tabernacle."
 - (2) Amos 9:11.
 - b. God is restoring praise and worship today.



Spiritual Truths

- God can speak through whom He desires.
- God speaks today, but sin makes us dull in our hearing.
- God does not need brilliant leaders, but He does need humble ones.
- God is holy and just, as well as loving.
- Sin results in death, but repentance and humility result in forgiveness.

- God is not mocked. We will sow what we reap.
- When you know you have a message from God, you must tell it.
- God speaks to us through His Word, the Bible.
- We should read the Bible every day.
- God promised to restore praise and worship to His church.
- God wants His people to worship Him in Spirit and in truth.



Lesson Material

God is a good God. He loved Abraham, and promised to bless his descendents. God gave Abraham a son, Isaac, and a grandson named Israel. The descendents of Israel became a great nation, and were given the land of Canaan (or Palestine) as their inheritance. God wanted to show the whole world that *"Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD."* (Psalms 33:12)

But the people, throughout their history, had a hard time staying faithful to God. They were constantly attracted to the wickedness they saw in other nations. They were drawn to idolatry, because when one worships idols, one can do what he wants. When one serves God, he lives God's way. Idolatry seemed to offer more pleasure and ego-satisfaction, but it never did. It always resulted in misery, destruction, and death. Serving God

always makes us satisfied, blessed, and fulfilled, in life and for eternity.

After the days of King Solomon, the nation of Israel divided into two countries. The northern part, which kept the name "Israel," adopted idolatry as its official religion. The southern kingdom continued to worship God, but kept backsliding and bringing idols in from other nations. The northern kingdom had all wicked kings, but the southern kingdom, Judah, had some godly kings and some great revivals.

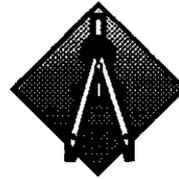
King Uzziah was basically a godly king. The primary prophet in Jerusalem was Isaiah. Judah was doing fairly well spiritually, but Israel was very carnal. The citizens of Israel were just like the wicked, heathen nations around them. God could not bless them, because the people did not live the way they should and would not repent. God sent several prophets to warn them. After many chances and warnings, God finally allowed the wicked and cruel Assyrians to conquer and destroy the nation.

Before the destruction of judgment, God sent several prophets, including Amos. Amos was a humble, simple "layman." He was not a professional preacher. He was a farmer. More importantly, Amos loved the Lord with all his heart. He lived a godly life, and communed with God. One day, the Lord spoke to Amos, and called him to be a prophet. That is, Amos was to get messages directly from the Lord and deliver them to the people.

Amos was called by God to leave his peasant farm and travel north to Bethel, which was the center for Baal worship in Israel. He was almost like Martin Luther, who boldly spoke out in Germany in 1519

against the corrupt church leadership of his day. Amos went to prophesy judgment against the wicked people of Israel, almost in the shadow of the very temples dedicated to the heathen worship of idols. This idol worship was forbidden by God, from the very beginning of creation.

God said, "Do not seek Bethel." It is our human tendency to devote our attention to people and things in life, rather than devote ourselves to spiritual things. God does not want people to merely try to be religious and go to church. He wants people to have a personal relationship with Him, through the Lord Jesus Christ. God wants us to be worshippers, who will enjoy fellowship with Him on a personal basis. Do not seek things, and do not simply seek religion. Seek God. Get to know Him personally -- by being born again, by reading His Word every day, and by prayer and worship. We do not go to church simply to get involved in religious activity. A good church will constantly encourage the congregation in their personal walk with the Lord, and will teach them the ways of God.



Methods

Visual

Locate a map of ancient Judah, and on the map locate the small towns of Tekoa and Bethlehem. Also locate the major cities of Jerusalem and Bethel. Finally, locate the Dead Sea.

Discussion

We know that God speaks to us through the Bible, which is His Word to us. Can God speak to us through our parents and pastors? Can God confirm His direction through circumstances? Does God have special servants today, who function as prophets? Will genuine pastors and prophets ever prophesy something which contradicts biblical truths?

Zechariah's Night Visions

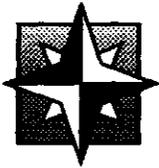
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Lesson 29



Bible Reference

Zechariah 1-14



Theme

God loves to save and restore lives.



Scripture Reading

Zechariah 6:9-15

9 "And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

10 "Take of {them of} the captivity, {even} of Heldai, of Tobijah, and of Jedaiah,

which are come from Babylon, and come thou the same day, and go into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah;

11 "Then take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set {them} upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest;

12 "And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name {is} The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD:

13 "Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

14 "And the crowns shall be to Helem, and to Tobijah, and to Jedaiah, and to Hen the son of Zephaniah, for a memorial in the temple of the LORD.

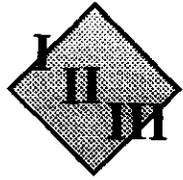
15 "And they {that are} far off shall come and build in the temple of the LORD, and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. And {this} shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God."



Memory Verse

Zechariah 4:6

"...Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts."



Outline

I. The Minor Prophets.

A. Prophets.

1. Men of God who spoke as messengers from God.
 - a. Lived pure lives.
 - b. Called to be spokesmen.
2. God has called special people throughout history to be His prophets.
3. Some of the prophecies are recorded in the canon of scripture.

B. Major prophets.

1. Prophets with large books of their prophecies recorded in the Bible.
2. There are four "major prophets."
 - a. Isaiah.
 - b. Jeremiah.
 - c. Ezekiel.
 - d. Daniel.

C. Minor prophets.

1. There are 12 prophets with smaller volumes of prophecies preserved in the Bible.
2. They are no less important. These prophets simply wrote smaller books.
3. Zechariah is one of the "minor prophets."

II. The Times of Zechariah.

A. After the Babylonian captivity of Judah.

1. Israel had been destroyed by Assyria.
2. The nation of Judah was spared.
3. After more than a century, Judah also fell into idolatry and turned from God.
4. After repeated warnings from various prophets, God allowed Babylon to conquer Judah and destroy Jerusalem.

B. Restored temple.

1. After 70 years of captivity, the Jews went back to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.
2. Zechariah saw the rebuilt temple, but Nehemiah had not yet rebuilt the wall of the city.

C. The need for a Savior.

1. The nation of Israel would go through more difficult times and suffer under two more wicked empires, before the Messiah would come.
2. Zechariah prophesied that Jesus would come to save the people from their sins.

III. The Message of Zechariah.

A. Blessing and restoration for the Jews.

1. Joshua, the priest, represents Israel. (Chapter 3)
2. Satan is the accuser.
3. God will take off Joshua's rags -- a type of sin -- and clothe him with beautiful garments -- a type of the righteousness of Christ.
4. In chapter 6, Joshua represents Jesus.
5. The name, "Joshua" is the Hebrew name for "Savior." The Greek form of the name is "Jesus."

B. The coming rise of the Greek Empire, and the revolt of the Maccabees.

1. The Maccabees were loyal members of a family of priests who bravely fought against the wicked Greeks.
2. But they turned to the Romans for help, and eventually, the nation fell under the cruel reign of the Roman Empire.
3. *"Not by might...but by My Spirit..."* (Zechariah 4:6)
 - a. It was not the power of the Roman Empire that would save them.
 - b. Only the power of the Spirit could deliver them from their oppressors.

C. The coming Messiah.

1. The Branch.
 - a. Jesus of Nazareth. "Nazareth" means "branch."
 - b. Jesus fulfilled Zechariah's prophecies about a coming Savior.
2. Building God's temple.
 - a. The Jews had just rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem.

- b. Jesus was going to come and build a spiritual "temple," His church.



Spiritual Truths

- The central figure of all human history is Jesus Christ.
- Zechariah prophesied concerning the Savior more than four centuries before Jesus came to earth.
- Everyone in the human race needs to be saved.
- The physical temple in Jerusalem was a prophetic picture of the true temple of God, which is the Church of Jesus Christ.
- The Church is comprised of all born-again believers in the world.
- Satan is the accuser of the brethren.
- We cannot be good enough to gain entrance into heaven by our own works. We must be covered by the righteousness of Christ.
- We cannot win the spiritual battle by our own human effort.
- When the Holy Spirit is working in us, we will always win.



Lesson Material

We know very little about the prophet, Zechariah and his friend, Haggai. We know that they were in Jerusalem when the Jewish people traveled hundreds of miles, returning from Babylon to rebuild the temple. Zechariah and Haggai encouraged the people to put God first and to restore the temple, which was a constant reminder of the fact that they were God's people.

When the nation of Judah turned from God and rejected the warnings of Jeremiah and other prophets of God, it was finally conquered by the vicious Babylonian army. God allowed this wicked nation to destroy His own people, because the Jews were polluted with sin and idolatry. They refused to serve God with all of their hearts. When Jerusalem was destroyed, the temple which Solomon had built was demolished. It had been covered with gold, silver, and gemstones. It was a fabulous building, constructed from much of the wealth from around the world. In the destruction of the temple, everything was taken apart, so that every last ounce of gold could be salvaged.

When the people rebuilt the temple under Zerubbabel's leadership, they no longer had the wealth of David and Solomon to work with. They had been slaves in a strange land for seventy years, and were limited to the resources given by the Persian king, Cyrus. Jerusalem had been completely demolished. Before they rebuilt the city, they built a smaller and much less expensive version of the original temple. This shows us that we

should put God first in our lives. If we build a good relationship with God in the spirit, we will then be able to build good relationships with other people. We will have good marriages and friendships, when we put God first.

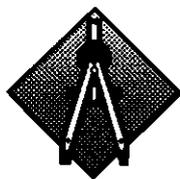
The temple took about twenty years to rebuild. Zechariah was one of the Jews who saw it restored. He was the grandson of a prophet of God; and he, too, heard from God. He had a pure heart, and was given many amazing glimpses into the life and future of his nation. Zechariah saw the spiritual battle going on. He was especially aware that God was going to send the Messiah, Jesus Christ the Savior, to that very geographical area and nation, to offer eternal salvation to "whosoever will."

Zechariah was a priest of the family of Aaron. It was rare for a priest to also be a prophet. Often, the priests were spiritually insensitive; and they carried out their functions callously, while the prophets burned with zeal for God and disclosed the sins of the people. But Zechariah held both offices, and he encouraged the people to serve the Lord.

Zechariah had eight recorded visions. A vision is similar to a dream, and it is something given by God to illustrate what He wants to say. Visions usually come when the person is awake -- but not necessarily. Visions are not really seen with the natural eyes, but with the spirit.

God not only gave Zechariah visions of symbols, but He let the prophet have some understanding as to the meaning. One of the most beautiful pictures is the vision of Joshua the high priest, standing before Jesus. Satan is there to accuse him to the Lord, but the Lord is defending him. Joshua the priest, representing Israel, is

seen clothed in filthy garments (representing sin). The Lord gives the command, and the filthy garments are removed. They are replaced by new garments and a beautiful crown. This is a picture of the believer exchanging his own righteousness for the righteousness of Christ. It is not by our own goodness, but according to God's mercy, that He saves us from sin. To those who put their trust in God, He gives the grace to live for Him, and to gain a beautiful crown. The Lord concludes the vision with a promise that He will send the Branch, who is Jesus Christ.



Methods

Focus on the temple.

What is a temple? It is a building designed for worship and sacrifice. While most local churches have buildings, the

Church is really all the born-again people throughout the world, who gather in the building and worship God. Under the Old Covenant, the people of Israel built physical buildings. But Jesus is fulfilling that symbol, by building His glorious church in the lives and hearts of His people.

A temple is a place for God to dwell. He not only dwells in our hearts individually, but He dwells in the midst of His gathered people. Together, we are His temple.

Joshua the Priest

Describe this key scene in vivid detail. Allow the class to discover that this not only represents the nation of Israel, but it represents every believer. Satan is the one who accuses and condemns, and we are clothed with sin. It is only by God's grace that we can be covered with the righteousness of Jesus Christ and gain an eternal crown. Our hope is in Jesus, and not in our religious works.

What is Worship?

Volume 3

Lesson 30

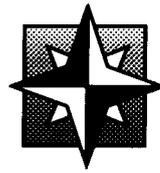


Bible References

Exodus 34:14
2 Samuel 6:12-17
1 Chronicles 13
1 Chronicles 14
1 Chronicles 15:14-28
1 Chronicles 16:29
2 Chronicles 36:22-23
Ezra 1:2-8
Psalms 100:4
Proverbs 20:27
Proverbs 21:1
Isaiah 44:28
Isaiah 45:4
John 4:24
Acts 24:14
Ephesians 4:23
Colossians 1:16

Revelation 4:8-11

Revelation 5:11-14



Theme

Worship is ministering to God in spirit and in truth.



Scripture Reading

Ezra 1:3-8

3 "Who {is there} among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which {is} in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he {is} the God,) which {is} in Jerusalem.

4 "And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that {is} in Jerusalem.

5 "Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all {them} whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the LORD which {is} in Jerusalem.

6 "And all they that {were} about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all {that} was willingly offered.

7 "Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods;

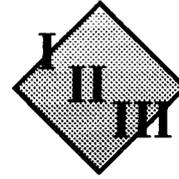
8 "Even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah."



Memory Verse

John 4:24

"God {is} a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship {him} in spirit and in truth."



Outline

I. Definition of Worship.

A. God created all people for Himself and for His glory.

1. He desires intimate relationship.
2. We can worship with our spirit.
3. If we are born again, our spirits are alive to God.

B. "Proskuneo" -- Greek word for "worship."

1. Means "to kiss toward."
2. Worship is ministering to God and blessing Him.
3. Praise is boasting about God.

C. God seeks worship.

D. We are not to worship any other gods.

II. Ezra the Worshiper.

A. Ezra was both a scribe and a priest.

1. A scribe was a person who wrote out copies of the scriptures.
2. A priest was one who represented the people to God, and offered sacrifices.

B. Cyrus -- king of Persia.

1. King Cyrus returned the holy articles to the temple.
2. He sent Jews back to Jerusalem.
 - a. The Jewish people had been captured by King Nebuchadnezzar.
 - b. The Israelites were slaves in a foreign land.
 - c. The Persians then conquered the Babylonians.
 - d. Cyrus was a Persian king.

III. Old Testament Worship.

A. The tabernacle was a picture of God's spiritual order.

B. Sacrifices were offered under the old covenant.

1. Animal offerings.
2. Meal offerings.
3. Incense offerings.
4. Peace offerings.
5. Burnt offerings.

C. David worshiped God.

1. He composed over half the Psalms.
2. He returned the ark to Jerusalem.
 - a. The ark of the covenant was the symbol of God's presence.
 - b. It was a gold-covered box, with golden angels on top.
 - c. God's presence was very powerful in the ark.
3. Under King David's leadership, the Israelites worshiped God before the ark.

IV. New Covenant Worship.

A. We do not worship before a golden ark.

1. We worship God in spirit.
 - a. Our spirit is the God-conscious part of our being.
 - b. We are spiritually alive, if we are born again.
 - c. People who are not saved cannot worship, because their spirit is not alive.
2. We worship in truth.
 - a. Worship God in ways that please Him.
 - b. Acts 24:14.
 - c. Worship according to God's Word.

B. Methods of praise and worship.

1. Singing about God.
2. Singing to God.
3. Praying -- worshiping, when we minister with our spirit.
4. Obedience can be an act of worship, when motivated by love.

V. Heavenly Worship.

A. Millions will minister to God in continual worship.

B. We will worship Him forever.



Spiritual Truths

- We were created for the Lord's pleasure and purposes.

- God desires a deep and intimate relationship with us.
- Worshiping is ministering to God -- blessing God.
- When we are born again, our spirit is made alive to God and to the things of God.
- The Lord wants to be first in our lives and occupy our "prime time."
- Praise takes us into God's presence, so that we can then worship Him.
- Prayer may be audible or inaudible (with only our thoughts and spirit).
- Preaching, teaching, and evangelizing will cease someday, but we will worship God forever.



Lesson Material

We were created for the Lord's pleasure and purpose. He is sovereign, and created all things for Himself and His glory. (Colossians 1:16) He desires a deep and intimate, personal relationship with each of us. Worshiping is not just something we do -- it is a response of devotion with our spirit. It comes from our spirit responding to God's Spirit -- joining our spirit with God. We are to "...worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness." (1 Chronicles 16:29) "God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24)

"Worshiping in truth" means truly worshiping out of a heartfelt relationship

with God. When we are born again, our spirit is made alive to God and to the things of God, such as love, faith, holiness, and spiritual understanding. In Ephesians 4:23, the Lord says to "...be renewed in the spirit of your mind." This does not mean that your mind is the same as your spirit, as some have mistakenly thought. This "spirit" is a general attitude -- the way we think about things.

The most frequently used Greek word for "worship" is "proskuneo". "Pros" means "toward," and "kuneo" means "to kiss." Worship can be likened to the love and intimacy of a happy marriage.

Worshiping is ministering to God -- blessing God. It may be public or private. In praise, we talk about God and boast and compliment Him; we speak of His attributes -- as healer, deliverer, provider, friend, and so on. Praise prepares us for worship, because it stirs up attitudes of gratitude and draws us closer to the Lord. Praise is the way to "*enter...into his courts.*" (Psalms 100:4)

God seeks worshipers. He is not just seeking to be worshiped, as some believe. God is not looking for impressive religious programs or crowds of religious people. He wants to be loved by a people who are worshipers, because He wants a relationship with us. Our spirit is the God-conscious part of us; the soul is the self-conscious part; and the body is the sense-conscious part. Our spirit consists of intuition -- the inner teacher; conscience -- the sense of right and wrong; and communion -- the part which desires a relationship with God.

It is the communion part of our spirit that relates to God. Proverbs 20:27 says that, "*The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.*" Our soul consists of the mind --

intellect and reasoning; will -- self-determination or choices; and emotions. It is with the mind that we praise God. Psalms 100:4 says,

"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, {and} into [his courts] with praise: be thankful unto him, {and} bless his name."

Praise brings us into God's presence, so that we can then worship Him.

In Exodus 34:14, the Lord says, "*For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.*" The Lord wants to be first in our lives and occupy the very best part of our day. Anything that takes the place of God, or becomes more important to us than God, becomes an idol, or false god. Our first ministry is to the Lord. Nothing should hinder our ministry to Him.

The scripture reference, Ezra 1:3-8, relates to the time of Cyrus, king of Persia, and Ezra, the Jewish priest and scribe. Ezra was a man of Judah and a lineal descendent of Eleazar, the son of Aaron. Ezra was a contemporary of Nehemiah and Zerubbabel. He returned to Jerusalem with the people.

Cyrus, in his first year as king of Persia, was stirred in his spirit by the Lord to proclaim that the Lord God of heaven had given him all the kingdoms of the earth and charged him to build Him a house in Jerusalem. (2 Chronicles 36:22-23; Ezra 1:2) Proverbs 21:1 states that the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, and that He turns it the whatever direction he wants to. The Lord said of Cyrus,

"{He is} my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy

foundation shall be laid." (Isaiah 44:28)

Isaiah 45:4 says,

"For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me."

The children of Israel had been held captive in Babylon for many years, because they did not listen to the prophets and refused to turn to the Lord. The priests, leaders, and people had sinned against the Lord, and needed to go into captivity to learn not to serve idols. The Lord was now using Cyrus to encourage the people to return to Judea and rebuild their temple.

The original tabernacle was built as a shadow, or prophetic picture, of God's plan for the church and of the worship in heaven. The patriarchs worshiped by building altars and sacrificing in the tabernacle, and later, in the temple. These buildings contained earthly, material things, which give us a picture of what spiritual things are like. The singing, feasting, dancing and sacrificing took place there.

The altars were constructed for offering sacrifices and burning incense. These offerings included: sin offerings, trespass offerings, whole burnt offerings, meal or vegetable offerings, and peace offerings. These offerings were offered in the outer court. The incense altar was located in front of the veil before the Holy of Holies, where God's presence dwelt. The incense was made according to a prescribed mixture of the finest spices and oil, and was offered in the inner court by the priests. Incense is a biblical type of prayer. We still offer up our prayers to God, but

we do not burn incense, because that was only a type.

In the Old Testament, David is one of the best examples of a man who worshiped God, because he had a heart after God. He wrote over 70 of the Psalms, many of which we sing today to worship and praise the Lord. There was great celebration and worship, when David brought back the ark to Jerusalem. (2 Samuel 6:12-17 and 1 Chronicles 15:14-28)

Worship today is the same as in the Old Testament times -- with our spirit. Only the covenants have changed. Because Christ came and shed His blood on Calvary for our sin, once and for all, we are not under the old covenant requirements of animal sacrifices.

Singing is still a vehicle of worship. We are admonished in Ephesians 5:19 to speak

"to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."

We sing, clap, shout, rejoice, dance, and play instruments to take us into His presence. Then, we are to minister to Him with our spirit.

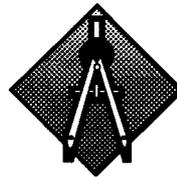
Praying is worshiping, when we are ministering with our spirit. Prayer may be audible or inaudible, with only our thoughts and spirit communicating with God. Prayer with the spirit builds us up and ministers to God, and it involves speaking in tongues.

Obedience is a fruit of worship. It involves worshiping with a right motive and spirit. As children, we are taught to obey our parents and teachers. We must

always obey God, even when it is a supreme test of our faith.

Millions in heaven minister to God. (Revelation 5:11-14) The four beasts or living creatures do not rest, but worship God day and night. The twenty-four elders fall down before Him and worship. (Revelation 4:8-11) Preaching, teaching, and evangelizing will someday come to an end, but we will worship God forever. We were made for Him.

We should all become worshipers of God and minister to Him, by worshiping in spirit and in truth.



Methods

Show a film on the temple and the sacrifices under the old covenant. Emphasize that we still worship today, even though the covenants have changed. Discuss worship under the new covenant.

Use a flannelgraph or a poster board drawing as a diagram to show the outer and inner courts of the temple and the Holy of Holies; and discuss what the significance of each section was. Discuss worship under the old and new covenants.

Discuss Old Testament characters such as David, Ezra, and Solomon, and how they worshiped God.

Dialogue concerning singing, prayer, and obedience and their relationship to worship.

Sons of Zadok

Volume 3

Lesson 31



Bible References

2 Samuel 15
2 Samuel 17:15
2 Samuel 19:11
1 Chronicles 12:28
1 Kings 1
Proverbs 31:4-7
Ezekiel 44:9-16
2 Corinthians 6:14-18
2 Corinthians 7:1
Ephesians 5:18
Revelation 19:8



Scripture Reading

Ezekiel 44:9-16

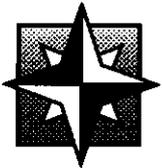
9 *"Thus saith the Lord GOD; No stranger, uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that (is) among the children of Israel.*

10 *"And the Levites that are gone away far from me, when Israel went astray, which went astray away from me after their idols; they shall even bear their iniquity.*

11 *"Yet they shall be ministers in my sanctuary, (having) charge at the gates of the house, and ministering to the house: they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them.*

12 *"Because they ministered unto them before their idols, and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity; therefore have I lifted up mine hand against them, saith the Lord GOD, and they shall bear their iniquity.*

13 *"And they shall not come near unto me, to do the office of a priest unto me, nor to come near to any of my holy things, in the most holy (place): but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed.*



Theme

God seeks worshipers who will be faithful to Him.

14 "But I will make them keepers of the charge of the house, for all the service thereof, and for all that shall be done therein.

15 "But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord GOD:

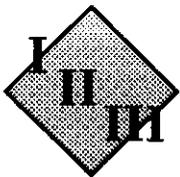
16 "They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge."



Memory Verse

Matthew 5:8

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."



Outline

I. Zadok.

A. A high priest in Israel.

1. Served under King David.
 - a. 1,000 years B.C.
 - b. During Israel's glorious days.

2. A Levite.
 - a. Direct descendent of Aaron.
 - b. Son of Ahitub, the priest.

B. Loyal and faithful.

1. Zadok came to David at Hebron, when David first became king.
2. He brought about 900 men and 22 captains with him.
3. When Absalom revolted against his father, King David, Zadok remained loyal to David.
4. Later, David's son, Adonijah persuaded General Joab and the high priest, Abiathar to support Adonijah's effort to overthrow the throne; but Zadok remained loyal to David.
 - a. After the *coup d'état*, Abiathar was removed from office, and Zadok was the only high priest.
 - b. Zadok later served under Solomon.

II. The Sons of Zadok.

A. Centuries later:

1. Israel declined spiritually and divided nationally.
2. The southern kingdom, Judah, remained loyal to David's dynasty.
3. They officially worshiped God, but fell into idolatry.
4. Most of the priests were as corrupt as the people.

B. Zadok's descendents.

1. The Levites from Zadok's line remained faithful to God.
2. Judah was defeated and taken into captivity for their sins.
3. Many people lost their lives.

C. Restoration.

1. When Jerusalem was restored, God had the temple rebuilt.
2. The other Levites were allowed to serve as workers in the temple, but not as priests before the Lord.
3. They were forgiven, but were given menial tasks.
4. The faithful sons of Zadok were given the function of priest.
5. They were to minister to God -- the highest honor any human can achieve.

III. Relationship.

A. The faithful priests were close to God.

B. Righteousness.

1. They were to wear linen -- a type of righteousness.
2. Revelation 19:8.

C. Covenant.

1. The priests were told not to shave their heads nor have very long hair.
 - a. A shaved head was a symbol of mourning or of slavery.
 - b. Long hair was either a symbol of a vow or of rebellion.
2. The priests were to drink no wine.
 - a. Alcohol is a hindrance to leadership. (Proverbs 31:4-7)
 - b. Alcoholic drink was used by those who needed to "drown their sorrows."
 - c. Better to be filled with the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18)
3. The priests were only to marry virgins.
 - a. An expression of purity.

- b. God's best for marriage -- one partner for life.

D. Sanctified. (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1)

1. God wants a people who will not be influenced by the sins of the world.
2. We are to be in the world, but not of the world.
3. Those who stand for godliness in a sinful world will be rewarded by God.
4. We are tempted to be like those around us.
5. When everyone around you seems to be sinning, stand for what is right.
6. Never make a covenant -- such as marriage -- with an unbeliever.
7. Do not join yourself to anyone who is not joined to God.



Spiritual Truths

- Zadok was faithful to David, when the crowd turned against David.
- Zadok's descendents were faithful to God, when the crowd turned against God.
- Do right when it is not popular, and God will be your eternal reward.
- God rewards and honors faithful people.
- Christians should influence the unsaved, without being influenced by them.

- We should witness to the lost, but not enter into intimate relationships with them.
- To be "sanctified" means to be "set apart" for God.
- A sanctified response to temptation is: "I belong to Jesus and cannot be involved in that activity."



Lesson Material

Zadok was not a major character in world history, but he was a great man in God's eyes. He was a good father, because his descendents followed his godly example of faithfulness. His descendents were rewarded and honored by God for their faithfulness. Zadok was not a king. He was a priest. As a priest, he was faithful to God and to God's man, King David. However, Zadok was tempted to follow the crowd and turn against his leader, on several occasions.

David was a great king, but not a great father. His son Amnon, was immoral, and was killed by a bitter half-brother, named Absalom. David failed to discipline Amnon and then failed to correctly deal with Absalom. They needed confrontation and chastening, but David did not discipline them. They both died tragic, violent deaths.

Absalom was extremely handsome and apparently vain. He worked hard to turn the hearts of the people of Israel against his father, in order to gain the throne for himself. Ironically, if Absalom had only

been faithful and patient, his father would probably have given him the throne and the wealth that went with it. But Absalom was bitter and disloyal, and he persuaded many of Israel's greatest leaders to support his rebellion. In fact, the majority of the people turned against David. This was one instance in history, among many, where the majority was wrong.

There were so many people to support Absalom, that David left Jerusalem, running for his life. God, however, restored the throne to David, partially through the assistance of loyal people such as Zadok, the priest. Zadok helped David once again years later, when another vain son of King David, named Adonijah, tried to usurp the throne before David could install his chosen successor, Solomon.

Under King David's reign, there was another priest higher than Zadok, named Abiathar. Abiathar transferred his loyalty to Adonijah, along with several notable leaders in Israel. When Adonijah was brought down, Abiathar the priest was removed from the priesthood, and Zadok became the principle priest for the nation.

Zadok wrote some of the Psalms in the Bible that we read and sing today. Apparently, he was a good musician, as well as a faithful man.

The descendents of Zadok seemed to follow in his footsteps. When Israel declined spiritually, it was because the people neglected spiritual things and drifted into sin with the world. They were not diligent before God, and they suffered great loss because of it. Any nation which turns away from God will eventually go into bondage, unless there is a revival. This includes America, a nation which was founded by Christians two centuries ago, but has gradually become taken over

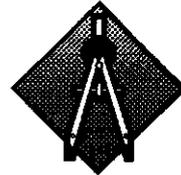
by ungodly men and women, who are successfully eliminating the freedoms of the people. Unless there is revival among the Christians, this country will go into greater and greater bondage.

During the great captivity, Ezekiel wrote of the nation of Judah. This was also during the time of Daniel. It was hundreds of years after Zadok lived, but his descendents still carried on his tradition of loyalty and faithfulness. They stood for righteousness, while the other priests were carnal, and the crowds wanted to be entertained. The descendents of Zadok were faithful to the temple, even when it was not popular; and God honored them for it.

When restoration came, the Lord pointed out that the other Levites were to be servants in the house, but the sons of Zadok were to minister to the Lord personally. They were to be set apart, to be a special delight to the Lord. This is what worship is all about. It is not just singing about God, but ministering unto God. It is spiritual intimacy and joy in the presence of the King. God calls His people to purity and faithfulness.

There are pressures on Christian young people to be immoral and vain. The world is attacking Christian values and morality with a barrage of persuasive propaganda, through some secular educational systems and entertainment. "Everybody does it" is the cry of a perverse generation, but there are still "sons of Zadok" who will say,

"No, I am going to do what is right. I belong to God, and I will not compromise." They may be scorned and ridiculed, but God will honor them with great joy and blessings.



Methods

Identify

Can you identify with Zadok and his descendents? Have you been ridiculed for standing alone against the temptation to sin? Have you been loyal to a Christian leader who was being attacked or reviled?

Can you remember times when you could identify with Abiathar, who went with the crowd and cut down the leader? Have you ever told something about another Christian which made others think less of them? Have you damaged someone's reputation and later felt sorrow because of disloyalty?

True worship

Can you picture yourself standing before the Lord, clothed in pure linen? Ask God to forgive any sins that you have not dealt with, and commit your life to seek God and His righteousness. Stand together as a class and worship God, lifting up holy hands which are dedicated to do His will.

Water Baptism

Volume 3

Lesson 32



Bible References

Matthew 3:1-17

Mark 16:16

Luke 3:21-22

Acts 2:38

Acts 22:16

Romans 6:1-7

2 Corinthians 5:17

1 John 1:9



Scripture Reading

Romans 6:1-7

1 *"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?"*

2 *"God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"*

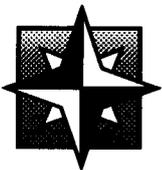
3 *"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?"*

4 *"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."*

5 *"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also {in the likeness} of {his} resurrection:*

6 *"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with {him}, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."*

7 *"For he that is dead is freed from sin."*



Theme

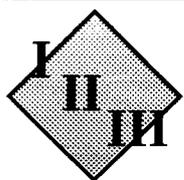
The purpose and power of water baptism.



Memory Verse

Acts 22:16

"...arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins..."



Outline

I. What Is Baptism?

A. From the Greek word, "baptizo."

1. It means "to submerge, to be immersed, covered over completely."
2. By definition, we are buried in water.
3. When Jesus baptizes us in the Holy Spirit, we are immersed -- covered completely -- in the Spirit.

B. The first New Testament baptisms were ministered by John.

1. John was a second cousin of Jesus.
2. John was called before his birth to be the one to prepare the way for the coming Messiah.
3. John baptized for repentance.
 - a. Many people came to him for baptism.
 - b. They were baptized to show that they were sorry for their sins.
4. John baptized in the river Jordan.

5. John baptized Jesus.

- a. The Holy Spirit came to Jesus at Jesus' baptism.
- b. God the Father spoke out of Heaven and said, *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."* (Matthew 3:17)
- c. John was surprised Jesus wanted to be baptized, because Jesus did not need to repent.
- d. Jesus was instituting the first Christian baptism.
- e. Jesus was being buried in water as a sign of His covenant with God.
- f. Jesus' baptism pointed to His future death and burial.

II. What Is a Covenant?

A. Why we are baptized.

1. We have a covenant relationship with God.
 - a. A covenant is an agreement with promise.
 - b. In a covenant, we give ourselves to the other party.
 - c. A covenant is more than a contract.
 - (1) Contracts demand that both parties fulfill an obligation.
 - (2) A covenant partner gives without reservation.
 - (3) A covenant is sealed with blood.
2. As a part of our covenant relationship, we are given various ordinances of the church, which signify aspects of the relationship.
 - a. Communion.
 - b. Baptism.
 - c. Marriage.

- B. Our covenant relationship demands of us a sign of compliance.
1. Not unto salvation.
 - a. We need not be baptized to be saved.
 - b. We do not take communion to be saved.
 2. We observe the ordinances as a symbol of our desire to follow after the Lord in subjection to Him and out of love for Him.
 3. As we obey, God cleanses our hearts. *"...Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins."* (Acts 22:16)
 - c. In this symbol of death to self, we find freedom from the power of sin. (Romans 6:7)
2. We allow ourselves to be baptized as a symbol of the cleansing of our sins.
 - a. The water represents a cleansing process which takes place in our hearts.
 - b. Jesus not only forgives, but He cleanses us from sin. (1 John 1:9)

III. Why Is Baptism Important?

A. Baptism is a symbol of the new birth.

1. We are being buried with Christ. (Romans 6:4)
2. Our rising from the water is a symbol of the resurrection.
 - a. We are brought out of the waters as Christ was brought out of the earth. (Romans 6:4)
 - b. We are empowered by His resurrection as we come out of the waters, and now can walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:4)

B. Baptism becomes a symbol of the washing away of our sin.

1. We allow ourselves to be baptized as a symbol of our willingness to be crucified.
 - a. Just as Christ was crucified, and went willingly.
 - b. We are willing participants in the giving of our bodies, that we might be more Christ-like. (Romans 6:6)



Spiritual Truths

- Water baptism by itself will not give us salvation.
- John's baptism was unto repentance, but Christian baptism is for the remission of sins, and a sign of the new covenant.
- We are baptized as a sign of our covenant relationship to God.
- When we are baptized, we symbolize that we are dying to both sin and self, that we might be free to live for Jesus from that moment on.
- Baptism symbolizes a cleansing of our sins through covenant relationship.
- The Lord Himself has commanded every believer to be baptized in water.
- We show our obedience to God as we enter into the ordinance of baptism.

- After we have been born again, we should receive water baptism as soon as possible.
- We should understand the meaning of baptism, before we participate.
- Baptism is only for those who have made a profession of faith in Christ.
- Sprinkling is an unscriptural substitute for baptism. The biblical model is always by immersion.



Lesson Material

We read about the early baptisms that were common with John in the Gospels. John had been called of God before his birth to be a forerunner of Jesus, the Messiah. It is significant that the man who was called to bring that message was also called to baptize them unto repentance.

When Jesus was baptized by John, the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove and rested on Him. As believers are baptized in water, Jesus often takes this opportunity to also baptize them in the Holy Spirit. It is significant that in Acts 2, the people were encouraged by Peter to expect the gift of the Spirit; and evidently, all of them did receive this gift on the same day. Many believers even come up out of the water speaking in tongues. Many others receive this Spirit baptism soon after their act of obedience in the waters of baptism.

God has told us in Acts 22:16 that after we have genuinely been born again, we

are then to be baptized. Baptism is a sign of our covenant with God. A covenant is like a contract, only stronger. In contract law, we find that there must be an agreement between two parties, who will each perform a particular function for the other. A contract says, "I will, if you will." But a covenant says, "I am more for you than I am for myself. I give to you." Jesus initiated the Christian covenant with the human race by giving His life on the cross to pay for our sins. Those who respond to that gift by repentance and faith, in turn, give their lives to Him, and signify that commitment by being baptized as He was baptized.

God has had many covenant agreements with His people. God made a covenant with Noah, with Abraham, and with Moses. Each of them had signs of the covenant, and each of them were given responsibilities that they must fulfill in order to honor the covenant.

The death and resurrection of Christ has provided us with our new covenant relationship with the Lord. God has promised that if we believe in Jesus as our personal Lord and Savior, we shall be saved. That belief must be from the heart, and not just from our mind or our lips. Belief is not enough. Belief is a function of the mind; but faith is a function of the spirit. Trust is a function of the heart. God knows the intent of our hearts.

When we are baptized, we are symbolizing death and resurrection. The water represents the washing away of our sins. When we received a pardon from God at our conversion, Christ's blood washed clean the record of our sin. As we are immersed in baptism, we go down into the water, symbolizing the grave. This reminds us that Christ went down into the earth, so that our sin could be taken away.

Just as Christ rose again, we emerge from the water to live a new life. We renounce our old life, which was focused on self; and we become His, to live for His pleasure, instead of our own. Our baptism, therefore, represents our willingness to identify with the death and resurrection of Christ, Himself, and to bear testimony to what that means in our life. The Christian life is indeed a new way of living, as well as hope for eternity. We are changed. We are new creations. Every part of life is different, and this difference is manifested in the way we love and live. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Romans 6:3 says that we are *"...baptized into his death."* We are immersed and lowered, as was Jesus in His death. Romans 6:4 says,

"...that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

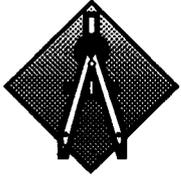
The scripture is very vivid in its description of the symbolism of what baptism is. We are called to be obedient to those words and receive the ordinance of baptism as an important step in the development of our faith.

Baptism does not bring salvation. You can be immersed, sprinkled, dunked, and have all the water in the world thrown on you, and you still will not be saved. Only by repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, can you be saved. A lack of baptism does not mean that you are not saved. The thief on the cross with Jesus went with Him to Paradise. Christ did not first say to him that he had to be baptized. However, it should be recognized that he had no opportunity to be baptized, and therefore, could not be held accountable for not

obeying. If he had had the opportunity to be baptized, then he would probably have responded accordingly, because he recognized that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. Note that Jesus said, *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..."* (Mark 16:16) Baptism is necessary as a part of the eternal covenant, but it is only for those who have first been born again by grace through faith.

If they have not already been so since they made a public confession of Christ, offer the students in your class the opportunity to be baptized. We do not believe that infant baptism (baptism before the age of accountability) is in keeping with this ordinance, because the Bible clearly teaches that baptism is a personal act of obedience for those who believe; and no one can make that decision for another person. Therefore, if a child was baptized as a baby and has since received Jesus as Savior, then, biblically, he should enter into baptism as a sign and symbol of his confession of faith. Also, most infant "baptisms" involve sprinkling, which has no precedence in the Bible and does not fulfill the purpose of baptism, which is a burial. No one is buried by sprinkling dirt on his head.

Make certain that the students know that this is a major commitment that they are making, and that it is not to be taken flippantly. Their decision to enter into the waters of baptism is a statement to the world, and to the Lord, that they honor His Word, His ordinances, and that they, too, want to be buried with Christ and walk in newness of life as an overcoming child of God. We are saying in baptism, "I am not my own. I belong to Jesus."



Methods

Dry Run

Have an elder or leader who participates in water baptisms spend time during class to show the procedure for baptism. Demonstrate how to cover their

noses, so water does not enter and cause discomfort. Also, the one being baptized should keep his body stiff, and allow the ministers of baptism to lift them out of the water.

Application

Encourage every student who has not been buried in the waters of baptism as a believer, to determine if they are genuinely born again, and then to pursue baptism as soon as is practical.

God Is Three in One

Volume 3

Lesson 33



Bible References

Deuteronomy 6:4

Isaiah 9:6

Matthew 3:13-17

Matthew 28:19

John 1:1

John 4:24

John 14:16-17,26

1 John 5:7



Scripture Reading

Matthew 3:13-17

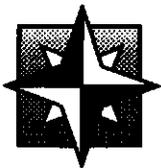
13 *"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.*

14 *"But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?"*

15 *"And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer {it to be so} now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.*

16 *"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:*

17 *"And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*



Theme

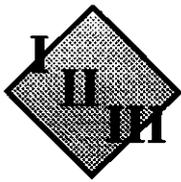
The importance of understanding the Trinity.



Memory Verse

1 John 5:7

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."



Outline

I. What Is the "Trinity"?

A. The word, "Trinity."

1. "Trinity" comes from the combination of "tri" (three) and "unity."
2. We use it to describe the three-fold nature of the one true God, the ruler of the universe.
3. God is:
 - a. The Father;
 - b. The Son;
 - c. The Holy Spirit.
4. They comprise the "Godhead" -- the ultimate authority of creation.
5. Other terms which may be used:
 - a. Triune God;
 - b. Three in One.
6. Jesus is called *"the fullness of the Godhead bodily."* (Colossians 2:9)
 - a. Lord Jesus Christ.
 - b. He is also called *"the mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."* (Isaiah 9:6)

B. A person who accepts the doctrine of the Trinity is called a Trinitarian.

II. How Can Three Be One?

A. The Father is part of the Godhead.

1. The Father existed before time began.
2. The Father had no beginning and has no end.

B. Jesus is part of the Godhead.

1. Jesus is separate, but equal.
2. Jesus is self-existent and co-existent with the Father.
3. Jesus has always been.

C. The Holy Spirit is part of the Godhead.

1. The Holy Spirit is separate, but equal.
2. The Holy Spirit is self-existent and co-existent with Jesus and the Father.
3. The Holy Spirit has always been.

D. Each of us has three parts.

1. Our body.
2. Our soul.
3. Our spirit.
4. We are made in God's "image."
 - a. This is not a perfect likeness, because we are not three persons, as God is.
 - b. God does not have a physical body, but is a spirit. (John 4:24)

E. The three Persons of the Trinity exist as separate entities.

F. It is impossible for man to completely comprehend.

III. Where Does the Bible Say There Is One Triune God?

A. Deuteronomy 6:4 says *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD [our God {is} one] LORD."*

1. The word used in the Hebrew for "God" is "Elohim."
 - a. The word, "God" is "El" in Hebrew, which means "the Judge."
 - b. "Elohim" is the plural form of "El."
 - c. The plural noun, "Elohim" is used with a singular verb 2,500 times in the Bible.
2. "Elohim" describes "Gods," or a plurality.
3. So the scripture would read "the LORD our Gods is one LORD."

B. God the Father is referred to as "God."

C. Jesus, the Son is referred to as "God."

D. The Holy Spirit is referred to as "God."

E. There is only one God, in three distinct Persons.



Spiritual Truths

- There is only one God.
- God is three distinct persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit is a divine person, not a "force."

- The mind of man cannot comprehend a God who can be three and yet be one at the same time.
- The word "Trinity" is not in the Bible, but the concept is given over and over again.
- Man did not invent the doctrine of the Trinity, because he cannot even understand it.
- Some people, who want a God whom they can fit into their own way of thinking, prefer a "oneness doctrine," which views God as one Person with three personalities.
- Others prefer to think that there are three Gods, or many Gods.
- There is only one true God in the universe, and He is three Persons.
- God said it, and that settles it, whether I believe it or not.



Lesson Material

The doctrine of the Trinity is not difficult to comprehend. It is impossible! God is bigger than we are. In fact, we cannot begin to grasp how great He is. He had no beginning, and will always be. We can imagine a trillion galaxies in the universe, but we cannot grasp the concept of infinity. We might imagine living for billions of years, but eternity is beyond our ability to imagine.

The concept of the Trinity could not have been invented by the mind of man,

because it is incomprehensible. It is a doctrine which was revealed to man. God said that He is One Lord, yet three distinct Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Even some Trinitarians tend to view the Holy Spirit as a force coming from the Father, rather than a Person with feelings and a personality.

We believe in the Trinity for one reason: it is scriptural. From the beginning, God is referred to as "Elohim," which means "Gods;" yet, this plural noun is used with a singular verb. In the Hebrew language, when the subject is singular, the verb used with it must be singular. This is the only time in literature where a plural noun is used with a singular verb, indicating concurrent plurality and unity. "...The LORD our God (is) one LORD:" (Deuteronomy 6:4)

Jesus left the Father to become incarnated as a man. He did not run the universe from the manger. He set aside His glory to become a man: God with us. As a man, He was submitted to the Father, and dependent upon the Holy Spirit for His power, just as we should be. He suffered as a man. He was tempted as a man. He died as a man for the sins of humanity. He had to become a man to be our "kinsman redeemer."

During Jesus' baptism, we see the Trinity at work. Jesus expressed His total submission to the Father by being symbolically buried in the waters of the Jordan River. The Father spoke out of heaven, confirming that this was indeed His only begotten Son. The Holy Spirit descended on Him like a dove. Jesus went on in the power of the Spirit to do the work of the Father.

We can understand how God can be Three, but how can He be one? God is one

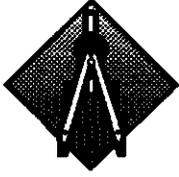
in substance and purpose. There is such absolute love and unity in the Godhead that division is impossible. God, in the fullness of His perfect being, is the incomprehensible Three in One. He is not four or seven or a thousand. God is One, yet Three.

We are created in God's likeness: body, soul and spirit. We are not trinities, because each of us is only one person. But there is something of a resemblance. Mankind is unique in creation in that he has three parts: spirit, soul, and body.

Mankind has invented many religions throughout history. Humanity has historically recognized that there is a greater power which created and governs the universe, but billions of people have rejected or ignored the revelation of God in His Word. When men create religions, they usually develop many gods, because this makes God easier for them to comprehend. Throughout history, man has said, "Let us make God in our image." The Greeks and Romans and others created many myths and legends about the supernatural, with many diverse gods who have the faults, failures, and weaknesses they see in themselves.

If we want to know the true God, we must come to Him on His terms. We need to believe that God is who He says He is, and receive His Word concerning His attributes and His personality. Orthodox Christianity proclaims the doctrine of the Trinity because it is based purely on the proven Word of God, the Bible. Those who subscribe to the "Jesus Only" theology, which does not embrace the concept of the Trinity, may be sincere; but, they are doctrinally incorrect. Jesus is God, but this does not deny His Father, nor does it exclude the Person of the Holy Spirit.

God is beyond our imagination in many ways.



Methods

Illustrated Sermon

Use the illustration of the egg, which has three parts: yolk, white, and shell. Is the egg a trinity? No. It is one egg, and it

has three parts, but the parts are distinct substances. God is one substance, yet Three distinct persons. Is God One or Three? Yes.

Why is it important that we believe in the Trinity?

We need to accept the reality of God as greater than our minds can comprehend. We need to learn to walk by faith, not by sight. If God were so small that we could comprehend Him with our minds, then He would not be God.

The Missionary Mandate

Volume 3

Lesson 34



Bible References

Psalms 67

Matthew 9:38

Matthew 28:19

Mark 16:15

Luke 24:47

John 4:35

John 20:21

Acts 1:8

Acts 5:12

Acts 20:27

Acts 21:17-40

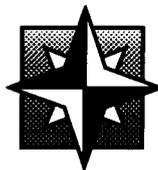
Acts 22:10-21

Acts 23:1-25

1 Corinthians 9:22

2 Corinthians 6:2

Hebrews 13:8



Theme

We should pray for our missionaries.



Scripture Reading

Acts 22:10-21

10 *"And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.*

11 *"And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.*

12 *"And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt {there},*

13 *"Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.*

14 *"And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest*

know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldst hear the voice of his mouth.

15 "For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

16 "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

17 "And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;

18 "And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

19 "And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:

20 "And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.

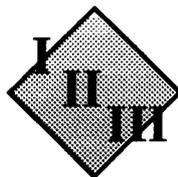
21 "And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles."



Memory Verse

Matthew 28:19

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."



Outline

I. What Are Missionaries?

A. Missionaries are special Christian leaders.

1. Christians with a call of God on their lives.
 - a. God calls all of us to serve Him and to win souls.
 - b. But these are called to full-time Christian service.
2. Individuals whom God has sent to a particular group, to minister to their needs.
 - a. Sent out to other nations or cultures.
 - b. Reaching out to the world.

B. Jesus -- our example.

1. Jesus left His heavenly home to give His life for humanity on earth.
2. He gave Himself so that we might live.

C. The Apostle Paul. (Acts 21:17 - 23:25)

1. Called of God to be an apostle -- "apostle" means "one who is sent."
2. Called to take the Gospel to the Gentiles -- those who were not Jewish, as he was.
3. Called to lead people not only to receive salvation from sin, but also to commit themselves to a covenant with God, through water baptism.

II. Why Should We Pray for Our Missionaries?

- A. They are in spiritual "combat" for souls.
- B. They also have personal needs, such as food, shelter, protection.
- C. Ministerial needs, such as equipment, transportation, and literature.
- D. They have spiritual needs.
 1. Encouragement.
 2. Spiritual anointing.
 3. Power over opposing demonic forces.

- As believers, in obedience to Christ, we have the same power and authority available to us today as the first century church had.
- Our testimonies are important, because others can identify with us and gain faith.
- The Lord gives us assurance and peace, in spite of circumstances, when we are in His will.
- Jesus and Paul are examples for us to follow -- obedience, suffering, sacrifice, and total commitment, as well as the willingness to go.



Spiritual Truths

- Jesus wants each of us to tell others about God's plan of salvation from sin.
- Jesus sets some apart to share the message of the Gospel with other nations or cultures.
- We cannot all go to foreign nations, but we all can pray for, and support those who do.
- Some nations will not allow Christian missionaries to enter, and it is very dangerous to witness there.
- Some nations can only be evangelized by training native leaders who live there.
- We are ambassadors for Christ, helping to restore others to God.



Lesson Material

Missionaries are very important in fulfilling the Great Commission which Christ gave to His Church. Acts 1:8 says,

"...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 whole body of Christ -- all Christian believers together -- must preach and teach to a lost and dying world what Jesus taught us. Our mission fields are local, national, and global. We are to preach *"all the counsel of God."* (Acts 20:27) Jesus said,

"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they

are white already to harvest."(John 4:35)

"Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." (Matthew 9:38) The Apostle Paul said, *"...now is the day of salvation."* (2 Corinthians 6:2) We are not to only concentrate on ourselves as the church at Jerusalem did, but we are to reach out with an emphasis on missions, as did the church at Antioch.

The New Testament word, "apostle" is the closest in meaning to our word, "missionary." "Apostle" means "sent one," "one sent forth," or "messenger." However, not all missionaries are apostles. Any pastor, evangelist, or teacher who operates in a foreign setting is considered a missionary. Missions is our outreach to the world, and a missionary is one sent out by God with the good news of the Gospel. Jesus said, *"as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."* (John 20:21)

Jesus was the perfect missionary example for us to follow. His mission was to reconcile sinful mankind to the Father by giving His life at Calvary. We should do our missionary work as Jesus did and be His ambassadors, helping to restore others to God. As a teacher, Jesus took the things of this world and used them to point to the next world. His lifestyle was simple -- that of a servant. He does not want us to be selfish and concerned with the material things of this life. Jesus, by example, taught His disciples to be missionaries. He healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, raised the dead, and cast out demons. They observed Him doing what He commanded. As believers in obedience to Christ, we have the same power and authority available to us today. Missionaries preach, teach, baptize, disciple, and build local churches. Jesus said that He came not to do His own

will, but the will of the One who sent Him. We must be sold out to God, and live a life of total submission to Him. Jesus wants us to have the same passion for souls that He has, and allow this to determine our schedules, finances, lifestyles, etc.

The apostle Paul made three great missionary journeys. In Acts 21:17 - 23:35, Paul had returned to Jerusalem to report in detail to James and the elders what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. Reports were circulating in Jerusalem that Paul had broken the law, so he joined other men in purification rites. The Jews had accused Paul of polluting the temple and teaching against their people and their law. Later, he was seized by the Jews and dragged out of the temple. Paul was rescued and bound by Roman soldiers. Paul spoke to the Roman centurion, and told the centurion that he, Paul, was a Jew from Tarsus, and a Roman citizen. Paul was permitted to speak in Hebrew and give his defense before the mob. He rehearsed what had happened to him, by giving his personal testimony.

Testimonies are effective, because others can identify with us, building faith and enthusiasm. Paul emphasized the law as his defense and told of his command by the Lord to go to the Gentiles. At this point, the mob said that Paul was not fit to live. Because the Jews did not agree, they did not listen anymore. The centurion ordered Paul be returned to the barracks to be beaten. Paul then asked if it was legal to flog a Roman citizen. As they could not legally beat him, they released Paul and took him before the Sanhedrin. Paul declared, *"I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."* (Acts 23:1). Paul took advantage of the situation, and divided the audience of the Sadduces and Pharisees over the

doctrines of angels, spirits, and the resurrection of the dead. The dispute became violent, and Paul was taken to the castle.

The next night, the Lord stood near Paul and told him to take courage -- that Paul was in prison for being obedient. The Lord encouraged Paul and told him that he was going to testify in Rome. The morning after, the Jews made a vow and formed a conspiracy to kill Paul, but his nephew heard about the plot and informed Paul. Paul then called one of the centurions to take his nephew to the commander, who had sent Paul by night to Caesarea to Governor Felix. Paul was kept under guard in Herod's palace.

Paul easily fit into that culture and could readily identify with the people. He recognized that education and religious philosophy were not the way to change men's hearts. Paul surrendered his ways to the Lord and became "all things to all men, in order that he might win some" to Christ. (1 Corinthians 9:22) He told the brethren how to behave and how to follow him and his co-workers as examples of Christ.

There are many reasons why we should pray for our missionaries. They are in spiritual warfare against the powers of darkness -- in direct combat with the enemy of our souls. Some of the missionaries' needs are personal. They need prayer for the paperwork and "red tape" to go smoothly. They need skill and wisdom, in packing and preparing to go to the mission field. This might include selling their homes, furniture, and other belongings. They need traveling safety for the trip overseas and for daily travel in the Lord's work. Family and friends who are left behind need prayer for the time of adjustment. Adaptation to a new culture

and way of life requires prayer, for the missionaries leave all behind to go to the field. However, the rewards of being in God's will and watching others give their lives to Jesus make it all worthwhile. Missionaries can experience loneliness, and they need prayer for new friends. Good health is important, for missionaries need to tolerate their immunizations and medications. Also, they are often exposed to diseases such as malaria, cholera, etc.

Missionaries need the Lord's protection from dangers -- violence, natural disasters, bandits, and so on. Feeling God's presence and His refreshing touch is needed, as well as a lifting of heaviness and burdens. Missionaries need guidance, discernment, and strength to accomplish God's work. Quickness of mind and much study time are needed to learn a new language, so that they can more effectively minister. Pray that missionaries will have great peace and the joy of the Lord in every circumstance. The Lord is able to enhance their talents and abilities. They need endurance, and the ability to keep their eyes on Jesus. There are times of persecution and setbacks. They desire the Lord's will and timing for their lives.

Other needs relate to the ministry. Missionaries need sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and the Lord's clear direction in all things. Prayer for the raising of financial support is essential. Laborers "hand-picked" by the Lord are needed for the harvest. They request prayer for doors to open, and for opportunities to minister. Also, it is important that hearts of those to whom they are sent are prepared to receive the Word. Supplies and tools are needed: Bibles, films, Sunday School manuals, etc. -- and wisdom to know with whom to leave them. Prayer is also needed for Bible study groups, prayer groups, classes, and so forth. Missionaries desire

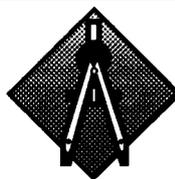
favor with the government and the people. There may be special needs for the country where they are serving -- drought, famine, plague, civil war, and unemployment, to mention a few.

Prayer for the leadership of the nations is necessary. As missionaries train national workers and turn work over to them, these ministries need to be bathed in prayer. Often prayer is needed for building programs and expansion of ministries. Pray for a demonstration of God's power, that the heathen might turn to Christ. (Acts 5:12; Hebrews 13:8) Missionaries need prayer for the removal of every hindrance to the Gospel going forth.

Mission boards and committees need prayer. There is often need for reform. Soul-winning abilities, church planting skills, past witnessing experiences, spiritual gifts, calling, and a life of faith are more important than education and technology. The Holy Spirit is calling large numbers of indigenous missionaries to carry out the Great Commission. Western missionaries now have the new role of assisting natives and participating as servants. We are to be senders, and go to train and assist others. There are nearly 12,000 unreached people groups and 3,000 language groups without the Gospel. We must use our support systems to send natives. Native missionaries understand the local culture. Another advantage is that there is less expense involved in supporting national missionaries. Also, there is a need for reform in budgets and ineffective programs. Honest reporting from the field and strict measures of accountability are necessary.

We must have open doors of evangelistic witness, not just a social Gospel. Satan has offered many substitutes

for the Great Commission. Institutions can be ineffective ways to win converts and plant churches. We need balance and must keep social work in a proper perspective. We must proclaim the Word to the world before it is too late. Jesus is coming soon! The doors of opportunity in many nations may be opened for only a short period of time.



Methods

Life Related Story

Demonstrations of the power of God often cause heathen people to turn to Christ. After God answered the prayers of Lun Poobuanak, a native missionary in Thailand, he saw an entire village of 134 families turn to Christ.

It was the rainy season, but the monsoons had not come; the crops were almost ruined, and the people were desperate. Village leaders came to Lun's Sunday service and said that all the households of their clan would worship Lun's God and become Christians, if his God would send rain within the month.

Lun thought they were playing games, but they assured him they were serious, and made a vow to become Christians. They also said that God could send judgment on them if they did not turn to the Lord. Lun and the other Christians fasted and prayed for three days, asking for rain. On the fourth day it poured, flooding canals and rice fields. The villagers declared Jesus to be the only true and

living God. Word spread, and many in the surrounding districts turned to Christ.

Illustrative Lecture

Talk about the Great Commission and how you and your church are working to fulfill it. Use a world map, and locate the missionaries your church supports with a flag or dot.

Video or Film

Talk about Jesus or Paul as examples for us to follow. Show a film or video on their ministries.

Special Prayer Time

Obtain missionary prayer requests through letters from them, from your pastor, or from other sources. Discuss the needs, then spend time in prayer for them. Read Psalms 67, the "missionary Psalm." Note that David wants God's blessing, not so he can feel blessed, but so that God's way may be known in the earth.

Twelve Disciples

Volume 3

Lesson 35



Bible References

Psalms 16:11

Matthew 22:14

Mark 3:13-19

Mark 8:34

Mark 16:17-18

Luke 9:23

John 4:23

John 15:16

Acts 1-2

2 Peter 3:9



Scripture Reading

Mark 3:13-19

13 *"And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth (unto him) whom he would: and they came unto him.*

14 *"And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,*

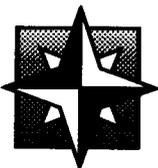
15 *"And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils:*

16 *"And Simon he surnamed Peter;*

17 *"And James the (son) of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder:*

18 *"And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the (son) of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Canaanite,*

19 *"And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him: and they went into an house."*



Theme

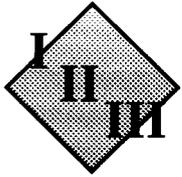
We should all be disciples of Jesus Christ.



Memory Verse

Luke 9:23

"And he said to (them) āll, If any (man) will come after me, [let him deny himself], and take up his cross daily, and follow me."



Outline

I. Disciples.

A. Faithful followers and learners.

1. We are all trained and influenced by others.
 - a. We begin by being disciplined by our parents.
 - b. We are disciplined and trained.
 - c. We have teachers, heroes, role models.
2. All Christians are really disciples.
 - a. God is training us for eternity.
 - b. We learn to be like Jesus, by walking with Him day by day.

B. How to follow Jesus.

1. Deny self.
 - a. Do not live for self or for pleasure.
 - b. Say, "No" to greed and selfishness.
 - c. Become His disciplined ones.

2. Take up the Lord's cross.
 - a. Live life God's way, when your will conflicts with His.
 - b. Bear spiritual burdens.
 - c. Become responsible as a servant of God.
 - d. Be willing to suffer for His sake.
3. Follow the Lord.
 - a. Seek His presence.
 - b. Become more and more like Him.
 - c. Do what He says to do.

II. He Called Whom He Would.

A. Not a reference to salvation.

1. "Whosoever will" may be saved. (Mark 8:34)
2. We choose to become His disciples.
3. No one will be denied, if they want to follow Jesus.
4. Jesus had thousands of followers.

B. Called to leadership ministry.

1. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you..." (John 15:16)
 - a. Jesus was talking to the twelve selected leaders.
 - b. They were called to full-time ministry.
 - c. It is not our choice to make the ministry a career.
 - d. God decides whom He will use as spiritual leaders.
2. The twelve disciples were chosen to become the apostles of the Church.
3. "Ordained" means to be "set apart and endorsed" for leadership ministry, or for a specific calling.

C. We can all choose to serve Christ, but God chooses the role we are to pursue; and He enables us to do that work.

1. The higher the calling, the greater the danger of pride.
2. The higher the calling, the more suffering is involved.
3. The higher the calling, the greater the responsibility.

III. That They Should Be With Him.

A. God's purpose is relationship.

1. Jesus does not want people merely to do His bidding.
2. He wants us to know and love Him with all our hearts.
3. The Father does not seek to be worshipped -- He seeks worshipers. (John 4:23)

B. God's training program.

1. Spend time in His presence. (Psalms 16:11)
2. Pray and read the Word.
3. Relate closely with other believers in fellowship.
4. Know God personally and intimately.

IV. That He Might Send Them Forth.

A. To preach.

1. Preach the Gospel -- the good news -- of salvation.
2. Win the lost, and train the believers.
3. Preach the Word of God.

B. To have power to heal sicknesses.

1. God still heals the sick.
2. God anoints believers with supernatural power to believe for miracles.
3. Healing is one of the signs that indicates that we are true believers. (Mark 16:17-18)

C. And to cast out devils.

1. Believers have authority over demonic spirits.
2. Believers must operate under God's authority and His direction.



Spiritual Truths

- Jesus died for the sins of the whole world.
- Jesus does not want anyone to be lost and go to hell for eternity.
- God does not choose who will be saved and who will be lost.
- "Whosoever will" may be saved.
- God does choose our place of service in His kingdom.
- God calls some to be leaders and some to be servants; but we should all have a servant's heart.
- The danger of a place of leadership is the temptation to become proud.

- We are responsible to become close to God; He is responsible for the way He uses us.
- Our goal should not be success in the ministry, but to remain close to God.
- God only gives gifts to enable us to serve others.
- God holds us accountable for the way we handle the spiritual gifts He has given us.
- Believers should pray for the sick and believe for divine healing.



Lesson Material

When we study the role of the disciples of Jesus, we must understand the practical application for our lives today. Often, people personalize everything they see in the Bible, and miss some of the principles involved. For example, many people look at the words of Jesus, *"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,"* (John 15:16) and have concluded that salvation is all a matter of God's predestination -- that we have nothing to do with our salvation. They seem to believe, "God chooses whom He will, so let us just be thankful we were chosen."

But this is contrary to scripture, which says that *"The Lord is...not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."* (2 Peter 3:9) It is not God's will for anyone to go to hell, and it is not God's irresistible will for anyone to go to heaven, unless they choose to repent and

believe. God will not forgive anyone, unless they ask for forgiveness. He will not take anyone to heaven who does not love Him. Heaven is for people who have responded to the Gospel with repentance and faith.

Every reference to "calling" and "ordination" by Jesus relates to a specific place of service. Jesus had a purpose on the earth. Rather than concentrate on gathering crowds to teach, Jesus selected twelve men with whom to spend the next three or so years. There were others who wanted to be a part of this company of disciples, but Jesus usually turned them away and told them to be a witness where they were. He did call the rich young ruler to follow him, but the ruler turned the offer down.

God calls us to salvation, but not everyone is chosen to become leaders. *"For many are called, but few are chosen."* (Matthew 22:14) We cannot all go into full time Christian work. If we did, who would be out in the business world, influencing their peers to become Christians?

When Jesus devoted His three and one half years to the ministry, He was supported by offerings from many friends. The twelve disciples left their occupations, such as fishing or tax-collecting, and became dependent on these offerings for their livelihood. They needed this time of intense training, because Jesus was going to leave them with the instructions to build the Church worldwide; and they need to carry on the work, just as He did.

After Jesus ascended into heaven, He left them in charge. It quickly became apparent that they could not do all the work by themselves, so the apostles appointed deacons to take care of some practical matters of ministry, while the

apostles focused on prayer and the Word of God.

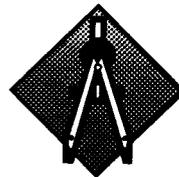
Many people are willing to sacrifice their time and money, in order to enable the pastor to spend most of his working time in the Word and prayer. This will enable the pastor to feed the congregation a balanced spiritual diet. If the pastor must spend his time earning money with another job to support his family, or if he must repair and clean the church building himself, he will not be able to preach well.

The calling to a leadership ministry is not a sign of God's special favor, or proof of spirituality. Some people believe that if they are really sincere as a Christian, they will become a pastor or a missionary. Others may feel that they are not important, if they are not a leader in the church. These are false concepts. The fact is, God will choose whom He will. He often chooses the least likely people for leadership, because He knows we all have a tremendous tendency to become proud. Effectiveness in ministry does not come from being more intelligent or more gifted than others. Effectiveness comes from being faithful and obedient to God. People do not need our clever ideas or brilliant thinking. They need to hear what God is saying. The key to being a good preacher is drawing close to God, so that you can hear what He is saying.

Jesus gave Himself to these twelve men for a purpose. He was preparing them for a task. He intended to send them out to take the Gospel to the world and build up His Church on the earth. Contrary to our "Santa Claus" mentality, God never gives gifts simply that we might feel gifted. Neither does God give spiritual gifts as rewards. God gives spiritual gifts to enable us to serve others, and He will hold us accountable for the way in which we use

those gifts. God calls each of us to specific responsibilities. It is better to be a faithful church janitor in the will of God, than to try to be an apostle or pastor, merely to build our own ego. God will give us the grace to perform what He has called us to accomplish. God will not anoint us to fulfill our own agendas which He did not give.

If God chooses you for full-time ministry, do not allow yourself to become filled with pride. Simply say "Here am I Lord. Send me." Be a servant to God and to God's people. Seek Him for the grace to accomplish what He called you to. Concentrate on knowing Him intimately. If God calls you to support another person's ministry and keeps you out of the spotlight, then support that person with joy, knowing that God will reward you in eternity. It does not matter whether you are rich or "important" in this life. The relatively few years we have on earth to serve God are nothing, in comparison to eternity.



Methods

Salvation

Emphasize the fact that our salvation does not depend on luck. God is just, and does not choose who will be saved or lost. He does choose our vocation, if we will be obedient. Encourage your students to seek a strong, intimate, daily relationship with the Lord, and determine to become what God wants you to be.

Vocation

Ask each student to make a commitment to seek God's will for their life. The next time someone asks, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" say, "I am going to be a good man (or

woman) who loves God. As to what I will do for a living, that is up to God." Also, purpose to allow God, with the help of your parents, to choose your close friends and marriage partner. God's choice is always better than our own.

A Centurion's Faith

Volume 3

Lesson 36



Bible References

Job 13:15

Proverbs 27:2

Matthew 5:41

Luke 7:1-10

2 Corinthians 5:7

Philippians 2:4

Hebrews 11:1



Scripture Reading

Luke 7:1-10

1 *"Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.*

2 *"And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.*

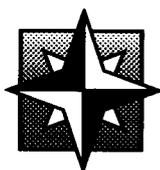
3 *"And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.*

4 *"And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this:*

5 *"For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.*

6 *"Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:*

7 *"Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.*



Theme

Jesus is more impressed with our faith than He is with our strength or wisdom.

8 *"For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth (it).*

9 *"When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.*

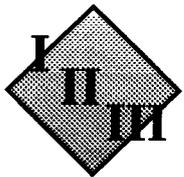
10 *"And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick."*



Memory Verse

2 Corinthians 5:7

"For we walk by faith, not by sight."



Outline

I. The Centurion.

A. A military officer in the Roman army.

1. The Jewish people had been conquered by the Roman Empire.
2. The ruler of the empire was called by the title of "Caesar."

3. Rome had a powerful army, which kept the people under control.

B. A centurion was an officer who commanded a hundred men.

1. "Cente" is Latin for "100."
2. The soldiers were very disciplined, and instantly obeyed their leader.
3. The centurion had authority, because he was submitted to the authority of the officers over him.
4. The word "authority" comes from the word which means "being sent by and responsible to a higher power."
5. The centurion's authority did not come from being stronger or more intelligent than others.

II. The Centurion's Reputation.

A. The Jewish people loved the centurion.

1. He was one of the few Roman leaders who was kind to the Jewish people.
2. The centurion even paid for a synagogue.
 - a. A synagogue is equivalent to a church building in the Christian world.
 - b. Jewish people gathered in synagogues to hear God's Word.
 - c. Jesus often went to synagogues.

B. "He is worthy."

1. The Jews felt that the centurion deserved the blessing.
2. The Jews felt the centurion loved them.
3. Many people were praying for him.
4. A group of Jewish leaders went to Jesus on the centurion's behalf.

C. The request.

1. The centurion's servant was desperately ill, and dying.
2. The centurion was not seeking for a selfish desire.
3. The centurion wanted Jesus to heal his servant.

III. The Centurion's Humility.

A. "I am not worthy."

1. The centurion had asked Jesus to come, but he felt unworthy to have Jesus in his home.
2. The centurion sent friends to intercept Jesus (Who was almost to the centurion's house), to ask Jesus just to speak the word of healing from where He was.
3. The centurion was a humble man.
 - a. It is easy for people with power and success to become proud.
 - b. Some said, "The centurion is worthy," but the centurion said, "I am not worthy."
 - c. *"Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips."* (Proverbs 27:2)
4. Faith and humility always go together.

B. "Lord (Master), do not trouble yourself."

1. "Just speak the word, and my servant will be healed."
2. The centurion also did not think he was worthy to talk to Jesus personally, so he sent others.
3. Jesus was impressed with this Gentile. (A Gentile is anyone who is not Jewish.)

C. Jesus honored the centurion for his faith, and spoke healing to the servant immediately.

IV. The Centurion's Authority.

A. "I am under authority."

1. "Men do what I tell them to do."
2. He did not say, "I have authority."
3. Because the centurion was carrying out orders from Rome, he had the power of the Roman army behind his words.
4. He was not going in his own strength, but in the power of Rome.

B. "In Jesus' name."

1. This is not just a phrase we use when we pray.
2. We can only pray in Jesus' name, if we are doing what He has told us to do.
3. "Jesus sent me here as His ambassador, and He wants to heal you. As His servant, I lay hands on you, for I am acting in His stead (name)."



Spiritual Truths

- Jesus is never impressed with our beauty, ability, or strength; but He is impressed with our faith.
- We should not praise ourselves, but we should live and give, so that others will honor God because of us.

- Pride is an undue focus on self. Pride prevents us from realizing the value of other people.
- Spiritual authority does not come from positive thinking, but from being submitted to God's will.
- Positive thinking is not faith, because it tends to center on self.
- Faith involves complete trust in God for whatever happens.
- People tend to respond positively to someone who seems to care about them.



Lesson Material

The Jewish people in Jesus' day were oppressed people. They had once been a world power, in the glorious days of David and Solomon. Now the Roman Empire ruled the known world. Roman citizens were free and had many rights. But the people of other nations were heavily taxed, and they had few rights. The Romans allowed the Jews to practice their religion and continue to have their religious authority; but the Jews were all subject to the final control of Caesar.

Roman soldiers were everywhere. The people were required to obey them. If a Roman soldier was tired, he could require any Jew to carry his pack, up to a mile. This is why Jesus taught people to "go an extra mile," so they would not be as likely to become bitter. (Matthew 5:41) The people deeply resented this, and hated the

soldiers. The Roman soldiers were constant reminders that they were not free, and they usually treated the Jews with disdain or even cruelty. Roman soldiers were hated almost as much as tax collectors. Jewish people who worked as tax collectors were considered traitors as well as cheats. Generally, they were both.

It was very unusual for a Roman soldier to be respected at all by the Jewish people, especially a high ranking officer. This centurion -- captain over 100 Roman soldiers -- was the exception. The Jewish people loved him. He was not only kind to them, he even gave a very large offering to help them build a synagogue. He sent a group of Jewish elders to Jesus to ask Him to pray for his beloved servant, who was deathly ill. The Jews went gladly, to ask for their friend.

When the centurion's friends came to Jesus, they explained that the centurion was worthy to receive a blessing, because he loved the Jews. Notice that the centurion did not think of himself as worthy to stand in the presence of Jesus, but others did. That situation is ideal. The Bible clearly teaches that we should not build our self-esteem, but that we should cultivate a humble attitude. *"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."* (Philippians 2:4) Love means caring for others. When we are unselfish in our attitude, people tend to respond to us. People who are self-centered or overly demanding tend to repel others.

The Roman centurion thought of himself as unworthy, but others considered him worthy. That is the way we should all be. We should each have an attitude of humility, with a clear desire to see others honored, blessed, and successful. People often reject a leader who

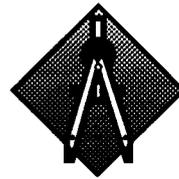
is smart and strong, in favor of a leader whom they feel loves them. A servant's heart is the desire to make others successful, and it is essential to be an effective Christian leader.

The centurion sent a message to Jesus as He was coming to Capernaum to pray for the servant. The centurion said, in effect, "Jesus, I understand you, because I am also under authority. Since I am submitted to Caesar, and am doing what I was told to do on behalf of my leaders, I can tell a man to go, and he will go. All the power of Rome will back up what I say. Jesus, you are completely submitted to God, and live only to do His will. Since you are ministering in the Father's name, then all the authority of heaven will back up what you say. That is why I know that you only have to say the word, and my servant will be healed."

Faith is not positive thinking. Positive thinking says, "If I believe hard enough, then God has to do what I want Him to." But this would make God *our* servant, and He is the Lord. We are *His* servants. Real faith dies to self. Faith results in God being able to get us to do whatever He wants. Faith places complete trust in God, saying, "God, I know you can do anything, but I trust You to do what is best. Not my will, but thine be done."

Faith may not get you new luxury cars and wealth, but it will keep you through the hard times, because you know God knows best. Faith trusts and obeys God. Job said, "Though he slay me, yet will I [trust] in him..." (Job 13:15) Job did not understand why he had lost his wealth, health, and children, but he did not lose

his faith. Faith holds you through the times when you do not understand what is happening to you. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1) Jesus was not impressed with the centurion's wealth or power. Jesus did not heal the centurion's servant because the centurion gave a good offering; He healed the servant, because the man had faith.



Methods

Reputation

Reputation is the kind of person other people think you are. Character is the person that you really are. What was the centurion's reputation? What did God think of the centurion? Why did people love him? Why was Jesus impressed with him?

Faith

Describe the difference between faith and positive thinking. Encourage students to trust God and seek to be so yielded to God, that they will be obedient to His calling and direction in their lives. Emphasize the importance of not allowing the class to develop the "gimme, gimme" prayers that young people tend to pray. Encourage them to pray more for others than themselves this week.

Honesty

Volume 3

Lesson 37



Bible References

1 Kings 22:29-37

Proverbs 11:1

Proverbs 26:18-19

Luke 8:15

Romans 13:13

Ephesians 4:25

Philippians 4:8

Revelation 21:8



Scripture Reading

1 Kings 22:29-37

29 *"So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramothgilead.*

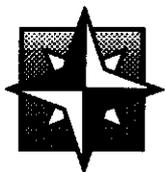
30 *"And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle.*

31 *"But the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains that had rule over his chariots, saying, Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel.*

32 *"And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it {is} the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him: and Jehoshaphat cried out.*

33 *"And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it {was} not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him.*

34 *"And a {certain} man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his*



Theme

God teaches us to be honest and truthful at all times.

chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded.

35 "And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot.

36 "And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country.

37 "So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria."



Memory Verse

Romans 13:13

"Let us walk honestly, as in the day."



Outline

I. King Ahab.

A. King Ahab was the ruler of Northern Israel.

1. His wife was a heathen idolater, named Jezebel.

- a. She was more wicked than Ahab.
 - b. She murdered Naboth to get his property.
 - c. She was killed by her own slaves and eaten by dogs.
2. Ahab was selfish, foolish, and dishonest.
 3. He was also miserable and frustrated.

B. Ahab's deception.

1. He allowed Jezebel to hire false witnesses to testify against Naboth, so that Naboth could be executed, and his land confiscated.
2. He went to battle with King Jehoshaphat of Judah.
 - a. Ahab, knowing that the prophet of God had predicted Ahab's death, disguised himself as a common soldier.
 - b. Ahab persuaded Jehoshaphat to dress in his royal robes and crown.
 - c. The enemy soldiers shot arrows at Jehoshaphat; but God guided one arrow to a joint in Ahab's armor, and he died anyway.

II. Jacob.

A. Jacob wanted his brother Esau's blessing.

1. Jacob and Esau's mother, Rebekah, persuaded Jacob to pretend to be Esau.
2. Their father, Isaac, was deceived; and Jacob got Esau's blessing.

B. Consequences.

1. Jacob got the blessing by deceiving his father, but he had to leave home to escape his brother's wrath.

- a. Esau wanted to kill Jacob.
 - b. Jacob fled to his family's old country, and met Uncle Laban.
2. Uncle Laban tricked Jacob into working 14 years in order to marry Rachel, and then six more years, before Jacob was able to return to his homeland.
 - a. Jacob reaped what he sowed.
 - b. He was dishonest, and others were dishonest with him.

C. If Jacob had been honest:

1. His father would have sent for Laban's daughters as wives for his two sons;
2. Leah, the oldest, would probably have been given to Esau;
3. Jacob would have been given Rachel without having to work for his uncle;
4. God had already promised Jacob a blessing, which he could have received by being honest.

III. Be Honest.

A. Honesty means telling and living the truth.

1. Do not try to get others to believe something that is not true.
2. God is always full of truth.
3. Satan, the devil, is the father of lies.
4. God never lies, and the devil never tells the truth.

B. A lie.

1. An effort to deceive.
2. Making someone believe a false notion.
3. You can say something that is technically a true statement, but still be dishonest.

4. You can be deceptive by remaining silent, when your silence implies you do not know the information.
5. If you turn in written work that you did not write, as your own, you are leading people to believe it is your work, even when you know someone else did it.

C. "I was only kidding."

1. *"As a mad {man} who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, So {is} the man {that} deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?"* (Proverbs 26:18-19)
2. A paraphrase of these verses might read, "As an insane person who is brutally destructive, so is the person who lies, and then says, 'I was only kidding.'"
3. "Kidding" is another word for lying.
4. If you are dishonest, people will not know when you are telling the truth.



Spiritual Truths

- Honesty is still the best policy.
- You never have to tell a lie, to be kind.
- There are times when it is very wise to remain silent.
- It is possible to say something that is technically true, but with a motive to deceive.

- A person who believes an untruth and repeats it is not lying, because he is not purposefully deceptive.
- "I was only kidding" is never an acceptable excuse for lying.
- Heaven is a place for honest people, not liars.
- Only a fool enjoys deceiving other people.
- God never lies.
- The devil never tells the truth.
- Christians should always be honest with each other.



Lesson Material

When Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden before the fall, they were in perfect harmony with each other and with God. They had nothing to hide. Then Eve was deceived by the devil. She was tricked into thinking that she could get away with disobeying God. She thought that sin might make life more exciting and fulfilling. Instead, it brought death and destruction to every aspect of life. The moment Adam and Eve sinned, fear and deception entered. They tried to hide themselves from God. Adam and Eve tried to deceive the Lord, but they could not do it. God sees everything.

Wicked people are basically dishonest. They are dishonest with other people, because they act like friends, but they only want to use them for their own advantage.

They are dishonest with themselves, because they think of themselves as basically good people who lie for good purposes. The wicked are also dishonest with God, but He always knows their deception.

Ahab was a wicked, dishonest man. He tricked other people into believing that Naboth was disloyal, so that he could take over Naboth's property. King Ahab tried to trick the enemy soldiers into shooting at king Jehoshaphat, but Ahab forgot about God's power. King Ahab died anyway. He was a very unhappy man, because he lived a lie. He had wealth and power, but not peace with God. He did not have personal integrity, and people did not respect him.

Jacob is a classic example of a good person who failed occasionally, when it came to being honest. He tricked his father into giving him his brother Esau's blessing. Jacob was encouraged to do so by his mother. Both Jacob and his mother were so intent on getting what they wanted, that they compromised their moral beliefs to accomplish it. They knew it was wrong to lie, but they did anyway. One lie led to another, and these lies destroyed the family. Jacob had to go into exile to escape from Esau, and Rebekah never saw him again. If Jacob had trusted God, Jacob would probably have been given Rachel as a bride, without having to work for fourteen years to obtain her from her dishonest father, Laban.

It is important to distinguish between a lie and an untruth. You can make an inaccurate statement without lying. The key is the intention of the heart. For instance, if you believe it is three o'clock, and someone asks you the time, you would not be lying to say "three o'clock," even though it is actually only two o'clock. You would be making an untrue

statement, but not with the intention to deceive.

On the other hand, it is possible to deceive someone with a true statement. For example, when your mother asks you if you washed your hands, you know that she wants to know if they are clean. But if you answer "Yes, ma'am," and mutter under your breath, "Yesterday," you are deceiving. It is a true statement. You did wash your hands. But you know you are deceiving your mother, by not telling the whole truth.

The Bible also notes that it is wrong for us to use deception as entertainment. Some people delight to lie, and then say "I was only kidding." They do not realize that they are gaining a reputation for dishonesty, and will not be believed at later times when they are telling the truth.

Is it ever right to deceive? The best argument might be in the case of protection against an enemy. Rahab the harlot lied to protect the two Israeli spies in Jericho, but she was not yet a believer, and did not know any better.

In another instance, the prophet Nathan came to King David with a story, without telling him that it referred to his own sin of adultery. But he did not lie: he simply told enough to impress upon David how serious David's sin was.

If a stranger comes up to a child and asks for the name of another child, the child being asked should not give the name. But that child does not need to lie. He can just say, "I cannot tell." The stranger might want to go up to the other child and call him or her by name, so he can gain that child's trust and do evil to him or her.

If there is any case for deception, it would only be to protect someone from an enemy. But the Bible always tells us to be honest with each other.

"Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another." (Ephesians 4:25)



Methods

Examples

Before class begins, prepare a small illustration with another member of the teaching team. In class, present the following: Ask that person, "How old are you?" Answer: "I'm 102, but I have had plastic surgery." Then ask, "How much do you weigh?" (If he is a chubby person, have him give a ridiculously low weight, or perhaps an extremely high one if he is thin.) Ask the class, "Is he deceiving anyone?" "Is the statement true?"

Biblical Illustrations

Emphasize the consequences of dishonesty and trickery mentioned in the Bible. Also emphasize the rewards to godly, honest people. Note that Satan always lies, but God always tells the truth. Since God is all-knowing, would not we be wise to be honest with Him, and tell Him our faults and sins? Can we be honest with ourselves, and take responsibility for our own wrong actions?

Lazarus, Come Forth

Volume 3

Lesson 38

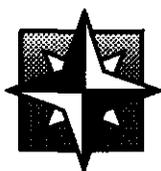


Bible References

Luke 16:19-31

John 11

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18



Theme

Jesus is the resurrection and the life.



Scripture Reading

John 11:34-45

34 "And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.

35 "Jesus wept.

36 "Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

37 "And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?

38 "Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

39 "Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been (dead) four days.

40 "Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

41 "Then they took away the stone (from the place) where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up (his) eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

42 "And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said (it), that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

43 "And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

44 "And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

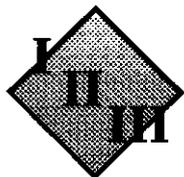
45 "Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him."



Memory Verse

John 11:25

"...I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."



Outline

I. The Friendship.

- A. Lazarus and his sisters were close personal friends of Jesus.
 - 1. Two sisters.
 - a. Mary and Martha.
 - b. Their parents were apparently dead.
 - c. Mary, Martha and their brother, Lazarus lived together in a small town called Bethany.
 - 2. Mary.
 - a. Had been an immoral woman before meeting Jesus.
 - b. Mary anointed Jesus' feet with oil and worshipped Him.

- 3. Bethany was only about two miles from Jerusalem.

- B. Lazarus was extremely sick.

II. The Delay.

- A. Jesus was not in the area.
 - 1. Jesus heard that his friend, Lazarus, was sick.
 - 2. Jesus waited two days in the same place, before going to Bethany.
 - 3. Jesus delayed deliberately.
 - 4. Lazarus died before Jesus could have arrived, anyway.
 - 5. Lazarus had been dead four days, when Jesus got to Bethany.

- B. Jesus told His disciples, "Lazarus is sleeping."

- 1. They said, "Good. Maybe he can get some rest."
- 2. Jesus used the euphemism "sleep" for the term "death."
- 3. When the disciples did not understand what Jesus meant, Jesus said, "Lazarus is dead."
- 4. Thomas was afraid to go to Bethany, for fear of the Jews.

III. The Grave Site.

- A. Martha went to meet Jesus.
 - 1. Mary stayed at home, grieving.
 - 2. Martha said, "...Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." (John 11:21)
- B. Hope.
 - 1. Jesus said, "Thy brother shall rise again." (John 11:23)

2. Martha said, *"I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day."* (John 11:24)
 3. Jesus then replied, *"I am the resurrection, and the life."* (John 11:25)
 - a. Jesus let Martha know that He could raise the dead.
 - b. She did not understand, but she trusted Jesus.
- C. The grave scene.
1. Lazarus had been anointed with fragrant spices, to mask the odor of death.
 2. Lazarus' body was wrapped thoroughly in cloth.
 3. Lazarus was laid in a tomb, which was cut into a stony hill.
 4. A stone was placed over the entrance.
 5. Lazarus was not buried in the ground, as is the custom in many places today.
- D. The confrontation.
1. Jesus went with Martha and Mary to the grave site.
 2. Jesus wept, because his friends were weeping and because of their lack of faith in God.
 3. Jesus said, *"...Take ye away the stone..."* (John 11:39)
 4. Martha said, *"...Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days."* (John 11:39)
 - a. Martha did not know that Jesus would raise Lazarus from the dead.
 - b. Martha was looking at the circumstances, instead of looking with faith to Jesus.
- E. Jesus said, *"...Lazarus, come forth."* (John 11:43)
1. Jesus spoke out loud, so that the others could hear.
 2. Jesus knew God would raise Lazarus from the dead.
 3. Jesus could not just say, "Come forth," because all of the dead around would have come alive.
 4. Lazarus came out of the tomb, and many who saw his resurrection believed on Jesus.



Spiritual Truths

- Jesus is our source of life, both now and forever.
- Jesus has a great love for His friends.
- God's timing is not our timing; but He is never late.
- Jesus often waits for the situation to become impossible, so we can learn faith.
- We often focus on the situation, instead of on Jesus.
- Jesus will not let you down.
- People naturally tend to explain away miracles.
- Supernatural miracles can be great soul-winning tools.
- When Jesus comes again, the righteous dead will be raised in glorified, perfected bodies.

- Physical death is separation from the body.
- Spiritual death is separation from God.
- It is easy for people to believe God for salvation, after they have seen the sick healed or the dead raised to life again.
- Today, there are people alive who were raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- God still works miracles today.



Lesson Material

The story of the raising of Lazarus is familiar to most students of the Bible. It is certainly not the first such miracle, and it was not the last. There were several accounts of resurrections in the Old and New Testaments; and resurrections from the dead still occur today, when people of faith pray fervently in the will of God. We should realize, though, there is a time for each of us to die. It is rare that God will raise someone from the dead. But there are also times when God does such a miracle, because He wants to stir up faith within people.

There are two kinds of death: physical and spiritual. God created within each of us a spirit, soul, and body. When the spirit leaves the body, physical death occurs. We can see the manifestation of it, because the body no longer breathes or functions. The muscles and organs relax, and there is often a terrible odor. When the body ceases to function, microbes and bacteria

immediately begin the process of decay, which results in a lingering smell.

The other type of death is spiritual death. This is separation from God. Jesus taught that most people choose the path of death, rather than serving God. They go the broad, easy way of sin and selfishness, and reject God's plan of salvation. Unless we repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, we will be separated from God for eternity in hell. Hell is eternal separation from God. People will exist in everlasting torment there; but one could not call it "living," because in hell there is no joy, no light, and no hope.

In the old days, people would often pour perfumed ointment on dead bodies and cover them with cloth, to mask the smell or delay the decaying process. Today, we have much more sophisticated ways of embalming bodies, so that they are preserved for longer periods. But physical decay is a natural process. The body eventually returns "back to the dust." The natural body is temporary.

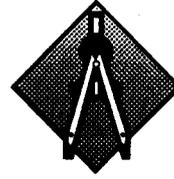
But the Bible teaches that the righteous who die in Christ will be raised at a great mass resurrection in the end times. Jesus will come from heaven, and the souls of the saints will come and be reunited with their physical bodies. God will restore the bodies, even if they were completely decomposed. All He needs is a "seed," or molecule, of the original body. We will not get "new bodies," but we will have glorified, resurrected bodies.

Martha believed that Jesus was referring to this end-time resurrection when He said, "*Thy brother shall rise again.*" (John 11:23) But Jesus was letting Martha know that He had the power to restore life within Him. He could raise the dead, as He had on several occasions. Jesus

went to the grave site with the two sisters, and commanded some men to remove the stone which covered the mouth of the tomb.

What happened to the spirit of Lazarus while his body was in the grave? In Luke 16:19-34, Jesus taught that the spirits of the righteous saints went to a place in the earth called "Paradise." Paradise was a nice place, but not as nice as heaven. The dead could not return to earth, unless God allowed them, as in the case of Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration. Lazarus probably met many of the saints from the Old Testament days. Then he heard the command of Jesus, and his spirit returned to rejoin his body.

Martha was surprised. She still did not realize what Jesus was intending to do. "...Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days." (John 11:39) But Jesus persisted, and told Lazarus to come out of the grave. Lazarus had to shuffle out, because he had been completely wrapped up in cloth. Those around the gravesite had to get the cloth off quickly, or Lazarus may have suffocated. Jesus not only returned the spirit of Lazarus back to his body, but He also healed Lazarus of the illness which had killed him. Lazarus lived for years after that. Eventually, Lazarus died again. This time, his spirit went to heaven, to wait for the great Resurrection at the "last trumpet."



Methods

Death

Discuss physical death as a natural transition in life. It is always a time to grieve, but believers do not sorrow like those "*which have no hope.*" (1 Thessalonians 4:13) Read about the hope of resurrection in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Make sure the students understand the difference between physical death and spiritual death.

Burial

Discuss the burial process. Try to obtain a picture or model of a rock tomb and a person wrapped in a grave cloth. Describe the differences between the modern and historical methods of embalming and burial. Note that Christian burial is a sign of honor, and a testimony of our hope that this same physical body will be raised one day.

Resurrection

Direct the attention of the class to the hope we have for a great resurrection some day. The Bible does not speak of "soul sleep," because the spirits and souls of the dead are very much alive and conscious after separation from the body. Remind the class that resurrection means that the bodies we have now will be changed and glorified, to be like the perfect body of Jesus after the resurrection.

Arrested

Volume 3

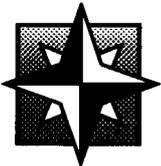
Lesson 39



Bible References

Matthew 26

Matthew 27



Theme

The arrest and trial of Jesus.



Scripture Reading

Matthew 26:57-66

57 "And they that had laid hold on Jesus led {him} away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

58 "But Peter followed him afar off unto

the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.

59 "Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death;

60 "But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, {yet} found they none. At the last came two false witnesses,

61 "And said, This {fellow} said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

62 "And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what {is it which} these witness against thee?

63 "But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.

64 "Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

65 "Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.

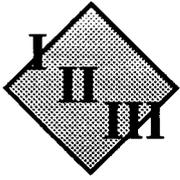
66 "What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death."



Memory Verse

Matthew 26:64

"...Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power..."



Outline

I. Jesus Was Arrested.

A. The religious leaders of the day resented Jesus.

1. The religious leaders viewed Jesus as one who would tear down their system of leadership.
2. The religious leaders watched many of their people leave the traditional Jewish faith to follow Jesus.
3. The religious leaders viewed Jesus as a good teacher, but a threat to their authority.

B. The religious leaders were always looking for a way to catch Jesus doing something wrong.

1. The religious leaders brought Jesus into difficult situations.
2. The religious leaders falsely accused Jesus, to get a response.
3. The religious leaders spied on everything that Jesus did.

C. The high priest had reason to want Jesus off the scene.

1. The high priest at that time was Caiaphas.
2. He was the son-in-law to Annas.
3. The previous thirteen high priests had all been relatives of Annas.
 - a. One could only be high priest for one year at a time.
 - b. Annas controlled the politics, to ensure that he was always in control of the temple.
4. Annas owned the booths in the temple, where the moneychangers sold sacrifices.
 - a. These booths are called "Annas booths" in the Hebrew encyclopedia.
 - b. Annas was angry, when Jesus turned over the booths in the temple.
 - c. Jesus had become angry, because greed had defiled His Father's house.
5. Annas had told Caiaphas that this Jesus had to be put to death.
6. Caiaphas knew that his job depended on Annas.
7. Caiaphas had determined that he would find a way to eliminate Jesus.

D. Jesus was betrayed by Judas.

1. Judas was not motivated by hatred for Jesus.
2. Judas was greedy and betrayed Jesus, because Judas wanted more money.
3. Judas expected Jesus to save Himself from the Pharisees and soldiers.
4. When Jesus was captured, Judas was so grieved that he gave the money back and committed suicide.

E. Jesus was taken to the high priest for a trial.

II. Jesus Was Tried in Court.

A. The Jewish leaders sought to bring false witness against Jesus.

1. Most of the Jewish leaders were corrupt.
2. The leaders needed false witnesses, because they had no evidence of any law that had been broken.
3. The false witnesses failed to bring an adequate charge against Jesus.

B. The question of rebuilding the temple.

1. One witness brought up the statement of Jesus concerning rebuilding the temple in three days.
 - a. Christ did not reply.
 - b. The high priest rose up in anger.
2. Jesus was asked if He was the Son of God.
 - a. Jesus knew that this question had nothing to do with the temple.
 - b. The high priest was trying to get Jesus to testify against Himself.

B. Caiaphas reacted.

1. Caiaphas tore his clothes.
2. Caiaphas accused Jesus of blasphemy.
 - a. "Blasphemy" means "to revile, to speak evil."
 - b. They thought Jesus was speaking evil by claiming to be God.
 - c. They did not realize that Jesus was God the Son.

C. Jesus was taken to Pontius Pilate for sentencing.

1. The Jewish leaders had no power to crucify anyone.
2. The Jews had been conquered by the Roman Empire.
 - a. The Jewish people had to pay heavy taxes.
 - b. Only Roman authorities could legally execute criminals.
 - c. The Jews had their own leadership and religious courts, but they were all under the higher authority of Caesar.

III. Jesus Gave an Answer.

A. Jesus said to the high priest,

1. "*Thou hast said*" [referring to the high priest's question whether Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God]. (Matthew 26:64)
2. "*Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.*" (Matthew 26:64)
 - a. Jesus did not say "Son of God."
 - b. A direct reflection on his being man as well as God.



Spiritual Truths

- Judas was a disciple of Jesus; but Judas became deceived by greed, and betrayed the Lord for money.
- Judas most likely did not intend for Jesus to be crucified.
- Jesus was taken to Pilate, because the Jews wanted Jesus executed, and they did not have the legal power to pronounce the death penalty.

- Jesus is both the Son of God and the Son of man.
- Jesus loved to call Himself "Son of man," because He wanted to identify with the human race.
- Jesus was not the son of a man, but the Son of man.
- Christ suffered His indignation for our sakes, so that we might have eternal life with Him.
- Jesus was mocked, tortured, and rejected by the religious leaders of His day as a part of God's plan to redeem the world.



Lesson Material

Note: This lesson should be used the week before Palm Sunday.

When Jesus came into the city of Jerusalem, He was hailed as a conquering hero. People waved palm branches and cried "Hosanna!" The Pharisees knew that if they were to have this man put to death, they needed the help of the Roman government. To gain this assistance meant having the Jewish people supporting them. So, they set about to trap Jesus.

Soon after arriving in Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple. There He found moneychangers and people with booths, who were selling animals for the sacrifices. But the temple was not making money from this business -- Annas the priest was pocketing the profits. The booths are

referred to in the Hebrew Encyclopedia as "Annas booths," because they were owned by Annas. These booths were selling animals which were not perfect (the law specified that only flawless animals be sacrificed to God); and they were selling temple coins, which were required to be used by those who did any type of financial transaction at the temple. The money-changers were charging a fee for the privilege of making that exchange. Annas was becoming a very wealthy man from these booths. Annas also controlled the politics of the position of high priest. A high priest could only serve for one year, so Annas simply positioned his relatives in the role of high priest when he could not serve, himself. Annas is referred to in the books of Luke and John as the high priest, even though Caiaphas was serving in that role at the time. It was common knowledge that Annas was the one in control.

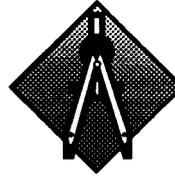
When Jesus knocked over the booths in the temple, He was no longer intruding only on the religious life of the Pharisees -- He was now intruding on the pocketbook of its most influential member. That day, Annas determined to get rid of this man, Jesus.

When Jesus was brought to trial, there was no evidence of any wrongdoing against Him. The Jews could not bring up what had happened in the temple, because by Jewish law, the booths and the selling and trading that were taking place were in themselves abominations against the Lord. The Jewish leaders had to make up something. Even in their attempts to find false witnesses against Jesus, they were unable to bring a charge against Him that could be substantiated. Caiaphas then asked Jesus if He was the Son of God.

When Jesus answered, He said, "It is as you said," and that soon they would see the Son of Man "sitting on the right hand of power." This implied His deity. Caiaphas was able to use this to his advantage. Caiaphas ripped his garments, a common expression of anguish or grief, and cried out "Blasphemy!" He encouraged the others in the room to get upset and to cry out. Soon Caiaphas had succeeded in convicting Jesus through false accusations. Further, Caiaphas had the people supporting his claim. Many of these same people, had just days earlier, proclaimed Jesus as King, as He rode into Jerusalem. Now they wanted to see Him crucified.

Jesus went on to be tried before the Roman authority, which was Pilate. Jesus was sentenced to the cruel death of crucifixion, a method devised by the Romans to inflict as much agony and shame on the victim as possible. For some vile-hearted people, the suffering of others is entertaining. Have you ever seen a bully who enjoyed playing pranks on someone weaker? It is the same attitude. We should never delight in the embarrassment or discomfort of another person. We should

defend those who are weaker, and bless those who are not as advantaged as others. Jesus did.



Methods

Discussion Questions:

Have we ever mocked the Lord by treating His Word lightly, or by dishonoring His servants? Have we ever rejected the Lord? Have we betrayed the Lord by seeking money, instead of seeking to please the Lord?

Why did Judas betray Jesus? (Greed, not envy or hatred.)

Why did the Pharisees reject Jesus?

Why did the Pharisees want to have Jesus put to death?

Let Him Be Crucified

Volume 3

Lesson 40



Bible References

Psalms 22:18

Matthew 20:17-19

Matthew 21:9

Matthew 27:11-66

John 19:2,5



Scripture Reading

Matthew 20:17-19

17 *"And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them,*

18 *"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death,*

19 *"And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify (him): and the third day he shall rise again."*



Theme

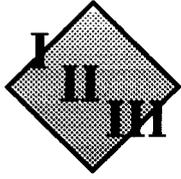
The trial before Pilate and the crucifixion of Jesus.



Memory Verse

Matthew 27:54

"...they feared greatly saying, Truly this was the Son of God."



Outline

I. The Warning.

A. The prophecy of Jesus.

1. Jesus told His disciples what was going to happen to Him.
 - a. He would be betrayed.
 - b. He would be crucified.
 - c. But He would rise again on the third day.
2. His disciples did not understand.

B. The fulfillment of the prophecy.

1. Jesus was betrayed by Judas.
2. Jesus was taken to the high priests in Jerusalem for trial.

II. The Trial.

A. Jesus was then taken before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor in Jerusalem.

1. Jesus was accused by the chief priests and the scribes.
 - a. Priests -- religious leaders of the Jews.
 - b. Scribes -- men who wrote copies of the scriptures for a living.
2. Jesus did not answer them.
3. The governor could not understand the silence of Jesus.

B. The offer of clemency.

1. It was the feast of the Passover.

2. Traditionally the governor released one prisoner in honor of the Passover holiday.
3. This year the governor gave the people two choices: Jesus or Barabbas.
4. The people cried out for the release of Barabbas.

C. Pilate was unsure of what to do.

1. Because Pilate's wife had a dream about Jesus, she tried to persuade Pilate to release Him.
2. In Pilate's heart, he knew that Jesus was not guilty of any crime.

D. The influence of the crowd.

1. The people demanded the crucifixion of Jesus.
2. Pilate was afraid of the crowd.
 - a. He did not want a riot.
 - b. He did not want Rome to hear that he was malleable.
 - c. He was afraid of the political connections of the priests.
3. Pilate gave in to the desire of the crowd.
 - a. He ordered Jesus to be crucified.
 - b. He washed his hands of the blood of Jesus.

III. The Suffering.

A. Christ was first scourged.

1. A brutal whipping.
2. The whip was made of leather with bits of stone or metal attached.
 - a. The whip would rip apart the flesh as it was administered to Jesus' bare back, and would wrap around to tear away at His chest also.

- b. Experts believe there was not an inch of Jesus' body which did not have cuts on it.
 - c. He was whipped almost to the point of death.
- B. Jesus then suffered further humiliation.
- 1. A crown of thorns was placed on His head.
 - 2. The soldiers placed a purple robe on His back.
 - a. John 19:2, 5.
 - b. Purple was a symbol of royalty.
 - c. The soldiers were mocking Jesus, the "King" of the Jews.
 - 3. The soldiers spat upon Jesus and hit Him.
- C. Jesus was forced to carry His own cross.

IV. The Crucifixion.

- A. The soldiers took Jesus to the hill outside of Jerusalem where criminals were publicly executed.
- 1. The name of this hill of crucifixion was "Golgotha."
 - 2. "Golgotha" means, "The place of the skull."
- B. The soldiers nailed Jesus to the cross.
- 1. Crucifixion was a cruel way to execute criminals.
 - 2. Jesus was nailed, so that He could not easily pull Himself up.
 - a. To breathe, those who were crucified had to pull themselves up.
 - b. Weariness often overtook those who were crucified, and they suffocated while on the cross.

- c. The legs of the other two criminals were broken, so they could no longer push themselves up to get a breath.
- C. The soldiers parted Jesus' garments.
- 1. The Roman soldiers gambled for His robe.
 - 2. This fulfilled the prophecy of Psalms 22:18.
- D. There were two thieves crucified next to Jesus.
- 1. One of the thieves mocked Jesus.
 - 2. The other thief asked Jesus for forgiveness of his sins.

V. The Death of Christ.

- A. Even though it was noon, the sky became extremely dark.
- B. At about 3:00, Jesus cried out:
- 1. "...Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?..." (Matthew 27:46)
 - 2. "...My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46)
- C. Then Jesus cried out again, and died.
- 1. An earthquake shook the earth.
 - 2. The veil in the temple was ripped in two from top to bottom.
 - a. The massive veil separated man from the Holy of Holies.
 - b. God was showing that the way was now made for man to come to Him.



Spiritual Truths

- Jesus Christ suffered and died for us.
- Jesus is the only true way to God.
- When faced with decisions, we must listen to God, and not the crowd.
- People may mock and ridicule you, when you stand up for your faith.
- When you fear God, you will not fear men.
- The crowd is often wrong.
- Even the thief on the cross had the opportunity before he died to receive forgiveness, because he believed.
- Pilate should have listened to his wife.
- Jesus is not in the grave. He is risen.



Lesson Material

NOTE: Palm Sunday Lesson.

The trial before Pontius Pilate illustrates the importance of standing firm in your convictions, even when everyone else is becoming involved in sin. The crowd which appeared outside around Jesus was comprised of many of the same people who had been on the streets when Jesus arrived in Jerusalem. Now the same people who had shouted "*Hosanna!*"

(Matthew 21:9) were angrily demanding Jesus death.

Pilate did not want to punish Jesus. He could see no wrong in anything that Jesus had done. Pilate even tried sending Jesus over to Herod, in the hopes that Herod would pass judgment; but Herod returned Jesus to Pilate. Herod did not want to get involved in this situation, either. Pilate's wife was even warned in a dream that this man, Jesus, was innocent and should be set free. Pilate knew that Jesus had done nothing evil; but Pilate was not certain how to handle the priests and the crowd.

Pilate thought he had discovered the solution, when he offered to release a prisoner. The Jews had a custom at Passover. They would select a criminal to pardon, as a celebration of the deliverance from death in Egypt. Pilate selected the worst criminal that he could think of, Barabbas, and felt certain that given this choice, the people would select Jesus for deliverance. However, the chief priests were far more concerned about Jesus than they were about a terrible criminal being loosed. The chief priests chose to go into the crowd and persuade the people to ask for the release of Barabbas. Pilate was again thwarted in his attempt to release Jesus.

Pilate still did not want to execute Jesus, but the crowd became upset and vocal. Pilate knew that his position was a political appointment which could be ended, if Caesar heard that he was being manipulated by the cries of the Jews. So to quiet them down, he ordered Jesus scourged (beaten with a metal or bone studded whip) and crucified. His hope again was that when the Jews saw the badly beaten body of Christ, that they would have pity on Jesus and they would let Him go free. But the Jews taunted Jesus even more.

Pilate, in an attempt to remove himself from the terrible decision which he had made, washed his hands and declared that the blood of Jesus was not his responsibility. The people cried *"His blood be on us, and on our children!"* (Matthew 27:25) Little did they know, that indeed, it was His blood which would save them and their children, if they would only accept Him as their Savior. Instead of His blood washing their sins away, for many, the blood was a constant reminder that they had sinned and had killed the very Son of God.

Jesus was led off to the cross in His weakened state. The soldiers had placed a crown of thorns on Jesus' head and had plucked out part of His beard. They had given Jesus vinegar to drink and ridiculed Him. The scourging had torn away His flesh, and He was too weak to make it up the hill to Golgotha carrying His cross unassisted. The Romans compelled a black man from Cyrene, named Simon, to carry the cross the remainder of the way up the hill. Can you imagine this heavy wooden cross, covered with the blood from a badly wounded and beaten Jesus, being placed on your shoulders? At times, we must also carry His cross through our suffering, for His name's sake.

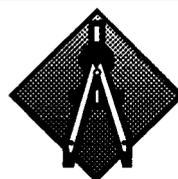
Once Jesus arrived at Golgotha, He was nailed to the cross. Being nailed added torment and hastened death, as it was more difficult for the victim to raise himself up to breathe. Every breath was torture.

Above Jesus head the soldiers placed a sign which read *"...[THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS]."* (Matthew 27:37)

The soldiers put the sign there to mock Jesus. Little did they realize that the sign was true. The soldiers then cast lots for

Jesus' garments, but even this had been foretold in Psalms 22:18. Jesus cried out to God as the people mocked Him, *"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"* (Matthew 27:46) The sky grew dark. With the last of Jesus' strength, He cried out one more time, and then died.

When Jesus died, the earth began to shake and the veil in the temple was ripped in two, from the top to the bottom. Many who were at the crucifixion, including the centurion of the Roman guard, said, "Surely this was the Son of God." Being afraid that someone would try to steal Jesus' body and claim that He had risen again, Pilate ordered the tomb sealed with a large stone. Everything was in order -- the body was in place. It was carefully guarded, and a stone was in front of the tomb. No one could get to Jesus. No one could ever claim that He had risen again.



Methods

Barabbas

Imagine the scene of the trial from the perspective of Barabbas. He was a convicted murderer. Barabbas lived in a time when even minor crimes were punishable with torture and execution. It is likely that he could hear from his cell the roar of the crowd, but not the words of Pilate. He may have heard, "Barabbas, Barabbas!", and then, after a moment of silence, "Crucify him. Crucify Him!"

Do we always obtain all the facts? Should we always believe the crowd?

Video

There are several videos available which depict the scenes of the trial before Pilate and the crucifixion of Jesus. Avoid using more than eight minutes of video. Add to the presentation the opportunity for a question and answer time, in which the students explain what they have heard and seen in the video, and how they believe it effects their lives.

Preview of Coming Attractions

As you teach this story, remember that it is leading up to the resurrection. Too

often we concentrate so much on the crucifixion, we forget that if Jesus had died on the cross and had then not been resurrected, all of His suffering would have meant nothing. We need to prepare the young people to want to return the following week and discover what happened to Jesus. Many students will already know; but, some will not fully understand what truly occurred, and what His resurrection means to us today.

Thomas Didymus

Volume 3

Lesson 41



Bible References

1 Chronicles 16:11

Psalms 16:11

Isaiah 61:1

Matthew 6:33

Mark 4:35-41

John 14:27

John 20:19-31

Acts 2:1-12

Ephesians 2:14-15

Philippians 4:7

Hebrews 12:2



Scripture Reading

John 20:19-29

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.*

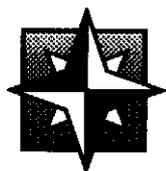
21 *"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace (be) unto you: as (my) Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*

22 *"And when he had said this, he breathed on (them), and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:*

23 *"Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; (and) whose soever (sins) ye retain, they are retained.*

24 *"But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.*

25 *"The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands*



Theme

Where Jesus is, there is peace.

the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

26 *"And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: {then} came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace {be} unto you.*

27 *"Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust {it} into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.*

28 *"And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.*

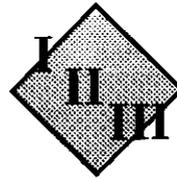
29 *"Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed {are} they that have not seen, and {yet} have believed."*



Memory Verse

John 20:29

"...blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."



Outline

I. The Door Was Shut.

A. The disciples were afraid.

1. When fear is dominating, faith is not operating.
2. Fear focuses on the dangers and negative possibilities of life.
3. Faith is a focus on God and His purposes.

B. The disciples were afraid of the Romans.

1. The disciples' leader had just been viciously killed by the Roman soldiers.
2. The disciples felt that the same people would murder them, too.

II. The Disciples Were Glad.

A. The disciples were glad when they saw Jesus.

1. Happiness is determined by our circumstances.
2. Joy is the response of our spirit, when we are in harmony with God.
3. Happiness is an emotion.

B. The disciples were not glad because they saw:

1. Their circumstances;
 - a. The situation looked bleak.
 - b. They had invested over three years of their lives in Jesus.

- c. They had sacrificed everything to follow Him.
- d. Now their hope was gone.
- 2. Doctrine;
 - a. Doctrinal debate does not make us glad.
 - b. One can have the right ideas, but still not know the Lord personally.
 - c. God seeks relationship.
- 3. One another;
 - a. "I am a flawed vessel, but I am in the repair shop."
 - b. Concentrating on people can be depressing, because people let us down.
- 4. Financial success.

C. "Looking unto Jesus..." (Hebrews 12:2)

- 1. Hebrews 12:2.
- 2. Seeing Jesus makes the difference.
- 3. A glimpse of Jesus settles doctrinal debate.
- 4. The "Gospill" (Gospel) is a happy pill: good news.
- 5. I am always glad when I am in the presence of Jesus. (Psalms 16:11)

III. "Peace Be Unto You." (John 20:26)

A. Peace comes from Jesus.

- 1. The first thing Jesus brings is the reality of peace.
- 2. John 20:19,21,26.

B. On the troubled sea. (Mark 4:35-41)

- 1. The disciples were on the Sea of Galilee in a boat.
- 2. Jesus was asleep.
- 3. A great storm arose.
- 4. Jesus said to the storm "Peace, be still." (Mark 4:39)

- 5. Jesus can bring calm and peace into our lives.
- 6. Jesus is greater than our circumstances.

C. "Peace I leave with you,...not as the world giveth." (John 14:27)

- 1. The world gives peace by trying to remove all conflict and threat.
- 2. Jesus places peace in our hearts. Peace can rule in spite of circumstances.
- 3. Peace is an indicator that you are close to God.
- 4. If you have a *piece* of God, you will have the *peace* of God.

D. Peace is a result of the cross.

- 1. Jesus told Thomas to touch His wounds, to assure Thomas it was Jesus and give him peace. (John 20:27)
- 2. Because of the cross, Jesus is our peace. (Ephesians 2:14-15)
- 3. We can have peace with God. (Philippians 4:7)

E. Thomas.

- 1. Thomas was not with the other disciples, when Jesus first appeared to them after His resurrection.
- 2. Thomas told the disciples that unless he saw and felt Jesus' wounds, he would not believe Jesus was alive. (John 20:25)
- 3. The next Sunday night, Thomas was gathered with the disciples.
- 4. How would you arrange your schedule, if you knew Jesus would be at a certain location?
- 5. Jesus was patient with Thomas, and showed Thomas His hands and feet.

6. Thomas received a revelation.
 - a. Jesus is very God.
 - b. "...My Lord, and my God!" (John 20:28)
7. Jesus understands our struggle with doubt.

IV. "So Send I You." (John 20:21)

- A. If we are going to live in peace, we must stop focusing attention on ourselves.
1. Do not feel sorry for yourself.
 2. Serve others. Get busy.
 3. Many Christians are sitting around saying, "Bless me. Entertain me."
- B. God's blessing: to make us blessings.
1. God does not bless people just to make them happy.
 2. God holds us accountable for every spiritual gift.
 3. "Whee!" is not the anointing.
 4. Emotion just feels good, but an anointed person must do something for God.
 - a. Isaiah 61:1.
 - b. No Old Testament prophet or leader was anointed, until it was time to serve.
- C. Jesus breathed on them.
1. "...Receive ye the Holy Ghost." (John 20:22)
 2. God's anointing breathed on them.



Spiritual Truths

- When fear is dominating, faith is not operating.
- Not everything in life goes smoothly.
- Seeing Jesus always makes the difference.
- We are always glad, when we are in the presence of Jesus.
- The world gives a superficial peace, because that type of peace is dependent on circumstances.
- Jesus gives peace, which will endure through the storms of life.
- Peace is a result of the cross.
- If we are going to live in peace, then we must get our minds off of ourselves.
- We receive God's anointing only when we respond to a mandate to do something for God.



Lesson Material

The disciples were confused and heavy-hearted. They had seen their friend, Judas betray their Lord in the garden. The disciples then watched helplessly as the Jewish leaders arrested Jesus, beat and tormented him through the night, and

then sent Him to Roman authorities, where Jesus was sentenced to die the cruel death of crucifixion. The disciples had failed to stand with him. Peter was especially grieved, for he had denied the Lord three times in the night, cursing in order to convince others that he was not a disciple of Jesus.

The disciples had seen Jesus die in agony, hanging naked on a rough wooden cross. Now they were huddled in a room in Jerusalem, wondering if the rough Roman soldiers were perhaps searching the city to find and crucify them, too. Jesus had told the disciples that He would rise from the dead, but they had not fully comprehended His words at that time.

Jesus had appeared the Mary and some other women in the garden, but He had not yet appeared to the disciples. Suddenly, Jesus was there with them! Jesus did not walk through the door. He materialized in front of them! After Jesus was resurrected, He had a perfect body which could move through walls and travel to different locations at will. Jesus was glorified, the *"...firstfruits of them that slept."* (1 Corinthians 15:20) His life was no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit.

Jesus once again said, *"...Peace be unto you."* (John 20:19) This is the first thing Jesus brings into our troubled lives, and it was the one thing the disciples needed most. Although all the disciples had fled in Jesus' dark hour, Jesus was loving and patient with them. Jesus would have forgiven Judas, too; but Judas had committed suicide, rather than ask the Lord to forgive him. What a tragic loss. Judas could have been one of the chosen apostles, with a great place in history. However, he reacted violently to his guilt in a destructive way, rather than with repentance and faith.

When Jesus came, He immediately brought peace. That is the way Jesus is. He is greater than any problem in life. He is the source of peace. The world seeks peace through peaceful circumstances. Years ago, thousands of young people in America made world news by "marching for peace." They were demanding an end to all wars and strife. Their attitude was, "Everyone be nice, and create a world where I can have peace!"

Jesus does not bring peace like the world does. Jesus places a peace in our hearts which is not dependent upon our situation. We can have *"...the peace of God, which passeth all understanding..."* (Philippians 4:7) when we have Jesus in our hearts. The world cannot understand this peace, because this peace can only come from knowing that you belong to God. This assurance removes the fear of death, because we know that we have inherited eternal life through Jesus Christ. Only Christians can have this kind of peace.

Jesus breathed on them, and said, *"...Receive ye the Holy Ghost."* (John 20:22) Now this was not the baptism of the Holy Spirit, because these same disciples received that several weeks later, on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:1-12) The anointing the disciples received when Jesus breathed upon them was an anointing of the Spirit for ministry. God breathed life on them.

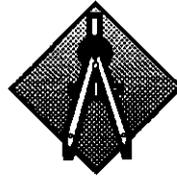
Anointing is not emotion. Anointing is spiritual power through which God enables us to do something for others. All of God's gifts are given to equip us for service. God never blesses anyone just to make them feel blessed. He blesses people to make them a blessing to others. Spiritual gifts are for the sake of others, and God holds us accountable for the way

we handle all that we have received from Him.

Jesus met with these men to impart blessing to the disciples, because they were to be the ones to establish His church throughout the earth. The disciples were Jesus' instruments to touch the world with the Gospel of salvation.

But Thomas was not at the gathering where Jesus first appeared to the disciples after His resurrection. When Thomas heard what he had missed, he was honestly skeptical. Perhaps Thomas had been gullible in the past; or perhaps he had been too overwhelmed by the events of the weekend to accept the idea too quickly. For whatever reason, he said, in essence, "I've got to see it, to believe it."

The next Sunday night, Thomas was with the disciples and Jesus again appeared in His glorified body. Jesus was very patient with Thomas' doubts, and showed Thomas His hands and His side. At that moment, Thomas cried out, "...My Lord and my God." (John 20:28) Thomas was not just blurting out an expression as some do today, such as "Oh, God!" Thomas was making a statement of faith. He was declaring the deity of Jesus Christ. Jesus is not just a prophet or a son of God, Jesus is the Lord: God the Son. The concept of the Trinity is a mystery to the human mind, but we receive it by revelation and by faith. God said it, and that settles it.



Methods

Imagine

What would it be like if Jesus were to appear right now in this class in a physical, visible form? How would we behave and react? What if we knew that He would be here next Sunday? Would we be ready? Would we arrive on time? Would we invite others to see Him?

Jesus is here, and He does meet with us, although He sends His Word and His Spirit to teach us and prepare us for the day when we will see Him face to face. What do you do each day to prepare for that certain day when this physical life will end? What does Jesus want us to do? He wants us to build relationships with Him, and with other believers. He encourages us to love God and people, and to be more like Him.

Honest Doubt

What do you do when you have questions about God, eternity, and doctrine? Why do you believe what you believe? The Bible does not tell us just to seek His ideas. We are told to "*seek his face continually.*" (1 Chronicles 16:11) We are told to "*...seek...the kingdom of God, and his righteousness....*" (Matthew 6:33) When we draw close into the presence of Jesus, His Spirit will guide us into all truth, and Jesus will give us peace.

On the Road

Volume 3

Lesson 42



Bible References

Matthew 1:21

John 14:21-23

John 15:16

Acts 4:12

Acts 8:1-4

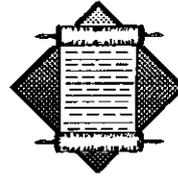
Acts 9:1-18

Acts 26:14-18

Philippians 2:9-11

1 Peter 2:9

1 Peter 4:12-16



Scripture Reading

Acts. 9:3-6

3 *"And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:*

4 *"And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"*

5 *"And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: (it is) hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*

6 *"And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord {said} unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."*



Theme

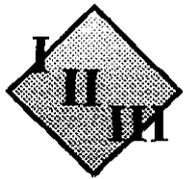
God chooses and changes an unbeliever.



Memory Verse

Acts. 9:15

"...for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."



Outline

I. Damascus.

- A. Major city in Syria, a Roman province north of Jerusalem.
1. Damascus was 175 miles northeast of Jerusalem.
 2. Located in what is still the nation of Syria.
- B. The house of Judas (where Saul stayed) was on Straight Street, one of the two main streets in Damascus.

II. Saul of Tarsus.

- A. Saul.
1. Saul was from the city of Tarsus.
 2. Tarsus was a major city in what is now Turkey.
 3. Saul was very well-educated, and brilliant.

4. Saul was devoted to the Jewish faith, and saw Christianity as a threat to his religious order.
5. Saul zealously attacked Christians, and had the political power to have Christians arrested.

B. Saul tried to destroy the church.

1. Because of persecution against Christians, many believers were scattered from Jerusalem to many other cities.
2. Men and women were put into prison.

C. Saul journeyed to Damascus, to expose some of these "rebel" believers in Jesus.

III. Saul's Encounter With Jesus.

A. Miracle meeting.

1. Saul was blinded by a bright light.
2. Saul met Jesus in a vision.

B. Jesus said, "...Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:4)

1. When one attacks a Christian, he is ultimately attacking Christ.
2. Saul did not know Jesus personally.
3. Saul was willing to listen.
4. Saul fasted for three days.

IV. Ananias.

A. Ananias received a call to go to Saul and lay hands on him.

B. Ananias obeyed God.

1. Saul's sight was restored.
2. Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit.

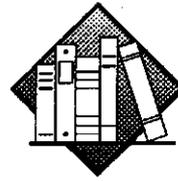
V. God's Plan Fulfilled.

- A. Saul was baptized as a believer.
- B. Saul was strengthened.
- C. Saul devoted the remainder of his life to spread the truth of Jesus.



Spiritual Truths

- Satan cannot destroy the church of the living God.
- Persecution actually causes true Christians to grow stronger in the faith and have greater unity.
- Jesus can reveal Himself sovereignly, although He prefers to reveal Himself through His people.
- God works through people, and calls them for specific tasks.
- We are God's chosen instruments.
- We are chosen to carry Jesus' Name to the world.
- God loves to choose people whom others would reject or disqualify.
- The laying on of hands is a spiritual pattern for receiving both healing and the infilling of the Holy Spirit.
- Service for Jesus and suffering for Jesus are linked together. (1 Peter 4:12-16)



Lesson Material

Children today can relate to "instant everything," and actually have little experience with what adults remember as the "old-fashioned" way of doing things. Instant oatmeal and instant pain relief are indicative of a lifestyle of instant gratification. Paul had an instant change of heart. One minute he hated Jesus and Christians, and the next minute he was miraculously changed into a preacher of the Gospel. Use your imagination. Is it possible to be walking along, minding your own business, and be suddenly surrounded by a light, brighter than the sun, and thrown to the ground? This sounds like a science fiction movie. It actually happened 2,000 years ago before Hollywood and laser beams were even conceived. How great is our God! What awesome power He can instantly display! This was God's way of getting Paul's attention. Likewise, God has a specific way of reaching each one of us according to our needs, personality, and situation. The touch of God on our lives will change us. Once we know that Jesus is real, we will never be the same. Changing our heart is the first step. Changing our purpose and direction must follow.

Can Jesus become real to us, without a dramatic, "bright light" experience? Yes! John 14:21 tells us that Jesus wants to show Himself to those who love Him and keep His commandments. He goes on to say in verse 23 that we become the "home" of the living God. We must become conscious of His still small voice within us and His abiding presence. That must be cultivated. The more we acknowledge His presence

and talk to Him, the more sensitive we become to His intervention in our lives.

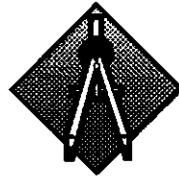
The thrust of this lesson is that God chose Paul to be His special vessel or instrument, and we are also God's chosen people. John 15:16 tells us that we did not choose Him, but that He chose us, and that we are to go and bear fruit. Again, we see the connection between being chosen and being sent out. We are never chosen to simply remain idle.

"But ye are a chosen generation,..that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:" (1 Peter 2:9)

Every child knows the thrill of being chosen by the teacher to lead the class, be first in line, or have a special job. Even more gratifying is to have the team captain pick you first to be on his team. Rejection can not only be humiliating, but unbearable. Can we grasp that the King of all kings has chosen us -- hand-picked -- and placed us on His team?

We have been studying the life of Saul, but let us look at the role Ananias plays in this story. He was hand-picked for God's team, to play a different part. Even though he had a vision and heard an audible voice, he struggled with fear for his life. Obedience was not easy. How important it is for we Christians to work together as a team! Would Paul still be blind if Ananias had not obeyed God? If Ananias had been disobedient, would a large portion of the New Testament have never been written? None of us are called in the same way, or given the same job. Each part of the body of Christ is vitally important and connected to the whole picture. When we, the pieces, are in our proper place, we

make a beautiful picture of Jesus for the world to see.



Methods

Analogy

God wants each of us to carry the name of Jesus to the world. The memory verse relates that we are instruments. Encourage the class to think of the many different musical instruments in a band. Again, each one is different in appearance, sound, and purpose; but they are working together for one purpose, and that is to blend together to make beautiful music. As the body of Christ, we are all individual parts, but we all work together to make the body function.

End this lesson with emphasis on the importance of the Name of Jesus. *"...there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."* (Acts 4:12) His Name is above every name, *"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,..."* (Philippians 2:10-11)

Skit

Dress up a person to come into class as Ananias. Have him share with the class what happened that day in Damascus, and what Saul told him happened out on the road. Have "Ananias" share how afraid he was to go to Saul, even though the Lord told him to, because Saul was wanting to kill all Christians.

Illustration

On a large poster board construct a puzzle with the name "JESUS" on it in big, bold letters. Give each child a piece and

have them work together to find out what it says. Point out that each of our lives represents part of a puzzle. We are each important. When we work together, we will reveal Jesus to a dying world.

An Escape in the Night

Volume 3

Lesson 43



Bible References

Matthew 5:10

Luke 12:48

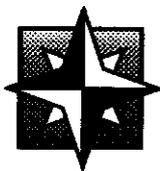
John 6:44

Acts 9:19-30

Acts 22:17-21

1 Corinthians 10:13

2 Corinthians 11:30-33



Theme

God can protect those who do His will.



Scripture Reading

Acts 9:19-25

19 *"And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.*

20 *"And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.*

21 *"But all that heard {him} were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?*

22 *"But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.*

23 *"And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him:*

24 *"But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him.*

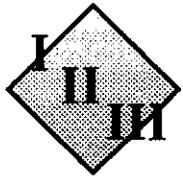
25 *"Then the disciples took him by night, and let {him} down by the wall in a basket."*



Memory Verse

Matthew 5:10

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."



Outline

I. Saul's Location.

A. Damascus.

1. Oldest city in the world with a continuing history.
 - a. It is still in existence.
 - b. Many other prominent biblical cities have been destroyed.
2. Capital of the nation of Syria.

B. Jerusalem.

II. Saul's Dangerous Situation.

A. Saul was preaching in Damascus.

1. Saul's listeners were astonished.
2. The people questioned Saul's motives.
3. Saul had been such a zealous enemy of Christianity prior to his conversion.

B. Jewish leaders plotted to kill Saul.

1. The Jewish leaders felt that they should defend the Jewish faith against Christianity.
2. The Jewish leaders viewed Jesus as a threat to their religion.
3. Jesus was really the fulfillment of their faith, for He was the Lamb of God, the Messiah of the Jews.
4. Saul learned of the plot to kill him.

C. Saul escaped in a basket.

1. The city had many homes built into the strong outer wall, which protected the city from invasion.
2. It was dangerous to go outside the gates, which were watched day and night.
3. It was too high from the ground to jump.
4. Saul was lowered to the ground in a basket, by his helpers.

III. Saul in Jerusalem.

A. More danger.

1. The Jewish Christians in Jerusalem were also afraid of Saul.
2. Saul preached among the Greek intellectuals that Jesus was God's Son, the Savior of the world.

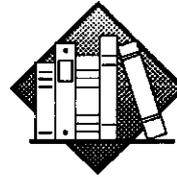
B. Barnabas helped Saul.

1. Barnabas was an apostle of the church.
2. Barnabas encouraged the brethren to accept this new preacher.
3. When the Christians accepted Saul, they received great blessing from his ministry, and the church grew.

C. Plot to kill Saul (again).

1. The Greek humanists hated Saul too.
2. They were not religious, but saw themselves as intellectuals who did not believe in God.
3. Saul had opposition from both religious and secular groups.
4. Saul escaped to Caesarea.
5. Saul then went north to his home town of Tarsus.

religious order, as well as by the secular world.



Lesson Material

The "basket escape" paints an exciting picture in the minds of children. This story is a visual "hook" in the minds of children -- one on which it is possible to "hang" memorable truths.

The main reason Saul was being pursued by the Jews was that he was preaching that Jesus was the Christ. Even today, we will not be attacked for being religious or good "church-goers." The truth which agitates and stirs up dissension is "Jesus is the Christ." No one comes to the Father but by Him. (John 6:44)

For most children, a physical life and death battle is not raging because of their belief in Jesus. However, they are in danger of dying spiritually, as the enemy of their souls wages an attack on their minds and tries to get them to doubt the very heart of this lesson -- Saul proving that Jesus is the Christ. The battle ground is our minds. What do we think concerning Jesus? If He is just a nice person and a good teacher, we have lost the battle. Jesus is the Christ; the Son of the Living God; the Savior of the world; the only One who can forgive our sins and give us eternal life.

Saul was a "completed" Jew. This means he was a Jew who had accepted Jesus as his Savior. The Jewish people traditionally worship the true God, and



Spiritual Truths

- Jesus is the Christ. This truth always stirs up the enemy, Satan, and separates "church-goers" from true believers.
- We need other believers to protect and defend us.
- The Holy Spirit can warn us of the enemy's plan.
- False teachers always attack the deity of Christ.
- To whom much is given, much is required. (Luke 12:48)
- When we accept a man of God, we receive what he has to offer.
- We may suffer persecution or even death; but we do not need to be afraid, because we have the hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ.
- The genuine Christian church is usually attacked by a jealous traditional

base their lives on only the Old Testament. But God designed the old covenants with Abraham, Moses, and others to be a picture of the eternal covenant He would establish. This was accomplished by sending His own Son, a Member of the Triune Godhead, to earth, to pay the penalty for the sins of the world. The old system of sacrifices and rituals made it possible to have a relationship with God; but only the holy blood of the God-man, Jesus, could satisfy the holiness of God and forever wash away the sins of those who would believe. No one could go to heaven when they died, until Jesus paid the price for sin on the cross.

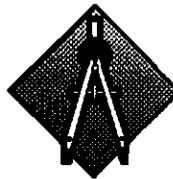
Saul zealously defended his religion and persecuted Christians, until he met Jesus personally. Then he realized that Jesus was the Messiah, the Christ -- God's anointed One, the Savior of the world. Saul then knew that Jesus, rather than being a threat to his faith, was the fulfillment of it. Those who rejected Jesus continued to look and hope for the promised Messiah, not realizing that Jesus Christ fulfilled all of the scriptural requirements. We still have many natural Jews (descendants of Israel) who seek to follow the laws of the true God, and are still looking for the Messiah.

Saul had two groups of enemies. In Damascus, the Jews were seeking his life. They thought they were doing God a favor, by killing this enemy of the Jewish faith. Ironically, the Christians in Jerusalem feared Saul as well, suspecting that he was still loyal to the Jewish religion, and working as a spy.

The other group who tried to kill Saul was the Greeks. They were the secular humanists of the day, who were influenced by immoral men like Socrates and Plato. They sought to explain all of life

through natural things, and rejected the spiritual and the eternal. They viewed man as just another animal, and imagined Christianity to be another man-made religion. The Greeks could not really defeat Paul's arguments through debate, so they wanted to silence him by other means. The Greeks did not want to think of sin and hell. If what Saul was preaching was true, then they were guilty of sin against a holy God. Most preferred to live in sin and convince themselves that they were not accountable.

Because of the great man, Barnabas, Saul was accepted by the Christian leaders in Jerusalem, and the believers helped to protect this dynamic preacher. When they accepted him, they had great rest in their spirits. They received Saul's message, and his message edified them. The result was dramatic growth in the church. When we accept those whom God sends to us, we set ourselves up to receive great blessings.



Methods

Visual

Children remember a visual picture longer than they remember words.

Construct the scene:

1. Use a cardboard box for the buildings and walled city. Draw the gates on the side to look like arches. Cut them out. Place small figurines as guards of the gates.
2. Basket -- small baskets are available at craft stores.

3. Paul (figurine) in a basket .
4. Twine (for rope).

Related story: Josef's Escape

A few years ago, a family in Fort Wayne, Indiana took into their home an Ethiopian refugee named Josef, who shared with them his own dramatic escape from communism. God miraculously guided him as he ran for three days and nights without food or water. At one point Josef collapsed, too weary to continue. When he awoke, instead of finding

himself surrounded by the enemy, Josef was next to a camp of wandering Bedouin shepherds. They offered Josef goat's milk; and he was refreshed enough to continue to the neighboring country of Kenya. Josef arrived there in the rainy season and suffered through some cold, homeless, hungry nights. As Josef trusted God and refused to grumble because of his circumstances, he was led to Bible translators who were from America. They offered Josef a job as a night watchman in their church. Josef's escape finally took him to America, where he and his family worship the God he has learned to trust.

Paul and the High Priest

Volume 3

Lesson 44



Bible References

1 Samuel 24:6

Matthew 23:27

Acts 22

Acts 23:1-5

Romans 13:1-7

1 Timothy 2:1-2

1 Timothy 5:1

Hebrews 13:17

Jude 8-9



Scripture Reading

Acts 22:30

30 "On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from (his) bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them."

Acts 23:1-5

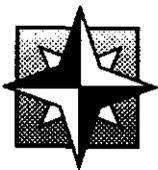
1 "And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men (and) brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

2 "And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.

3 "Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, (thou) whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?

4 "And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest?

5 "Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written,



Theme

We should respect those in authority.

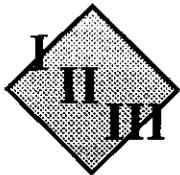
Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people."



Memory Verse

Hebrews 13:17

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account..."



Outline

I. Paul in Court.

- A. The Apostle Paul was persecuted by Jewish leaders.
 1. The leaders sought to kill Paul.
 2. They could not legally kill Paul.
 - a. Paul was a Roman citizen.
 - b. The Hebrew people were under Roman rule.
 - c. The Jews were like slaves, while the Romans were the free citizens.
 - d. Jews had few rights under the cruel Romans.
 - e. That is why the Jewish leaders took Jesus to Pilate, instead of just taking Him to Caiaphas.

- f. Roman law stated that Caiaphas and the priests were not allowed to execute anyone.
3. Paul was a free-born Roman citizen.

B. Paul was accused of heresy, and taken to the religious court in Jerusalem.

1. Paul's only crime was preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. The Pharisees felt that their religious empire was threatened by Jesus.
3. The Pharisees had decided that Jesus was not really their Messiah from God.

II. The High Priest.

A. Paul's remarks.

1. "I have lived a good, honest life."
2. "My conscience is clear."
3. "I am right with God."

B. Ananias, the leading spiritual leader.

1. Ananias was angered by Paul's remarks.
2. Ananias ordered his men to hit Paul in the mouth.

C. Paul's response:

1. "God will slap you, you whitewashed fence."
2. "It is against the law to strike me."
 - a. Jews were not allowed to strike Roman citizens.
 - b. They probably did not realize that Paul was under Roman protection.

III. Reviling.

- A. Someone said to Paul, "How can you speak that way to the high priest?"
- B. Paul's response.
1. "I did not know he was the high priest."
 2. The Bible teaches that we should not speak evil of spiritual leaders.
- C. Respect spiritual leaders.
1. Paul rebuked the man for breaking the law.
 2. Paul would not have rebuked him, had he realized the high priest's office.
 3. The higher the office, the greater the need to show respect.
 4. Paul did not respect the man, but he respected God and the office of high priest.
 5. Paul respected the fact that the high priest had a higher office than he did.
 6. It would have been acceptable for Paul to rebuke another man, but not the leader.
 - a. *"Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father."*
 - b. 1 Timothy 5:1.
- D. David respected King Saul.
1. David showed reverence for Saul, even while the king was trying to kill David.
 2. David trusted God to protect him and deal with the leader.
 3. David refused to raise his hand against the Lord's anointed leader. (1 Samuel 24:6)

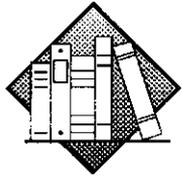
IV. The Need for Reverence.

- A. For Christian leaders.
- B. For parents.
- C. For God's house.
- D. For God's Word.
- E. For civil government.



Spiritual Truths

- We should respect all people, but some have more honor than others.
- We are not to treat those with authority over us as we do our peers.
- Do not rebuke a spiritual leader, but appeal to him as you would your father.
- When we respect human authority, we easily learn respect for God.
- Authority is not a hindrance to freedom, but a means of protection.
- Even if the person does not deserve complete respect, we still honor the office.
- We should pray for all those in authority over us, so that we can have a peaceful life.
- It is very stressful to live under an ungodly authority, but one can still do it with God's grace.



Lesson Material

The Apostle Paul was greatly loved by many people, but he was hated by many Jewish leaders. He boldly preached the faith that he once persecuted. He exalted Jesus. Those who loved Jesus loved Paul, but the enemies of Christ felt threatened by him. The Jewish leaders had rejected the Messiah, and bitterly opposed anyone who honored Him. The Pharisees and priests did not realize it, but they were opposing the God they claimed to serve. They were so concerned with themselves and their traditions, that they failed to see that Jesus was the answer to their national prayers.

The Jewish leaders were frustrated by the powerful Roman Empire. Many years before, they fought against their Greek conquerors, who had treated them harshly. These conquerors had even defiled their temple. The Jews foolishly turned to Rome for military help. The Romans did defeat the Greek Empire, but they turned out to be even more cruel and demanding toward the Hebrew people.

When Jesus came to earth, Rome ruled the known world. Roman citizens were given great favor and had many rights, but the rest of the world suffered under bondage. All who were not Romans paid heavy taxes to Rome, and were obligated to serve the Roman soldiers whenever they were commanded to. In Palestine (called "Judea"), the Jews were allowed to practice their religion and keep their priesthood, but they had little legal power. Caesar did not allow the Jews to carry out capital punishment, which is a key to a

civil government's power. This is why the priests who persecuted and arrested Jesus had to turn Jesus over to Pilate, who was the Roman governor of Judea at the time. Caiaphas could not execute anyone, so the Jewish leaders had to convince the Roman authorities to do it. The Romans had invented a particularly cruel method of execution, called crucifixion.

It was the Jewish ecclesiastical court which arrested and questioned Paul in Jerusalem. Paul had been preaching the Gospel, and was very effective. He began his defense before the priests by saying that he had a clear conscience. In other words, "I have done nothing wrong before God." This angered the high priest, who considered Paul's actions to be treason against the Jewish faith.

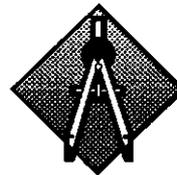
The high priest ordered Paul struck in the face, and Paul was viciously slapped. Paul said, "*God shall smite thee, (thou) whitened wall...*" (Acts 23:3) Jesus had spoken of the Pharisees as "whitewashed sepulchers." (Matthew 23:27) Whitewash was like a very thin, weak paint, which was used to try to cover mold and dirt, in order to give something decayed a fresh appearance. In other words, Paul was calling the man a hypocrite, who had sin in his heart, but tried to act perfect and holy.

When someone told Paul that the man he had just rebuked was the high priest, Paul apologized immediately. Paul had thought that the man was just another Pharisee. When Paul learned of the office, he showed respect, and noted that we are not to speak evil about God's anointed leaders. It had been all right to rebuke a peer (an equal), but it was wrong to rebuke one in spiritual authority.

It is wrong to talk against spiritual leaders, even when they are imperfect. The church has ways to deal with leaders who sin. They are dealt with by other leaders, or by those in authority over them. The Bible notes that carnal people tend to enjoy speaking evil about those in authority. We should respect the office, and trust God to discipline those over us. In fact, Paul told Timothy to pray for everyone in authority over him, so that he could lead a quiet and peaceful life. (1 Timothy 2:1-2)

We are to treat our elders with respect. This starts with the way we address them. Humanism teaches that we are all on earth by chance; and, therefore, we are all "equal." In the classroom, this is often seen by children who call their teachers by their first name. Sadly, this practice has been picked up by some church leaders, in an effort to be familiar with their students. However, it tends to reinforce a lack of respect, which is demonstrated in the way children treat these adults. It is not wise for any teacher to give children the right to call them by their first name. The children should at least add some kind of title, such as "Miss Rose," or "Mr. Dave." Only those who are peers or authority figures should call you "Bob" or "George." An adult teacher who gives children his first name is giving them power that they should not

have. This is a part of the reason that children tend to have greater respect for secular teachers than for church leaders. They are not given that kind of power in school.



Methods

Emphasis

Be sure to note the difference between the kind of philosophy that comes out of humanism, and that which is from God. God sets us in families, and commands us to honor our parents. Some people are more worthy than others, but we still respect the office.

Note the power that is in a name. We can crush someone's spirit with a mocking nickname, or we can greatly diminish the influence of a leader with a casual first-name basis. Practice with the class addressing various individuals, and be sure to use some kind of title for Pastor, Teacher, Mr., Mrs., Miss, etc. Note that "Pastor Smith" may be addressed simply by the title "Pastor," but never as "Smith," or as "Bob."

Thank God for Mom

Volume 3

Lesson 45



Bible References

Ruth 1-4

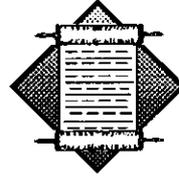
Proverbs 6:20-22

Proverbs 22:15

Proverbs 29:15

Malachi 4:6

Colossians 3:20



Scripture Reading

Ruth 2:8-12

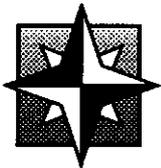
8 "Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens:

9 "(Let) thine eyes {be} on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of {that} which the young men have drawn.

10 "Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I {am} a stranger?

11 "And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been showed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and {how} thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore.

12 "The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust."



Theme

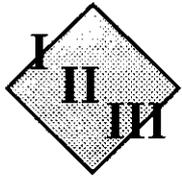
Good things happen to you when you choose to obey your Mother.



Memory Verse

Colossians 3:20

"Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is wellpleasing unto the Lord."



Outline

I. The Location.

A. Moab.

1. A heathen nation.
2. Descended from Moab, Lot's son through incest.
3. Moabites worshipped the demonic god, Chemosh.

B. Bethlehem.

1. A small town in Canaan (later called Judea).
2. An Israelite town.
3. Families were all given land, which was to be kept in the family perpetually.

II. The Situation.

A. Naomi, a Jewess, and her family went to Moab.

1. They sought to escape famine by going to "the world."

2. Naomi's husband and two sons died in Moab.
 - a. Maybe it was not such a good idea to have left Bethlehem.
 - b. Sometimes people leave the church where God has planted them, because they think things are "dry."
 - c. Unlike Abraham, God did not tell Elimelech to go to Moab.
 - d. Elimelech went there, because he was afraid he might die in Bethlehem.
 - e. Elimelech died.

B. Naomi returned to Bethlehem.

1. Ruth followed her.
 - a. Both of Naomi's sons had married Moabite girls.
 - b. Both sons had died.
 - c. Ruth and Naomi were both widows.
 - d. Moabites did not usually care for widows.
2. Ruth helped Naomi.

C. Ruth met Boaz.

1. Gleaning in the fields of Boaz.
 - a. God required Israelites to leave some of the harvest in the fields for the poor.
 - b. The poor people could have what was left in the fields, if they did the work of harvesting.
 - c. If someone would not work, he did not eat.
2. Ruth slept on threshing floor.
 - a. She appealed to Boaz to be her spiritual covering.
 - b. She was obeying Naomi's counsel.

3. Boaz married Ruth.
 - a. Boaz was a close relative of Elimelech.
 - b. Boaz was allowed to buy back Elimelech's land, and take the widow, Ruth as his wife.

III. Their Responses.

A. Naomi -- mother figure.

1. Blesses. (Ruth 1:8-9)
2. Sacrifices. (Ruth 1:11-15)
3. Warns. (Ruth 2:22)
4. Provides. (Ruth 3:1)

B. Ruth -- child figure.

1. Respects. (Ruth 2:2)
2. Receives. (Ruth 2:10)
3. Obeys. (Ruth 3:5)

IV. The Results.

A. Ruth was redeemed by Boaz.

B. Ruth became an ancestor of Jesus.

1. She became part of the genealogy of David and of Jesus.
2. Ruth "lived happily ever after."

- A mother's heart knows sacrificial giving.
- We strongly disagree with those in education and entertainment who are desiring to turn the hearts of children away from their parents.
- Mothers have insight, and can warn their children of impending danger.
- A godly mother will point you in the direction of your Redeemer.
- A child who operates in the principle of obedience will be blessed by the Lord and be used to reveal Jesus to the world.



Lesson Material

"It is not that I do not want to obey my mother, but she is always asking me to do things." "I cannot have a moment for myself." "She acts as though it is a crime to sit in front of the television." "Why does she always have to be on my case about something?" "I am old enough to know what is best for me."

Does this sound familiar? Every young person struggles with those feelings. They want their freedom and independence and wonder why they need a mother to "boss" them. The answer to that question can be found in the book of Proverbs. Proverbs 29:15 says, "...a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." Proverbs 22:15 says, "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child...."



Spiritual Truths

- God gives mothers a special heart of love and devotion for their children.
- A mother's love blesses and builds up her children.

Today, there is a strong anti-family bias in secular education and media, that is literally designed to alienate children from their parents. Christians are fighting a battle for family values and biblical morality; but the opposition is powerful and dogmatic. Christianity is reviled on television, avoided and rejected in public schools, and ridiculed in the movies.

We need to emphasize creation and reinforce the family. Bible teachers should be clearly on the side of parents, because God is. John Dewey and other leaders of modern education were committed to socialism. They viewed the family as an obstacle to world socialism. He wanted to "liberate" children from the values of their parents, and teach them that they should make their own decisions. Parents are portrayed as obstacles to freedom and as members of an obsolete generation, which does not understand children.

The purpose of God is to "...turn...the heart of the children to their fathers." (Malachi 4:6) We should teach children to honor their parents, even if they are not Christians. We should honor and obey God first, and we must not disobey the Bible at any time. Children need to be encouraged to view the authority of parents as protection, not bondage.

No one loves as a mother loves. There is a unique bonding that comes from carrying a child for nine months and then giving birth. Normally, mothers are willing to lay down their lives for their children. Mothers sacrifice for their children, and want the best for them. Generally, when mothers "nag," they are seeking to develop behavior traits, which will result in a successful life.

Tell the children to imagine themselves as uncut, unpolished

diamonds. Their mothers are a tool in God's hands to mold and shape. Each time mother scolds and disciplines, she is chiseling away undesirable traits and helping to transform their personality and character into a beautiful, precious gem.

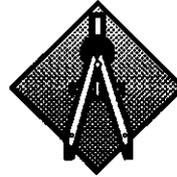
Mothers are called of God to build character and discipline. If we do not learn obedience from them, we will have to experience many more of life's harsh, painful, learning experiences.

The training of a young wood duck gives us an example from nature of the importance of learning obedience from our mothers. The mother wood duck carefully lays between six and eight eggs, ten to twenty feet off the ground, in the hollow of a tree. She selects this spot very carefully. A low nest would make the eggs vulnerable to thieving raccoons. An excessively high nest would make the downward leap to the ground very dangerous. When the ducklings are one day old, mother duck carefully scouts the area for predators, such as minks or raccoons, hiding in the tall grass. Even the sky is scanned by her caring eye, for hawks and owls. Nearby water must be free of frogs and snapping turtles. When the coast is clear, mother duck jumps from the nest and calls her young to follow. One by one, the newborn ducklings, appear at the 4" opening to make the great leap. This is equivalent to a man jumping 400 feet. Mother patiently coaxes. If the duckling obeys, it will be led to water and on its way to learn the necessary skills for survival. If he does not obey his mother, he remains in the nest and awaits a certain death.

In the book of Ruth, we discover the gifting at work that God has planted in the heart of mothers. Naomi is the mother figure, and Ruth is the child figure. When Naomi says, "Turn again, my daughters:

why will ye go with me?..." (Ruth 1:11) what she is really saying is, "I am more interested in your happiness than my own." Mothers desire to see their children blessed and fulfilled. We catch a glimpse of a mother's heart in Ruth 1:8-9. Naomi says in this passage, "...the LORD deal kindly with you..." and "The LORD grant you that ye may find rest..." Children often question, "If mother really wants to bless me, why does she force me to eat my vegetables; go to the dentist; or go to bed earlier than my friends?" The answer is that she has better insight than her children, and is looking toward the future. She is working toward their ultimate welfare.

Naomi's plan for Ruth's future unfolds in Ruth chapter 3. Ruth's response to her mother-in-law's directive should be every child's. She replies, "...All that thou sayest unto me I will do." (Ruth 3:5). The world is not a safe place. Mothers can understand the pitfalls better than children. In Ruth 2:22, we see Naomi warning Ruth to go with the maidens to Boaz's field, because Ruth might be harmed in someone else's field.



Methods

Brainstorming:

Allow the class to discuss the situation presented in the last paragraph of the lesson material. Bring the illustration to modern day situations -- as it is not likely that any member of the class will find themselves in the situation of field gleaning. What have their mothers been telling them, to warn and protect them?

In order to get the class to participate in the group discussion about mother's warnings, on a blackboard or large poster board, draw a large circle in the middle. Inside the circle write, "Mother knows best." Draw spokes outward from the circle in the center of the board, and put slightly smaller circles at the end of each spoke. Fill in the circles on the spokes with each child's answer to the question, "How has your mother helped you not get hurt?" (Examples: do not accept rides with strangers; look both ways before crossing a street.)

Tabitha, Arise

Volume 3

Lesson 46



Bible References

Ecclesiastes 3:2

Matthew 5:14

Matthew 28:18

Mark 16:15-19

Luke 6:38

Luke 10:19

John 14:12

John 20:21

Acts 9:32-42

Ephesians 2:8-10



Scripture Reading

Acts 9:36-42

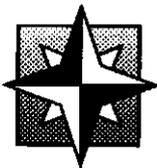
36 "Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.

37 "And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid {her} in an upper chamber.

38 "And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring {him} that he would not delay to come to them.

39 "Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.

40 "But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning {him} to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.



Theme

Jesus gave His disciples power to heal the sick and raise the dead, just as He had.

41 "And he gave her (his) hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.

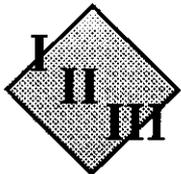
42 "And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord."



Memory Verse

James 5:15

"And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up."



Outline

I. Tabitha.

A. A woman from Joppa.

1. "Tabitha" ("Dorcas") means "gazelle."
2. Tabitha was a lovely person.
3. Tabitha was a good worker who helped the poor.
4. "Almsdeeds" means to give "volunteer service."
5. Tabitha was a popular lady, because she was so unselfish.
6. Tabitha was called a "disciple."
 - a. This was a reference to the fact that she was a follower of Jesus.
 - b. "Disciplined one."

- c. The followers of Jesus were later called "Christians."
- d. Tabitha was a Christian before the term "Christian" originated.

B. Joppa.

1. An ancient city on the Mediterranean Sea.
2. About thirty miles from Jerusalem.
3. A seaport city.

C. Tabitha became sick and died.

1. Tabitha's body was washed, and placed in a room.
2. Some people called for the Apostle Peter, who was in a nearby city.

II. Peter.

A. The Apostle Peter.

1. Peter had walked with Jesus personally, during Jesus' earthly ministry.
2. Peter was one of the original twelve disciples, who later became apostles.
3. Peter was a leader in the Church that Jesus established.
4. Peter was a bold preacher, and he had great spiritual power.

B. Peter in Lydda. (Acts 9:32-35)

1. Peter went to visit the Christians -- called "saints" -- in Lydda.
2. Peter met Aeneas, who had been bedfast for 8 years with a degenerative muscle disease, such as muscular dystrophy.
3. Peter said to Aeneas, "...Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed."
4. The man was instantly healed.

5. The whole town of Lydda turned to the Lord, as a result of this miracle.
6. God uses miracles to show people His love and saving power.
7. Peter wanted to glorify Jesus, not himself.

C. Two men went to Lydda to ask Peter to come and pray for Tabitha.

1. Peter went with them to Joppa.
2. The people were weeping over their loss.
3. They told about the good deeds Tabitha had done for the poor.
4. Peter had everyone leave the room.
5. Peter prayed alone, and then told Tabitha to rise up.
6. Peter took Tabitha's hand, and led her to the window, where he presented her to the people.
7. As a result, there were many who believed on the Lord.

III. We Are to Be Like Jesus.

A. Jesus calls His disciples to go forth in His name, to do His work in the earth.

1. "...As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." (John 20:21)
2. "Ye are the light of the world..." (Matthew 5:14)
3. Jesus had said that He was the light of the world.
4. The Church is Jesus' body, designed to do on the earth what He began.
5. "...all power is given unto me..." (Matthew 28:18)
6. "Behold, I give unto you power..." (Luke 10:19)

B. Christian.

1. Means "little Christ."

2. Jesus intends for us to carry on His work on earth.
3. "He that believeth on Me,... greater works than these shall he do." (John 14:12)
4. Evidence of faith -- "These signs shall follow them that believe..." (Mark 16:17-18)

C. Healing.

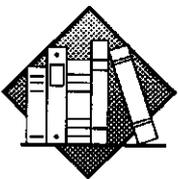
1. Healing is not based on works.
2. Tabitha was raised from the dead because of the faith of Peter and the Christians who were praying for her.
3. God still heals today, as a response to the faith of believers.
4. "Healing" means "supernaturally recovering from sickness or disease, or being preserved from an early death."
5. God does not always heal when we want Him to, or in the way that we desire.
 - a. There is a time to die. (Ecclesiastes 3:2)
 - b. Sometimes we are sick, because of our own wrong actions or attitudes.
 - c. We should pray with faith, but not with presumption -- demanding that God do what we want.
6. We should pray for healing, with the motive to glorify God.



Spiritual Truths

- Both God and people notice our works.

- There are rewards for faithfulness and unselfishness.
- Tabitha was raised from the dead because of the faith of Peter, not because of her works.
- The goal of every Christian should be to be like Jesus.
- The power that Jesus had through the Holy Spirit is available to us today.
- God still heals and raises the dead today.
- Together, we continue the ministry which Jesus began on earth 2,000 years ago.
- We have power over demons and sickness, when we go as servants of Jesus Christ.
- We do not follow signs, but signs should follow us as believers.
- Christians are also called "believers," "disciples," and "saints" in the New Testament.



Lesson Material

Peter was a follower of Jesus Christ. Peter had his "ups and downs" during the time of Jesus' earthly ministry. In fact, Peter denied the Lord three times, when Jesus was being crucified. But Peter repented, and he became a bold witness for the Lord. Peter was fully committed to Jesus for the rest of his life. Later, Peter was crucified upside down in Rome, because of

his faith and his great ministry for the Lord.

Peter was an apostle. That is, he was a spiritual leader and overseer in the church. He was a "pastor's pastor." Peter visited the churches, and was very close the Lord, as he encouraged the persecuted saints in Palestine and Galilee. His whole life was focused on doing the work Jesus began to do on earth. He healed many sick people, and that always gave him a ready audience for his message. Peter was always quick to give the credit to Jesus.

In Lydda, Peter met a man who had been bedfast for eight years. Everyone knew of his condition. But Peter had great faith, and healed the man instantly. The whole town then responded to the Gospel message. Peter did not need advertising or music or crusades. He had the power of God, and the people could see God in his life.

When Tabitha (a very popular woman from nearby Joppa) died, her friends called for the Apostle Peter. They knew that Jesus had raised people from the dead; and they realized that it was possible for His disciples to do everything Jesus had done in His ministry. They could see that Jesus, although He had gone to heaven, was still with Peter and the other disciples. But now, as the resurrected King, Jesus could be everywhere at the same time, along with the mighty Holy Spirit and the Father.

Tabitha was not healed as a reward for her good works. However, the people were highly motivated to go out of their way to pray and intercede on her behalf, because she was so greatly loved. There is a reward for faithfulness. When we love and help others, it returns to us. Tabitha was a Christian who radiated the love of Jesus.

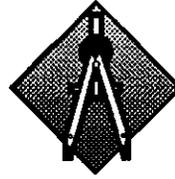
Because she knew God loved her, she felt free to give herself to others. She was not seeking to be loved. She was fulfilled in her heart, and so she had the freedom to give of herself to others.

Jesus taught that our giving causes people to return generosity back upon us. (Luke 6:38) People often give back to those who are know how to give. The people of Joppa prayed for Tabitha, even after she died. They still sent for the Apostle Peter, who was in Lydda. They were expecting something supernatural. They knew that Peter knew Jesus, and that there was nothing too hard for Jesus to do.

We do not understand why God heals some people and not others. But we do know that God wants us to pray for the sick, and He wants us to believe for miracles of healing. God wants us to look to Him as our first resource and go to prayer, before we seek out doctors. It is all right to go the doctors and hospitals when we are sick or injured; but we should always pray in faith, too.

Usually, when people die, we accept it and minister to the family. There is a time for all of us to die. But God still raises the dead in response to believing prayer. This is happening more frequently in developing nations, where money is scarce but faith is high. God extended the life of

Tabitha, and she was able to be an even more effective soul-winner after her experience.



Methods

Encouragement

Ephesians 2:10 says that we are created "...unto good works..." Most know about verses 8 and 9, which say that we are saved by grace through faith, not of works. But we often ignore the next verse, which says that salvation results in a changed lifestyle, characterized by good works. We must keep it in context. We are not saved by works, but if we are really saved, we will do good as a result. If our lifestyle has not changed, then we need to check our foundation. Real salvation makes us new creatures in Christ.

This lesson encourages us to believe for miracles. God has as much power today as He had when Peter was still alive. We have access to the same Holy Spirit who empowered Peter to raise the dead. Jesus is alive and well, and He is doing great things all over the world.

Freedom

Volume 3

Lesson 47



Bible References

Acts 12:1-19

1 Thessalonians 5:17

1 Timothy 2:1-2

James 5:16



Scripture Reading

Acts 12:1-16

1 *"Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth (his) hands to vex certain of the church.*

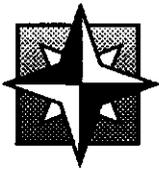
2 *"And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.*

3 *"And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)*

4 *"And when he had apprehended him, he put (him) in prison, and delivered (him) to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.*

5 *"Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.*

6 *"And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.*



Theme

God can dispatch angels, when we pray in faith.

7 "And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon {him}, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from {his} hands.

8 "And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

9 "And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.

10 "When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.

11 "And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and {from} all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

12 "And when he had considered {the thing}, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.

13 "And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda.

14 "And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate.

15 "And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel.

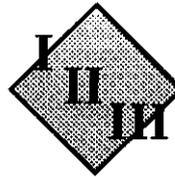
16 "But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened {the door}, and saw him, they were astonished."



Memory Verse

Acts 12:5

"...but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him."



Outline

I. The Persecution.

A. Herod, the Roman governor in Palestine, was persecuting the Christians.

1. This was the first time since Paul's conversion that persecution against the church was noted in Acts.
2. It was now the civil authorities, rather than just the Pharisees, who are doing the persecuting.

B. Herod selected for execution certain leaders of the movement.

1. Herod wanted to put fear in the hearts of the people.
2. The Romans wanted power for themselves, and had resented the popularity of Jesus.

C. Herod had arrested James.

1. James was one of the first three apostles selected by Jesus.
2. James was beheaded.
3. He became one of the first martyrs of the Church.

D. After James' execution, Herod arrested Peter.

1. Herod had Peter put in prison.
2. Herod decided to have Peter executed after Easter.
 - a. Herod did not want the Jesus' followers to think of Peter as a martyr; so he did not have Peter executed on the anniversary of the resurrection of Jesus.
 - b. It was the Passover feast, and Herod did not want to anger the Jewish leaders.
 - c. Unlike the swift deaths of Stephen and James, Peter's imprisonment gave the church time to pray.

II. The Prayer.

A. The church gathered together and prayed.

1. The church prayed unceasingly.
2. The church prayed specifically for Peter's safety and release.

B. God heard and answered their prayers.

1. God did not answer their prayer immediately.
2. At the final hour, just before Peter was to be executed, God answered.
 - a. God knew that the faith of the people would be strengthened, as they continued to pray.
 - b. God's timetable is not always what we have in mind, but it is always accurate.

III. The Passage.

A. An angel came to Peter.

1. The angel woke Peter from his sleep.
2. The angel then told Peter to follow him.

B. The miraculous escape.

1. The guards were put to sleep by the angel.
2. No one bothered Peter and the angel.
3. They escaped into the streets of Jerusalem.
 - a. Peter was not even sure it was all happening.
 - b. He thought it may have been a vision or a dream.
 - c. The angel vanished after releasing Peter.

IV. The Presentation.

A. The church was still praying.

B. Peter went to Mary's house. Mary was the mother of John Mark.

1. Peter knocked, but only one person heard him.

2. Rhoda, a young girl, came to the gate.
3. Rhoda recognized Peter's voice.
4. Instead of opening the door, in her excitement, she ran to tell the others.

C. The believers' unbelief.

1. Rhoda told them that Peter was at the gate.
2. They did not believe her.
3. The Christians thought it was Peter's ghost.
4. Finally, someone opened the gate for Peter.

D. The believers' praise.

1. Peter told them what had happened in the prison.
2. Peter then went to a place of safety.

- God has millions of angels in the world who can help us, when we pray to Him for help or protection.
- God often chooses to wait to intervene, until we turn to Him in believing prayer.
- Peter was prepared to give his life as a martyr for the faith, just as we should be.
- When we do good, Satan hates us.
- Prayer should not just be the last resort.
- Prayer is really the most effective thing we can do, in the midst of spiritual conflicts.



Spiritual Truths

- God listens to the prayers of His people.
- When God's people are doing God's work, there will also come persecution.
- Persecution means the mean, and sometimes violent, opposition by enemies.
- God can do the miraculous.
- God loves it when we pray unselfish prayers of intercession.



Lesson Material

After Jesus ascended to heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to give boldness and power to His disciples. They were very effective in spreading the Gospel, and thousands of people became devoted followers of Jesus Christ. The church thrived under the leadership of Peter and the other apostles.

However, persecution also increased. The devil hated this exciting, new church. Herod was now taking a more commanding role in both the political and religious affairs of Israel. He felt threatened by the Christians, and had determined to put a stop to their movement. Herod did not persecute all of the Christians, as Saul had sought to do, but chose instead to select certain leaders and use them as examples. He began this

persecution by capturing and beheading James. James was one of the first apostles called by Jesus, so his death had alarmed the church. Perhaps it was because it happened so quickly. You may note that there was no mention of the church coming together for prayer for James, as is reported when Peter was arrested. Maybe the Christians did not believe that Herod would actually execute James. Perhaps it was done so quickly, that they could not react. But whatever the situation, when Peter was arrested, the entire local church went to prayer.

Does God hear our prayers? The answer is, Yes! Here is a perfect example of God answering the unceasing prayers of His people. Note, however, that the deliverance did not come immediately. Peter's deliverance took place after several days of prayer and at the last minute. Just hours before Peter was to be executed, God raised His hand and sent deliverance to Peter as an answer to the believers' prayers.

An angel came to deliver Peter from what would seem to be an impossible situation. Herod had secured Peter in such a manner, that Peter felt no one could help him escape. He was handcuffed between two guards and locked in a cell. There was no way for Peter to escape, or for others to free him. But God can do all things.

Before God even created the earth, He created possibly billions of spirit beings called "angels." The word "angel" means "messenger." Throughout history, God has used angels to deliver messages and to defend the people who pray. One-third of the angels fell into pride and sin when Lucifer -- now known as Satan -- rebelled against God; but the rest of the angels remained faithful to God. The angels can

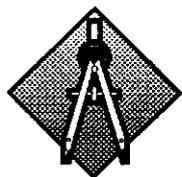
appear in a human-like form, but they are not humans. Angels are very powerful.

The angel awakened Peter. Peter was not lying awake, fretting over his fate. He was asleep, knowing that if God was going to deliver him, He would do so. Peter also knew that if he was to die, then he would be in the presence of Jesus again. This was a true demonstration of Peter's faith. After the angel woke Peter, he told Peter to rise up and get ready. Peter dressed, and put on his sandals. The angel cast a light that was bright enough for Peter to see in the darkened cell. The handcuffs fell off of Peter's wrists, and he was able to walk freely through the opened cell doors. Peter and the angel walked through each check point, and were never stopped or questioned. They came to the iron gate, and it opened by itself! God had provided a miracle. Peter found himself on the streets of Jerusalem, wondering if it had really happened, but finally concluding that he was free and God had delivered him.

When Peter came to the home of Mary, John Mark's mother, where the people had gathered, he must have been anxious to let them know that he was alive. He knocked on the door of the gate, but everyone was so busy praying, that only a young girl heard and came to the door. She was so excited to hear the voice of Peter, that instead of opening the gate, she ran back to those who were in prayer and told them that Peter was at the gate. They did not believe her. They had been so consumed by their prayers, that they had given up hope. They could not believe this young girl could be bringing them the message that they had been praying for. Many times God uses children to bring us the answers to our prayers. The people said that Rhoda was mad (crazy).

Then, others heard the knocking at the door. Would it not have been terrible to have been rescued from prison only to be recaptured at the house of his fellow believers because they did not believe in the miracle? The second time they heard the voice, they presumed it to be the ghost of Peter. This was again a lack of faith in the answer to their prayers. But finally, someone went to the door and let Peter in. There was a short time of excitement and joy; and then, Peter had to depart in order to go into seclusion, for safety's sake.

God wants us to know that He is in charge all of the time. We should not be weary of prayer, but trust that He is always in control. This is the emphasis of this lesson -- God answers prayers. Even when we do not see the answer immediately, or when it is not the answer that we thought we wanted, God is still in control and in the prayer-answering business. The Lord will reveal to you later why He did some things the way He did them. For now, we need to stand firm in our faith and our trust in Him.



Methods

Discuss the following questions:

Why was such a good man put in prison?

Wicked men always want power over others. When evil rulers want to promote

wickedness nationally, they feel resistance by Christians. The Roman Empire was ruled by evil men who felt threatened by Christianity. They wanted people to be afraid to follow Jesus, but their persecution did not work.

What is freedom?

Peter was really more free in prison than were the Romans around him. He had the power to do what was right, and the assurance that God was on the throne. Peter did not fear death, because that meant great reward.

What is a martyr?

A martyr is anyone who is killed by the enemies of Jesus because of his faith and ministry. Actually, there have been more Christians martyred in this century, than in all of previous history. God promises a special, heavenly crown for those who are martyred for their faith in Him.

Skit

Have a person dress up to play the part of Rhoda. If you have a child in your class who has the ability to play this part, give her the script at least a week in advance and have her play the part. Have this person tell all about what happened with James and then the arrest of Peter. Have Rhoda recount the escape and all of the guards whom Peter had to go past. Then have her relate what happened at the house, and how no one believed her, when she told the believers that it was Peter who was at the door.

In the Twinkling of an Eye

Volume 3

Lesson 48



Bible References

Matthew 24:33-42

Luke 18:8

1 Corinthians 15:51-52

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

2 Peter 3:10 -11

Jude 23



Scripture Reading

1 Corinthians 15:51-52

51 *"Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,*

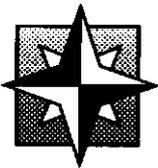
52 *"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."*

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

16 *"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:*

17 *"Then we which are alive (and) remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

18 *"Wherefore comfort one another with these words."*



Theme

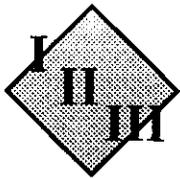
The rapture of the church.



Memory Verse

1 Corinthians 15:52

"...for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."



Outline

I. What Is "the Rapture?"

A. The word, "rapture."

1. "Rapture" is not found in the Bible.
2. It is a word that Christians use to describe the event referred to in 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4.
3. "Rapture" literally means:
 - a. Great joy;
 - b. A thrill;
 - c. A catching away.

B. Christians view the rapture as:

1. The great hope of the Church.
 - a. The great expectation.
 - b. The great taking away.
2. The great meeting in the air.
 - a. With Christians who have died and are now in heaven.
 - b. With the saints who are still alive on this earth when Jesus comes.

3. The trumpet of God.
 - a. Trumpets speak prophetically of great events.
 - b. Trumpets are used to announce great events.

II. When Will the Rapture Occur?

A. No man knows.

1. Many will try to figure out a date.
 - a. Many dates have been given by religious leaders, but all have been wrong so far.
 - b. Only God knows.
2. There will be signs preceding the rapture.
3. No one really knows the date.
 - a. The apostles believed it would occur in their day.
 - b. Many believed it would happen during their lifetime.
 - c. Many people have placed their faith in a false date, and then lost their faith when Jesus did not cooperate with their schedule.

B. Only God knows the hour and the day.

1. We are to always be ready.
2. We will not know when it will occur, until we actually hear the shout of the Lord.
3. The saddest aspect of the rapture is that there will be many who are not ready.

III. What Will Happen During the Rapture?

A. We will meet Christ in the air.

1. In the twinkling of an eye.
 - a. A twinkling is less than a full blink.
 - b. A partial blink, when the eyelid twitches.
 - c. About one-tenth of a second.
2. At the trump of God.

B. We will meet other believers in the air.

1. Born-again, redeemed saints of God.
2. "Saints" means "sanctified ones."
3. We do not expect to see "carnal" Christians in the rapture.

C. We will meet the Lord in the air.

1. We will rule on earth with Christ during the millennial reign.
2. One thousand years of peace, when Satan is bound.

IV. How Do We Prepare for the Rapture?

A. Be born again.

1. Repent of your sins.
2. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. Give your heart and life to Him.
4. Receive Jesus as the Lord of your life.

B. Live for God instead of for self.

1. Live each moment as if Christ is standing next to you, because He is.
2. Live each moment as if it will be the last, because it may be.

C. Be prepared.

1. When Jesus comes, what will you be doing?
2. Always be prepared for Jesus' return.

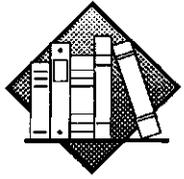
D. Look forward to the rapture.

1. Those who do not love Jesus are afraid of that day.
2. We will spend eternity with Jesus.
3. All the saints will be there with us.
4. Have joy, and look forward to that blessed day when Jesus will come again.



Spiritual Truths

- Christ is coming back for His bride, the Church.
- Jesus is coming back for those who love and serve Him.
- Believing that Jesus is Lord is not enough.
- Even Satan knows who Jesus is.
- We must be born again by the Spirit of God to have eternal life.
- No man knows the time or the hour that the rapture will occur, so be ready at all times.
- Look forward with great joy to the day and time of the rapture.
- If you are not a child of God, you have reason to fear.



Lesson Material

As with the word, "Trinity," the word, "rapture" is not found in the Bible, but is a word designed to express a purely biblical truth. It is an important part of the second coming of Christ to the earth, and is the glorious hope of the true Christian. The rapture greatly inspired the Apostle Paul and the other leaders of the church, with hope and expectation. Remember that the term, "church" refers to the total company of genuinely born-again people, and not to any earthly group or denomination.

In the dictionary, the word, "rapture" is one which relates to feelings of joy and ecstasy. "Rapture" is also defined as a "catching up." These are descriptive terms which rightly define the feeling we will have when the biblical "rapture of the church" occurs. We define the rapture to be the event that is described in 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15, describing the great taking away of the church.

Jesus Himself warned that He would come at a time when He is not expected, (Matthew 24:33-42) as a "thief in the night." (2 Peter 3:10) This is because He wants a people who serve Him out of love, and not those who simply want to avoid hell. Everyone wants to go to heaven, but not everyone wants to obey God, or to know Jesus as the Lord of their lives. People want to be in control of their own lives, and God will let them, if they so choose. But God's kingdom is for those who choose Him to be their King.

The church is composed of the saints of God who have been born of the Spirit and

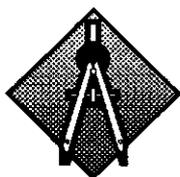
live for the Lord. Jesus told us to "...occupy till I come." (Luke 19:13) Jesus will come "as a thief in the night," so that no one will be able to have a last-minute conversion. Jesus wants to be loved; and He wants a people who will love Him and serve Him, because it has been their decision to do so.

There are some Bible scholars who believe that some of the people who are born-again believers will not go in the rapture -- that only those who are saved and faithful will go. The stories in Matthew 25 do seem to indicate that some of the believers failed to make it in, when the bridegroom came. We should not be dogmatic, but we should always exhort Christians to fear the Lord, and to remain as close to God as possible. Some Christians have been reassured many times that they are "going to make it in," regardless of how selfishly and sinfully they have been living. It is a much safer position to live for the Lord as closely as possible and allow the Lord to judge us according to our good deeds, rather than stand before Him fearfully, because we did not completely live for Him.

Many of us have visualized world chaos after the rapture, with cars spinning out of control on highways as drivers are snatched away from the steering wheels, and planes crashing into mountains as pilots are taken. The Bible does not mention the reaction of the world after the rapture occurs, other than to say that the world will continue in its wickedness. In fact, Jesus once said, "*When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*" (Luke 18:8) We should each make sure we are full of faith and ready for His return.

There is a time and a place for the fear of the Lord. Jude said to save some with

fear as a motivation to run from sin and into the Spirit. (Jude 23) It is also important to view life from Peter's perspective, who said, "*Seeing that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be...?*" (2 Peter 3:11) Note also that the preceding verse includes a reference to cataclysmic events, possibly such as the explosions of nuclear weapons, that accompany the coming of the Lord as a "thief in the night."



Methods

What if?

The world desires to have us focus on the moment, and make decisions based on

temporal values. Compare the world's perspective with that of the early Christians, who were looking for Jesus to come any day.

What if Jesus were to come tonight, and today was your last day to prepare? Would you do anything differently?

What if you knew that every possession you had would disappear at midnight, and all you would have is what you had given to God?

Christian World View

Emphasize the perspective on life which centers on God and His purposes, rather than on the fatalistic and hopeless philosophy of secular humanism. What does it mean to "live for Jesus?"

Like a Mighty Rushing Wind

Volume 3

Lesson 49



Bible References

Acts 2:1-21

Acts 10:46-48

Acts 11:16

1 Corinthians 14:1-27

Jude 20



Scripture Reading

Acts 2:1-4

1 *"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*

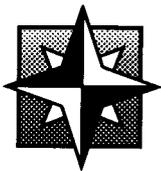
2 *"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.*

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."*

Acts 11:16

"John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost."



Theme

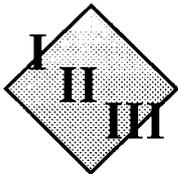
Jesus wants every Christian to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit.



Memory Verse

Acts 2:4

"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."



Outline

I. What Happened on That Day?

A. There were physical manifestations.

1. The Jew followed signs.
2. They did not believe what they could not see.
3. God did not send wind or tongues of fire to believers, after that first day.
4. After that first day, the believers did continue to receive the sign of speaking in tongues, when they were baptized in the Spirit.
 - a. Christians today continue to receive the same sign.
 - b. "Tongues" is speaking in a language we did not learn and do not understand.
 - c. Tongues is a supernatural sign of a supernatural gift.

B. The manifestations represented the types of the Holy Spirit.

1. The Holy Spirit is like the wind, in that He is unseen.
 - a. We only see Him in His manifestations.
 - b. We cannot see wind. We can only see the results.
 - c. The Holy Spirit moves our hearts and our spirits.
2. The Holy Spirit is like fire.
 - a. He was manifested with the cloven tongues of fire.
 - b. Fire is used to refine gold.
 - c. The Holy Spirit was sent to refine and purify us.
 - d. Fire is used to create power.
 - e. The Holy Spirit is the one who gives us power in our lives.

II. What Was the Result of the Wind and the Fire?

A. All of the people in the room were filled with the Holy Spirit.

B. They received the very power of God in their lives.

1. The Spirit manifested Himself.
2. With the Spirit came spiritual gifts and manifestations.

C. This baptism in the Holy Spirit was confirmed by the manifestation of speaking in other tongues.

1. Tongues is speaking in a language which is unknown to us.
2. The Holy Spirit gives us the words, but we must speak out and obey.
3. Tongues is not just babbling and sound.
4. Tongues is a real language.

III. Who Can Receive This Baptism?

- A. Any child of God who asks for it.
1. The receiver of tongues must be first be born again.
 2. The Spirit cannot reside in an unclean house.
 3. Light cannot dwell with darkness.
- B. Anyone wanting the gift of tongues must desire to have the gift that the Lord offers freely to them.

IV. Why Receive the Baptism?

- A. The baptism in the Holy Spirit will enable you to have a greater boldness in your praying.
- B. When we do not know specifically how to pray, the gift of tongues will enable us to pray with more than our own understanding.
- C. As we pray in our prayer language -- tongues -- the Spirit will give us the utterance to pray unto God words and things which our minds would not know or understand. (1 Corinthians 14:2)
1. Pray with the spirit.
 2. Pray often in tongues.
 3. Use this "prayer language" when praying for others.



Spiritual Truths

- God has promised to send His Holy Spirit to mankind.
- On the day of Pentecost, God sent the Holy Spirit to man; and He was manifested in tongues, wind, and fire.
- Speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance is still God's initial manifestation of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
- The titles of "Holy Spirit" and "Holy Ghost" are equally acceptable.
- God wants us to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
- Speaking in tongues builds Christians in their spirit.
- When we pray in tongues, our spirit communicates with God's Spirit.



Lesson Material

When the day of Pentecost came, the believers were gathered in Jerusalem, as Jesus had commanded them. They were praying in one accord (in love and unity). The Holy Spirit came from heaven, with the sound of a mighty rushing wind. Then "cloven tongues" like fire came upon the heads of all who were present. That is, the image of fire appeared over the heads of

the 120 faithful believers. They were still waiting in obedience to the command Jesus had given them about ten days earlier. The fire apparently was "cloven," or split like a hoof. There was also the sound of a great wind. The Bible does not say they *felt* wind, but that the sound was like a great wind.

These manifestations were not necessary for the believers to know that they had received the Holy Spirit. However, because the Jews were more inclined to believe only the miraculous and the visible, God chose to bring the manifestation of the Holy Spirit to the believers in this manner. God gave visible and audible signs to confirm this initial outpouring of the Spirit. Later passages in the Bible do not always mention that the people spoke in tongues. But there are no passages when which imply that they did not; and, even when tongues are not mentioned, the context shows that something supernatural occurred. While the Bible nowhere else mentions fire and wind relating to this baptism, there are many references to tongues.

When the Holy Spirit came, all those who were in the room were filled. This is because they were all in one accord -- they had all gathered together to pray in unity for the power of God. God was pleased with their spirit of love and obedience, and gave this great blessing to every believer who was there.

"Tongues" refers to our spirit language, directed to God. *"For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God...."* (1 Corinthians 14:2) The believers did not know what they were saying, but they knew that God did. They were so filled, that they stumbled out into the street and appeared to be drunk. The power of God was on them so

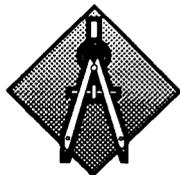
mightily, that they had trouble walking. Peter defended the believers from the mockers. Peter told the crowd that the men were not drunk with wine as they supposed, since it was only nine o'clock in the morning. *"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel."* (Acts 2:16)

The infilling and baptism in the Holy Spirit did not cease on the day of Pentecost. There are many examples of manifestations of the Holy Spirit coming on believers throughout the New Testament. Each time that this power came on them, they had the manifestation of tongues as a sign of the gift which had been given them by the Holy Spirit. This gift was offered to the Jews first and then to the Gentiles. Cornelius and his Italian family all received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and it was manifested by speaking in tongues. Paul talked about the importance of asking for the gift and using it as a part of daily prayers.

Each of us should receive this gift God has offered us. We must first be born again and submit to Jesus as our personal Lord and Savior. Then, we should seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Praise and pray audibly, and ask God to give you the baptism. He will do it. It is helpful to have Spirit-filled leaders lay hands on you and pray with you, but Jesus is the One who does the baptizing. If you are hindered by fears or by guilt, deal with these things in fervent prayer, and ask God to remove every obstacle. Be willing to sound foolish, and be hungry for God. God will answer your prayers, and He will fill you with His Holy Spirit and the power which comes with that baptism.

The baptism is for today. The gift is still for *"...to all that are afar off..."* (Acts 2:39) as Peter boldly declared, and we are here, almost 2,000 years later. All over the

world, millions of Christians are experiencing the joyful dynamic of this baptism, and the edification that comes from speaking in other tongues. A Pentecostal revival is sweeping the world, helping to prepare the Church for the exciting, but dangerous events ahead, in the end times.



Methods

Emphasis

Communicate the truth that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is for today, and is a wonderful blessing from Jesus. Remind the group that it is a supernatural

experience, with a supernatural evidence. Jesus told us not to be afraid to open ourselves to the Spirit, because the Father will only give good things when we ask for the Holy Spirit. God will not send an unholy spirit, or a phony gift.

Demonstration

Have the teaching team “prayed up” ahead of time and ready to minister to the class with the laying on of hands. Let the students hear you pray and praise in the spirit. Plan to minister to those who express a desire to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Continue to pray for them, until they speak in tongues. Tongues was all the evidence Peter needed to accept the fact that the Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit. (Acts 10:46-48)

And God Created Dad

Volume 3

Lesson 50



Bible References

Exodus 20:12

Exodus 21:15,17

Proverbs 1:8

Proverbs 3:12

Proverbs 17:25

Proverbs 29:3

Malachi 1:6

Matthew 19:19

1 Thessalonians 2:11

Hebrews 12:7



Scripture Reading

Hebrews 12:5-11

5 *"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:*

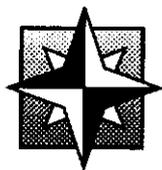
6 *"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*

7 *"If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?*

8 *"But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.*

9 *"Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected {us}, and we gave {them} reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?*

10 *"For they verily for a few days chastened {us} after their own pleasure; but he for {our} profit, that {we} might be partakers of his holiness.*



Theme

Honor your father.

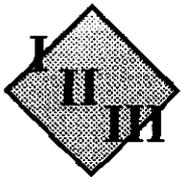
11 "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."



Memory Verse

Proverbs 17:25

"A foolish child is a grief to his father...."



Outline

- I. **A Father's Role.**
 - A. The father is the God-ordained leader of the family.
 1. Spiritual leader of the house.
 2. Christian fathers should teach their children about God.
 3. All fathers show us some of our Heavenly Father's work.
 4. Fathers should teach their children about Jesus.
 - B. A father will to answer to God for how he handles his family.
 1. God is not pleased with fathers who do not raise up their children to know Him.
- II. **The Child's Role.**
 - A. Children should honor their fathers.
 1. Exodus 20:12.
 2. Matthew 19:19.
 3. Malachi 1:6.
 4. To dishonor one's father was punishable by death in the Old Testament.
 - a. Exodus 21:15.
 - b. Exodus 21:17.
 5. "Honor" means "to confer value, importance."
 - a. We are to view our fathers as God's delegated leaders.
 - b. We should respect and obey our fathers as much as possible.
 - c. Only disobey, when the father's command is immoral or against God's command.
 - B. Children are to listen to the teaching and exhortation of their fathers.
 1. Proverbs 1:8 "...hear the instruction of thy father...."
 2. 1 Thessalonians 2:11 "...Exhorted you...as a father doth his children."
 3. Proverbs 29:3 "Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father...."
 4. Proverbs 17:25 "A foolish child is a grief to his father...."
 - a. "Foolish" means "willfully rejecting wisdom."
 - b. A fool lives for self and pleasure, instead of for eternity.

- c. A fool says in his heart, "God will not hold me accountable."

C. One is to accept chastening from his father.

1. Proverbs 3:12.
2. Hebrews 12:7.
3. "Chastening" means "enforcing correction," usually with a rod.
4. "Chastening" can be referred to as "punishment", but it is better described as "discipline."
 - a. Punishment is punitive.
 - b. Discipline is corrective -- discipline lovingly trains for the future.
5. A good father chastens children to bring their will into subjection, so that they learn wisdom.

III. What If Your Father Is Not Godly?

A. No one is perfect.

1. Every father makes mistakes.
2. Some fathers, however, do not live for God.

B. Ungodly men will not always do what is best for their children.

1. Some fathers desert the family.
2. Some fathers are selfish and abusive.

C. What should you do if your father is ungodly?

1. Pray for his salvation.
2. Give him as much honor as you can, without doing anything which would dishonor God.



Spiritual Truths

- God gave us fathers to train and protect us.
- Your natural father is your first glimpse of God, your perfect Heavenly Father.
- Our fathers are responsible to God for the way they train and nurture us.
- Fathers are never to be cursed or hit by their children.
- You can honor your father by loving him, by being a good student in school, and by loving the Lord.
- The highest honor a father can receive is to watch his children honor and love the Lord.
- When your father chastens you, it is a godly sign of love.
- Chastening is never pleasant, but chastening helps to build our character.



Lesson Material

NOTE: This lesson is to be taught on **Father's Day**. Check the calendar in advance.

The role of the father is important. Many children have been separated from

their fathers due to death, divorce, or desertion. It is much easier to honor the memory of a deceased father, than it is to honor one who deserted.

When children are living in a Christian home, they have some important advantages in life. Bible teachers should encourage students to trust and confide in their fathers and trust his judgment in matters concerning their relationships and activities. Parents and children need to keep the lines of communication open. Modern educational forces and entertainment leaders actually oppose the family in subtle ways. Hollywood consistently portrays fathers as the enemies of "true love," and encourages young people to follow their own instincts in romance. This is a false and dangerous idea. Actually, a father is the best protection, especially for females, against picking the wrong mate. A father is a natural protector.

Christian fathers make it easy for children to respond to their Heavenly Father. They provide for, guide, and love their children. Fathers give us a small picture of the role of God, who loves us enough to chasten us at times. A good father will only spank his child when he realizes that it is necessary for the good of the child. He will be careful not to injure, and will always affirm afterward, with love and encouragement.

Unfortunately, there are more and more children who do not have such a father. A few have even been abused, usually by fathers influenced by alcohol or drugs. Often, children with abusive fathers will have a hard time praying to the "Father," preferring to pray to Jesus, or even Mary. These children will have a harder time receiving God's love,

because they do not tend to associate love with the father image.

There are a few things we can do for children who have difficulty relating to their earthly father. We can help to provide or point to godly father figures. George Washington, for example, was the "father of our country" in the United States. He was a humble man who faithfully prayed two hours each day. He loved God, and sacrificed his own comfort for the sake of others. God is such a good Father that He gave His only begotten Son, in order to restore us to Himself. He is the perfect provider and protector.

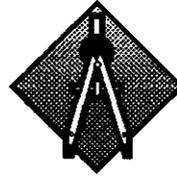
If you, as a teacher, are a man, then you can be another example of a firm, but loving father figure. However, be careful not to try to draw to yourself the affection or loyalty children should give to their own fathers. Those with no father need extra attention and prayer. Encourage their mothers to "adopt" a godly man as a father figure -- either a Christian relative, or a leader in the church. God designed the family to have both a mother and a father, and a mother cannot totally fulfill the role of the father.

Students need to understand that chastening is always to be looked upon as an act of love from a father. There may be cases of abuse in some homes. In those cases, the act of violence is not biblical chastening. Chastening, by its definition, is a loving act of reproof designed to change negative behavior into positive. Abuse usually results in worsened behavior by the child. Abusive fathers react to their children out of their own frustration and selfishness, and will often cause injury. Loving discipline involves the motive to lead children away from destructive attitudes and dangerous actions. The difference between loving

chastening and abusive beating has a lot to do with the motive, and children know the difference.

Many people today equate all spanking with abuse, because they have not been exposed to loving discipline. Such people have the idea that children are the equals of adults and can be dealt with through reason alone. They are wrong. *"Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him."* (Proverbs 22:15) We all need the "rod" at times. Of course, we parents need to be taught to use a neutral object to administer spanking, whenever possible. Hands are for administering love and blessing.

God holds fathers directly responsible for the actions of their children. Many good men in the Bible were chastened by God for not having raised their children in the ways of God. Men such as David and Solomon are looked upon as wise men, but Solomon in particular was a poor father. Aaron, Samuel, and Hezekiah are others who were good men, but weak fathers.



Methods

Lists

Make a list on the board or on a large card, and go through the characteristics of what a father is supposed to be, and how a child is to honor their father. Then discuss as a class things they do which honor their fathers, and things that they have done which did not bring honor. Pray at the end of the class for the fathers and/or guardians of each of the students in the class.

The father's role: provider, protector, guardian, governor.

Honor through: obedience, reverence, boasting, thanking, respecting, loving.

How do these responses fit the way we should treat our Heavenly Father?

The Revelation

Volume 3

Lesson 51



Bible References

John 14:6

Revelation 1

Revelation 19-22

to pass; and he sent and signified {it} by his angel unto his servant John:

2 "Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

3 "Blessed {is} he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time {is} at hand.

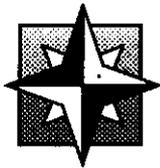
4 "John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace {be} unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

5 "And from Jesus Christ, {who is} the faithful witness, {and} the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

6 "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him {be} glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

7 "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they {also} which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

8 "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."



Theme

Jesus is coming soon, and we should be ready to meet Him.



Scripture Reading

Revelation 1:1-8

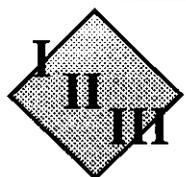
1 "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come



Memory Verse

Revelation 5:13

"...Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."



Outline

I. John.

A. An apostle of Jesus Christ.

1. All the other apostles had died.
 - a. John was a very old man.
 - b. Peter and the other original disciples, with the exception of Judas, had been martyred by wicked men because of their testimony for Jesus Christ.
 - c. Judas had committed suicide, but the other disciples died in faith and glory.
2. John had been persecuted for the Gospel's sake.
 - a. John was boiled in oil, but miraculously survived.
 - b. Wicked leaders hated the Gospel of Jesus, and felt threatened.

B. In prison.

1. John was exiled to a prison island called Patmos.
2. The officials who exiled John to Patmos hoped that he would die under the harsh conditions.

II. The Revelation.

A. The unveiling of the mystery.

1. The world did not understand Jesus Christ.
2. The Jewish people did not generally receive Him as their Messiah.
 - a. They were wrong. Jesus was their Messiah.
 - b. Jesus is the very Son of God, sent to save us from sin and death.
3. Sin keeps us from seeing truth, and from receiving eternal life.

B. *"Blessed is he that readeth."* (Revelation 1:3)

1. This verse does not say, "he that understandeth."
2. We still do not fully understand the revelation.
3. Most of it is in prophetic, figurative language.
 - a. For instance, the number seven represents completion, and may not necessarily mean seven literal things every time.
 - b. The color white represents purity.
 - c. Gold represents the glory of God.
 - d. Trumpets can be symbols for the prophetic Word of God.
4. This is a revelation of the glory of Jesus Christ, and not only a chart of the end times.

5. All of the prophecy in Revelation will be fulfilled, but not necessarily as we imagine it.
6. The Old Testament had many prophecies concerning the coming of Christ, but the experts with their charts did not recognize Him when He came.

III. Jesus.

A. Seven golden lampstands and seven stars.

1. Seven gold lampstands -- or candlesticks -- represented all local churches in the church age.
2. They also referred to the seven churches in Asia Minor which Jesus wrote to in Revelation chapters 2-3.
3. Each church characterized a period in history from 70 A.D. until present times.
4. They represented seven basic conditions of the church.
5. The seven stars represented the pastors.
 - a. Each church had an "angelos."
 - b. The Greek word, "angelos" means "messenger."
 - c. In this case, the "angelos" meant the senior pastor.
 - d. God would never give a man a message to deliver to an angel.
 - e. Jesus dictated the letters to give to the seven churches listed in Revelation 2-3.

B. The picture of Jesus.

1. Not a literal likeness.
2. A prophetic picture, representing Jesus' work and character.
3. Golden cloth around his chest.
 - a. Represents the glory of God.
 - b. Breastplate of righteousness.

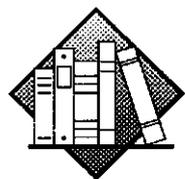
4. White hair.
 - a. Represents wisdom.
 - b. Represents holiness.
5. Eyes like a flame of fire.
 - a. Omniscient -- all-knowing.
 - b. Power to know and to judge our sins.
6. Feet like fine brass.
 - a. Brass is a prophetic symbol of judgment throughout the Bible.
 - b. Jesus will judge the whole earth.
 - c. Jesus will stamp out the wicked.
7. Voice as the sound of many waters.
 - a. Water speaks of life.
 - b. Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. (John 14:6)



Spiritual Truths

- The last book of the Bible is the Revelation of Jesus Christ.
- Revelation gives us a glimpse into the end times, and shows that believers win.
- Jesus conquered by becoming the meek Lamb of God and dying on the cross.
- All of heaven worships the Lamb Who was slain, and Who lives forevermore.
- Because Jesus lives, we who believe and love Him shall live, also.
- Jesus is coming again to the earth, and will establish His kingdom on earth.
- Satan will be cast forever into the lake of fire, at the end of the age.

- The book of Revelation is full of prophetic, figurative language, and should not be viewed completely in literal terms.
- Jesus is the Head of the church, both local and universal.
- The church consists of all born-again Christians in the world.



Lesson Material

The great book of Revelation is one of the most sublime and exciting pieces of literature in history. It is an important part of human knowledge, because it gives us a glimpse into the future, as well as a picture of the work and Person of Jesus Christ. We should be careful not to take everything in the book of Revelation too literally. Many people promote themselves as “experts” on Revelation, and then make their living making charts and predicting dates. This is a mistake. Most of God's precise plans are still mysteries. All we really need to know is clearly given to us in scripture. The things which God has kept veiled are not yet for us to know.

We do need to know that Jesus is Lord, and that He is the great Head of the church. We need to know that He is coming again, and this time He will not be coming quietly as the Lamb to be slain. He will come in power and glory to judge the earth. That is, He will cast down the wicked and bless the faithful on the earth.

After Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, the church grew

rapidly under the leadership of the apostles whom Jesus had personally trained. The Jewish leaders felt threatened even more by the growth of this faith, because the new believers had great zeal, and generally would suffer torture or even death, rather than deny Jesus as their Lord. The Jewish priests and leaders often accused Christians to the Roman authorities, as they had with Jesus. The Roman Empire ruled the known world, including all of Europe, Asia, and the Mediterranean area. Rome was ruled by powerful and usually wicked emperors.

Nero was a particularly evil emperor. Nero had ordered thousands of Christians to be tortured and killed by savage means, including the Apostles Peter and Paul. In 70 A.D., the emperor Titus had Jerusalem destroyed. By the year 95 A.D., John was the only original apostle still alive. There were other apostles and prophets, but no others who had personally walked with Jesus during His earthly ministry. John was an old man who had known much persecution and suffering through his lifetime for the sake of the Gospel. At the time of John's exile, the emperor was named Domitian, and he was worshipped as a god. Domitian considered it treason for anyone to worship Jesus; therefore, he had many Christians murdered or put into prison. Domitian was murdered by his wife, one year after he banished John to the island of Patmos.

The island of Patmos was a harsh, mountainous island about 35 miles off the coast of Asia Minor (now Turkey) in the Mediterranean Sea. The weather was generally mild, but the conditions were very harsh. Domitian had banished other political prisoners there, including some of his relatives whom he believed might be heirs to the throne. It was on Patmos

that John was given the great visions which became the book of the Revelation.

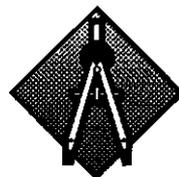
John received a prophetic picture of Jesus, representing His nature and character. Some of the images, such as the candlesticks and stars, were explained. Many others were not. While we do not know the exact dates of the Second Coming or of the events of the end times, we can see that the Great Tribulation is near. The world is heading toward a "New World Order" -- a godless, socialistic system, which will strongly oppose Christianity. It will be an "anti-Christ" system, spreading hardship and tyranny over the earth.

We also know that the Holy Spirit is at work in the Church, preparing the church -- Christians -- to become the "bride" of Christ. These are days of revival and preparation, as well as times of trouble and danger. It is important that Christians keep their focus on eternal things, and realize that the physical things of earth are temporary.

We know that all who die in their sin will stand before Jesus at the Great White Throne Judgment. They will be judged for their works, and cast into an eternal lake of fire with the devil and his angels. (Revelation 20:10-15) However, the redeemed saints will live forever in heaven with the Lord. Revelation 21-22 give a vivid picture of this magnificent city and the righteous people who will dwell in heaven with the Lord. People who are caught up in selfishness and carnal pleasure would not be at home in heaven, because Jesus is the center of attention and affection. There will be no sin there.

How can we know that heaven is our home for eternity? According to the Bible,

we must repent of our sins and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as both our Savior and Lord. We believe on Him as Savior, by trusting that He died in our place, so that we would not have to suffer the death penalty for our wicked works. We believe on Him as Lord, by dedicating our lives to serve Him, recognizing His right to rule every part of our life. This means that we will not only be willing to die for Him, but we are willing to live for Him, instead of for our own selfish goals. We place Him first in life, and decide to set our affections on eternal values. Satan will always try to persuade us to be materialistic and be distracted with the cares of this life. However, the wise will always focus on that which will last. Heaven is a wonderful and exciting place. The greatest tragedy in life would be to die without knowing that your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. (Revelation 20:12,15)



Methods

Blessed is he...

Read as much of Revelation chapter one as is possible to the class. Note the special blessing pronounced on those who read (or listen to) the Revelation. This is the only book with such a blessing added. We do not understand it all. Even the most brilliant pastor will understand only a part of the Revelation. But one day we will all understand it. For now, God will bless those who read it. We see that Jesus is the conquering King and the victorious Lord of all. We catch a vague glimpse of heaven and eternity; and it helps to

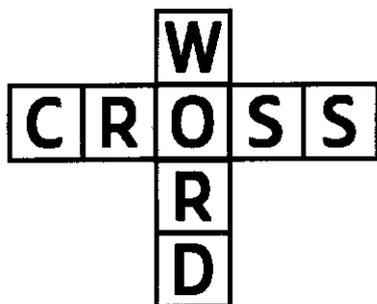
motivate us to concentrate on the things which really matter.

Encourage the parents of your students to read with their children from the Book of Revelation this week. Give an altar call, if you feel there are any students who are

not yet born again. Ask all of the students to make a renewed commitment to live for Jesus, instead of for themselves. Remind the students that all who have called on the name of the Lord will be together in heaven with the Lord at the end of this life.

Section 9

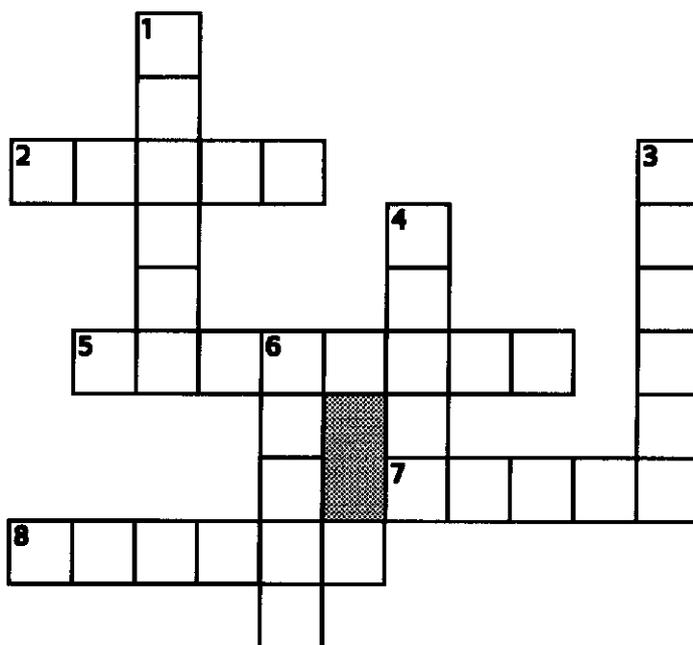
Activity Pages



Crossword Puzzle

Abraham, God's Friend

Using the clues below, solve this Crossword Puzzle!



ACROSS

2. Abram built an _____ unto the LORD, who appeared to him. (Gen. 12:7)
5. God said He would make Abram's name great and that Abram would be a _____. (Gen. 12:2)
7. Abram was 75 years old when he departed from _____. (Gen. 12:4)
8. Abram took his family and all he had and went forth to go to _____. (Gen. 12:5)

DOWN

1. Abram traveled to a mountain that was located on the east of _____. (Gen 12:8)
3. God told Abram He would make him a great _____. (Gen. 12:2)
4. Abram was a man of great _____. (Heb. 11:8)
6. Abram's wife's name. (Gen. 12:5)



Word Search

Bezaleel, the Builder

Find the hidden words in the puzzle below.
Circle the words when you find them.

T	G	S	I	L	V	E	R	X	N
B	A	O	F	P	T	N	H	A	Y
E	B	B	L	B	E	V	M	R	B
Z	X	Y	E	D	R	S	H	I	U
A	Y	J	N	R	T	D	D	Y	I
L	K	R	A	F	N	R	E	Y	L
E	Z	D	A	M	G	A	P	L	D
E	J	R	H	O	R	S	C	P	E
L	C	F	B	R	A	S	S	L	R
F	U	R	N	I	T	U	R	E	E

BEZALEEL

BRASS

BUILDER

CRAFTSMAN

FURNITURE

GOLD

SILVER

TABERNACLE



Mystery Word

A Winning Attitude

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Fill in the missing letters in each of the words below.
To discover the Mystery Word, write the letters in the numbered boxes
below in the box with the same number above.

Do not _____ when you are rebuked by the Lord.
(Hebrews 12:5)

He is a _____ _____ of them that diligently
seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6)

Where there is no _____ _____ the people perish.
(Proverbs 29:18)

Jesus is seated at the _____ _____ hand of the throne
of God. (Hebrews 12:2)

We are to lay aside every _____ _____ and sin
which easily beset us. (Hebrews 12:1)

The Bread and the Wine





Scrambled Words

The Words of My Mouth

Unscramble the words below and write the correct word in each blank.

1. ONEGUST

4. TEER

2. RIFE

5. STAREH

3. SOWDIM

6. LIVE

1. It is very hard to control our _____.
(James 3:8)

2. "And the tongue is a _____, a world of iniquity.
(James 3:6)

3. The mouth of a just person brings forth _____.
(Proverbs 10:31)

4. "A wholesome tongue is a _____ of life.
(Proverbs 15:4)

5. The things we say come out of our _____.
(Matthew 15:18)

6. Do not speak _____ of one another. (James 4:11)

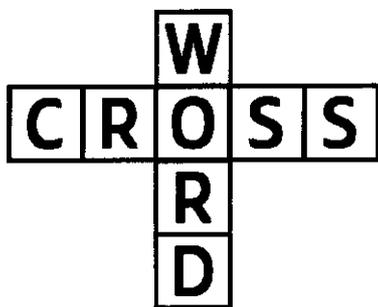
Solve the Code

Benaiah

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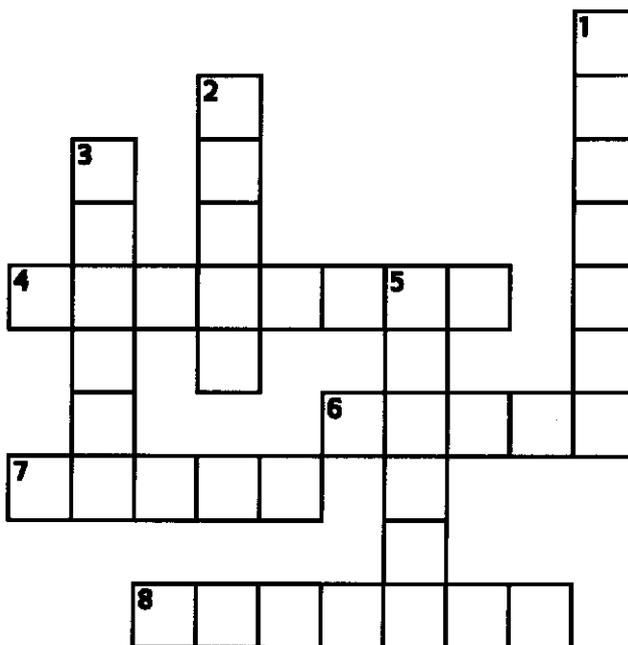
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z



Crossword Puzzle

A Valley Full of Ditches

Using the clues below, solve this Crossword Puzzle!



ACROSS

4. Before Elisha could prophesy, he asked to hear a _____ play. (2 Kings 3:15)
6. Three _____ and their armies went to fight Moab. (2 Kings 3:9)
7. After traveling for seven days, the armies ran out of _____. (2 Kings 3:9)
8. Elisha was a _____ of the LORD. (2 Kings 3:11)

DOWN

1. Elisha proclaimed that God wanted the armies to make the valley full of _____. (2 Kings 3:16)
2. We must put our _____ in God, not in men. (Psalm 4:5)
3. The son of Shaphat. (2 Kings 3:11)
5. Elisha's teacher. (2 Kings 3:11)



Word Search

Death in the Pot

Find the hidden words in the puzzle below.
Circle the words when you find them.

M	M	Z	J	F	I	R	L	T	P
C	E	I	X	B	D	U	N	H	O
Y	Q	A	R	J	F	A	C	I	I
G	U	K	L	A	V	T	I	P	S
O	T	T	I	R	C	Y	T	V	O
U	P	X	E	D	F	L	C	R	N
R	V	S	W	B	F	J	E	M	R
D	C	L	S	E	L	I	S	H	A
S	C	Y	T	F	A	M	I	N	E
G	I	L	G	A	L	F	X	I	D

ELISHA
FAMINE
GILGAL
GOURDS

MEAL
MIRACLE
POISON
SERVANT



Mystery Word

A Child Shall Lead Them

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Fill in the missing letters in each of the words below.
To discover the Mystery Word, write the letters in the numbered boxes
below in the box with the same number above.

The high priest's name was _____.

(2 Kings 11:15)

After the high priest anointed the king, the people clapped and
said, " _____ _____ save the king." (2 Kings 11:12)

"I will teach you the _____ _____ of the LORD." (Psalms
34:11)

Jesus is the King of _____ _____. (1 Timothy 6:15)

"Come, ye children, _____ _____ _____ _____ unto me."
(Psalms 34:11)



Scrambled Words

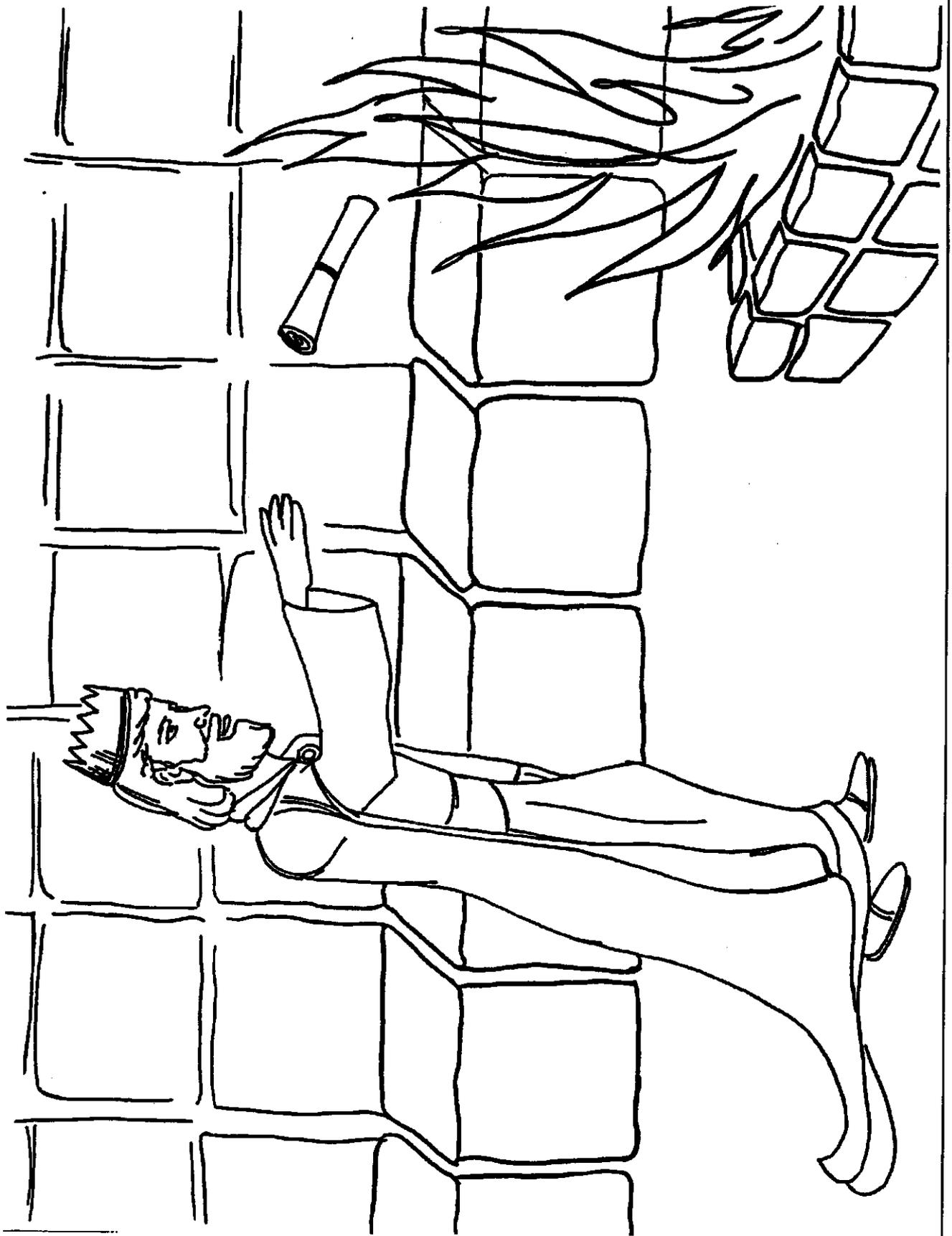
A Treasure Chest

Unscramble the words below and write the correct word in each blank.

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. YORLG | 4. THISET |
| 2. BESOID | 5. SCETH |
| 3. THERFA | 6. NOYEM |

1. "Give unto the LORD _____ and strength."
(Psalms 96:7)
2. We are to present our _____ as a sacrifice to God. (Romans 12:1)
3. "If any man love the world, the love of the _____ is not in him. (1 John 2:15)
4. We are to bring our _____ to God's house.
(Malachi 3:10)
5. The priest put a hole in a _____ to receive the offerings. (2 Kings 12:9)
6. The priests agreed to take no _____ so God's house could be repaired. (2 Kings 12:8)

It Cannot Be Destroyed



I Want to Serve Him



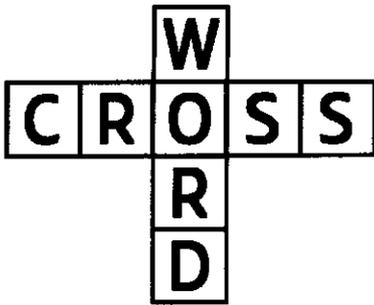
Solve the Code

King Uzziah

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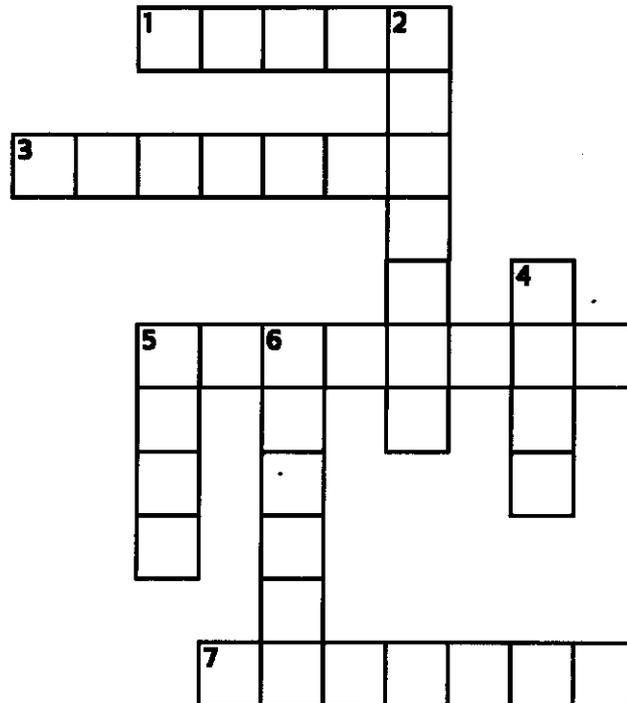
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
												
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
												



Crossword Puzzle

Ebedmelech: African Bible Hero

Using the clues below, solve this Crossword Puzzle!



ACROSS

1. Jeremiah prophesied that the people in the city would die by the _____, famine and pestilence. (Jer. 38:2)
3. The Lord said the king of _____ would destroy the city. (Jer. 38:3)
5. Ebedmelech was from the country of _____. (Jer. 38:7)
7. Jeremiah was a _____. (Jer. 38:9)

DOWN

2. Because the princes didn't like what Jeremiah said, they threw him into a _____. (Jer. 38:6)
4. The pit in which Jeremiah was placed was full of _____. (Jer. 38:6)
5. Ebedmelech told the king that the princes were _____ men. (Jer. 38:9)
6. Ebedmelech was afraid Jeremiah would die of _____. (Jer. 38:9)



Word Search

Jeremiah and the Potter

Find the hidden words in the puzzle below.
Circle the words when you find them.

L	A	N	Z	U	B	X	I	H	Y
I	I	F	V	L	O	F	A	E	V
T	O	F	F	M	P	I	B	L	E
R	A	S	S	L	M	O	I	W	S
E	E	N	H	E	I	V	U	Q	S
S	B	V	R	H	W	C	P	I	E
T	H	E	F	Q	F	H	T	A	L
O	J	E	N	R	O	J	E	E	N
R	R	E	P	E	N	T	C	E	D
E	P	O	T	T	E	R	T	I	L

AFFLICTED
JEREMIAH
OBEY
POTTER

REPENT
RESTORE
VESSEL
WHEEL



Mystery Word

The Spiritual Realm

1	2

3	4	5	6

Fill in the missing letters in each of the words below.
To discover the Mystery Word, write the letters in the numbered boxes
below in the box with the same number above.

"In my name shall they cast out _____."

(Mark 16:17)

"I am _____ that they might have life." (John 10:10)

"And these _____ shall follow them that believe."
(Mark 16:17)

Things which are seen are _____ _____.
(2 Corinthians 4:18)

They shall speak with new _____ _____."
(Mark 16:17)

"Take heed that no man _____ you."
(Matthew 24:4)



Scrambled Words

Evil King Manasseh

Unscramble the words below and write the correct word in each blank.

1. LODI

4. VILE

2. DAJHU

5. TIFFY

3. LEPOPE

6. STARLA

1. Manasseh put an _____ in the house of God.
(2 Chronicles 33:7)
2. King Manasseh made _____ do wrong things.
(2 Chronicles 33:9)
3. God spoke to Manasseh and his _____ but they would not listen. (2 Chronicles 33:10)
4. "Abstain from all appearance of _____. (1 Thessalonians 5:22)
5. Manasseh was king for " _____ and five" years.
(2 Chronicles 33:1)
6. Manasseh built _____ in the house of the Lord.
(2 Chronicles 33:4)

Solve the Code

Esther

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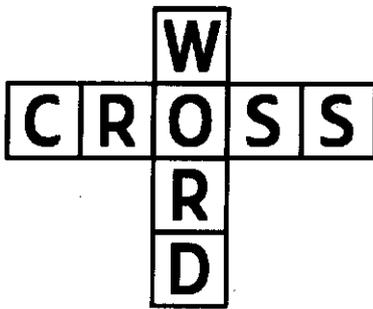








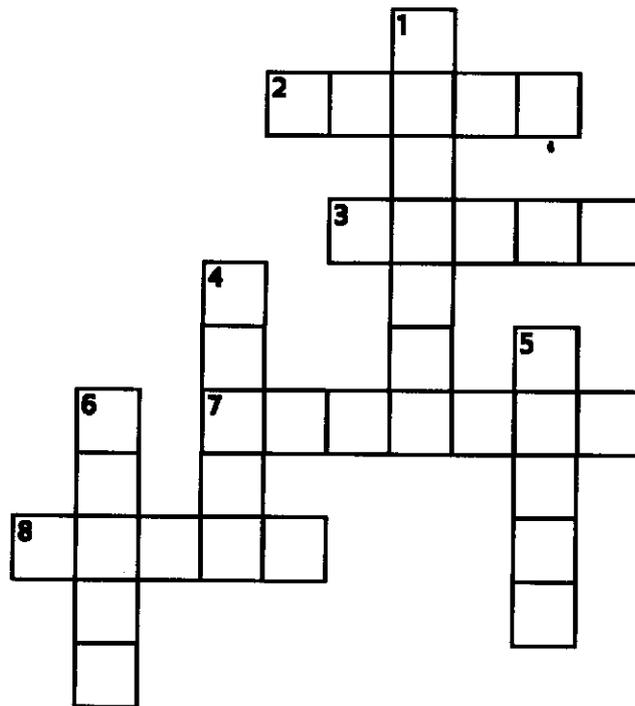
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z



Crossword Puzzle

A Queen Is Chosen

Using the clues below, solve this Crossword Puzzle!



ACROSS

2. The king was so impressed with Esther that he made her the new _____. (Esther 2:17)
3. The king made a great _____ for all his princes and servants. (Esther 2:18)
7. Esther's father. (Esther 2:15)
8. The king _____ Esther above all the women. (Esther 2:17)

DOWN

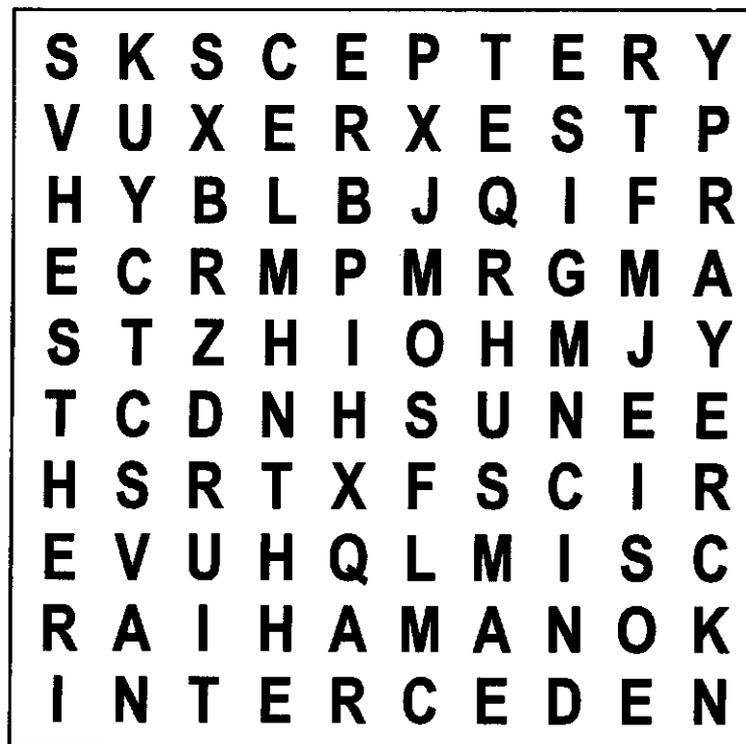
1. Esther was taken into the king during the _____ year of his reign. (Esther 2:16)
4. Esther obtained _____ and favor in the sight of the king. (Esther 2:17)
5. During the celebration, the king gave away many _____. (Esther 2:18)
6. King Ahasuerus gave Esther the royal _____. (Esther 2:17)



Word Search

Appealing to Authority

Find the hidden words in the puzzle below.
Circle the words when you find them.



AUTHORITY
ESTHER
HAMAN
INTERCEDE

PRAYER
SCEPTER
SUBMISSION
XERXES



Mystery Word

Haman and Mordecai

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Fill in the missing letters in each of the words below.
To discover the Mystery Word, write the letters in the numbered boxes
below in the box with the same number above.

_____ was not pleased that the king wanted to
reward Mordecai. (Esther 6:12)

"A _____ man obtaineth favor of the Lord." (Proverbs
12:2)

"The king's heart is in the _____ of the Lord."
(Proverbs 21:1)

The Lord will _____ a man of wicked
devices. (Proverbs 12:2)

" _____ goeth before destruction." (Proverbs
16:18)



Scrambled Words

Give Thanks

Unscramble the words below and write the correct word in each blank.

1. SESJU

4. WAYLAS

2. ROVCITY

5. YERVE

3. DOGO

6. NOBUD

1. The greatest thing we have to thank God for is that _____ came to save us. (John 3:16)

2. "But thanks be to God which giveth us the _____." (1 Corinthians 15:57)

3. "O give thanks unto the LORD for He is _____." (Psalms 107:1)

4. We are to give thanks _____ for all things. (Ephesians 5:20)

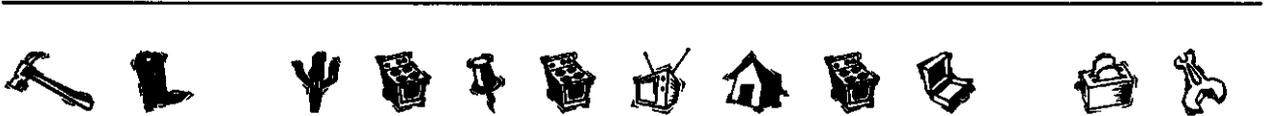
5. "In _____ thing give thanks." (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

6. "We are _____ to thank God always for you." (2 Thessalonians 1:3)

Solve the Code

Pure Religion

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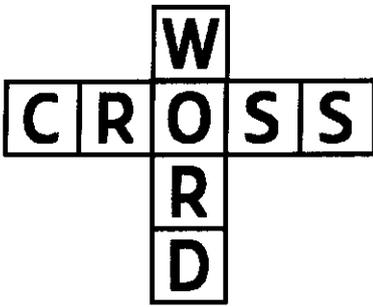


A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M

N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

Mary, Do You Hear Me?

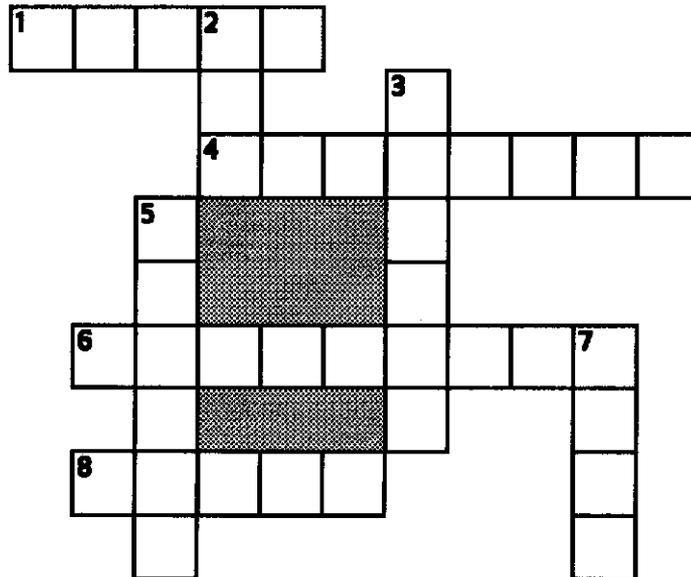




Crossword Puzzle

The City of David

Using the clues below, solve this Crossword Puzzle!



ACROSS

1. Joseph was of the house and lineage of _____. (Luke 2:4)
4. Joseph left _____ to go to the city of David. (Luke 2:4)
6. The city of David is also called _____. (Luke 2:4)
8. A decree was given that everyone must return to their own city to be _____. (Luke 2:3)

DOWN

2. There was no room in the _____. (Luke 2:7)
3. Jesus was laid in a _____. (Luke 2:7)
5. The ruler at the time of Jesus' birth was _____ Augustus. (Luke 2:1)
7. Joseph's wife. (Luke 2:5)



Scrambled Words

J-O-Y

Unscramble the words below and write the correct word in each blank.

1. CREEJOI

4. THEAR

2. LESSNUF

5. ENGTHSTR

3. SLEBS

6. LIGHTED

1. "Yet I will _____ in the Lord."
(Habakkuk 3:18)

2. In God's presence there is _____ of joy.
(Psalms 16:11)

3. "I will _____ the Lord who hath given me counsel."
(Psalms 16:7)

4. "A merry _____ doeth good like a medicine."
(Proverbs 17:22)

5. "The joy of the Lord is your _____."
(Nehemiah 8:10)

6. _____ yourself in the Lord. (Psalms 37:4)

Wait Upon Him

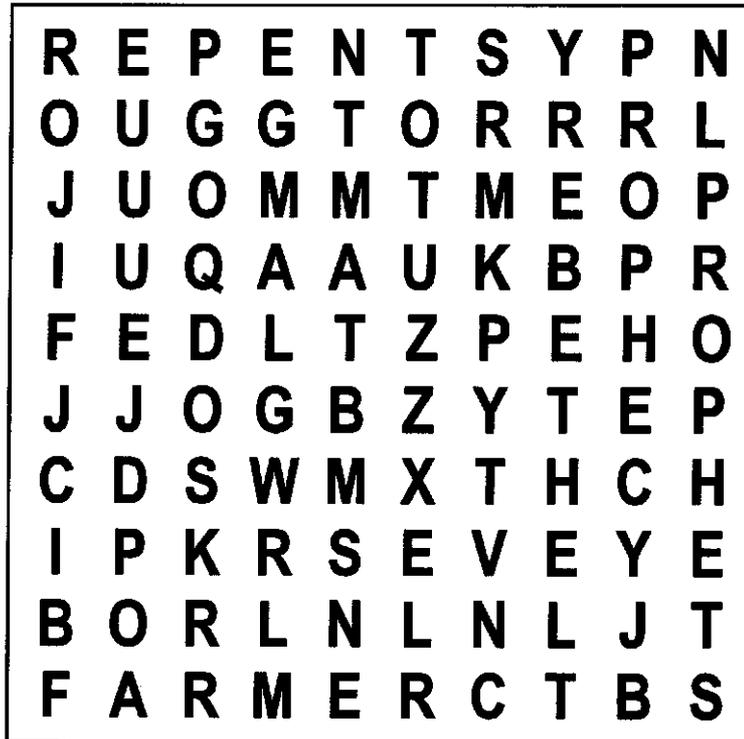




Word Search

The Burden of Amos

Find the hidden words in the puzzle below.
Circle the words when you find them.



AMOS
BETHEL
FARMER
IDOLATRY

JUDGMENT
PROPHECY
PROPHETS
REPENT



Mystery Word

Zechariah's Night Visions

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

Fill in the missing letters in each of the words below.
To discover the Mystery Word, write the letters in the numbered boxes
below in the box with the same number above.

___ ___ ___ ___ ___, the son of Josedech, was the high
priest. (Zechariah 3:1, 6:11)

"Behold the man whose name is the ___ ___ ___ ___ ___."
(Zechariah 6:12)

"Then take ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ and gold, and make
crowns." (Zechariah 6:11)

Obeys the ___ ___ ___ ___ of the LORD your God."
(Zechariah 6:15)

Zechariah heard the ___ ___ ___ of the Lord. (Zechariah
6:9)

"Not by might, nor by ___ ___ ___ ___ ___." (Zechariah 4:6)



Word Search

What is Worship?

Find the hidden words in the puzzle below.
Circle the words when you find them.

P	R	A	I	S	E	T	H	P	P
C	E	S	P	I	R	I	T	I	P
O	C	F	Y	Y	K	F	H	T	R
I	F	V	J	L	Q	S	C	R	I
X	I	F	I	J	R	B	K	U	E
V	S	X	E	O	R	O	N	T	S
J	E	U	W	R	E	T	E	H	T
B	V	K	B	U	I	Z	Q	C	W
S	Z	S	B	J	L	N	R	R	X
T	Y	C	Y	R	U	S	G	A	I

CYRUS
EZRA
OFFERING
PRAISE

PRIEST
SPIRIT
TRUTH
WORSHIP



Scrambled Words

Sons of Zadok

Unscramble the words below and write the correct word in each blank.

1. RUPE

4. LETVIES

2. RISTEP

5. PEEKERS

3. HITGYM

6. SLIDO

1. "Blessed are the _____ in heart for they shall see God." (Matthew 5:8)

2. Zadok was a high _____. (Ezekiel 44:15)

3. Zadok was a man _____ of valor.
(1 Chronicles 12:28)

4. The _____ who were sons of Zadok continued to minister to God. (Ezekiel 44:15)

5. "But I will make them _____ of the charge of the house." (Ezekiel 44:14)

6. Some of the priests went astray from God and worshiped _____. (Ezekiel 44:12)

Solve the Code

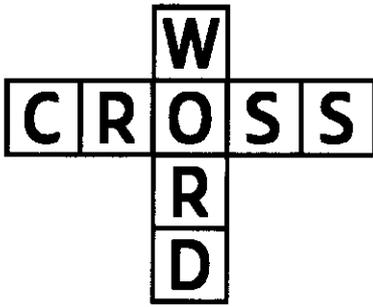
Water Baptism

Use the code at the bottom of the page to solve this message.



A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M

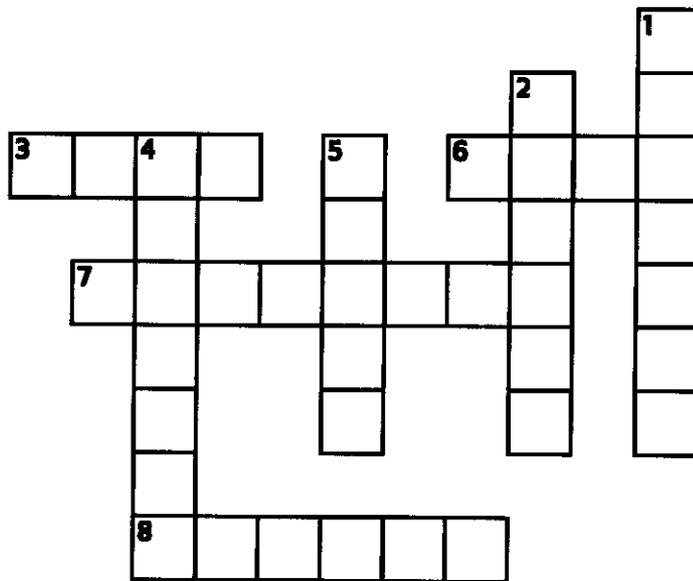
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z



Crossword Puzzle

God Is Three in One

Using the clues below, solve this Crossword Puzzle!



ACROSS

- 3. Jesus came to _____ the Baptist to be baptized. (Matt. 3:14)
- 6. After Jesus was baptized the Spirit of God descended upon him like a _____. (Matt. 3:16)
- 7. Before Jesus began his earthly ministry, it was important that He be _____. (Matt. 3:13)
- 8. The _____ of God came upon Jesus after He was baptized. (Matt. 4:16)

DOWN

- 1. God said He was well _____ with Jesus. (Matt. 3:17)
- 2. Jesus came to the _____ River to be baptized. (Matt. 3:13)
- 4. When Jesus came out of the water, the _____ were opened to Him. (Matt. 3:16)
- 5. A _____ was heard from heaven after Jesus was baptized. (Matt. 3:17)



Mystery Word

The Missionary Mandate

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Fill in the missing letters in each of the words below. To discover the Mystery Word, write the letters in the numbered boxes below in the box with the same number above.

"For I will send thee far hence unto the

___ ___ ¹ ___ ___ ___." (Acts 22:21)

___ ___ ² ___ ___ ___ was a devout man. (Acts 22:12)

"For thou shalt be his ___ ___ ³ ___ ___ ___ unto all men." (Acts 22:15)

"Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are

___ ___ ⁴ ___ ___ already to harvest." (John 4:35)

"Go ye into all the ___ ⁵ ___ ___ ___ and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15)

"Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will

___ ___ ⁶ ___ ___ forth laborers..." (Matthew 9:38)

"Arise and go into ___ ___ ___ ⁷ ___ ___ ___ (Acts 22:10)



Scrambled Words

Twelve Disciples

Unscramble the words below and write the correct word in each blank.

1. TREEP

4. NOSECH

2. REDTHUN

5. SCORS

3. RECHAP

6. ALHE

1. Simon's other name was _____. (Mark 3:16)
2. James and John were called the "Sons of _____".
(Mark 3:17)
3. Jesus sent the disciples forth to _____.
(Mark 3:14)
4. God has _____ us to be his disciples.
(John 15:16)
5. A disciple of Jesus will take up his _____ daily.
(Luke 9:23)
6. Jesus gave the disciples power to _____ sickness.
(Mark 3:15)

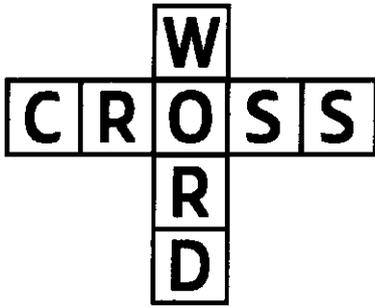
Solve the Code

A Centurion's Faith

Use the code at the bottom of the page to solve this message.



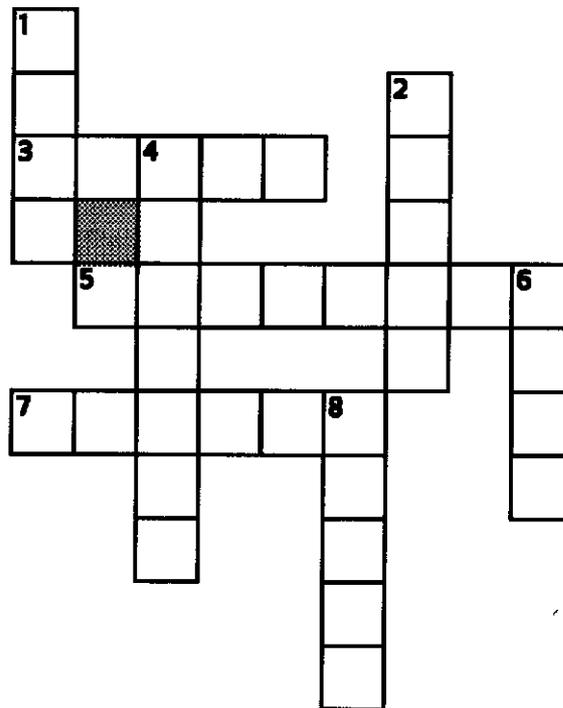
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
												
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
												



Crossword Puzzle

Honesty

Using the clues below, solve this Crossword Puzzle!



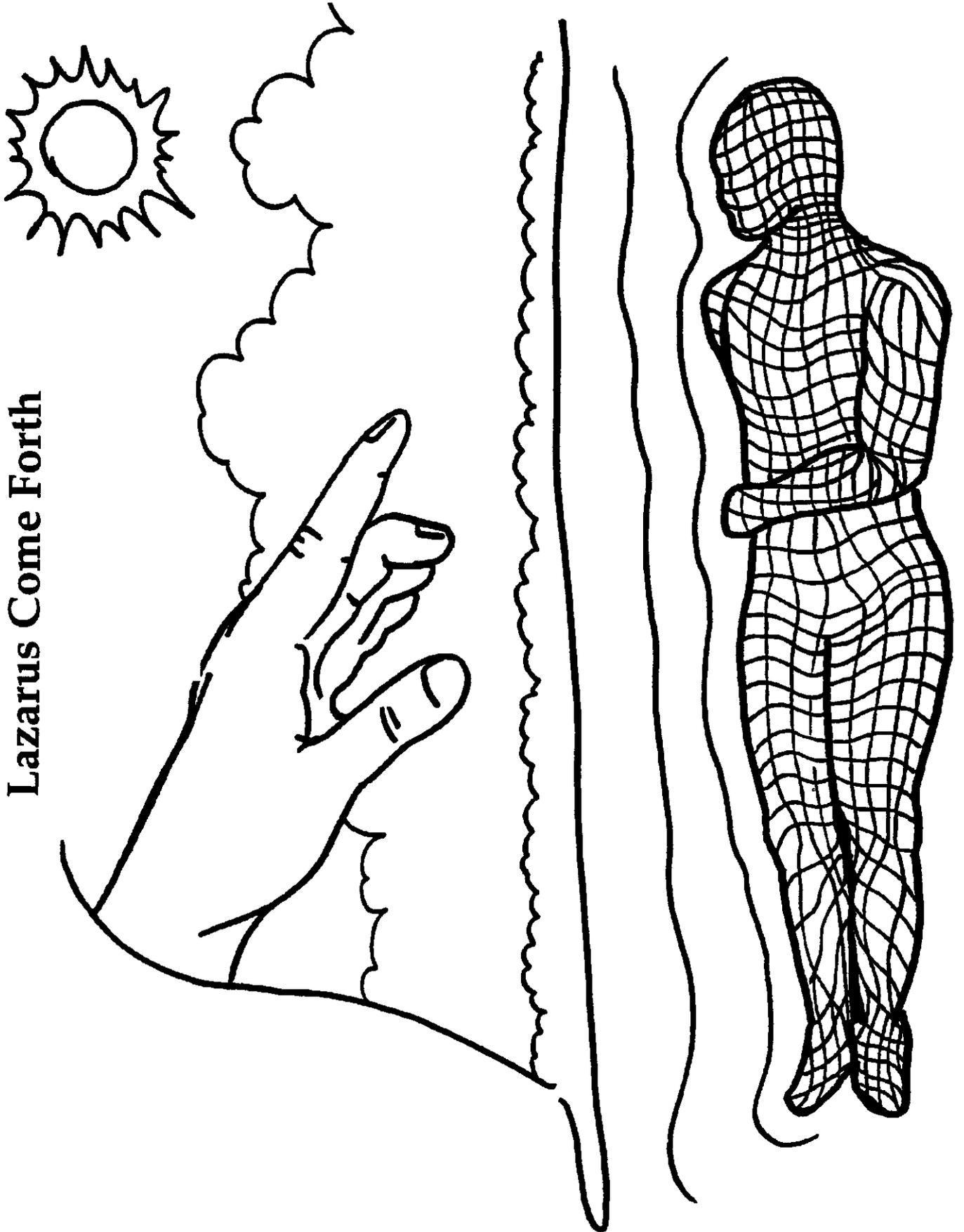
ACROSS

3. _____ tricked Jacob into working for him. (Gen. 29)
5. Isaac gave his _____ to Jacob because he had been tricked by Jacob and Rebekah. (Gen. 27:30)
7. We are to think on things that are true, and _____, and pure. . . (Phil. 4:8)

DOWN

1. We are to _____ honestly. (Rom 13:13)
2. Those who hear the Word and keep it will produce _____. (Luke 8:15)
4. A false _____ is an abomination to the Lord. (Prov. 11:1)
6. Think on things that are of a _____ report (Phil 4:8)
8. Everyone should speak the _____ with his neighbor. (Eph. 4:25)

Lazarus Come Forth





Scrambled Words

Arrested

Unscramble the words below and write the correct word in each blank.

1. THEAD

4. SADJU

2. SALEF

5. CAPEE

3. APETIL

6. WROPE

1. The chief priests and elders wanted to put Jesus to _____ . (Matthew 26:59)
2. _____ witnesses came to testify against Jesus. (Matthew 26:60)
3. Jesus was also taken to _____ , the governor of the region. (Matthew 27:2)
4. Jesus was betrayed by _____. (Matthew 27:3)
5. When Jesus was accused, he held his _____. (Matthew 26:63)
6. "Ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of _____. (Matthew 26:64)



Word Search

Let Him Be Crucified

Find the hidden words in the puzzle below.
Circle the words when you find them.

B	G	O	L	G	O	T	H	A	G
A	C	X	C	R	O	S	S	N	U
R	R	R	F	C	D	V	I	M	G
A	Z	U	U	A	R	R	J	I	P
B	O	H	C	C	E	S	I	T	I
B	O	R	B	F	I	M	B	Q	L
A	M	J	F	A	C	F	D	D	A
S	L	U	K	Z	E	I	I	K	T
U	S	J	E	S	U	S	R	E	E
B	E	T	R	A	Y	E	D	D	D

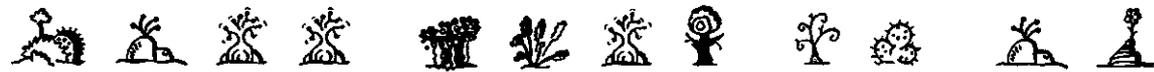
BARABBAS
BETRAYED
CROSS
CRUCIFIED

GOLGOTHA
JESUS
PILATE
SUFFERING

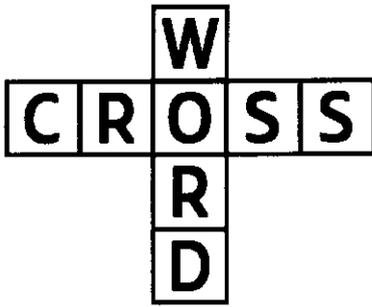
Solve the Code

Thomas Didymus

Use the code at the bottom of the page to solve this message.



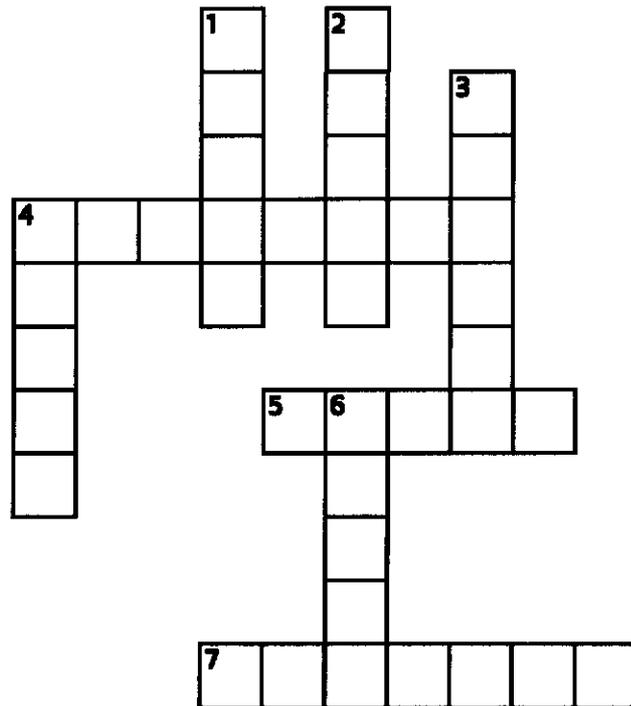
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
												
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
												



Crossword Puzzle

On the Road

Using the clues below, solve this Crossword Puzzle!



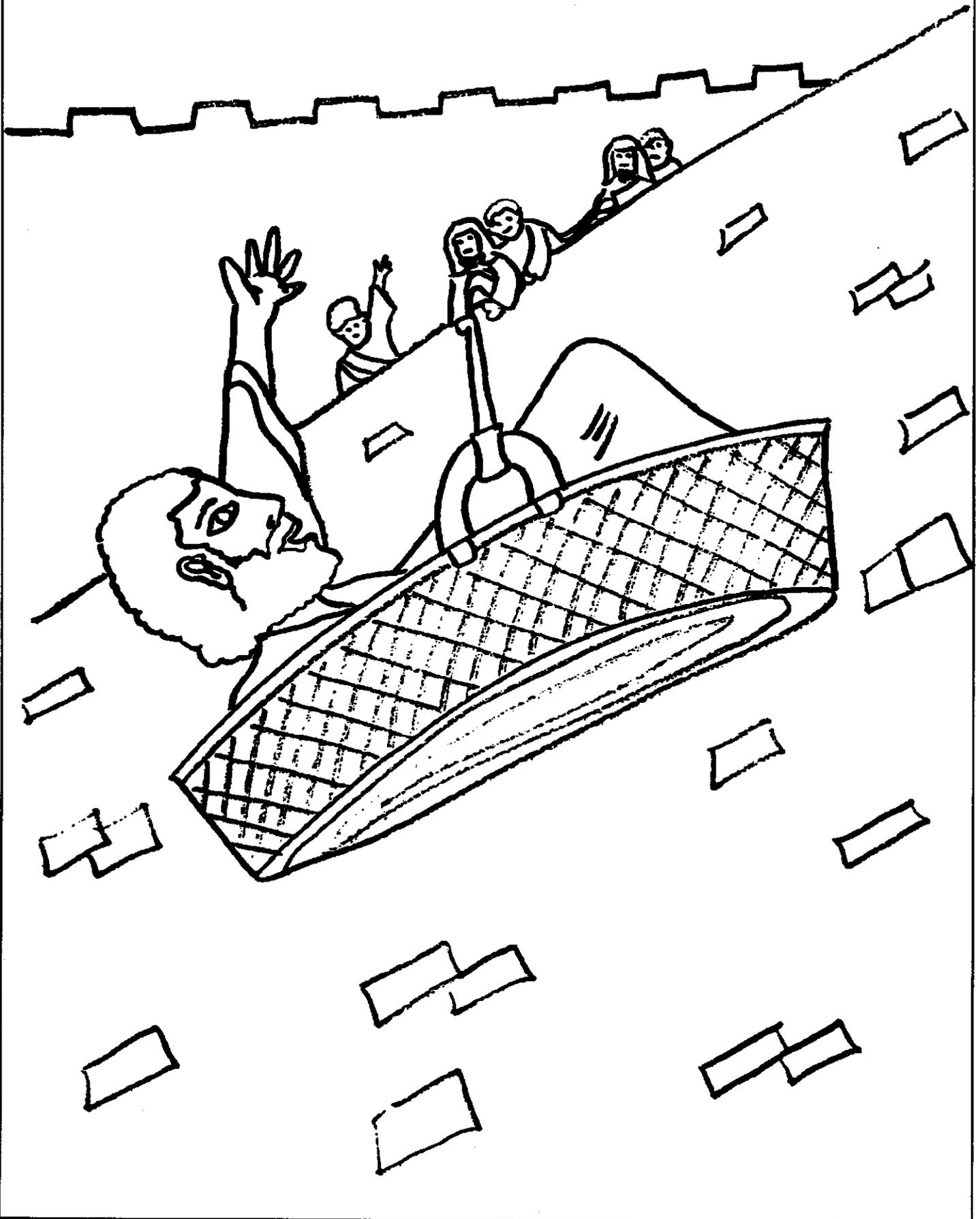
ACROSS

4. Saul was on the road to _____. (Acts 9:3)
5. When Saul opened his eyes, he was _____. (Acts 9:8,9)
7. Saul asked the high priest for _____ which would allow him to arrest Christians. (Acts 9:2)

DOWN

1. The Lord told Ananias to go to the house of _____ and ask for Saul. (Acts 9:11)
2. The men traveling with Saul heard a _____, but saw no man. (Acts 9:7)
3. The Lord told Ananias what to do in a _____. (Acts 9:10)
4. Saul did not eat nor _____ for three days. (Acts 9:9)
6. On his journey, Saul was suddenly surrounded by a bright _____. (Acts 9:3)

An Escape in the Night





Mystery Word

Paul and the High Priest

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

Fill in the missing letters in each of the words below. To discover the Mystery Word, write the letters in the numbered boxes below in the box with the same number above.

"Let every be subject unto the higher powers."
(Romans 13:1)

"Obey them that have the over you."
(Hebrews 13:17)

"Woe unto you, and Pharisees, hypocrites!" (Matthew 23:27)

"Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father, and the younger as brethren." (1 Timothy 5:1)

"Thou shalt not speak of the ruler of thy people." (Acts 23:5)

Those who have authority over us for our souls. (Hebrews 13:17)



Word Search

Thank God for Mom

Find the hidden words in the puzzle below.
Circle the words when you find them.

B	L	N	A	O	M	I	H	H	E
G	E	O	N	Q	O	B	T	C	O
Y	W	T	V	L	U	U	N	L	Q
N	X	V	H	E	R	E	U	E	M
F	Y	L	Y	L	I	V	D	K	O
A	K	A	H	D	E	Q	C	T	T
M	P	X	E	J	D	H	A	K	H
I	A	B	Z	Y	W	A	E	E	E
L	O	F	T	U	O	N	L	M	R
Y	P	C	H	I	L	D	R	E	N

BETHLEHEM
CHILDREN
FAMILY
LOVE

MOTHER
NAOMI
OBEDIENCE
RUTH

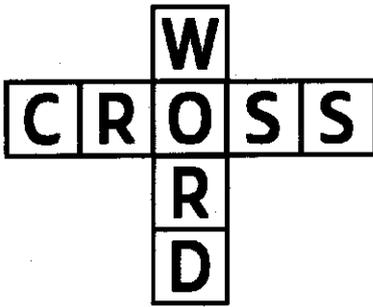
Solve the Code

Tabitha, Arise

Use the code at the bottom of the page to solve this message.



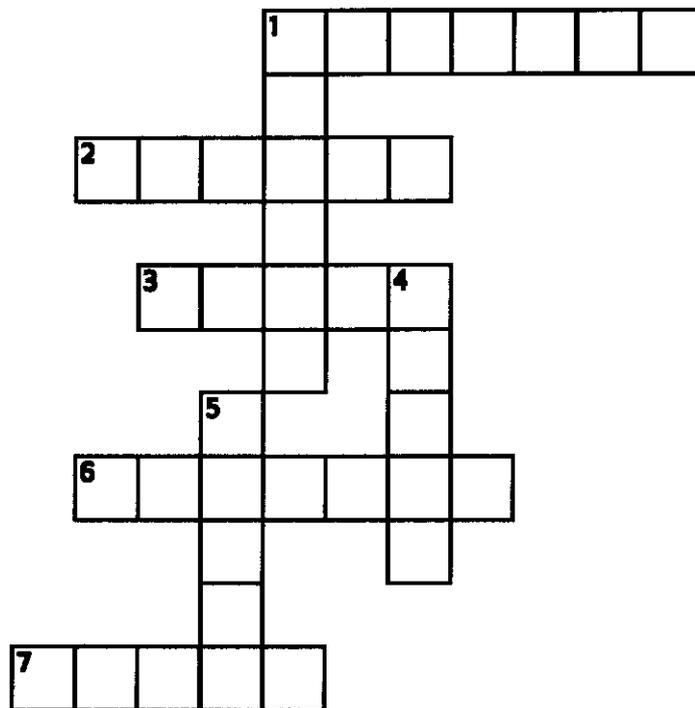
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
												
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
												



Crossword Puzzle

Freedom

Using the clues below, solve this Crossword Puzzle!



ACROSS

1. Many people were _____ at Mary's house. (Acts 12:12)
2. The angel of the Lord caused the _____ to fall off from Peter's hands. (Acts 12:7)
3. The girl who went to see who was at the door. (Acts 12:13)
6. When Peter arrived at Mary's house, he _____ on the door. (Acts 12:13)
7. Herod killed _____ with the sword (Acts 12:2)

DOWN

1. Herod had Peter put in _____. (Acts 12:4)
4. When the _____ appeared to Peter, a light shined in the room. (Acts 12:7)
5. The girl who came to the door recognized Peter by his _____. (Acts 12:14)



Mystery Word

In the Twinkling of an Eye

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Fill in the missing letters in each of the words below. To discover the Mystery Word, write the letters in the numbered boxes below in the box with the same number above.

"Heaven and ___ ___ ___ ___ shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away. (Matthew 24:35)

Jesus will descend from ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ with a shout. (1 Thessalonians 4:16)

"For the ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible." (1 Corinthians 15:52)

"He is the ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ of the Lord."
(1 Samuel 24:6)

We will be caught up in the ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ to meet the Lord in the air. (1 Thessalonians 4:17)

"Behold, I show you a ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___."
(1 Corinthians 15:51)

"We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___." (1 Corinthians 15:51)



Scrambled Words

Like a Mighty Rushing Wind

Unscramble the words below and write the correct word in each blank.

1. THOGS

4. SUNDO

2. PEAKS

5. GINS

3. CLAPE

6. YRAP

1. "And they were all filled with the Holy _____."
(Acts 2:4)

2. On the day of Pentecost, believers began to _____
with other tongues. (Acts 2:4)

3. "They were all with one accord in one _____."
(Acts 2:1)

4. There came from heaven a _____ like a mighty
wind. (Acts 2:2)

5. Tongues are a _____ for those who do not believe in
God. (1 Corinthians 14:22)

6. When we _____ in the Spirit, we build ourselves up.
(Jude 20)



Word Search

And God Created Dad

Find the hidden words in the puzzle below.
Circle the words when you find them.

T	G	G	J	S	L	D	R	X	L
Q	E	Q	X	V	A	E	F	J	Z
K	V	A	V	D	T	Z	A	J	F
U	M	N	C	H	H	S	L	T	L
Z	S	L	G	H	S	A	L	R	E
T	S	U	H	I	E	Q	T	A	A
W	A	S	Q	U	F	R	L	I	D
D	G	M	V	Z	Y	E	S	N	E
H	O	N	O	R	M	H	I	O	R
F	A	T	H	E	R	R	X	Q	N

DAD
DAUGHTER
FATHER
HONOR

LEADER
SON
TEACHER
TRAIN

Solve the Code

The Revelation

Use the code at the bottom of the page to solve this message.







A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

Activity Sheet Answer Key for Volume 3

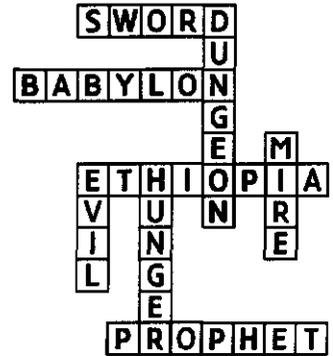
Lesson 1



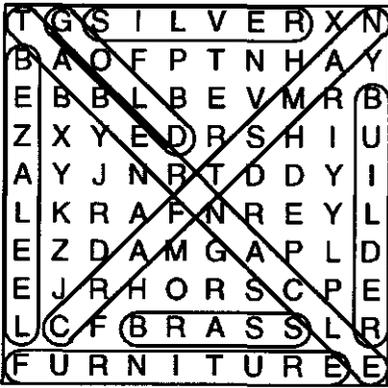
Lesson 7



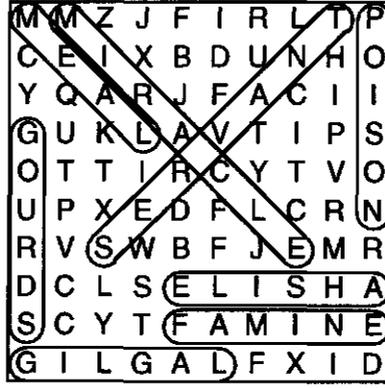
Lesson 14



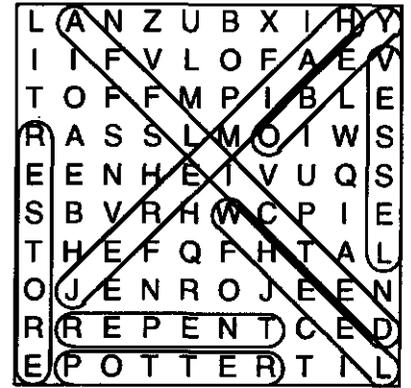
Lesson 2



Lesson 8



Lesson 15



Lesson 3

Mystery Word = Faith

1. Faint
2. Rewarder
3. Vision
4. Right
5. Weight

Lesson 4

Coloring Sheet

Lesson 5

1. Tongues
2. Fire
3. Wisdom
4. Tree
5. Hearts
6. Evil

Lesson 6

God is bigger than any problem I have.

Lesson 9

Mystery Word = Joash

1. Jehoiada
2. God
3. Fear
4. Kings
5. Hearken

Lesson 10

1. Glory
2. Bodies
3. Father
4. Tithes
5. Chest
6. Money

Lesson 11

Coloring Sheet

Lesson 12

Coloring Sheet

Lesson 13

Every good thing in life is a gift from God.

Lesson 16

Mystery Word = Do Good

1. Devils
2. Come
3. Signs
4. Temporal
5. Tongues
6. Deceive

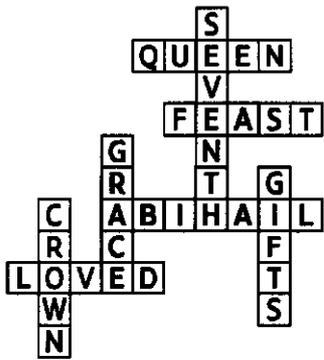
Lesson 17

1. Idol
2. Judah
3. People
4. Evil
5. Fifty
6. Altars

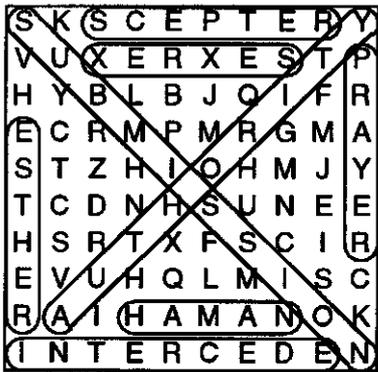
Lesson 18

God gives us gifts to help us serve others.

Lesson 19



Lesson 20



Lesson 21

Mystery Word = Honor

1. Haman
2. Good
3. Hand
4. Condemn
5. Pride

Lesson 22

1. Jesus
2. Victory
3. Good
4. Always
5. Every
6. Bound

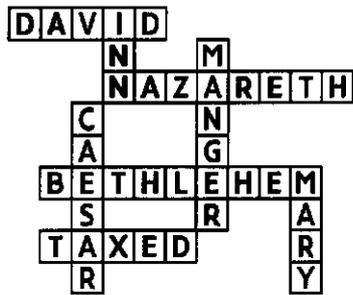
Lesson 23

Our character is revealed by what we do.

Lesson 24

Coloring Sheet

Lesson 25



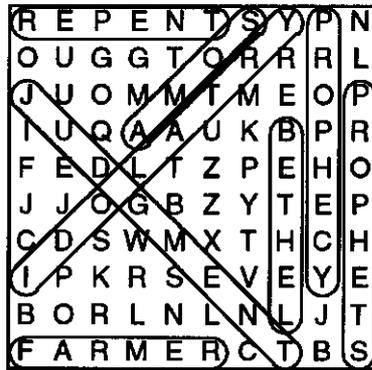
Lesson 26

1. Rejoice
2. Fulness
3. Bless
4. Heart
5. Strength
6. Delight

Lesson 27

Coloring Sheet

Lesson 28



Lesson 29

Mystery Word = Savior

1. Joshua
2. Branch
3. Silver
4. Voice
5. Word
6. Power



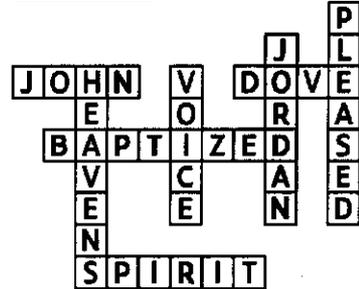
Lesson 31

1. Pure
2. Priest
3. Mighty
4. Levites
5. Keepers
6. Idols

Lesson 32

Jesus commands every believer to be baptized in water.

Lesson 33



Lesson 34

Mystery Word = Nations

1. Gentiles
2. Ananias
3. Witness
4. White
5. World
6. Send
7. Damascus

Lesson 35

1. Peter
2. Thunder
3. Preach
4. Chosen
5. Cross
6. Heal

Lesson 36

Without faith it is impossible to please God.

Lesson 37

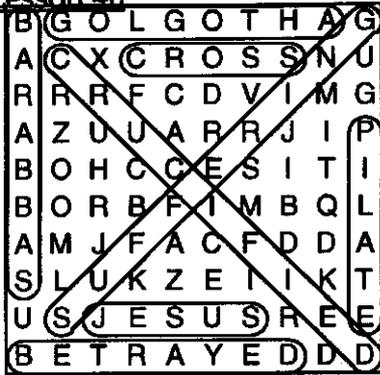


Lesson 38
Coloring Sheet

Lesson 39

- | | |
|-----------|----------|
| 1. Death | 4. Judas |
| 2. False | 5. Peace |
| 3. Pilate | 6. Power |

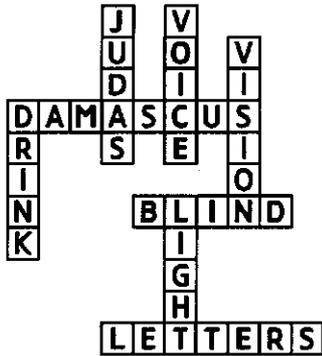
Lesson 40



Lesson 41

Jesus gives us peace which will help us in times of trouble.

Lesson 42



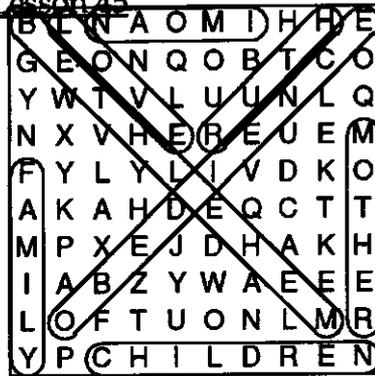
Lesson 43
Coloring Sheet

Lesson 44

Mystery Word = Submit

- | | |
|------------|----------|
| 1. Soul | 4. Men |
| 2. Rule | 5. Evil |
| 3. Scribes | 6. Watch |

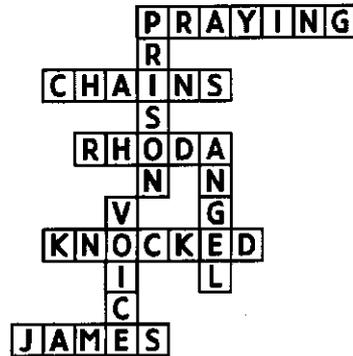
Lesson 45



Lesson 46

The prayer of faith shall save the sick.

Lesson 47



Lesson 48

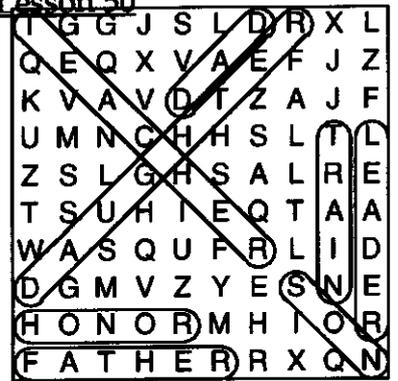
Mystery Word = Rapture

- | | |
|-------------|------------|
| 1. Earth | 5. Clouds |
| 2. Heaven | 6. Mystery |
| 3. Trumpet | 7. Changed |
| 4. Anointed | |

Lesson 49

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. Ghost | 4. Sound |
| 2. Speak | 5. Sign |
| 3. Place | 6. Pray |

Lesson 50



Lesson 51

Jesus is coming again to the earth.