

## **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.

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

# **Section 1**

**Welcome  
To Our  
Ministry  
Team**

## To Our Co-Laborers in the Work of the Ministry

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

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

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

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

## Our Calling

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

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

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

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

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

### A HIGH CALLING.

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

### A HOLY CALLING.

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

**A HEAVENLY CALLING.**

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

**A HOPEFUL CALLING.**

Paul's prayer:

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

**A HUMBLE CALLING.**

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

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

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

**Did God call me to teach?**

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

**What group am I called to teach?**

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

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

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

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

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

**Am I a team player?**

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

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

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



## Our Charge

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

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

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

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

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

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

**A good teacher will inspire more than inform.**

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

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

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

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

### Teams are more effective than individual efforts.

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

(Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

### We are soldiers under authority.

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

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

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

### The charge to Joshua was to love the Word.

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

(Joshua 1:8)

### Paul's charge to Timothy:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
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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.

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

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

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### My Credibility

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_ Check One: [ ] Male [ ] Female

Marital Status: \_\_\_\_\_ Ages of Children: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

1. When were you born again? \_\_\_\_\_

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

3. When were you baptized in water? \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

6. Do you read the Bible and pray daily? \_\_\_\_\_

7. What is your primary vocation? \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

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

10. What education or degrees do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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



## My Goals As a Worker In the School of the Bible

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## **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.

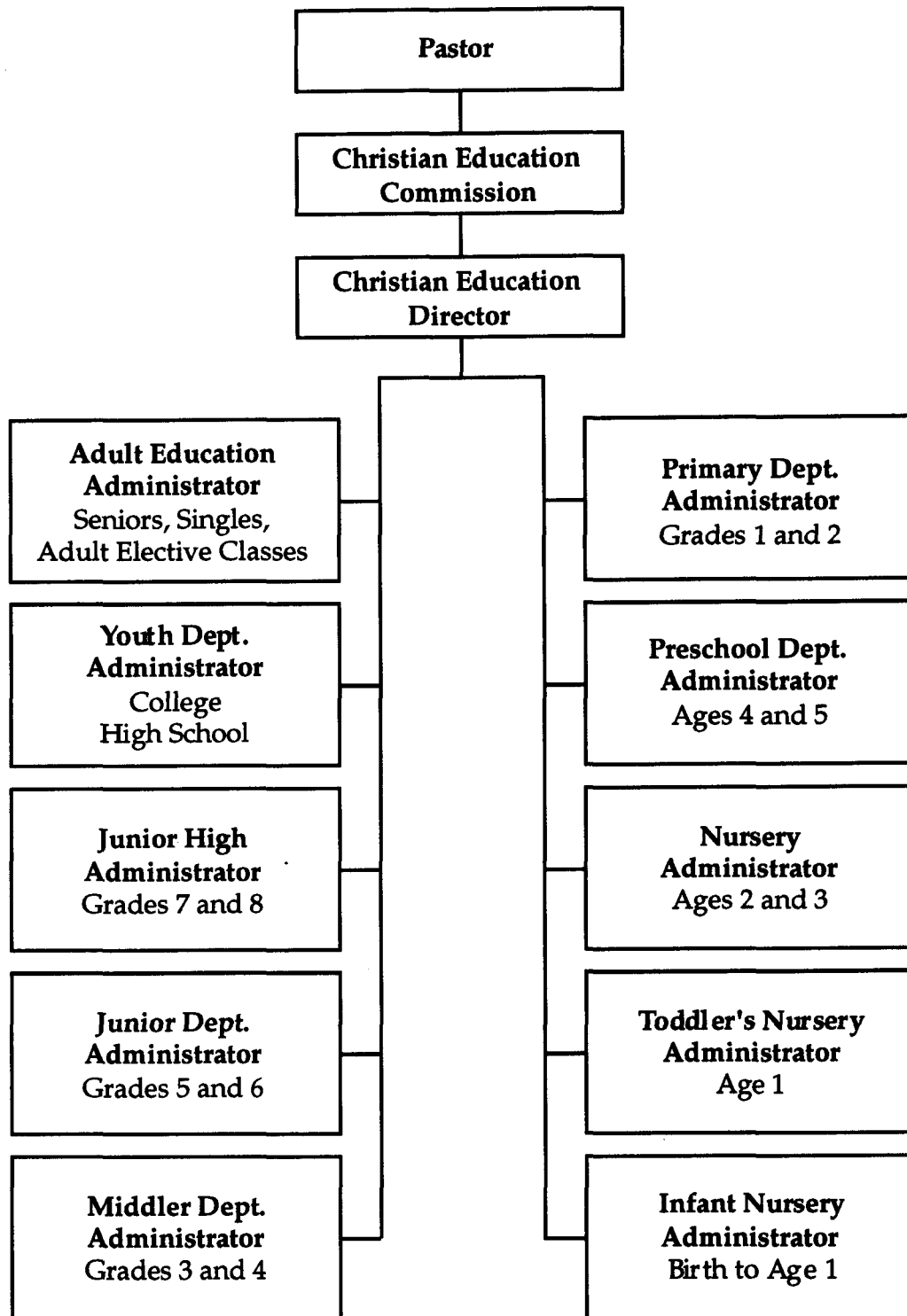
The job descriptions in this section define the responsibilities of the members of an effective ministry team. Sometimes, it may be necessary for a few people to fulfill several responsibilities in the class. However, as the class grows, these responsibilities can be delegated to new leaders as they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

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

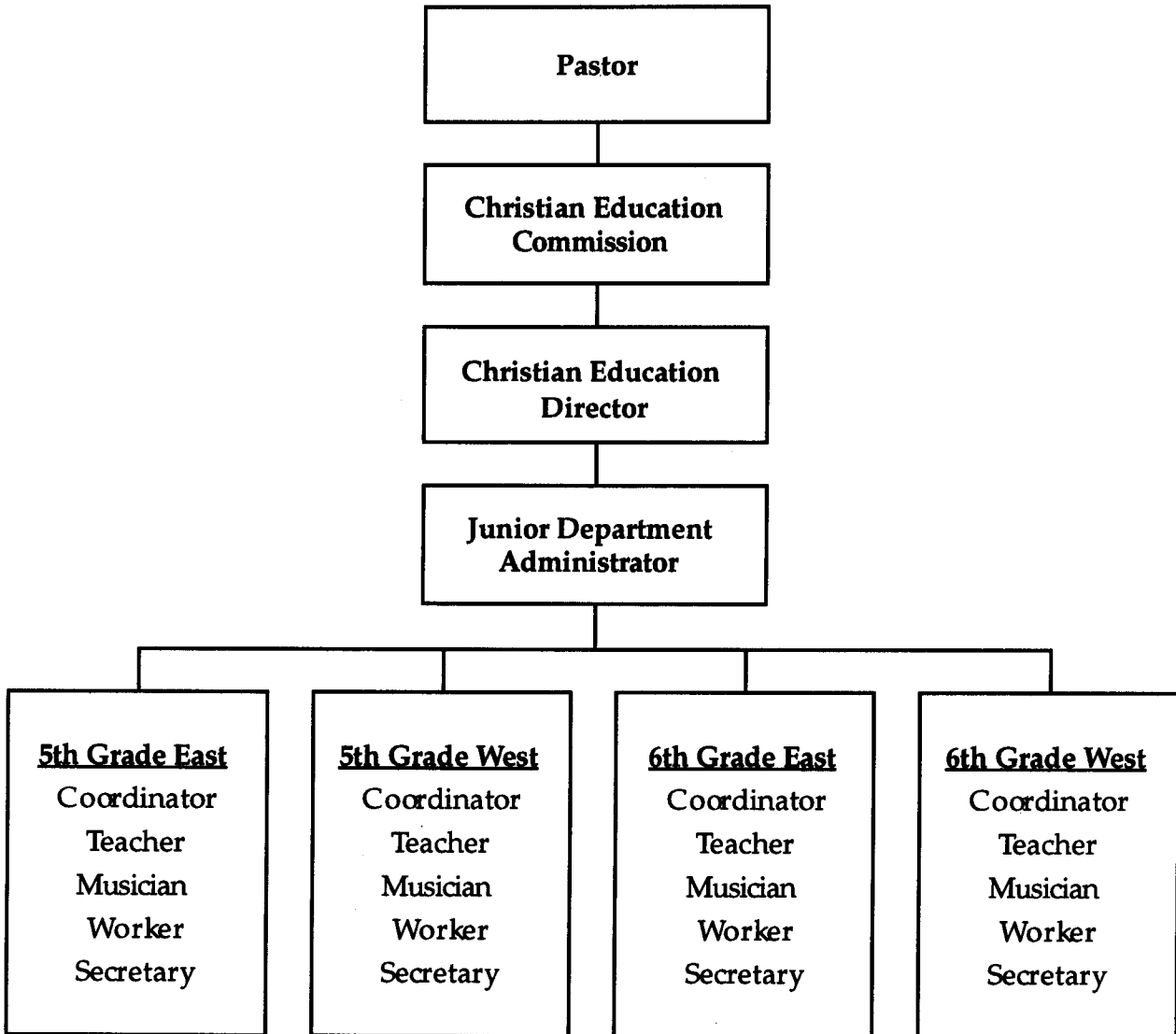
Confusion reigns when there is more than one person thinking they are in charge. The larger the body, the more responsibility needs to be delegated, and the more authority needs to be established on multiple levels. Everyone needs to know to whom they answer, and who has the responsibility to make the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



### Junior 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.

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*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.

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*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 Fifth Grade Students

### Physical Development

1. Fifth graders are usually strong and healthy, and love physical activity. If possible, give them opportunities for recreation and exercise. Try to plan extra outdoor activities.
2. They are developing motor skills rapidly, and should be increasingly skilled in crafts and music. They should be encouraged to develop skills in music or art, as well as sports.
3. They are usually not too tidy, and many need to be reminded occasionally to be neater in their appearance and in the care of the room.
4. Some of the girls are already maturing physically, and are taller than the boys. This is an awkward time for both sexes. We need to be careful not to draw attention to it, unless we gently mention in a general sense that this is only temporary. Large girls and small boys are especially sensitive. Be careful.
5. In America, many of our children are still "couch potatoes," which is a slang term for a television addict. This not only steals much of their time during some potentially great learning years, but it also damages their bodies, both by promoting physical inactivity and by promoting high-fat, low-fiber "foods." Try to stimulate them and their families toward more productive things, such

as music, sports, reading, and family devotions.

6. Children need good role models, and that should be part of a good Sunday School teacher's job. Take care of your own body. Stay in shape and in good health, by eating right and exercising. This will encourage them toward fitness more than lectures.

### Intellectual Development

1. Fifth graders should be good readers. By now, they should be able to at least read along with the group. Be careful, however, about singling out individuals to read. Some are weak readers and will be very embarrassed.
2. They can memorize easily, and are probably capable of more than you think. Their minds are clear and ready to receive.
3. They are beginning to grasp some abstract concepts, but still will have trouble thinking in analogies. Be clear and precise, and try to communicate, because analogies are extremely important to understanding the Bible.
4. If challenged and given a little instruction, fifth graders could probably write poems, or even songs. Even though their creativity may be somewhat damaged by overexposure to television or sensual music, they still have potential. Give them opportunities to be creative in a

positive way. Why not challenge the class in a poetry, story, or song-writing contest?

5. By now, they should know some of the Bible, or at least know the books of the Bible in order. Have a periodic drill on the books of the Bible, and challenge them to correlate known scripture passages with life situations. Start them thinking and participating.
6. Ask questions, and show respect for them when they give wrong answers. However, do not treat their wrong answers as if they were right, because you could cause confusion. Point out any right concepts, but gently lead them to the Word of God and to right doctrine.
7. Fifth graders are in great need of role models. Emphasize the biographies of great Christians, and encourage them to read good books.

### Social Development

1. On the average, fifth graders are moving toward more group loyalty, and away from a family focus. We do not consider this good, and we will try to stand against the peer-orientation that is strongly affecting children in our society. Encourage them to trust and talk to their parents. Encourage the parents to communicate and spend quality time with their children. Let the parents know you are there to support and help them in their role as the primary spiritual leaders of their children.
2. They still prefer the "pals" of their own gender, but that is beginning to

change. The girls are already very aware of boys, but the boys are not noticing the girls. Some girls may be "boy-crazy," and, as a rule, that is not healthy. Lead them away from the dating mentality they are exposed to so often, and toward a healthy biblical view that they should be friends with one another, and act like caring brothers and sisters. Play down the gender emphasis.

Some churches have found this to be a good age to have separate classes for boys and girls. They can then focus on ways to strengthen proper social responses, which are characteristic of their gender. Girls can focus on poise and beauty; boys can learn about manners and social skills.

3. They are very concerned with "fairness." Teach them the difference between fairness and justice, and show the values and benefits we can gain, if we respond with a right attitude to the many "unfair" situations in life. Teach them to "prefer one another in love," instead of trying to get "their fair share" in life. Show them that the life message of Jesus was that "it is more blessed to give than to receive."
4. The boys may be self-conscious, especially about praise and worship. They will want to appear "cool," and may be hesitant about singing. Remember that self-consciousness is an evidence of a lack of God-consciousness, so help them to get close to God and to learn the fear of the Lord. Show them that a healthy response to God in singing is an evidence of strength, and that their silence is the result of fear, not maturity.

## Spiritual Development

1. Fifth graders who have been in Sunday School for several years, have heard many lessons and many appeals for salvation. It is important for the teacher to be aware of the spiritual condition of the students and of their Christian background, or lack of it. If there are some unsaved young people in the group, there will be times which are conducive for an "altar call," or at least a question about their spiritual condition, to be followed up later. If only one or two children have not made a confession of faith, rather than single them out and focus the entire group on their need, why not meet with them or their family later, and lead them to the Lord? It would probably be much more meaningful to them, and would prevent a few possible problems.

If we have an altar call every week for "churched" children,

a. They will tend to develop the idea that the salvation experience is all there is to Sunday School, and not keep a learner's heart later on. They may be more likely to drop out, with the idea that "I already got saved -- several times, in fact. I do not need to go back."

b. There will be an embarrassing focus on one or two who are known to be new or unsaved.

c. We will miss opportunities to lead them into other experiences, or into character development. This is a good age for them to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, or to learn serving and giving.

d. It will become a ritual (rut), and lose its effectiveness.

Listen to the Holy Spirit, in order to know when to make a spiritual appeal for salvation.

2. The spirits of fifth graders are able to respond to spiritual truths, but perhaps their minds cannot yet fully grasp them. Use analogies, and keep teaching and praying. The Holy Spirit is able to make truth come alive in their spirits and in their understanding.

3. They should understand the purpose and significance of water baptism, and should be thoroughly taught and encouraged to be buried in the waters of Christian baptism.

4. They need to be led and encouraged to respond in the spirit, and not just focus on the social and intellectual aspects of life and religion. They should be able to hear from God and respond to Him.

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

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

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!

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.

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!

## **Fifth Grade Sunday School Class Schedule**

- 8:35 a.m. Team Prayer, Greet Students, Fellowship.
- 9:05 a.m. Song Service.
- 9:16 a.m. Offering.  
Announcements, Birthdays, Promotions.
- 9:22 a.m. Catechism in Doctrine.
- 9:32 a.m. Life-related Story, Object Lesson or Project.
- 9:42 a.m. Bible Lesson.
- 9:55 a.m. Prayer and Closing.
- 10:00 a.m. Dismiss to General Service.

## 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 Catherine Booth

Catherine Mumford was born in 1829. Three of her four brothers died in infancy; and so, her mother was very protective of her two remaining children. Catherine grew up in an atmosphere filled with love and wisdom. She received an excellent home education. Before she was twelve years old, she had read through the entire Bible eight times. As a child, she wrote brilliant and insightful magazine articles for magazines, being careful not to let them know that she was only a child.

One day, she was playing outside when she saw a drunk being arrested and taken off to jail. There were many people around who were jeering and mocking the poor man; but Catherine marched over to walk beside the man as he was led away. Later, while in boarding school, she was quick to defend and comfort those who were picked on by the older or "smarter" children who would play "practical" jokes on them. (This is called "folly" in the Bible.) She worked hard, but had to give up her schooling because of poor health. She had severe back problems; but while she was bedfast, she gave herself to reading and memorizing.

In her early teens, she "fell in love" with a young man; but then she realized that he was not completely devoted to God, so she broke off the relationship. This was a wise move, because she would later marry a great preacher and have a long and fruitful ministry with him.

Although Catherine was a devout and diligent person, she struggled with doubts about her salvation. For six weeks, she wrestled with God for assurance. Finally, she read a hymn which said,

*"My God, I am Thine, what a comfort divine.*

*What a blessing to know that my Jesus is mine."*

These words ignited her soul, and she ran to tell her mother of her joy.

One day, Catherine heard a fiery young Methodist preacher named William Booth. They became close friends, and began to encourage each other spiritually. They would talk about God, and inspire one another as soul-winners. In four months, they had led 1,739 people to the Lord. After a happy three-year courtship, they were married; and they began to travel together as an evangelistic team.

Mrs. Booth was very timid, and loved only to hear her husband preach. While she was focused on her four small children, God began to move her again. After Mr. Booth had preached to a group of 3,000 people, Mrs. Booth stood up and surprised him by publicly confessing that she had resisted God's call to preach, and that she would start preaching nightly. This was unusual, because many people were strongly opposed to women preachers. William and Catherine Booth became one of the greatest husband and wife preaching teams in history, and founded the great Salvation Army. In addition to a heavy preaching schedule, Mrs. Booth did her own housework, and ministered to the poor and to many guests. She also managed to do a lot of writing. Despite her physical pain, she labored diligently; and all of her nine children became preachers and soul-winners.

## The Story of William Bramwell

William Bramwell was born in Lancashire, England, in 1739. He was the tenth child out of eleven in the family. His parents were dedicated Christians; and they taught him to be honest and to work faithfully. He had a fine voice, and was an excellent singer.

He obtained a job as an apprentice courier several miles from his home, so he stayed in his employer's home. The man recognized that he was hard-working and honest, but he thought William was something of a religious fanatic. And so William was forbidden to use candles, to discourage him from reading the Bible so much. But he lay by the fireplace until late at night, pouring over the Word of God by the hour.

William was deeply convicted by his sins, and he sought pardon desperately. He would sometimes put coarse sand on the floor, and kneel on his bare knees. He even cut the skin off the tips of his fingers, inflicting pain to remind him of his sin. Some nights he would walk the ten miles to his parent's home and back again, praying all the way. But this penitence did him no good, because we are not saved by works or acts of penitence. We are only saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. His self-inflicted sufferings only damaged his health, and baffled his doctor.

Finally, during a communion service, William fully believed on the Lord, and received forgiveness. God also graciously healed his frail body, and restored him to good health instantly.

His family had forbidden him to relate to the Methodists, which had begun in revival fervor under men like John

Wesley. The Methodists in those days were zealous for God, and they preached a strong holiness message. One day he heard a woman make a remark about "those Methodist devils," and became curious as to why they were so hated. He went to a Methodist meeting, where the people were worshipping God with great joy, and the Word was being preached with a powerful anointing. Ah, this was his kind of folk. William became a Methodist for life, and went on to become a fine preacher.

William Bramwell spent his life in a diligent pursuit of God and holiness. No matter what time he went to bed, he never slept past 5:00 in the morning, and was usually up praying by 4:00. One time he spent 365 straight hours in a sand-hole, seeking God. He discovered that holiness, also, was not to be obtained by works, but by faith. As he focused his attention and affections on the Lord, he found it a joy and privilege to walk in moral purity.

Bramwell married a fine Christian woman, and was a devoted husband and father. But he only saw his wife about once every six weeks or so, because he traveled in the ministry most of the time. He had a passion for lost souls, and his wife always encouraged and supported his calling.

Because he was so given to prayer, William Bramwell was sensitive in his spirit. In one church, he visited a sick man in his home. He said, "All is not right here. This man is not your husband. You have been living together in sin!" They both confessed in tears that it was so. On another occasion, he spoke to a woman who was highly respected in the church,

and said, "Woman, you are a hypocrite; and if you do not repent, you will go to hell." To everyone's amazement, she confessed that she was not right with God, and that she was grateful for his reproof. These are examples of the gift of the word of knowledge, spoken of in First Corinthians chapter twelve.

After sixty years of joyful and diligent service, William Bramwell met Jesus Christ face to face in the year 1818. The secret of this life that was so well lived was faithful, diligent, consistent prayer.

## The Story of Anoosh Bullock

Anoosh was a dark-haired Armenian girl, born about 1952. She was exceptionally intelligent; and she gave her heart to Jesus at an early age, even though her father was not a Christian. When she was still very young, her father decided to move the family to Russia. Russia was an even more oppressive land than Armenia. Generally, people were allowed to move into Russia, but they could never move out. The Communist government worked very hard to keep people from leaving. It was a land ruled by atheists who hated God; and the system always created poverty and poor living conditions. Anoosh dreaded the idea of moving to Russia, for she wanted to travel and tell people about Jesus. Nevertheless, she went with the family.

In Russia, Anoosh excelled in learning, and was allowed to attend the university. Although Christians were harshly discriminated against, God helped her to do so well that they were forced to pass her with honors. Through it all, Anoosh was faithful to serve the Lord in this land of darkness and persecution; and she continued to pray that God would let her be free.

The desire of her heart was to be a preacher's wife. Specifically, she wanted to marry an American preacher. One day, as she was praying, she asked God to tell her why she was still not married. God said, "You have never said what kind of man you wanted." She said, "I want an American, with blond hair and blue eyes."

Alan Bullock was an American preacher who had spent years in Florida in

the drug business. He was a dangerous, hardened criminal, until the Holy Spirit came with convicting power, and turned his life around. He became a strong Christian, with a dynamic testimony of the grace of God. Alan moved to California. One night, he had an unusual dream. He saw clearly the face of a young, dark-haired girl; and he knew that it was the face of his future wife. Soon after that, he was with a minister friend who had just returned from a trip to Russia. As he was showing pictures of the scenes and people of Russia, Alan saw one picture that amazed him. He said, "Wait! That is the girl I am going to marry!"

It happened that the man remembered the girl, and knew how to contact her. Alan wrote to Anoosh, and she wrote back. In one of the letters, he asked her to marry him, and she said "Yes." They were still looking forward to meeting each other, and were praying that God would miraculously enable him to get her out of Russia.

Alan finally made the trip to Russia. After some exciting adventures, and some dangerous encounters with KGB agents, they prayerfully made their plans. Through much effort and prayer, Anoosh was finally granted freedom; and she went with her new husband to America. Today, the Bullocks have two children and a busy and fruitful life in the ministry. God continues to use them both, and to inspire thousands of people with their testimony that God is faithful to answer prayer, even though with men it is impossible.

## The Story of John Calvin

"Calvinism" is a term associated with the idea of "once saved, always saved," although John Calvin himself did not teach that concept. Calvin was a very godly man who believed strongly that people reap what they sow, and that God is a just and holy God.

John Calvin was born in France, in 1509. He was just a boy, when the German monk Martin Luther nailed his "Ninety-five Theses" on the door of the Wittenberg church, beginning the great Reformation. "Reformation" is a term referring to the fact that, during the Dark Ages, the Roman Catholic Church had gradually become more and more corrupt, and had focused primarily on tradition and politics, rather than God's Word. John Calvin was to become another great reformer of the Christian faith in the sixteenth century.

John was the son of a successful lawyer, who had great ambitions for his bright son. John's mother was a kind woman, who also possessed a keen intellect. They began to train John at an early age, and learning became a lifelong pursuit of John Calvin. At the age of 12, he was appointed a chaplain in the cathedral; and this job helped to finance his education. John graduated from the University of Paris, the most important college in Europe, at the age of 19. His father then sent him to another university to study law.

There, the young law student began his study of Greek. When his father died, John decided to study the Bible. In 1532, after diligently studying the Scripture, he surrendered to the call of the Holy Spirit and committed himself to the ministry.

In Paris, John studied theology; and he began to learn about the teachings of Martin Luther and the other teachers of the Reformation. Knowing the Bible well, he quickly recognized that they were correct, while the traditions of the Roman Church were not biblical. The French king supported the Roman Church in persecuting reformers; and John was exiled from his native land.

John Calvin fled to Switzerland, seeking to travel to Germany. In Geneva, he met Pastor John Farel, who was teaching Luther's doctrines at the leading church in the city. Pastor Farel decided that this brilliant and dedicated young man should work with him in Geneva, and he insisted that he remain there. In fact, he threatened John with the wrath of God if he dared go anywhere else. With the big pastor's fists grasping his collar, John agreed that it was surely God's will to stay.

John became the most influential man in Geneva. He sent out hundreds of men to preach the gospel throughout Europe; and he boldly preached the gospel and its principles to the Church. The city's civil government was strongly influenced by his teaching; and many laws were passed in response to his sermons. John Calvin wrote many books and articles in his career. Because of the opposition of ungodly people, both Calvin and Farel were banished from Geneva in 1535. But, in 1540, he was asked to return with his new bride; and he remained in Geneva for the remaining 23 years of his life.

Calvin built a great Christian academy in 1559; and he promoted education for children and adults. He was a powerful

leader of the Reformation, and established hundreds of churches in France -- the homeland that had rejected him as a young man. John Calvin is remembered

today as a courageous champion of biblical Christianity, and as a man of God who helped change the world.

## The Story of George Washington Carver

George Washington Carver was born a slave in Diamond Grove, Missouri, in 1864. His mother was owned by the Moses Carver family, and his father belonged to a neighboring plantation. The Carvers had been wealthy; but the marauding thieves of the early Civil War called "night riders" had stolen or destroyed much of the wealth in that part of Missouri. One night the night riders stole baby George and his mother, and took them to Arkansas. Mr. Carver sought after them, and found only the boy. The men offered to give him the sickly black baby for his valuable race horse. That horse was about the only possession of real value he had left; but he accepted the trade. He took the dying baby home, and the Carvers nursed him back to health.

However, the boy remained frail during his childhood, so he was usually found in the kitchen, helping Mrs. Carver do "women's work." He became skilled at sewing, knitting, ironing, and working with plants. He also gained a deep faith in God, as he was spiritually trained by the devoted Christian family that raised him.

As a young boy, he found a spelling book, and quickly memorized the entire book. He then went to Neosho to attend a small school there, where he learned all they could teach him in only one year. George had a deep desire for education. He traveled to Kansas, where he earned his living by washing and ironing clothes, while he learned. He applied to a college, and was accepted. However, when he arrived, he was told that "Negroes are not welcome here." But he found a college in Iowa that would accept him, and he continued his education. He again started a laundry business, and studied art and

science. He later entered Iowa State College, where he earned a master's degree in botany, and was offered a teaching position.

Later, Booker T. Washington, a famous black educator, persuaded George to move to Tuskegee, Alabama, to head their agriculture department. He became concerned with ways to help the struggling agriculture industry in the south; and he worked to develop uses for such "useless" plants as the sweet potato and the peanut. Mr. Carver eventually created 150 uses for the sweet potato, and 300 products from the lowly peanut. Until then, they were considered weeds, unfit for human consumption. He made milk, soap, soup, wood stains, axle grease, ice cream, sugar, and hundreds of other things from peanuts, as well as roasted peanuts, and, yes, peanut butter.

He was summoned to present his findings in Washington to a congressional committee, who laughed at his sloppy clothes and unshined shoes. They had allotted ten minutes for his presentation; but even after he spoke for an hour and forty minutes, they asked him to continue. When asked how one man could have such amazing ability to create useful things out of plants, he would quickly say, *"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth."* (Psalms 121:1-2) In addition to teaching from his vast knowledge of botany and chemistry, George loved to teach his Bible class. He was always quick to tell people that the secret to his success was, *"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."* (Proverbs 3:6)



## The Testimony of Christopher Columbus

Everyone in America knows that over 500 years ago, Christopher Columbus sailed from Spain in three small ships and "discovered" America. However, secular historians have twisted the story, and have omitted important facts, in order to avoid the Christian message of his story. Christopher Columbus was not seeking a trade route to India; but his primary purpose was to take the gospel to India and to fulfill his given name, which means "Christ-bearer." He was also convinced that the earth was round, not by watching ships sail over the horizon, but by reading in Isaiah 40 about the "circle of the earth." It was the Christians who thought that the earth was round; and the scientists of the day laughed them to scorn.

Columbus had to overcome the fears of his sailors, as well as his own. On October 9, 1492, he met with the captains of the *Pinta* and the *Nina*, who told him that the men were about to mutiny, unless they turned back. They had already gone further than expected -- and there was no land in sight. Discouraged, he pleaded for just three more days; and then, he promised to give up the dream, if they did not find land. We all know that they did sight land that third day. Christopher was the first to step on the new shore. He called the place San Salvador (Spanish for "Holy Savior"). He had landed on what we know as Central America.

Columbus still thought he had arrived in India, and called the natives there "Indians." Native Americans are known by that name today, even though it was a mistake. He took a few of the natives home with him; and after many other perils and the loss of two of the ships, he

made it back to Spain in the *Nina* and received a hero's welcome.

Some historians had a hard time believing that anyone would be so dedicated that his motive was really to spread the gospel; so they wrote that Columbus was merely trying to establish a trade route to the East. They also guessed that he must have derived his idea about a round earth from watching ships sail over the horizon. After all, why give the Bible so much credit? Here is an account, which is taken from Christopher Columbus' own words:

*"It was the Lord who put into my mind (I could feel His hand upon me) the fact that it would be possible to sail from here to the Indies. All who heard of my project rejected it with laughter, ridiculing me. There is no question that the inspiration was from the Holy Spirit, because He comforted me with rays of marvelous inspiration from the Holy Scriptures...."*

*I am a most unworthy sinner, but I have cried out to the Lord for grace and mercy, and they have covered me completely. I have found the sweetest consolation since I made it my whole purpose to enjoy His marvelous presence. For the execution of the journey to the Indies, I did not make use of intelligence, mathematics or maps. It is simply the fulfillment of what Isaiah had prophesied...*

*No one should fear to undertake any task in the name of our Saviour, if it is just and if the intention is purely for His holy service. The working out of all*

*things has been assigned to each person by our Lord, but it all happens according to His sovereign will, even though He gives advice. Oh, what a gracious Lord, who desires that people should perform for Him those things for which He holds*

*Himself responsible! Day and night, everyone should express their most devoted gratitude to Him."*

(From Columbus' Book of Prophecies.  
Available only in Spanish.)

## The Story of Domitian

During the time of Christ and the early Church, the world was under the political control of the Roman Empire. The Roman leaders were generally cruel and selfish, for they were pagans who rejected the gospel. The Christians, in the meantime, were spreading the gospel to the whole world. After the day of Pentecost, the early believers carried the happy message of salvation everywhere. The Church experienced explosive growth, in spite of opposition from Jewish leaders as well as the Romans.

After the death of the vile Emperor Nero, several emperors ascended to the throne, only to die from one sort of treachery or another. The next one to reign for very long was Domitian, who was also a cruel and godless tyrant. He killed his own brother, and also anyone else he suspected might threaten his position. He had some rich men executed simply to take their wealth for himself, and ordered the death of anyone descended from King David.

He had Simeon, the Bishop of Jerusalem, crucified. The Apostle John, now the only one of the twelve who had not been killed as a martyr, was boiled in oil. But he miraculously survived; and so he was banished to the prison island of Patmos, where Jesus appeared to him and gave him the great Revelation.

Emperor Domitian found it convenient to blame Christians for any national problem or natural disaster, such as earthquakes and famines. It was falsely rumored that Christians held indecent meetings at night, and murdered their children. A law was passed that mandated that every Christian must be punished,

unless he or she renounced Christ before the Tribunal. Many people would report Christians to the authorities, for the sake of personal gain.

Christians were stretched out and pulled on racks, seared with fire, boiled, scourged, stoned, and hanged. They were tortured with red-hot pincers, or put in arenas with wild bulls, to be gored. To add to the indignity of persecution, the relatives of the martyrs were refused permission to bury their bodies.

Timothy visited the Apostle Paul, just before his execution. Then he returned to Ephesus, where he served as the senior pastor of the church until almost the close of the first century. One of the pagan practices in Ephesus was to celebrate an annual feast, in which the people paraded through the streets in masks, carrying images of their heathen gods. Pastor Timothy met the procession, and reproved the wicked people for their idolatry. The crowd became enraged, and many of them beat the pastor with clubs. Within two days, he was dead.

Amazingly, Christianity flourished during these dark days of persecution. For one thing, people had to be sure they were really born again, because it often cost them their life. Also, it was a source of inspiration and wonder to other people who saw the courage and conviction of these saints, who had found a faith worth dying for. Many who witnessed their love and bravery gave their hearts to the Lord. God's Word also promises special honor and reward in heaven for those who give their lives as martyrs for the faith.

## The Story of Henrietta Green

Henrietta Green was a very unusual woman. She was not a Christian, but we can learn an important lesson from her life. Mrs. Green was divorced from her husband; and she lived with her son, Edwin in a cheap tenement apartment in New York City, around the turn of the century. She lived as many people there lived -- shivering through the winter in a cold, damp room, and living on the cheapest possible food available. When her son was young, Mrs. Green would read her copy of the newspaper, and then send the boy out to the street to sell it to some passerby. Sometimes she would use the newspapers to wrap around herself under her shabby coat, as insulation against the cold New York winter. She also used them under her boy's clothing, for in winter, their room temperature was often nearly freezing, and they almost never used the stove, even for cooking. She would eat soup cold out of the can, because she wanted to save the cost of wood or coal.

Henrietta's son was used to living a meager existence. He never had toys, or new clothes. His only garments came from the Salvation Army, or were hand-me-downs from people who felt sorry for Mrs. Green or for him. He seldom had the luxury of a hot meal, or a nice, hot bath.

One day, young Edwin broke his leg. Mrs. Green tried to set the leg in a homemade splint made from sticks and

rags; and she did her best to care for him. After weeks of agony, Mrs. Green took him to a clinic to get some medical help. Yes, the doctor said, young Edwin needed an operation. He must be in a cast. But it might be expensive. She would thank the doctor, and they would trudge on around town, looking for a clinic or a doctor who might take care of the leg at no charge. But no one offered, and Edwin suffered on.

Months passed, and the leg continued to deteriorate. Finally, during a visit with his father, Edwin confided his suffering. The father was determined to help. He sold many of his few possessions, in order to pay for medical help. But gangrene had set in, and Edwin's leg had to be amputated. Edwin did survive, but oh, how different his life could have been, if it were not for his mother.

You see, Hettie Green did not have to suffer in poverty all her life; but, she did. Mrs. Green had money in the bank. She was just too stingy to spend it, even when her son needed an operation. Because she did not know God as her source of peace, she hoarded her money, thinking it would make her secure. But she lived her whole miserable life saving money that she would never spend. In fact, she died with as much as one hundred million dollars -- the richest woman in the world. Now, we would look at her life and say that she was also the poorest woman in the world.

## The Story of "Just As I Am"

Charlotte Elliott was born in 1789. Although she lived about 82 years, she was puny and sickly as a young woman. One day, she was entertaining a visiting minister in her home. Her distinguished guest was Dr. Caesar Malan, from Geneva, Switzerland. Dr. Malan was ministering in England for a short time. As they engaged in polite conversation, the preacher gently asked her if she had been genuinely born again. He wanted to know if she had a covenant relationship with the Lord. Charlotte was offended by such a personal question. She had been taught that it was impolite to speak of such things, because it implied that the person did not seem to be a true Christian. She replied, "I do not wish to discuss the matter." Dr. Malan said that he would not pursue the matter if it displeased her, but that he would pray that she would become a born-again Christian.

Several days later, she saw him again, and apologized for her rude response. She said, "I do not know how to find Christ. I want you to help me." Dr. Malan said, "Come, just as you are." This simple suggestion led to her conversion. Later, it became the basis of inspiration for her best known poem, which has become one of the most widely used hymns in the history of Christianity.

Charlotte Elliott, the young and happy new Christian, wrote:

*Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that thy blood was shed for me,*

*And that thou bidd'st me come to  
thee,*

*O Lamb of God, I come! I come!*

*Just as I am, and waiting not,*

*To rid my soul of one dark blot,*

*To thee, whose blood can cleanse each  
spot,*

*O Lamb of God, I come! I come!*

*Just as I am, though tossed about*

*With many a conflict, many a doubt,*

*Fightings and fears within, without,*

*O Lamb of God, I come! I come!*

One summer evening in 1875, Pastor D. W. Couch was struggling through a service. He was expecting a visiting minister, who did not arrive. He turned to the music director, and asked him to lead in a familiar song. The congregation sang, "Just As I Am." The next morning, the pastor received a note from a lawyer, who said that he had something interesting to tell him. When they met, the man tearfully told him that he had found Christ as the Savior of his soul.

He said, "I am the son of a pastor, and I have lived a selfish and sinful life. I was in my room across the street, meditating on the wickedness of my soul, and the

many opportunities for salvation I had avoided. I felt that I had sinned against light, and against the prayers of my parents, and that there was no hope for me. Then, I heard you young people downstairs singing "*Just As I Am*," and I

thought, 'Does God bid me to come? Is this for me?' Then the congregation upstairs sang the same hymn, and I knew God was speaking to me. I said, 'O Lamb of God, I come!' My soul is filled with joy, and I know my parents will rejoice."

## The Story of R.G. LeTourneau

Have you ever wondered who invented the bulldozer, and the many giant earth-moving machines that are used to build highways and dams? The leader of that industry was a Christian businessman named Robert LeTourneau.

When World War I broke out in 1917, Robert was a young, hard-working man who had his own auto garage business. He went to help the war effort by going to work in the shipyard; and he left the business in the hands of a partner. When he came home in 1919, he discovered that the partner had wasted all of his money on drinking and immoral living.

As Bob worked long, hard hours trying to restore the business, he found that there were more and more bad debts and losses, because the partner had not kept records. He would repair a car and sell it, only to find that the partner had borrowed much more on the car than it was worth, and then had kept the money for himself. After many months of hard work, he finally sold his business; but he was still \$5,000 in debt.

Bob was a hard worker; and he soon got a job operating road building equipment for \$2 an hour, which was a good wage at that time. However, he and his wife had to live in an old, leaky shack with no plumbing or electricity, because they had no money. Later, God provided the money to buy an old scraper and tractor; and Bob began to operate his own business again. He dedicated his life to the Lord, thinking that he would have to give up his secular work to become a preacher; but the Lord called him to be a businessman, and so he dedicated his finances and

abilities to help his local church, missionaries, and the poor.

When he took on his first major building contract, he found that he could not meet the deadline without more efficient equipment; and so he invented the bulldozer to replace the old scraping machine that was pulled by a tractor. Over the years, he invented many giant earth-moving machines that could increase the productivity of one man to do the work of hundreds.

He discovered that every time he went into partnerships with men, he would have conflicts with them. It seemed that God would bless his business when he was working to raise money for missions; but when there were partners, they would be plagued with envy, doubts, and mounting losses. He learned that God was the Partner he could depend upon; and that when he worked for God's honor, he always prospered. Whenever he faced an impossible deadline, he would go to prayer and give it to the Lord. God would then give him ideas for new machines that would meet the need.

Bob learned that whenever he worked for money, he was not successful. When he sought to bring increase to God's kingdom, he was anointed to make money. In 1928, he found that he had more contracts than his men and machines could handle; and he prayed, "God, if You do not help me, I am ruined." Bob quickly realized his mistake; and he prayed, "God, I did not mean that. God, please help me not to let You down." He went to bed with peace in his heart; and the next day, God gave him the plan for a cable-controlled scraper that could move

ten tons of dirt at a time. The next road was finished three months ahead of schedule.

One day, Bob and his wife decided that since they were working for the Lord, they should dedicate half of all their business

and personal profits to God. Eventually, they began the practice of giving 90% of their income to Christian work. R. G. LeTourneau died in 1969 at the age of 80, a happy man who had done much in his life for the work of missions and evangelism, because he gave his business to the Lord.



## The Story of Dr. Morrison

Many years ago, a prominent preacher named Dr. Morrison was asked by a mission society to conduct a ministry tour around the world. There were many Christian leaders who needed training and encouraging, in so many nations. He consented, knowing that the trip would take much more than a year to complete, because he would travel mostly by ship and by train.

After the long and exhausting journey, he arrived at his home town late at night. He was the only passenger who got off the train at that station; and there was no one there to help or even greet him. One solitary light bulb dimly illuminated the platform. The night man had gone on home. Dr. Morrison, already weary, found it necessary to pick up his own heavy baggage and carry it up the hill to his home.

As he trudged up the long road, he began to feel sorry for himself. He had just read in the paper of the recent homecoming of President Teddy Roosevelt. The President had been to Africa on one of his famous big game hunting expeditions, attended by many servants and surrounded by the press and many celebrated people. When he arrived in New York, he was greeted by a large

brass band and a cheering crowd. He was given a ticker tape parade down the main street of the city; and the news of his arrival was spread across the nation.

Dr. Morrison frowned as he made the inevitable comparison. "Lord, I nearly died in India from drinking the filthy water there. I suffered through unbearable heat and terrible living conditions in that land, so filled with demonic activity. I was nearly killed in Borneo by wicked native warriors; and I endured many hardships and perils. Roosevelt was on a vacation, shooting animals -- yet he is warmly greeted by a great crowd. I have labored to preach the gospel and save souls, and not one person is here to welcome me home."

As he continued on, he began to be quiet before the Lord, and then a strong but gentle Voice spoke to his spirit, "Son, you are not home yet." With that comforting word from the Holy Spirit, his countenance brightened, and his steps became lighter. He saw that the last chapter was yet to be written, and that this was not the end of the story. As he thought about his real home, and the greeting he would one day receive, he began to rejoice on his way, and to look forward to the next day's adventures.

## The Story of John Patton

John G. Patton was born in Scotland in 1824. He grew up in a small, three-room cottage with his four brothers and six sisters. His father was a godly man, who went into the small inner room of the thatch-roofed home to pray three times every day for God's blessing on his family. His good father made a strong impression on his life; and John became a committed Christian as a young boy.

At the age of twelve, he was helping his father in the stocking business. In his free time, he was already studying Latin and Greek. He went on to study medicine and theology in Glasgow. After Bible school, John spent ten years ministering to the poor people in the slums of the city where he had been educated. It was hard and discouraging work. But he led many people to the Lord; and eight of his young converts later became preachers.

John married a Christian girl when he was thirty years old. That same year, they were asked to go to the New Hebrides Islands (located in the south Pacific) as missionaries. They were informed that, although the islands were beautiful and the weather was very pleasant, it was difficult to get missionaries to go there. The last couple had been eaten by the local cannibals.

It was indeed dangerous. The Pattons did not know the language, so they had to communicate as best as they could with sign language. As he learned the language, he started developing a written form, for there was no reading nor writing in this rare language. Eventually, he developed a Bible for them.

Life was indeed difficult for this gentle missionary. His wife and baby boy died with a tropical fever. Natives were always stealing his belongings and equipment; and he was in constant danger. He continued to labor in the gospel for many years among the savage people of the islands, and God gave him fruit in his labors.

By the time he died in 1907, at the age of 83, John Patton had built a home, a school, a missionary headquarters, two orphanages, and a church. His translation of the New Testament into their native language was printed and published in 1899. Twenty-five of the thirty islands had missionaries and churches; and there were no more cannibals. Most of the people on the islands had followed the faith of this good leader, and had become born-again Christians. John Patton went on to his great reward, leaving the world a much better place than he had found it.

## The Story of Russian Believers

The Apostle Paul said that "*...where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.*" (Romans 5:20) This is clearly illustrated in the nations of the world which strongly oppose Christianity, such as communist countries. When people's very lives are threatened if they believe, they tend to have much more grace from God, in order to overcome the evil in their society.

Since 1917, historians claim that the communist party has been directly responsible for the deaths of about 65 million people in the world -- and many because they were Christians. Marxists felt that Christianity threatened their ability to promote their political ideology, because Christians tended to have stronger families, and greatly valued freedom. But when an oppressive government is in control of a country, the Christians there will tend to be much stronger in their faith than believers in other nations, who live an easy life.

During the 1960s, when socialism was still the controlling element in Russia, the Christians were forced to function underground. The state-sanctioned churches were spiritually dead, and therefore no threat to the communist party.

But the underground church was alive and well. With no money to operate, it was a pure venture of faith. Reports of God miraculously turning water into wine were common, because water was all they had. Meetings were often held in dark, remote basements, in the middle of the night. Even then, the believers were told

that the time and place of the meeting could not be divulged ahead of time, because of the danger of spies. The people would have to receive a word from the Lord.

One night, in a secret believers' meeting, the sermon was interrupted by a knock at the door. A group of Russian soldiers burst into the room, waving machine guns at the startled congregation. The officer in charge said, "This is an illegal meeting. We know you are Christians. Those of you who wish to renounce Christ may do so by leaving the room. You have twenty minutes to comply. Those who remain will be shot."

The people were troubled, but they had known to expect this very real possibility. Millions of believers throughout history have had to make the choice of renouncing their faith, or dying. As the minutes ticked by, some of the people, ashamed and embarrassed, quietly filed out of the dim room and into the night. But a good number of men, women, and young people stayed in their seats, quietly praying and weeping.

After the time was up, the officer ordered the remaining believers to stand up against the wall. Many of them held hands as they wordlessly complied with the orders. As the soldiers positioned themselves on the other side of the room, the officer suddenly smiled and said, "Brothers and sisters, we are Christians, too. Now that all the phonies are gone, we can really have church!"

It was a good service, after all.

## The Story of A. B. Simpson

Albert Benjamin Simpson was born in 1844, the fourth of nine children. His parents were Scottish. They had moved to Prince Albert Island, Canada, where Albert grew up. The Simpsons were good, devout people; and several of the Simpson boys, including Albert, had plans to enter the ministry later in life. But Albert was torn. He was concerned that if he really gave his life to the Lord, he would not have much fun in life -- and fun was very important to him.

His great love was hunting. He longed to be out in the fields with a beautiful steel shotgun in his hands, waiting for flocks of unsuspecting birds to come within his deadly range. When he was fourteen years old, he had saved enough money to buy a used shotgun, which he hid from his parents. Whenever he could, he would sneak out of the house, and become the terror of all things flying.

But one day, the inevitable happened. The Simpsons found out about Al's gun. He was humiliated and crushed, as his parents made him return the gun to the man from whom he had bought it. They also insisted that his money not be refunded. It was a great loss to Albert. But his character was such that, rather than rebel in bitterness, he submitted; and he settled his heart to pursue the honorable occupation of the ministry.

The Simpson family was large, and did not have a lot of money. Albert's father met with him and his oldest brother, explaining to them that he was financially able to send only one of them to college to study for the ministry. It was Al's duty to

stay home, allowing the eldest brother the opportunity to go to college.

Later, Al became very ill. During this time of physical suffering, God met with him in a very special way; and he gave his heart unreservedly to the Lord. When he recovered, he received his father's permission to go to Bible college, with the understanding that he would have to pay his own way. In 1861, he enrolled in Knox College, near Toronto. He earned several scholarships; and he also worked for his tuition by teaching and preaching at every opportunity. He was ordained in 1865; and he accepted his first pastorate in a church in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. He was married the following day.

Pastor Simpson later was called to serve as pastor of a Presbyterian church in Louisville, Kentucky. He had a passion for souls, and began to conduct evangelistic meetings every Sunday night at different places around the city. One night, he went out during a storm to call on a man who was not saved. The man was moved by such a display of compassion; and he readily received salvation.

A. B. Simpson was skilled in the Word; and he earned a doctor's degree. He later moved to New York, and continued to be active in evangelism, as well as missionary work. He had such a heart for missions, that his ministry eventually grew into what is now the Christian and Missionary Alliance organization, which continues to support and send out many Christian missionaries around the world. When asked the secret of his success, he acknowledged that it was the power of prayer.

## The Story of Billy Sunday

Billy Sunday was born in 1862 in Ames, Iowa. His father was a Civil War soldier who died when he was just one year old; and so, he was reared in an orphanage. He lived a rough life as a boy, working at odd jobs and growing up around street gangs. He proved to be especially athletic; and in 1883, he joined the Chicago White Sox and became a successful professional baseball player.

A few years later, he was among the people who heard a sermon at a street meeting by Harry Monroe of the Pacific Garden Mission; and he responded to the altar call. Until 1891, he continued his career in baseball, as he eagerly grew in the Lord as a young Christian. At the peak of his career at age 29, he quit professional sports and took a low-paying job as an assistant secretary for the YMCA, which in those days was a strong evangelical Christian ministry. He faithfully served as a helper to other ministries for three years, and was eventually ordained as a preacher.

He conducted preaching campaigns in army camps during World War I, and then began to preach in tent meeting crusades across America. In Philadelphia, over 2,300,000 attended the meetings, in the eight weeks of the city-wide revival services. Billy Sunday continued to preach for 20 years in cities around the country. He was a fiery preacher, preaching fervently against sin -- especially the sin of drunkenness. He was famous for his acrobatic style of preaching.

He was one of the most energetic preachers who ever lived. To emphasize a strong point, he would do a cartwheel or a hand spring, or leap over furniture. It was rare that anyone would sleep through a

Billy Sunday meeting. At the close of the sermon, people would throng to the front up the "sawdust trail" to respond to the call for repentance and salvation.

It is said that his sense of humor was a bit wild at times; but with his two-fisted preaching, he brought a million souls to Jesus Christ in his years of preaching, and he helped influence the nation to pass legislation outlawing liquor. The nation approved a Constitutional amendment prohibiting the sale of alcoholic drinks. It was called "prohibition." Even one of his critics said, "He greatly aided the cause of temperance." Billy Sunday died in 1935, just two weeks before his 73rd birthday. 4,400 people attended his funeral.

Here is an excerpt from his sermon entitled, "Booze."

*When you come staggering home, cussing right and left and spewing and spitting, your wife suffers, your children suffer. Don't think that you are the only one who suffers. You're placing a shame on your family. If you're a dirty, low-down, filthy, drunken, whisky-soaked bum you'll affect everyone around you. You can't live by yourself. I occasionally hear a man say, "It's nobody's business how I live." Then I say he's the most dirty, low-down, whisky-soaked, beer-guzzling, bull-necked, foul-mouthed hypocrite that ever had a brain rotten enough to conceive such a statement and lips vile enough to utter it. You say, "If I am satisfied with my life, why do you want to interfere with my business?" If I heard a man beating his wife, and heard her shrieks and the children's cries and my wife would tell me to go see what was the matter, and I went in and found a whisky-*

*soaked, hog-jowled, weasel-eyed brute dragging a little woman around by the hair, and he said, "Isn't this my wife that I got a license for, and aren't these my kids?*

*If I want to beat them, it's none of your business," I would never apologize. I'd knock seven kinds of pork out of that old hog.*

## The Story of Hudson Taylor

James Hudson Taylor was born on May 21, 1832, in Barnsley, Yorkshire, England. His parents were godly Christians; and they dedicated this firstborn to the Lord as an infant. From his childhood, Hudson expressed the desire to be a missionary to the heathen of the world. He was known to tell people that he was going to be a missionary to China when he grew up. He loved to listen as his father talked with other preachers about the things of God. Dad was a pharmacist, but his greatest love was the gospel.

As a teenager, Hudson Taylor struggled with his love for the things of God; and he was involved in many of the carnal pursuits and temptations of youth. When he was 17, his mother went to visit a friend who lived nearly one hundred miles away. While she was away, the Holy Spirit prompted her to pray for her son; and she began to intercede in great earnestness for him. After several hours, the burden lifted; and she knew he was saved.

At home, Hudson had found a tract in his father's library, and began to read it. He was struck with the phrase, "the finished work of Christ;" and he fell to his knees, yielding his life and heart to the Lord Jesus. The impression given to his mother by the Spirit in that distant city was correct. Hudson Taylor was a genuine believer.

In his teen years, Hudson studied chemistry, as his father had done. He became skilled in the medical field; but he also learned to trust God. Many times he had to rely on God's financial provision; and God never let him down. He also learned that Jesus Christ was his Great

Physician. One day, he became infected with some bacteria in the dissecting lab, and became deathly ill. His malady was generally a fatal one. But Hudson cried out to the Lord, and he received a supernatural healing in his body.

In 1853, young Hudson Taylor sailed for China. During the voyage, the ship was becalmed, and drifted dangerously close to a reef. Taylor and three other Christians on board began to intercede in prayer. He then went to the first officer and suggested they let out the sail, for a wind was coming. The man cursed him; but suddenly the wind picked up, and they sailed out of danger.

In China, he fell in love, and began a happy marriage in 1858 with Maria Dyer. It was her faith and love which sustained him through many dark and discouraging times as a struggling, pioneer missionary.

Hudson Taylor founded the China Inland Mission in 1865. Later, he experienced a spiritual transition in his life, which he termed "the exchanged life." Instead of struggling to have faith, he learned to look to Jesus as his Source in life. He began to rest in God's grace, and to respond to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Instead of working late into the night, he began to go to bed early, and arise at 5:00 each morning to get into the Word and prayer. More and more, he sought to allow God to work through him, rather than seek to work for God. Like George Müller, he felt that he should not ask people for offerings, but rather that he should pray, allowing the Spirit to prompt people to give to his ministry. He lived a fruitful life, and died during his final visit to China in 1905.

## The Story of George Whitefield of England

George Whitefield was born in Gloucester, England, in 1714. His father died two years later, leaving his mother with the sole responsibility for her seven small children. The children contracted measles; and due to the lack of proper care, George was left with a permanently squinted eye. Desperate for work, Mrs. Whitefield tended bar at an inn. George was mischievous as a child. He was given to lying, and stealing from his mother, while she slept.

George had a deep desire to learn; but only the wealthy could afford to send their children to school. Many of the poor children in England in those days were forced to work long hours in mines or factories; and some starved to death. Finally, when George was twelve years old, he was able to start attending a Catholic school. There he applied himself to learning, and was noted as a very capable actor. However, when he was fifteen, he had to quit school, in order to work with his mother. At home, he continued to faithfully read his Bible whenever possible; and he harbored a deep desire to go to Oxford and become a preacher, even though he was not saved. His great-grandfather had been a man of God, who had prayed that his descendants would serve the Lord.

Later, George was able to return to school, where he tried diligently to be good. But he was said to waver from sinner to saint to sinner. At Oxford, he became friends with John and Charles Wesley, and read books faithfully. He read that works cannot save us; but he continued to live a life of discipline and self-denial, seeking God through good deeds. Once when he was ill, he was

seeking God; and he was gloriously saved. Still sick, he was sent home to rest; but he was so full of joy, he could not rest. He went to visit a lady who had admired his acting while in school, and quickly led her to the Lord. One by one, he shared his faith with his acquaintances, and led many of them into a saving faith.

Young George Whitefield had strong spiritual convictions, and a burning desire to win souls to the Lord. He was gifted with a beautiful speaking voice and an excellent mind; but he remained humble before the Lord, recognizing his need for God's anointing. He never relied on his own ability; but rather, he gave himself to prayer, so that he could be guided and strengthened by the Holy Spirit.

In 1736, he was ordained a deacon. A week later, he preached his first sermon in the church where he had attended school as a child. When the pastor of the Tower Chapel in London took a leave of absence, he appointed George to fill his pulpit. He did a superb job. Each service drew more and more people, until the church was overflowing. Wherever this young man preached, people's lives were changed by the power of God.

After the pastor returned to his much larger church, George continued to answer calls to preach. He sailed to America to preach. During the long voyage, he spent much time preaching to his captive audience. Sometimes when the sea was calm, the three ships sailing together would be close enough so that people in all the ships could hear his powerful voice. That voyage was noted for the excellent, calm spirit that prevailed,



whereas the atmosphere was normally turbulent.

In England, George met with opposition from jealous church leaders;

but he was popular with the people. He became one of the greatest preachers of the Great Awakening, especially in America.

## George Whitefield's Conversion

During the revival in America called the Great Awakening, God was moving in the same way in Great Britain. In 1733, a 19-year-old boy named George Whitefield went to Oxford to study. At that time, Oxford was a major college, whose primary purpose was to train men for Christian ministry. However, there were many people there who were religious, but not really saved. That is, they read the Bible and sought to be good people; but they had never been born again by the Spirit of God.

George was the son of a widow, who kept an inn in Gloucester, England. He was a very intense young man. He worked hard to be a good person. He visited the sick, the poor, and those in prison. He studied with great diligence, and read the Bible faithfully. Many of the students at Oxford would laugh at his serious ways, because they themselves were there to do as little work and as much partying as possible.

George soon began to meet with a group of serious-minded students, led by John and Charles Wesley. They were called the "Holy Club" by their carnal fellow students. They were also called "Methodists," because they were so methodical in their religion.

George worked hard to try to please God, but he was not happy. He was struggling with dead works. As he sought God, he came across a book called The Life of God in the Soul of Man. He learned that all of his works could not earn him favor with God. It said that he needed to be born again. George began to deny himself and work even harder at seeking God. It even wore him down physically.

Finally, in desperation, he threw himself across his bed, and cried, "I thirst!" He gave up his efforts to be good enough for God; and he surrendered in faith to God's great grace. The Lord told him, "George, you have ceased to struggle, and you have simply believed; and you are born again." George Whitefield began to laugh with joy, saying, "Joy, joy unspeakable, joy that's full of, big with glory!"

George rushed out of the room to share his joy with his friends, and kept sharing. He became the greatest evangelist of the eighteenth century, and preached to so many people, that he had a great influence on whole nations. He was ordained to the ministry in 1736, at the age of 22. In the first three cities where he preached, great revival broke out. Large crowds would gather; and they would flock in response to God, when called forth for salvation.

In his life, George Whitefield preached more than 18,000 sermons, often outdoors to as many as 30,000 people at a time. He was called the "silver-tongued orator;" and he could usually be heard for nearly a mile. Benjamin Franklin (although he never became a Christian) was an admirer and friend of George Whitefield.

One day, a drunken sailor in New England came up to Mr. Whitefield and said, "Well, Reverend Whitefield. S' good to see you again. I (hic)...."

"I do not know you sir." Whitefield replied.

"Don't know me? Why, you converted me ten years ago."

Whitefield said, "I should not wonder. You look like one of my converts. If God had converted you, you would still be sober."

As an old man, George Whitefield was advised to slow down. His zeal had not diminished, and he was working too hard. He replied, "I would rather burn out for God, than rust out."

## Smith Wigglesworth is Healed

Smith Wigglesworth was an English plumber, who was born in 1859. As a young father, he was just learning the wonderful ways of God. He was a zealous soul-winner, constantly looking for someone to witness to. He considered himself a very poor speaker; but he could talk about the Lord to anyone.

One day, the family arose to find that their two sons were extremely ill. Mr. and Mrs. Wigglesworth prayed for them; and they were instantly healed. They went off to school, while their father went to the home of a wealthy man to do some plumbing work. The lady of the house said, "Can't you send your apprentice to the shop for something?" He complied; and then the lady said, "Sir, I noticed the bright smile on your face. I am so unhappy. My husband left in anger this morning, and we have no peace. How is it that you have such joy?"

The plumber told her that God had just healed both of his sons, and that their joy came because they were born-again Christians. He led her in a prayer of repentance, and she was wonderfully saved. She then said, "Sir, how can I keep this joy?" He replied, "When you have some friends to your home, tell them what God has done for you, and lead them to the Lord. That is a source of great joy."

Not long after this, Mr. Wigglesworth himself became sick. He was doubled over

with severe abdominal pain, and was helped home by his employees. When the pain did not subside after much prayer, he said to his wife, "I may be dying. Please call a doctor, so you will not be blamed for negligence." The doctor came, and said, "I am sorry, but this man cannot live. He has had appendicitis for six months, and his body is full of toxins. He is too weak to survive an operation. I will come back this afternoon, to see if he is still alive."

While the doctor was away making other calls, an old woman and a young man came in to visit. They were Christians who had great faith in God; and they prayed for Mr. Wigglesworth. The young man was of the opinion that all sickness was caused by demons, so he cried out, "Devil, come out!" His theology may have not been totally accurate, but his faith was right on target. Smith Wigglesworth was completely and instantly healed. He got up out of his deathbed, and said, "I have some plumbing jobs that need to be done right away."

When the doctor returned, he was told that his patient had left to go to work. He said, "They will bring him back a corpse, as sure as you live." But the happy plumber lived for many fruitful years, ministering healing to thousands of sick folks, and even raising the dead. He also had a strong faith for appendicitis. Every time he prayed for someone suffering from it, the person was completely healed.

## The Early Ministry of Smith Wigglesworth

Smith Wigglesworth was a plumber who lived in England during the early part of the 20th century. He was intensely in love with Jesus, and very bold in telling everyone about the salvation and healing that they could receive. During his long lifetime, there were many hundreds of stories about this extraordinary man of God; and those stories still inspire and encourage us today.

Smith was a wonderful soul-winner, but he was not a preacher. His wife did most of the preaching, while he witnessed and prayed for people. After he had received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, he telegraphed his wife with the news. She was reluctant to believe that it was necessary to speak with other tongues to be Spirit-baptized, so she decided not to sit with him on the platform, the next time they ministered. He preached with such anointing and power that she realized tongues were real. It was not long, before she was speaking in tongues, rejoicing in greater anointing. A great Pentecostal revival broke out in their home church, because neither of them could keep it to themselves. Hundreds received the baptism; and they all spoke in tongues.

Their next meeting was in a Methodist church in Shropshire, England. There was bitter persecution from many people in the small town; but the fire of revival fell one night, and the church saw a mighty move of God. Smith was charged up. The next morning, he walked into the grocery store. There were three people in the shop. When he walked out of the store an hour later, there were three new believers. He had won them all to the Lord. Carrying his bag of groceries, he walked on down the road a little way. He saw two

women in the field, carrying buckets. He shouted out, "Are you saved?" Somehow, tremendous conviction came on them both; and they dropped their buckets and knelt down in the field to pray and weep.

That afternoon, he walked by a stone quarry. As the men were pounding on the great rocks, Wigglesworth walked up and began talking about Jesus to them. It was not long before conviction fell on them; and many of the workmen knelt there in the rough quarry to give their hearts to the Lord. Big, burly men melted in tears, as they poured out their hearts in repentance to God.

As Smith was returning to his room from the quarry, he passed by a saloon. There, for some reason, two men in a carriage pulled up beside him, and glared at him with obvious hatred. He did not know the men; but he recognized instantly that they were full of the devil. The evil spirits in the men recognized a pure man of God, and they became angry. For no apparent reason, both men began to shout and curse, and tried to injure Smith with their whips. Hearing the commotion, seven other heathen people ran out of the saloon. They were cursing and shouting as well. They acted like mad dogs.

Smith cried out, "In the name of Jesus, in the power of the blood of Jesus, I drive you back into your den." Suddenly they stopped; and they all whirled around to rush back into the saloon. The vicious men in the carriage ran after them. Smith Wigglesworth, still full of the Holy Ghost, marched right in after them, and started preaching the gospel to them.

This was one ordinary day in the life of an extraordinary man, who had a passion for souls. Soon after this, Smith

Wigglesworth quit his plumbing business, in order to devote all of his time to the ministry.

## The Story of Smith Wigglesworth Raising the Dead

Some people try to claim that supernatural healings and miracles were for the church in the Bible days, but they are not for today. But Jesus told the church, "*...He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and [greater {works} than] these shall he do; ...*" (John 14:12) Jesus did some amazing miracles, including raising the dead. Today, throughout the world, there are many miracles, signs and wonders occurring; but most of them go unreported. God is still healing thousands of people from impossible diseases -- and yes, even raising the dead.

Smith Wigglesworth was an English plumber who ministered through the first half of the twentieth century. He had great zeal and anointing, and he prayed. Thousands of people were saved, healed, and filled with the Holy Spirit through his ministry.

One day, he was asked to visit a woman who was dying with a tumor. As he looked at her, he realized that she was beyond medical help. Her strength was completely gone. She was a barely breathing skeleton. Smith said, "I know you are very weak; but if you wish to be healed, and cannot raise your arm, could you please lift a finger." She was able to move one finger slightly. Smith said to his friend, "Let us pray, and anoint her with oil." As they prayed, her chin suddenly dropped, and she died. The friend began to tremble in terror, and he backed away, shouting, "She is dead!" He then asked, "What shall I do?"

Wigglesworth then did something very unusual. He seemed to become angry. He

picked up the frail woman's body by the shoulders, carried it across the room, and slammed her up against the wall. He looked into the face of the corpse, and shouted, "In the name of Jesus, I rebuke this death!" The body began to tremble. He then said, "In the name of Jesus, I command you to walk!" She opened her eyes, and walked.

Her doctor was summoned, and he quickly came. He said, "Mr. Fisher, the elder, told me that you were raised from the dead. Is that true?" She said, "Yes." He then asked her to go to a meeting that night to give a report.

At the meeting hall, she stood on her own feet, and said, "For many months I have been going down to death. But I wanted to live for my children. A man prayed for me, and told me to lift my finger if I wanted to live. After that, I remember going to Glory. I saw great crowds of people, and I heard heavenly, joyful singing. It was lovely, and the face of Jesus lit up everything. I was having a beautiful time in heaven, when the Lord suddenly pointed to me without speaking. I knew I had to go back to earth. The next moment, I heard a man say, "In the name of Jesus, I command you to walk!"

The good doctor then rose to give his testimony. With tears and trembling lips, he was finally able to say that he had been praying for months for this woman. He had informed the family to prepare for death, for she was beyond all medical help. He strongly encouraged everyone he knew to go to Smith Wigglesworth's meetings if they ever had the opportunity, for he had God's anointing on his life.

## **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.

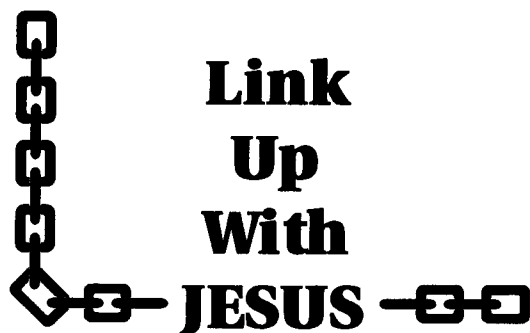
Our promotions are designed to motivate our young people to attend both church and the School of the Bible on a regular basis; to bring their Bibles with them; to bring their tithes and offerings faithfully; to bring their friends to Sunday School on a regular basis; to learn the importance of giving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

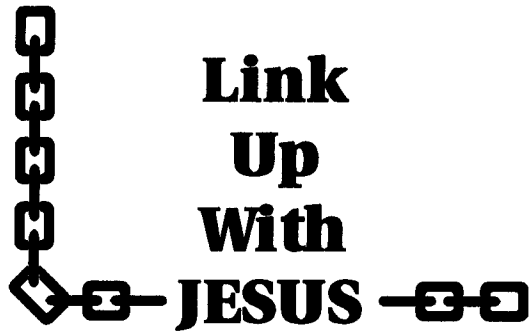
When a student brings his or her Bible, record the date in the appropriate section of the Point Chart, complete the information on the "Brought a Bible" link, and add it to the chain.

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.**

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

**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**

<b>LEVEL #1</b> 24 Links	
<b>LEVEL #2</b> 36 Links	
<b>LEVEL #3</b> 52 Links	
<b>LEVEL #4</b> 70 Links	
<b>LEVEL #5</b> 100 Links	
<b>LEVEL #6</b> 150 Links	
<b>LEVEL #7</b> 200 Links	
<b>Grand Prize</b> 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

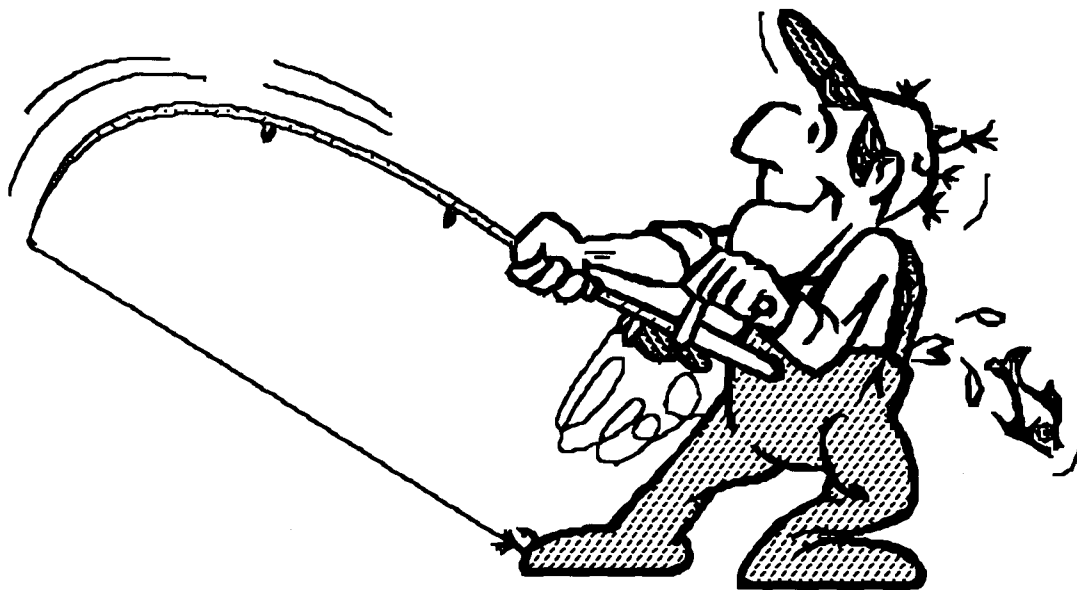
We can fulfill the command of our Lord by ministering to those who are in need.





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

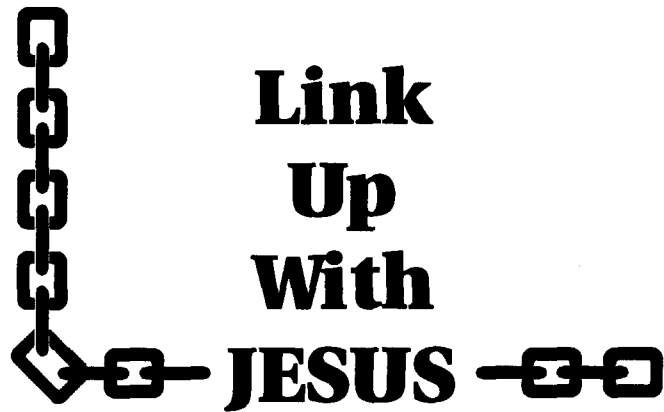


Spend time this week learning God's Word so you can have the "Right Bait" to catch the biggest fish of all: a person who needs to know Jesus.


**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".



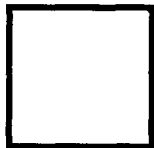


**Link  
Up  
With**

**JESUS**

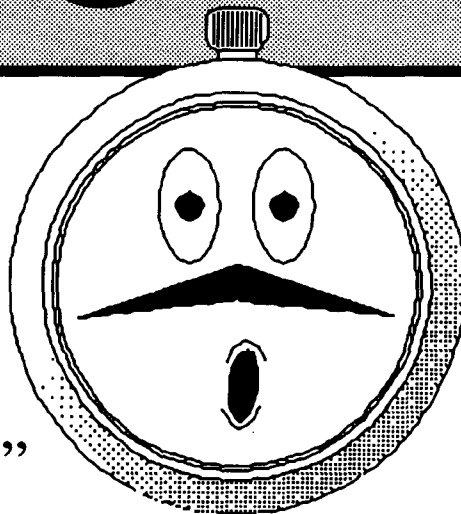
**Time is  
getting short**

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.

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

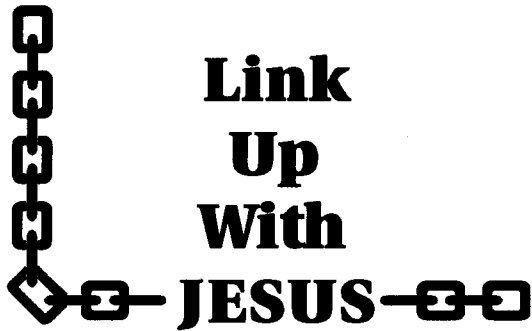
**Brought a Friend**

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

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**Qualified for Bonus Points?**

Award 5 links.



## Memory Verses List #1

Gen. 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Gen. 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the Image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Gen. 15:6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

Psalms 19:14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, Oh LORD, my strength and my redeemer.

Psalms 23:1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Psalms 23:6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Psalms 25:1 Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.

Psalms 25:2 Oh my God, I trust thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.

Psalms 25:4 Show me thy ways, oh Lord; teach me thy paths.

Psalms 25:8 Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.

Psalms 25:18 Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.

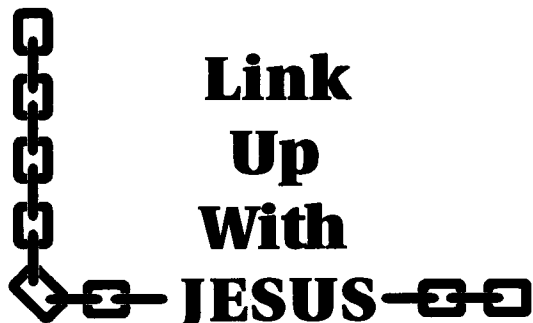
Psalms 25:21 Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.

Psalms 25:22 Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.

Psalms 26:2 Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.

Psalms 27:1 The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

- Matt. 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- Matt. 5:4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
- Matt. 5:5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
- Matt. 5:6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.
- Matt. 5:7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
- Matt. 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.
- Matt. 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.
- Matt. 5:10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- Matt. 5:11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.
- Matt. 5:14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.
- Matt. 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.
- Matt. 5:41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him two.
- Matt. 6:19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth.
- Matt. 6:20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.
- Matt. 6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.



## Memory Verses List #2

- Psalms 27:7      Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice: Have mercy also upon me, and answer me.
- Psalms 27:11     Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.
- Psalms 37:4      Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.
- Psalms 56:11     In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.
- Psalms 95:6      O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.
- Psalms 118:6     The LORD is on my side; I will not fear.
- Psalms 119:11    Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.
- Psalms 119:105   Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.
- Psalms 120:1     In my distress I cried unto the LORD, and he heard me.
- Psalms 121:2     My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.
- Psalms 122:6     Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.
- Psalms 127:1     Except the LORD build the house, they labor in vain that build it.
- Psalms 134:2     Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD.
- Psalms 143:8     Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust.

- Psalms 147:1 Praise ye the LORD, for it is good to sing praises unto our God.
- Matt. 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.
- Matt. 7:7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.
- Matt. 28:6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.
- Matt. 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.
- John 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.
- John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.
- John 14:14 If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.
- John 15:7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.
- Acts 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.
- Acts 2:21 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.
- Acts 4:29 Grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word.
- Acts 10:44 The Holy Ghost fell on all of them which heard the word.
- Romans 1:17 As it is written, the just shall live by faith.
- Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.
- Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Link  
Up  
With

JESUS

**Brought a Visitor**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



Link  
Up  
With

JESUS

**Brought a Visitor**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



Link  
Up  
With

JESUS

**Brought a Visitor**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



Link  
Up  
With

JESUS

**Brought a Visitor**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



Link  
Up  
With

JESUS

**Brought a Visitor**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



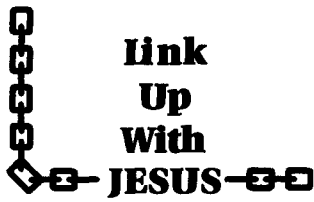
Link  
Up  
With

JESUS

**Brought a Visitor**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

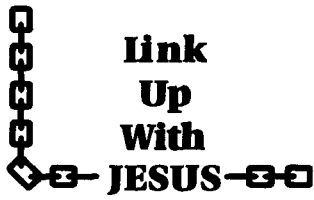


**Link  
Up  
With**

**Verse:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

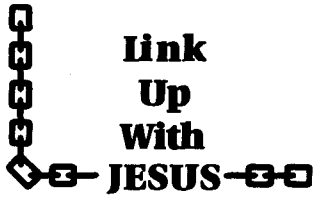


**Link  
Up  
With**

**Verse:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Link  
Up  
With**

**Verse:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

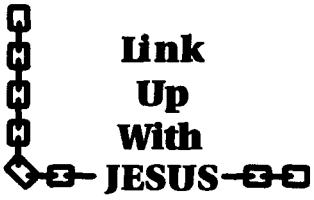


**Link  
Up  
With**

**Verse:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

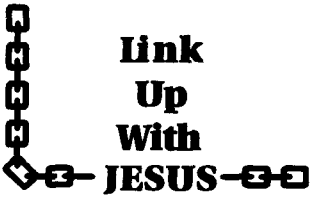


**Link  
Up  
With**

**Verse:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Link  
Up  
With**

**Verse:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_





**Attendance**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Attendance**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Attendance**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

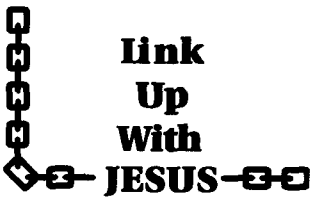
Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Attendance**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

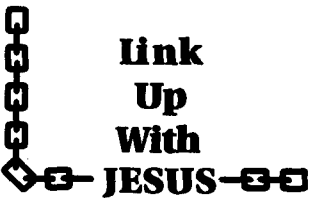
Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Attendance**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

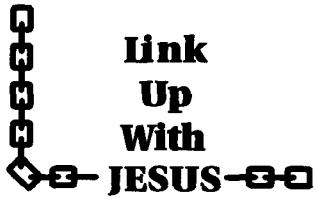
Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Attendance**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Link  
Up  
With**

**Brought a Bible**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

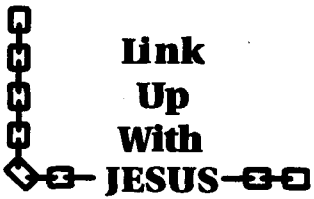


**Link  
Up  
With**

**Brought a Bible**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

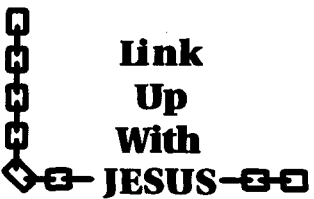


**Link  
Up  
With**

**Brought a Bible**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

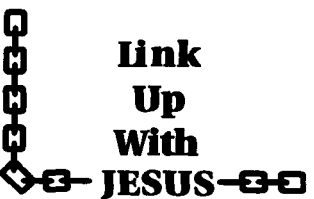


**Link  
Up  
With**

**Brought a Bible**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Link  
Up  
With**

**Brought a Bible**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Link  
Up  
With**

**Brought a Bible**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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# Fuel Flame

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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

<b>CONTEST BEGINS:</b>	<b>CONTEST ENDS:</b>

**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.)

<b>P R I Z E S</b>	<b>GOAL #1 PRIZE</b> When You Earn 55 Points	
	<b>GOAL #2 PRIZE</b> When You Earn 80 Points	
	<b>GOAL #3 PRIZE</b> When You Earn 120 Points	
	<b>GRAND PRIZE</b> 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.

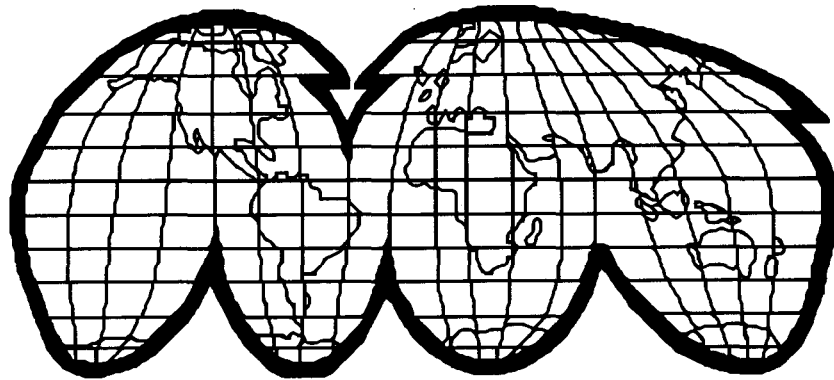
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_____	_____	_____

---

# *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* *Flame*

---

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

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

Students Earning  
120 Total  
Points Receive:

Students Earning  
80-119 Total  
Points Receive:

Students Earning  
55-79 Total  
Points Receive:

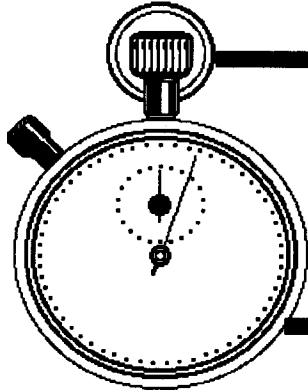
**Invite a Friend Today and Help Us  
Fuel the Flame!**



---

# *Fuel* *the Flame*

---



**TIME IS  
RUNNING OUT!**

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

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



---

# *Fuel* *the Flame*

---



# Mother's Day

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

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

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



# Fuel the Flame

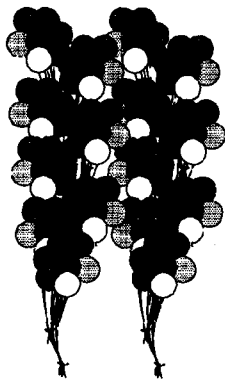
## Point Tally

Name \_\_\_\_\_

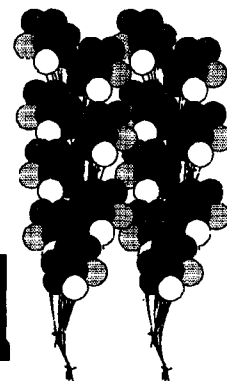
Class \_\_\_\_\_

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





# 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: \_\_\_\_\_

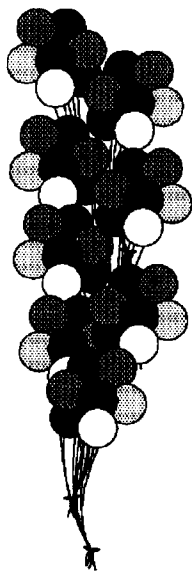
Earn Tickets For The Festival By:

- 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**

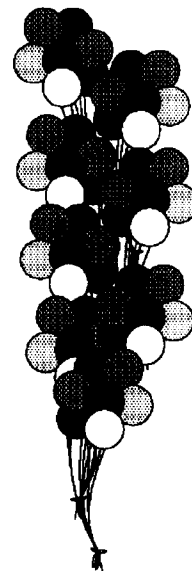
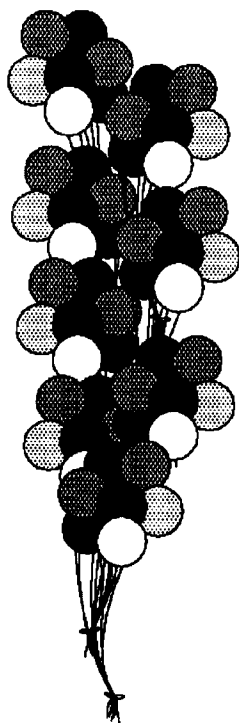


**Prizes**

**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.*



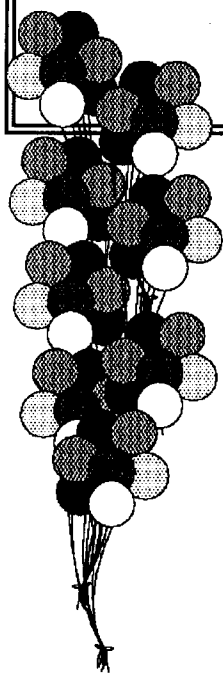
**GET  
EXCITED**

**The  
"FALL FUN FESTIVAL"**

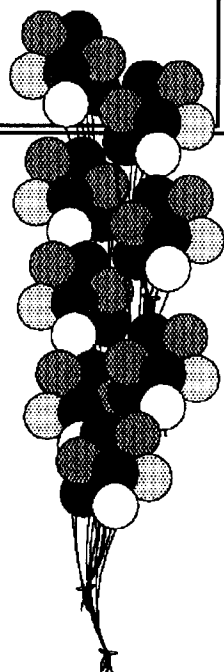
**Date:**

**Time:**

**Place:**

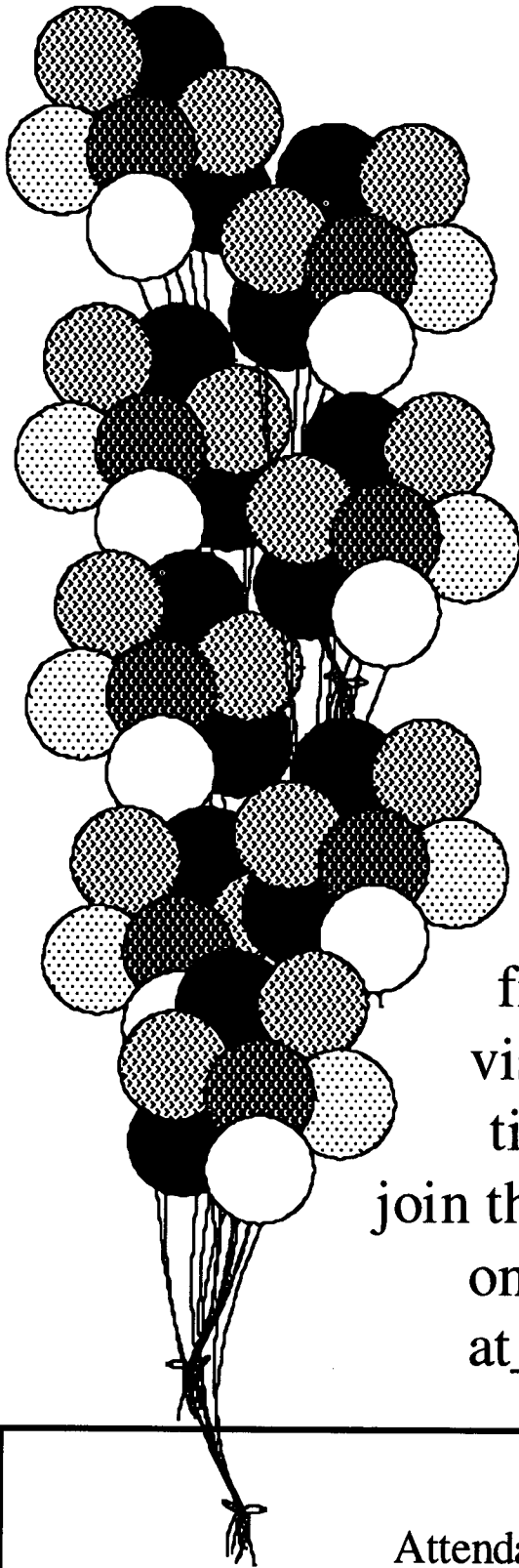


*Earn All the Tickets You Can  
by Attending Sunday School!  
Bring a Friend and Earn Extra Points!*



**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:

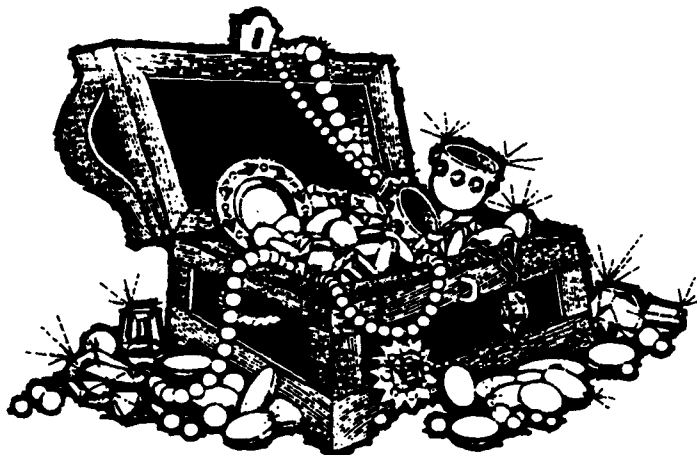
Each Secretary will have a Weekly Point Chart on which to record the points each student earns. A supply of coins will also be distributed to every class. Additional coins will be available in the Audio-Visual Room. Every time students

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



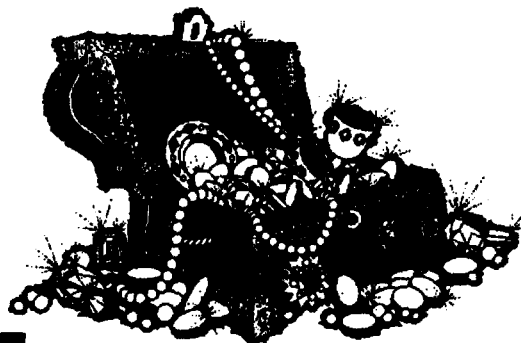
For every 40 points you earn, you will receive a "Gold Coin."  
Coins can be redeemed for prizes.

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!

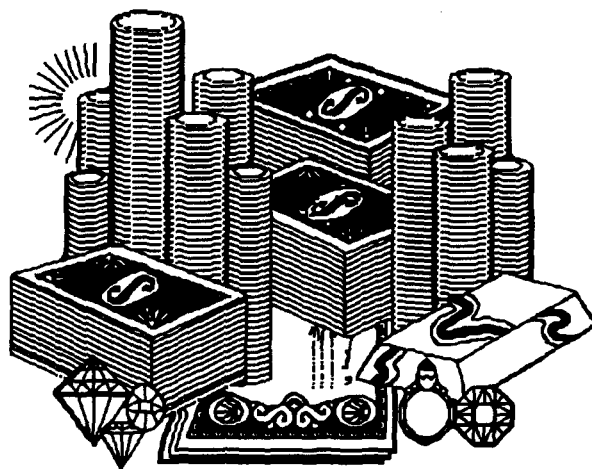
## Invite Your Friends to Sunday School!

# 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.

## Why Is Our Body Called a "Temple?"

The Bible calls our body a "temple," or "tabernacle," because it is a dwelling where we live in this present world and a place for the Holy Spirit to dwell with us.

*"Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle...." (2 Peter 1:13-14)*

*"Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" (1 Corinthians 6:19)*

The Bible clearly teaches us that "the real you" involves more than just your body and your mind. You live in a body. It is still important to take good care of your body. You need to be active and be careful not to stuff your body too full of junk food or harmful things. Because we express ourselves through and serve the Lord with our body, we want to do the most we can with the one life we are to live on earth. When we leave this body, we call that separation "death." That is not the end of our existence, because our soul and spirit last forever.

*"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (2 Corinthians 5:1)*

The word "tabernacle" is another word for "tent," a temporary dwelling. It is important for us to remember that we are "pilgrims and strangers" here on earth (Hebrews 11:13), and "have no continuing city." (Hebrews 13:14) All the things we have in the physical world are temporary; but, spiritual values and character will be forever. "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Corinthians 4:18)

It is not wise to concentrate all your affections and hopes on the things that will "pass away." The basis of security is having your hope and trust in eternal things and not on the temporary. "Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away." (Mark 13:31)

The word "temple" means "house," or "dwelling place." When we are born again, our bodies become the temple of the Holy Spirit. He lives in us and works through us as we yield ourselves to Him. He convicts us when we are wrong, because He is holy and will not live in an unclean place. The apostle Paul reminds us to "cleanse ourselves" (2 Corinthians 7:1) and take good care of the temple.

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## What Is a Biblical Local Church?

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A biblical local church is a group of Christians, who meet together regularly to worship and serve God, under the leadership of a pastor and the lordship of Jesus Christ.

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*"...upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18)*

*"...And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily." (Acts 16:5)*

The Greek word for church is "ecclesia," which means, "called out ones." Every born-again believer is called out of the world of sinful humanity and darkness to walk with God in the light of His Word. We are to be "in but not of the world." (John 17:14) We belong to God as His purchased possession. Everyone who has genuinely been "born again" (according to John 3) is a member of the "universal church," the whole body of believers who will reign with Christ forever, regardless of which Christian denomination or congregation they are a member.

But, when the Bible speaks of the word, "church," it almost always refers to the local church, where people gather, relate, worship God, and share their faith, struggles, and joys together. It is in the local church that we are equipped for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:12), and where we obey and submit to those who

have the rule over us, and where we "call for the elders" (James 5:14) to anoint us with oil for healing.

A true local church is much like a large family, where the pastor and ministry leaders -- elders -- are like parents, who teach and nurture and provide for the young ones of the "flock."

To be a legitimate church, a congregation must be initiated by the Holy Spirit and under the headship of Jesus Christ, who, as the Chief Shepherd, anoints and appoints an undershepherd -- pastor -- to lead and feed the flock. A true pastor will be related and submitted to other proven ministries, and will not be a "lone ranger." He will respect and love those under his care; but, he must be the leader of the flock.

When a family leader commits himself and his family to a local church, he is stating, "Pastor, I believe God has sent you to this community to lead and feed us. I trust Him to speak through you to us; and, if I have problems or misunderstandings with you, I'll go to you privately to resolve them. I am committed to your success, because I identify with you as your brother in the Lord. If you're blessed, we're blessed."



Our ability to get along with each other in a local church is the greatest test of the validity of our commitment to God (John 13:35) and our greatest witness to the unsaved that Jesus is really Lord (John 17:23). The local church is the "storehouse," where we pay the tithe of

our income to the Lord. The local church is the place, where, as we work through the practical reality of the Christian lifestyle in the real world of flesh and blood people, we prepare to live with God for eternity.

## What Is the "Rapture?"

The "rapture" is the blessed hope of the Christians, when the dead in Christ and the living saints will be "caught up" to meet the Lord in the air at His return.

*"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; 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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18)*

The term "rapture" is not in the Bible per se, but it is a biblical event. Paul spoke of it as the "blessed hope" of the Christians. "Rapture" means "a thrill, ecstasy, a glorious joy." The word also means, literally, "to seize, to carry off, to transport," as in the rapture of Elijah the prophet. Christians have looked forward with prophetic faith to this supernatural moment of "rapture" that God clearly promises in His Word.

After Jesus rose from the dead, He made numerous appearances among His disciples for 40 days; and then, before a large crowd, He ascended up to heaven in a cloud. Then,

*"while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye*

*men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." (Acts 1:10-11)*

Since Jesus ascended in a cloud, His return will be "in the air," and the saints will go up to meet Him.

At a moment in time, which only God knows, the trumpet of God will sound, and Jesus will return. The souls of the saints who died in Christ will come with Him and will go to their graves (1 Thessalonians 4:14) to be restored to their physical bodies. These bodies, no matter how much they have decomposed, will be restored, transformed, and brought to life. The graves will open, and they will rise to meet Jesus in an incorruptible body of "flesh and bone." This renewed body will never grow old or die, but it will be like Christ's glorified body. John said that

*"...it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:2)*

Note also that John continues by saying,

*"and every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John 3:3)*

In other words, if you really believe it, you will change your lifestyle, realizing that the temporal pleasures of sin cannot compare with the joy that will be revealed at His coming.

"Glorified" is the term we use for the change from "corruptible" -- capacity for decay and death -- to "incorruptible" -- cannot decay. This "mortal" -- able to die -- will put on immortality -- life eternal. The living saints will suddenly experience the

same change in their bodies and will rise together to meet the Lord in the air. Those who are not ready to meet Him will be left with all the rest of the world to experience the greatest tribulation ever known by mankind.

*Therefore be ye also ready: for at such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." (Matthew 24:44)*

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## What Is Resurrection?

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Resurrection means the restoration of life to a person who has died and the return of his spirit to his physical body.

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*"I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." (John 11:25)*

A friend of Jesus from Bethany, named Lazarus, died. His body ceased to function, and his spirit had gone to "Paradise," also called "Abraham's Bosom," where the souls of the righteous went before Jesus died on the cross. When Jesus arrived four days after the death of Lazarus, He called the spirit of Lazarus back, and Lazarus rose from the dead. There are several cases of resurrection from the dead in the Bible, but the most important is the resurrection of Jesus. All of the others eventually died again; but, Jesus was raised "incorruptible" -- "glorified." He is called the "firstfruits of the resurrection." (1 Corinthians 15:20, 23)

When Jesus returns to the earth, there will be a mass resurrection of all the saints who have died, whose spirits are now in heaven. In the case of extreme decomposition, God can take even a molecule of the original body as a "seed", restore the body, and make it perfect and eternal. It will be the "same" body, only "new and improved." Notice from the Bible accounts that after Jesus was resurrected from the dead, He could suddenly appear and disappear at will.

*"We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:2)*

Jesus did not get a brand new body when He was resurrected; rather, the body He had on earth was transformed and glorified. We speak of our "new" body; but, it is probably more correct to use the term "renewed body." In eternity, we will still know and recognize one another. It is similar to the transformation of earth in the day of judgment by fire. John speaks of a "new heaven and a new earth." (Revelation 21:1) They will actually be the same earth and atmosphere, but they will be changed and restored to their pre-flood beauty.

Almost every religion has some form of doctrine relating to "eternal life," or at least some form of ongoing existence. The Hindu religion and the mystic cults which developed from it teach the false doctrine of "reincarnation," or the idea that the soul just gets involved in another birth and becomes one creature after another, a form of "eternal life." This is a tactic of Satan to deceive men into thinking that this life is not very important; that it is not "*appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:....*" (Hebrews 9:27) Many other religions teach that people will just become spirits, or ghosts, or gods, or angels, or get different bodies.

Christianity is unique in the doctrine of a bodily resurrection. Men can invent all sorts of ideas about eternity; but, God is the one who really knows, and His Word clearly teaches a bodily resurrection. There will be other mass resurrections after the thousand-year reign of Christ on the earth, notably the resurrection of all the unrighteous dead. The book of Revelation

says that they will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ, who will pronounce righteous eternal judgment upon their lives, based upon their rejection of Him as their Lord and Savior, and He will assign them to the eternal lake of fire with Satan and his angels. (Revelation 20:11-15)

## Who Will Go in the First Resurrection with the Dead in Christ?

The Lord is the judge. But, scripture indicates that not all believers will be ready to meet the Lord when He comes again.

*"Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." (Matthew 24:40-42)*

In Matthew 24 and 25, Jesus spoke of many things about the last days and His second coming. He exhorted His disciples to *"be ready...."* He taught them about four kinds of people who, at best, would be in a very poor position at the *"day of the Lord."* We believe that these are referring to born again people, because they are the Lord's servants, virgins, stewards, and the Lord's flock. Each one of them lacked something essential to be included in the company of the faithful saints.

1. **Servants.** (Matthew 24:45-51) This seems to speak particularly of preachers and teachers in the church, who say in their hearts, *"my Lord delays His coming."* They lack vision, and **lack the fear of the Lord**, so they have two general responses in life.

a. They *"smite their fellow servants,"* -- have you ever seen Christian leaders who cut each other down? -- and they

b. Indulge themselves in worldly pleasures with the wicked. Jesus said that when He comes, He will *"cut him off"; "appoint him his portion with the hypocrites,"* and *"there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

2. **Foolish Virgins.** (Matthew 25:1-13) The kingdom of heaven is like ten virgins -- pure ones. This could hardly mean lost people, yet five of them were *"foolish,"* because they ran out of oil and could not light their lamps. They portray believers who **lack spiritual anointing.** They are spiritually dried up. The Holy Spirit is not flowing through them, so their light cannot shine. When the bridegroom comes, they miss the wedding festivities. The *"door was shut."*

3. **Stewards** with the Master's talents. (Matthew 25:14-30) Each faithful servant who invested the Master's money wisely received a reward; but, the one who hid his talent in the earth, because he was lazy, was severely rebuked by the Lord and cast into *"outer darkness."* He was the Lord's servant; he was entrusted with a gift; but, he **lacked integrity.**

4. **Goats** in the flock. (Matthew 25:31-46)  
Jesus differentiates between His sheep and goats by their responses to hurting people. If they cared about and helped people in their times of distress and need, Jesus responded to them as if they had done it to Him. He judged some of the flock to be "goats," because they **lacked compassion** for people in trouble. Those goats on His "left" were assigned to "everlasting fire."

We see in the book of Revelation that there will be many Christians in the Great

Tribulation. There is no guarantee that all church members or all believers will be in the number of those who are ready when Jesus comes. We do not know exactly who will be ready; but, we know that we can be ready to meet the Lord as we "watch and pray" and encourage one another to "occupy" until He comes.

*"He which testifieth of these things saith, 'Surely I come quickly.' Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."  
(Revelation 22:20)*

## What Is the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?

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The baptism in the Holy Spirit is the supernatural immersion into the Holy Spirit by the Lord Jesus Christ, with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues.

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*"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me....shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." (Matthew 3:11)*

*"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:4)*

Everyone who is born again by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is "born of the Spirit." Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost:" (John 20:22) and yet, before He ascended to heaven, He told those same men to wait in Jerusalem, and "ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost...." (Acts 1:5)

The New Testament teaches that God has a gift to give to any believer who will receive it. The progression in Acts 2:38 is,

*"Repent, and be baptized... for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."*

God uses this term "baptidzo" for this spiritual impartation, as well as for the sacrament of water baptism. This baptism is more than a "filling" of the Spirit. It is a time where the believer, in his pursuit of more of God's presence and power in his life, surrenders to the Lord as a cleansed

vessel. He responds to the Spirit, who overwhelms and washes his soul in a flood of power-producing joy. This baptism is also a free gift, given to every believer who will seek and receive it.

The Apostle Paul said to a group of "Baptists" in Ephesus:

*"Have ye received the Holy Ghost since you believed?" (Acts 19:2)*

They were believers; but, they had not heard about this gift that God had available for them. They received Christian water baptism; and then they began to speak in unknown tongues as they were baptized in the Holy Ghost.

In the accounts in the book of Acts, there always was a supernatural manifestation that accompanied the baptism; and the one "sign" mentioned in Acts is speaking in tongues. When Peter heard Cornelius speaking in tongues, he was instantly convinced that Gentiles could be saved, even though, up until that moment, he thought salvation was for Jews only. (Acts 10:44-48) The tongue is spoken of in the Bible as our most "unruly member." (James 3:8) If our tongue becomes yielded to the Holy Spirit, it is a good "sign" that our whole heart is surrendered to the Lord.



## How Do We "Speak in Tongues?"

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As stated in the book of Acts, when we are baptized in the Holy Ghost, we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to speak in unknown languages.

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*"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:4)*

In the Bible, the supernatural evidence of speaking in a "heavenly language" accompanied the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and continued in their lives as a means of spiritual intercession and edifying. The Apostle Paul especially encouraged the practice, because he said, *"He that speaketh in a unknown tongue edifieth himself (builds up his spiritual strength)."* (1 Corinthians 14:4) He also said, *"I speak in tongues more than ye all;"* and, *"I would that ye all spake with tongues."* (1 Corinthians 14:5, 18)

The supernatural manifestation of speaking in a tongue that you have not learned is also called "glossolalia." As we speak in a language we do not understand, it is an evidence of a humble yielding to the Holy Spirit. We speak in obedience to the Lord and as a joyful response to His presence and power. Many people seem disappointed that God does not bypass their will and speak through them like a robot. The Holy Spirit does not move that way. He "gives the utterance;" and we do the speaking.

As we praise and seek God with all our hearts as believers, we come to the point

where we cannot express what is in our spirits with our known language. The Spirit of God can pray and praise through us as we yield our bodies and tongues to Him. We are baptized into the Person of the Holy Spirit by a sovereign act of Jesus Christ. Peter said,

*"Repent, and be baptized,... and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38)*

We do not earn a gift. We have to receive the gift in faith. Part of receiving the gift is yielding our tongue to His direction. He impresses new words in our spirit; but, we must do the speaking in faith and obedience. The language does not come from our mind. It comes from our spirit.

Some Christians have been taught that we should not speak in tongues, as they did in the early church, because we might open ourselves to an unholy spirit. But Jesus said,

*If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" (Luke 11:13)*

## How Does Faith in the Second Coming of Christ Affect a Person's Lifestyle?

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When we have a valid hope in the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ, we will live for the Lord, instead of for our own selfish purposes.

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*"And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John 3:3 )*

The early Christians greeted each other with, "Maranatha!" This means, "Our Lord is coming again!" They were constantly stirring up their "blessed hope" and were encouraging each other to center their lives and activities around things from which they would benefit eternally. They were "in one accord" and had such a deep love for one another that even the heathens noticed their loyalty and care for one another. They had a strong realization that the things of this life are temporary and the things of the spirit are eternal. So, they sought to live each day ready for Jesus to return, knowing that they would soon give an account to Him for every word, action, and thought.

John said that all people who possess this hope will live pure lives, because the joy of hope also includes a healthy fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is knowing that our lives really belong to Him and that everything in this life will affect us eternally. The lie of Satan, on the other hand, is "thou shalt not surely die." In other words, "you can sin and get away with it if you're not caught." No. God is perfectly just and holy, and you can "be

*sure your sin will find you out."* (Numbers 32:23) *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom...."* (Proverbs 9:10) *"...and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil."* (Proverbs 16:6)

The world tries to fill our minds with so much diversion, entertainment, and temporal desires that the Lord is "crowded out" of our thinking; we easily lose our sense of urgency and purpose for eternity. Paul said,

*"Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world,...."* (2 Timothy 4:10)

The world looks attractive until you realize that it is temporary and its rewards are immediate. But, we are created to live forever; and God's rewards and blessings last forever.

Several years ago, Jim Elliot, a missionary, and some of his friends were working in the jungles of Ecuador, trying to evangelize the Acua Indians. Some of those Indians killed Jim Elliot; and, after his death, his friends found these words of wisdom written in his diary: "He is no fool who exchanges that which he cannot keep for that which he cannot lose."

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## How Do We Strengthen Our Faith in God?

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We strengthen our faith in God by building our hearts and minds with reminders of God's greatness, faithfulness, and love.

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*"So then faith cometh by hearing,  
and hearing by the word of God."  
(Romans 10:17)*

Satan is the enemy of our soul. His goal is to get Christians to focus on themselves, on people, or on the things of the world, so that they will be spiritually ineffective in their warfare against him and his dark forces. When God's children walk in spiritual victory, joy, and harmony with each other, Satan is in trouble. He uses fear, deception, and temptation to turn our eyes and hearts away from God and His power. The more we think only on self, people, and things, the more fear we will have; and fear is the opposite of faith.

Every time we direct our attention toward the Lord and His Word, our faith grows. All through the Bible, we see that, in spite of men and their weaknesses and failures, God never fails. We see men being unfaithful and unreliable, while God is always perfectly faithful. Men break promises; but, God never does.

Even though we do not understand everything in the Bible, we always gain a sense that God is good and always wins. Notice that, when the book of the Revelation pronounces a blessing on those who read it, it does not say you have to understand all of it to get the blessing. No one fully understands Revelation; but, we

get the strong assurance that, when we are "in Christ," we will win.

Our enemy has attacked America with a religion called "secular humanism." It sounds like "humanitarian"; but, it is not. Basically, humanism is a way of looking at life as if God does not exist. It is based on the doctrine of evolution and the philosophy that "life just happens." Our society is flooded with books, newspapers, films, and broadcast media which portray life and society as if there were no God. This results in a dark fatalism. It leads to depression, witchcraft, new-age religion, abortion, sodomy, suicide, drunkenness, and other perversions.

On the other hand, we build our spirit and develop our faith by things that remind us of God and His power, His purity, and His purposes. We build faith by reading and hearing the Word -- scripture, preaching, teaching, etc.-- by worshipping with other believers; by genuine Christian fellowship; by praying; and by fasting.

The more we include God in our thinking, the more we can stimulate our faith, because faith is belief in God; reliance on His Word; and absolute confidence in eternal values. Everything about God is good. The only way the enemy can get us to turn against God is to distract us and to cause us to be

preoccupied with something else. It is important to develop a focus on God and to remind each other of Him every day,

because He is good. To know Him is to love Him; and to love Him is to obey Him.

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## What Does the Bible Mean When It Speaks of the Heart?

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The heart is the center of our affections; and,  
it is the key to the direction of our life and lifestyle.

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*"Keep thy heart with all diligence;  
for out of it are the issues of life."  
(Proverbs 4:23)*

The Bible teaches us that, in the image of God, man is a tripartite being. We were created by God with a spirit, a soul, and a physical body. Our spirit is God-conscious; our soul is self-conscious; and our body is sense-conscious. It is interesting to note that some created beings are spirit but have no physical body, such as angels; and some creatures have a body but no eternal spirit, such as animals.

Scripture has many references to something called our heart, which is very important. It is not a separate fourth part of our being. It is the center of our affections and relates primarily to the soul or personality of man, because our hearts greatly affect our thoughts, feelings, and decisions.

"Heart" basically means "center" and is not referring to the fist-sized blood pump in our chest by the same name. It can be said that a person who is focused on God and whose life is dominated by the Spirit has his heart in the spirit. As the Apostle Paul said, *"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."* (Philippians 1:21) David said,

*"One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,...."  
(Psalms 27:4)*

You can see where the affections of these men are centered.

The lives of some people are dominated and controlled by the flesh. They think of evil all day long.

*"...every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Genesis 6:5)*

Their *"...God is their belly...."* (Philippians 3:19) These people have their hearts in the flesh and in the world. They are spiritually dead. They are *"...sensual, having not the Spirit."* (Jude 19)

It is important to note that, while our decisions in life are directed by our hearts, they also influence our hearts. People focus attention on evil entertainment, because their hearts are not pure. Then, the more evil they absorb with their eyes and ears, the more corrupt their hearts become. The more we decide to read the Bible, pray, and fellowship with believers, the more our hearts are drawn toward God. As the old hymn says, "I love to tell

the story, for those who know it best, seem hungering and thirsting, to hear it like the rest."

We can decide what kind of music or literature we love. We can guard our heart by being careful what we put into our mind. *"Set your affections on things above..."* -- higher values. (Colossians 3:2) We protect our hearts by focusing on that which is good. (Philippians 4:8) *"Keep your heart with all diligence."* (Proverbs 4:23) Be careful about giving your heart to the world or to its idols.

We should guard and guide our hearts with the Spirit and the Word of God and be careful not to let our hearts control our lives. The humanist says, "just follow your heart," but the Bible says that

*"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"* (Jeremiah 17:9)

Be diligent to *"...establish your hearts:..."* (James 5:8) by humbly seeking after God and His grace.

## Who Are the Sons of God?

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In the Old Testament, the angels are referred to as "sons of God."

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*There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown." (Genesis 6:4)*

There are five Old Testament references to "sons of God." Two of them are in Job, the oldest book in the Bible. Both of these verses are referring to angels. Angels are clearly created by God, and are shown to be accountable to Him. All of the New Testament references to "sons of God" (such as John 1:12-13 and 1 John 3:1) are speaking of godly, redeemed people. Many newer translations prefer the term "children of God."

The account in Genesis 6 is referring to fallen angels. They committed fornication with the "daughters of men," and their offspring were giants. Note in verse 9 that Noah was "perfect in his generation." Satan had contaminated all of the other families in the earth with these fallen angels. Only Noah's family was undefiled by these wicked spirit-beings.

The Bible does not teach that angels are sexless beings. Jesus said that in heaven we would not marry, but would be "like the angels in heaven." The reason angels do not marry is that they are all males. Angels are capable of sexuality, but they have to leave the state in which they were

created to commit fornication with human women.

Jude said, "*And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh...."* (Jude 6-7) The "fornication" is referring to the action of the angels, and not just to the people of Sodom.

God commanded Israel to wipe out all of the Canaanites, because they were also contaminated by sexual angels. Some time after that, God arrested those fornicating angels and put them in chains of fire. These are the angels which the saints will judge.

There are two kinds of fallen angels. The ones who sinned sexually with humans are in prison: a place in the underworld called "Tartarus." Since then, if an angel sins sexually, the judgment of God will come immediately, because God no longer permits it. Now Satan uses demons to try to thwart God's program. Demons are not angels, but are the disembodied spirits of a pre-Adamic race, which was destroyed before the re-creation of Genesis 1.

The good angels are the "sons of God," and there is a great host of them. Prayer by Christians dispatches angels to work on our behalf. These angels camp around those of us who love God. We are a special breed. Angels are sons of God by creation, but we are sons of God by redemption. What a glorious salvation!

Angels do not understand redemption, but they desire to look into it. The sons of

God reveal His power, but the children of God reveal His love. God could create mountains and angels without love, but He shows His love when He redeems people. *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons (children) of God."* (Romans 8:14)



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## What Is a Revelation?

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A revelation is the unveiling of that which had been unknown,  
or hidden from us, as a mystery.

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*"Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest,...."*  
(Romans 16:25-26)

When God created man, He placed him in a time-space world and made him very limited in his ability to see or understand. When sin entered the human race, man's spiritual vision was diminished even more; and he was "subject to vanity," or to living with a tendency to carnality and the neglect of the spiritual realities of life.

We are born in sin, spiritually blind. (1 Corinthians 2:14) Even when we are born again, we still can see only as "...through a glass, darkly." (1 Corinthians 13:12) Many things are a mystery to us; that is, they are hidden from our view.

It is necessary for us to trust God at His word, even when we do not understand everything that happens. We must respond to God in faith, if we are to respond to Him at all, and respond to His love, even though we do not see Him. When we love God even in this natural life, God knows that our love is genuine, and He is blessed by our honest response of faith and obedience.

Jesus often spoke in parables, because He loved to communicate the truth of God's kingdom. He did not want carnal people following Him just because of the miracles and free fish sandwiches. It was prophesied that Jesus would speak in parables.

*"I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."* (Matthew 13:35)

He told His disciples,

*"...it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given."* (Matthew 13:11)

Jesus wanted to give revelation only to His disciples, or disciplined ones.

The verb form of "revelation" means "to uncover - to reveal that which was hidden." The Bible is a revelation from God concerning Jesus Christ and God's purposes for mankind, and many mysteries in life are unveiled in it. The last book in the Bible is even titled the "Revelation of Jesus Christ." Many people view this as a revelation from Jesus concerning the end times. It is more accurate to see it as an unveiling of the truth of Jesus Christ the Lord, and,

secondarily, to see it as a glimpse into the events that surround His work in the last days.

Indeed, the book of the Revelation, as a chart to end times, has more mystery than revelation, because it veils events in prophetic language and symbolic imagery. However, it does unveil a clear picture of Jesus as the conquering King of Kings and Lord of Lords; the mighty Judge of all the nations; and the Lamb on the throne of

God. We are given a clear and powerful revelation of what we really need to know, while there are yet many mysteries to be revealed about events and the course of the human race. We may not yet be able to accurately chart the future; but, we know who the winner is in the end.

## Is Jesus Really God?

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Yes. Jesus Christ is equal with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit;  
and these Three are One God.

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While the Church of God is carrying out the commission to preach the gospel to the whole world, Satan is trying to damage the work of the Kingdom by raising up and encouraging false teachers and churches. They claim to be Christian; but, they are not. These are called pseudo-Christian cults. Many use the Bible; but, so did Satan. The difference is that they will use isolated verses and parts of passages to support their ideas. They will use half-truths: concepts that are only partially true and, therefore, are very dangerous.

Jesus warned us that in the last days there would be many false prophets and false teachers, who will be very clever. They will seem to be Christian. However, their purpose is to damage the Christian faith; to dilute and pollute the true church.

One biblical test for the validity of a teacher or a religious group is their response to the deity of Christ. Most cults accept Jesus as a man and even as a great prophet from God. But, true Christians worship Jesus as very God, the Creator, as well as our risen Savior and Lord. Jesus did not begin life 2,000 years ago; He simply became incarnated and took on humanity to become our "kinsman redeemer" (Ruth 3, 4) and the Lamb of God. From eternity past, Jesus was "with God, and was God." (John 1:1-2)

John warned of false teachers too, and said that

*"Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." (1 John 4:2)*

Note that he said to test their spirit, not just their words. True Christians believe that Jesus Christ, the Savior, the anointed one from God, came in the flesh: that deity became humanity. False teachers will recognize an historical Jesus who came in the flesh; but, they will reject His deity.

When an angel in the Bible was worshipped, he would stop the person and say, "No. Do not worship me. Only God is to be worshipped." But, Jesus often received worship, because He was also deity. Thomas bowed to Him and said, "My Lord and my God," (John 20:28) and Jesus accepted that. Indeed, the reason the Jews tried to kill Him is that

*"...he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." (John 5:18)*

Jesus said, "...he that hath seen me hath seen the Father;..." (John 14:9) Jesus was not saying that He is the Father, but that He is the revelation of what the Father is like. He is the physical expression of the

Trinity, the *"fullness of the Godhead bodily."* (Colossians 2:9)

In Revelation 3:14, Jesus is called *"the beginning of the creation of God."* The word "beginning" is the Greek word "arche", which is the source of our word "architect." Jesus was not created; but, rather, He was the "architect of creation."

A man came to Jesus and called Him "Good Master." Jesus replied,

*"Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one,...God:"*  
(Matthew 19:17)

He did not say, "I'm not good," as some might think. He was saying in essence, "how can you recognize my godly character and attributes -- goodness -- and still not recognize that I am God? If I were not God, I could not be perfectly good." Jesus is very God, and very man.

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* (John 1:1)

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## What Is a Christian Pastor?

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A Christian pastor is an apostolic gift from Jesus to the Body of Christ.  
He is specifically called by God to lead a local church,  
as a shepherd leads and feeds his flock of sheep.

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*"And he gave some,...pastors..."*  
(Ephesians 4:11)

The Greek word "poimn" means "shepherd", or "pastor". Jesus, who is called the Great Shepherd, has called gifted people and prepared them to serve under Him as special leadership gifts to the church, as shepherds, or "under-shepherds."

Every true pastor will have a heart of love for the people he leads; but, he knows that Jesus is the Chief Shepherd -- the final authority and the ultimate head of the church. (Colossians 1:18) A good pastor will seek to draw people to Jesus instead of to himself. He will recognize that "his" flock is really the Lord's flock, for which he will give an account at the day of judgment. The people belong to the Lord; just as children really belong to God, and parents are responsible for "their" family.

The pastor of the church is in much the same role as the father in a home. He is the leader; the head of the family under Christ; the primary provider and protector.

We realize from Psalms 23:1 that "*the LORD is my shepherd*" -- pastor -- but not to the exclusion of any other pastor; just as He, as our Father, gave us a natural father to guide us to Him. God uses people to

lead people. God is training all of us to be leaders. The first quality of a good leader is that he is a faithful follower. He is teachable. God delegates authority and follows a "chain of command" in the home, church, government, and business world.

Moses was not the king of Israel. He was really the pastor of the nation. Moses listened to God and then told the people the word of the Lord. It was his job to stay close to God and to receive God's orders.

When the people were carnal, they tended to react against Moses. They wanted to control the decisions. But, God honored His delegated leader and taught the people that His church is not a democracy -- rule by the people -- but a **theocracy** -- rule by God. Of course, every pastor must also remember that the church is a theocracy and not a monarchy -- rule by one person. Also, the purpose of any church board is to confirm the word of God and to serve as a support team, not to be an oligarchy -- rule by a committee.

The pastor needs to be subject to counsel, and even to correction, by other godly leaders. Note that there are different kinds of apostolic gifts listed in Ephesians 4:11. Every good pastor will be related to "apostolic authority," that is, recognized

teams of mature anointed leaders. This will protect him from error and will protect the church.

The pastor is the **leader** of the local church. He is the one to whom God gives the vision for the church. He will always see more of God's vision than any of the people.

The pastor is also the **feeder** of the flock. (1 Peter 5:2) He is responsible for a

balanced diet of the Word of God going out from the pulpit. He protects the church from false doctrine, just as the shepherd protects the sheep from poisonous plants or harmful weeds. He knows that, when the people are fed well, they will be strong and healthy; and they will win souls and bring others into the church.

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## What Is a New Testament Deacon?

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A New Testament deacon is a mature member of the church, who assists the pastor by serving in practical and physical areas of ministry.

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*"Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."*  
(Matthew 20:26-27)

The word, "minister," means "servant." All Christians have a ministry of some kind. Early in their ministry, the church leaders in the book of Acts discovered that there were many practical aspects to meeting the needs of people. As God's extended family, the church needed to help some people with physical needs, especially widows with no husband to provide and care for their needs.

The apostles found themselves with too much to do; they did not have enough time for the Word and prayer. They also could not get everything done, because the people started to complain about the inadequate care for the Greek widows.

At the Lord's direction, the leaders said,

*"...It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. 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. But we will give ourselves continually to*

*prayer, and to the ministry of the word."* (Acts 6:2-4)

These men were appointed by the leaders to be servants and helpers. A modern application of the deacon/servant mentality would be the man who says, "Pastor, I will take care of Widow Jones; and I will mow your lawn Saturday, so you can have more time to read the Bible and pray. I will lighten your physical load, so you can preach your best next Sunday."

The basic function of a deacon is to lighten the load of the leaders by attending to the physical needs of the congregation. A pastor can be at his best if he has faithful, dependable men and women who can open the building; regulate the temperatures; set the lights; check and tidy up the rooms; and oversee the ushers. The whole church is more effective when the physical building and grounds are well managed.

In the early church, the deacons were chosen by the pastoral leadership in recognition of their faithful help in the work of the church. The qualifications for deacons were given to Pastor Timothy as a guideline. The Apostle Paul told the pastor that deacons must be serious-minded; honest; sober; and they must not be greedy. They must have a clear conscience; a good reputation; and a godly wife, who will not

gossip. (1 Timothy 3:8-13) They should also function in the church in a supportive capacity.

A church leader should be careful never to give the title, "deacon" to anyone who is not already serving with a deacon's heart. Having a function without a title will not hurt anyone; but, having a title without the function will cause a man to be proud.

In 1 Corinthians 12:28, Paul taught the importance of diversity of gifts and ministries in the church. Some are called to lead and to teach, and others have the gift of "helps." (12:28) The man with a true servant's heart, with the gift of helps, is a great gift to the pastor and to the church. The church would be less effective without his ministry.



## What Is a Local Church Elder?

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A local church elder is a mature Christian, who is able to help the pastor in the personal and spiritual care of the people.

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*"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock,..." (1 Peter 5:2-3)*

The Bible teaches that people are like sheep. They need to "flock together"; to be fed; and to be protected. People need the personal care of a shepherd. A good pastor will be dedicated to the care and feeding of his flock. However, when a church becomes large, it becomes necessary to have help in caring for families and needy individuals on a personal level. A pastor can feed a large church on a general level; but, he cannot do all the counseling and give all the personal oversight.

The Apostle Peter outlined the basic functions of local church elders. They are **feeders, overseers, and examples.**

1. **Feeders.** Elders are to be "apt to teach." They should be able to communicate practical and biblical truth to others.
2. **Overseers.** Elders are overseers. The word "bishop" means "overseer", or one who gives leadership and personal care to others. The title is

used often to describe leaders who are overseers over a number of pastors and churches, much like the apostles did in the early church. Paul was clearly the overseer of Timothy, Titus, and many other pastors.

A good local church elder will watch over families. He will keep his eye on them, and will notice when they are missing or have a special need. He will call on them occasionally and give them encouragement. If there is a serious need he cannot meet, he will call on the pastor to minister.

A good elder is an "undershepherd." As a deacon frees the pastor's time by overseeing projects, the elder helps the pastor by overseeing people.

3. **Examples.** Paul outlined the qualifications for elders in 1 Timothy 3:1-11. Basically, an elder must be an honest, mature Christian, who leads his own home well. He must be a good husband and father; a hard worker; a good teacher; given to hospitality. He must also not be a "novice" -- meaning, "newly planted" -- or he will be lifted up with pride.

The Apostle James also taught that the elders should lay hands on the sick. (James

5:14) This is a natural expression of the fact that elders minister to people.

It is both an honor and a serious responsibility to be appointed to serve as

an elder. The work of the elder is a vital ministry in any large church.

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## What Is Hell Like?

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Hell is a real place of darkness, fire, misery, and torment for people who did not respond to God's plan of salvation with repentance, faith, and love for God during their life on earth.

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*"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10:28)*

Jesus spoke much more about hell than He did about heaven, because He does not want anyone to go to that unspeakably horrible place. Most false cults reject the idea of a literal hell, because they are religions invented by people. Whenever men invent their own doctrines, they will tend to shape them according to their own desires and omit anything they do not like. But, the Bible clearly teaches there is a literal and eternal hell.

Jesus related the account of Lazarus and the rich man. (Luke 16:19-31) This was not an allegory or a parable. It was an actual account of two real men, one of whom was identified by name. Both of them died. Lazarus went to Paradise, and the rich man went to hell. Both bodies were still in the grave; but, their souls were still alive and conscious. The rich man could look up into Paradise and could even communicate with Abraham; but, he could not do anything to escape from hell, or even to get some relief.

Scientists have recently discovered that the core of the earth is hotter than they

thought -- about 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit. Volcanoes are the result of weaknesses and breaks in the hardened crust of the earth, and the molten material -- magma-- comes spewing to the surface. Imagine being confined to the inside of a volcano for centuries, with its darkness, heat, and noxious fumes. That is what hell is like.

The Bible does not teach about a "soul sleep," although some cults do. Paradise and hell were both located somewhere inside the earth, a great distance apart. Paradise was also called "Abraham's Bosom" and was evacuated when Jesus ascended into Heaven after His resurrection. From then on, all the saints who died went to heaven to be "*present with the Lord.*" (2 Corinthians 5:8)

Hell, however, is still occupied, and it will be until the Great White Throne Judgment. (Revelation 20) At that time, the inhabitants of hell will be resurrected from the dead and will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will be judged for their wickedness and will be cast into the Lake of Fire.

The Lake of Fire is a place somewhere in the universe, which God prepared for the devil and his angels; but, it is large enough for the ungodly people as well. Apparently, it will be similar to hell, with

the torment of perpetual fire, darkness, loneliness, and absolute hopelessness. There will also be no end to the suffering, because God created man to be an eternal spirit. Jesus mentioned that hell was a place *"where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."* (Mark 9:44)

Obviously, the truly wise man will not fear those who have only the power to destroy this short natural life; but, he will fear God, because God is the one with the keys to death, hell, and the grave.

## What Is Heaven Like?

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Heaven is a fabulous city, called "the New Jerusalem", where the children of God will live with Him in perfect peace and joy forever.

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*"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."*  
(Revelation 21:2)

The Bible teaches that God has created a real place called "heaven". There are references to heaven, or the heavens, signifying the physical atmosphere over the earth. But, "heaven" usually refers to the New Jerusalem, and Jerusalem means "city of peace."

When John was exiled by the Romans on the prison island of Patmos, God let him see a vision of this great city. Apparently, it will come down from outer space and will hover over present-day Palestine as God's capital city. There, the saints -- born-again Christians, the overcomers from among the human race -- will have an eternal home with no sickness, death, or sorrow.

This city is far too massive to sit on the ground in Palestine. According to prophecy, it will be about 1500 miles wide and 1500 miles long, and about 1500 miles high! (Revelation 21:16) The walls are made of jasper -- a precious stone -- and are more than 200 feet thick. The city has 12 gates, each made from a gigantic pearl. It has 12 foundations. Many Bible scholars believe this to mean that there will be 12

levels, or "floors." On the bottom level, there will be about 2,250,000 square miles of living space. If the other foundations are about 10 miles thick -- we do not know-- then from the first level you could look up, and the bottom of the second floor would still be 115 miles above you. On the 12 levels, there would be about 27,000,000 square miles of land, with lots of room for high rise buildings. There is enough room in this city for every person who has ever lived on earth, with plenty to spare.

But scripture indicates that the majority of the people on earth have rejected God and will not be there. God said that

*"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."* (Revelation 22:14)

The Bible says that no fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate men, homosexuals, thieves, greedy people, drunkards, revilers, or extortioners will be in heaven. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)

The last two chapters in the Bible give us nearly everything we know of New Jerusalem. The rest of the Bible is devoted to many instructions, which will help us

to get there. It is good to know that we have a hope for such a city. We know that while many prophecies in the book of the Revelation are prophetic pictures and not literal things, the New Jerusalem is shown in scripture to be a literal place that God has built for His people.

By earth's standards, heaven is a city of unspeakable wealth, where streets are paved with pure gold. There is a river of life and a tree of life. The city will be illuminated by God; so, there will be no

night. In heaven, Jesus is the center of attention. There is a continual sound of perfect music and glorious worship. Heaven would be an uncomfortable place for those who are in love with themselves, or who love sin. However, for people who love to worship and serve God, the place will be absolutely heavenly.

# **Section 8**

# **Lessons**

# Abram, Man of Faith

Volume 5

Lesson 1



## Bible References

Genesis 12

Hebrews 11

Galatians 3

James 2

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:*

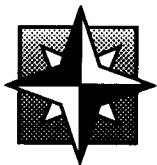
3 *"And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*

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. "*



## Theme

Faith is God's first priority in education; and it is an important character quality, gift, and asset.



## Scripture Reading

Genesis 12:1-7

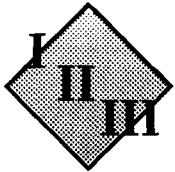




## Memory Verse

Galatians 3:6

*"...Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."*



## Outline

### I. The Early Life of Abram.

- A. We do not know anything about Abram until, at the age of 75, he left his homeland in Ur (in the Middle East) to go west to Canaan.
- B. He went toward the Mediterranean Sea, because God said to do so.

### II. Abram's Family.

- A. Abram had a wife named Sarai.
- B. Sarai was barren (physically unable to have a baby).
  - 1. This is possibly why Abram took his nephew along.
  - 2. They traveled several hundred miles, not expecting to return to Ur in their lifetime.
  - 3. Abram probably planned to make his nephew, Lot the heir to his wealth when he died, since he had no children.

### III. Faith and Obedience.

- A. Faith means trust, confidence, reliance.
  - 1. If you know God is for you, you will not have trouble doing what He told you to do.
  - 2. Abram looked to God as his source.
- B. Faith in God naturally produces obedience to God.
  - 1. We show our faith by what we do.
  - 2. James 2:18.

### IV. The Importance of Faith.

- A. Faith in God is necessary for genuine salvation.
- B. Without faith, it is impossible to please God. (Hebrews 11:6)
- C. The decisions in our lives are determined according to what we put our confidence in.
- D. Faith is an act of righteousness; and it is vital to establishing and maintaining relationship with God.



## Spiritual Truths

- We all have faith. The question is: in what or whom do we invest our faith?
- The more we focus on God and the Bible, the more faith we will tend to have.

- Faith is a focus in life on God and His purposes.
- The opposite of faith is fear, which comes from a focus on self.
- Fear is a sign that I have assumed ownership of my life, and that I need to surrender my rights to God.
- When we are disobedient, we show a lack of faith.
- The world says, "be your own person." This is the lie of humanism.
- When we have faith, we realize that God's will is better than our will for our lives.
- With God, you do not have to know the why, or the how, or the when -- as long as you know the Who.



## Lesson Material

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Abram lived with his family in Ur of the Chaldees -- a pleasant, fertile land in Mesopotamia. The area is now largely desert, and is called the Middle East. Abram had a beautiful wife named Sarai; but they were unable to have children. In those days, children were more important to a man than anything else in life. A son was like an extension of himself -- a kind of immortality. Having a baby was the most wonderful experience they could know. Abram loved his wife; but they were both grieved, because they had never had children.

When God told Abram to leave home and go west, he took along one of his brother's sons, so that he could have an heir to his wealth. He went, because he knew God had told him to; and he trusted God's judgment. He did not know anything about the land, the people there, or the dangers he would face; but he knew God, and that was enough. If God said to go, that was enough for Abram. Abram worshipped and feared God. Abram was God's friend.

Abram did not merely "say prayers." He talked to God as his Friend and Heavenly Father. He enjoyed his relationship with God; and God enjoyed Abram. Abram had developed a strong confidence in God, and God was very pleased with him. There was no Bible in those days; but Abram did a lot of praying, and he knew what God wanted him to do.

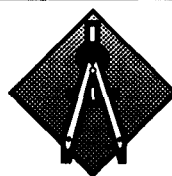
God told Abram what he should do, but He did not give him any details. Abram was not told at that time that he would be given a large area of land, or great wealth, or that he would be given the son that he had always dreamed about. Abram made no special deal with God. All God said was, "Go west." Abram did not question it. If God said to go, then that was what he had to do. He knew that God was his friend; and he trusted his God completely. Instead of looking to the future with dread, his faith caused him to look ahead with excitement. As the old song says, "I do not know what the future holds, but I know Who holds the future."

The greatest characteristic of Abram was his faith. The Bible records that his ability to trust God and take Him at His word was an act of righteousness. It is ironic that anyone would not trust God, because God has never lied or failed. The reason people do not trust God is that they

have wronged God and other people have sinned against them. When we focus on self or people, we see faults and failures. The more we focus on God, the more we realize that He is worthy of trust. He has never missed it. God always does the right thing. That is why *"...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."* (Romans 10:17) In the Word, we see man's frailty and failure, and God's faithfulness and perfect wisdom, in every situation. The more you focus on the Word, the more you realize how trustworthy God is. You will build up your faith in God, if you are a hearer of the Word.

Satan is our enemy. He wants more than anything to keep us focused on self, or pleasure, or people, or money -- anything but God. When we see ourselves as God's children, and everything in the world as God's property, we handle life differently. We are free from fear of the future, because we know Whom we have believed (2 Timothy 1:12) and we know that God is in control. But if we are self-centered -- if we try to take control of our own lives -- we set ourselves up for fear. Fear is a sense of dread -- a negative expectation of harm or loss. Fear is the result of ownership. Paul said, *"...Ye are not your own."* (1 Corinthians 6:19) He also taught the principle of "dying to self." (1 Corinthians 15:31; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:3) In other words, "I belong to God. I fear God, and not man." When you see your property as God's, you no longer fear losing it. If your life belongs to God, you will no longer fear death.

Read the Bible. The more you learn of God, the more you realize that you can trust Him completely.



## Methods

### Discussion questions:

1. Is it a good practice to move away from our families to live in a far-away state or country, like Abram did?

Only if God tells you to do it. God sends some out to be foreign missionaries. But generally, it is better to stay together as a family.

2. How old was Abraham, when he left his home town?

75 years old. That might not be a good age to move away from home and start a new career.

3. Why did Abraham leave his kinfolk?

God told him to; and God knew what was best for him and his family.

4. Why did Abraham take his nephew with him?

He did not want to completely forsake his family. Was he disobeying God?

Perhaps he wanted to make sure he had an heir to carry on the family work.

5. Did Abraham have a good wife?

Yes. Sarai let him be the leader; and she honored his decisions.

6. What is faith?

7. How are faith and fear different?

Faith is a positive focus on God and His purposes; and it comes from giving God ownership of our lives.

Fear is a focus on the negatives in life; and it is the result of taking ownership

of ourselves and our things. Fear comes from looking at circumstances, instead of looking in faith to God as our Protector, Provider, and Lord.

# Abram and Lot

Volume 5

Lesson 2



## Bible References

Genesis 13

Proverbs 11

Proverbs 21

5 *"And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.*

6 *"And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together."*

8 *"And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.*

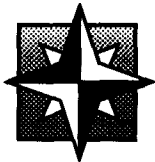
9 *"Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.*

10 *"And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.*

11 *"Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.*

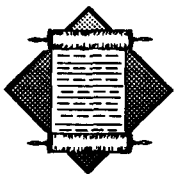
12 *"Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.*

13 *"But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly."*



## Theme

There are many reasons for financial prosperity or poverty. Abram is a good example of a prosperous man.



## Scripture Reading

Genesis 13:2, 5-6, 8-13

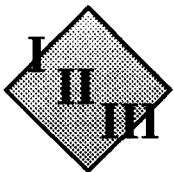
2 *"And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold."*



## Memory Verse

Proverbs 10:22

*"The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it."*



## Outline

- I. Abram's Wealth.**
- A. Abram was God's friend, and he obeyed God.
- B. God blessed Abram with great wealth.
1. Abram had large herds and hundreds of servants.
  2. Abram had large amounts of gold and silver.
- C. Sin always has pleasure (reward) at first, but there are always consequences:
1. Guilt.
  2. Fear.
  3. Disease.
  4. Problems.
  5. Broken relationships.
  6. Death.
- D. God's blessings, however, are pure.
1. *"The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it."* (Proverbs 10:22)
  2. The devil's "blessings" always have a price to pay later -- but not God's.
  3. God loves to bless those who faithfully serve and honor Him.
- E. Abram was blessed by God, because He loved God and was faithful to put God first in his life.
1. Abram realized that all he had really belonged to God.
  2. Abram was God's friend.
  3. Abram was a faithful tither and giver.
- F. Some of the biblical reasons for financial prosperity:
1. Seeking God. (2 Chronicles 26:5)
  2. Hard work. (Proverbs 13:11)
  3. Meditating on God's Word. (Psalms 1:2-3)
  4. Humility and the fear of the Lord. (Proverbs 22:4)
  5. A righteous lifestyle. (Proverbs 15:6)
- G. Some biblical reasons for poverty:
1. Moral impurity. (Proverbs 6:26,32)
  2. Putting trust in riches. (Proverbs 11:28)
  3. Drunkenness. (Proverbs 23:21)
  4. Gluttony. (Proverbs 23:21)
  5. Taking advantage of poor people. (Proverbs 22:16)
  6. Becoming a lover of pleasure. (Proverbs 21:17)
  7. Stinginess. (Proverbs 22:9)
  8. Overspending. (Proverbs 21:20)
  9. Laziness. (Proverbs 24:33-34)

**II. Lot.**

- A. Lot was wealthy, because of his relationship to Abram.
1. When God blesses us, He also blesses those we love.
  2. We are affected by those people with whom we associate.
  3. *"He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."* (Proverbs 13:20)
- B. Lot was better off with Abram than he was later, in Sodom.

**III. Lot's Choice, Abram's Deference.**

- A. The company with Abram was very large, and strife developed between the servants of Abram and Lot.
- B. Abram and Lot decided to part company, in order to avoid strife.
- C. Abram gave Lot the choice of the land he would possess and farm.
- D. Lot chose the fertile plains near Sodom.
1. The grass seems greener in the secular world.
  2. Sodom looked attractive, but it was full of wicked men.
- E. Just as Lot was blessed when he lived with God's friend, Abram, so he suffered as a result of living in the wicked city of Sodom.
1. Sodom was taken captive by another nation; and Abram had to rescue Lot and his family from captivity.

2. When God later judged Sodom with fire and brimstone from heaven, Lot lost his home, his wealth, and his wife.

- F. Abram was kind enough to allow Lot to choose the fields, even though Abram was the rightful leader.
1. Abram showed deference.
  2. Abram yielded to the ideas and desires of others, because he trusted God as his source and he loved others.
  3. People who are kind and unselfish are those whom God especially loves to bless.
  4. Twice Lot got into trouble; and Abram went to his defense, and delivered him.




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## Spiritual Truths

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- When God blesses you, there are no hidden costs, as there are with Satan's "blessings."
- Being drunk in the Spirit is better and sweeter than the other kind of drunk -- and there are no hangovers or dangers with it.
- God takes delight in blessing people who are faithful and generous.
- We are greatly affected by the kinds of people with whom we spend our time. Therefore, we should carefully choose with whom we will relate.
- The pleasures and opportunities of the world always look better to the natural

eye -- but there are always hidden consequences.

- God will not withhold any good thing from those who are honest and upright in their lifestyles.



## Lesson Material

Abram was God's friend. He was also very wealthy. There are several reasons for Abram's success in life. We know that he was a tither and a generous giver. He was kind and generous to others, especially to his nephew, Lot. As an old man, Abram still had no children; and he expected to make his nephew the heir to his vast fortune.

The Bible gives many reasons for poverty. It is not just an accident that some people are more financially blessed than others. There are many factors involved, so we cannot judge someone's spirituality on the basis of his wealth or poverty. There are some people who are wealthy because they are greedy or dishonest. They live for money, and they concentrate their efforts on gaining more. They may accumulate money; but they will often be unsuccessful in other areas of life. Those whose goal is financial gain may lose their marriages, their health, or their good name. Eventually, they will lose their wealth -- either in this life, or certainly in the next. *"Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished...."* (Proverbs 13:11)

Some people are wealthy because of their parents or other people who have been successful. Lot was wealthy just because he was Abram's nephew.

However, Lot made some unwise choices; and he ended in shame and poverty. Some people are poor because they live in a country that gives no opportunities to succeed. In cultures which have nationally rejected God, there are usually corrupt and oppressive governments which tend to make the rich, richer, and the poor, poorer. Some people do not have the ability or opportunity that others have. Those who are blessed with more opportunities will be held accountable to produce more. They are not just "lucky." *"...For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required...."* (Luke 12:48) If you have freedom, a good home, and plenty of opportunities, but you spend much of your life pursuing entertainment such as TV, sports, and video games, you will have to give an account to God for the wasted years of your life. How many souls could you have won to God and seen in heaven, if you were diligent and faithful?

Luke 6:38 is a principle of life, applying to much more than just money. There are many other factors involved in our financial success. Apart from circumstances, there are many who could be financially blessed, but they miss the blessing because of laziness, love of pleasure, poor spending habits, immorality, drunkenness, or other foolish things. Abram was a giver; but he was also a diligent worker. He did not spend his strength or substance on pleasure. He had a good wife whom he loved, and he was guided by God in the handling of his business. His wealth was a normal by-product of the fact that he handled his daily life well.

In Proverbs, Solomon wrote about a number of factors which influence personal success. One notable statement is, *"He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man...."* (Proverbs 21:17) This is one of the

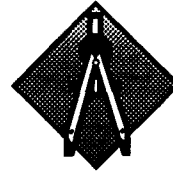


promises of God that not too many people love to claim in their favorite book of Bible promises; but, the verse is in the Bible. If we seek pleasure in life more than we seek God, we will suffer consequences in this life, as well as in eternity. If we *"...seek...first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;...all these things shall be added unto you."* (Matthew 6:33) It is ironic, but people who seek for wealth will eventually lose it, while those who instead seek for God will eventually gain everything.

In the story of Abram and Lot, we notice not only that they were wealthy, but we get an idea of the reason Abram was so blessed. Not only was he a pure man who worked hard, but he also had a generous and loving spirit. He showed deference to others. He was not out to get all he could, and then hoard it all. He thought of others. He showed deference to his nephew. When Abram saw that they needed to separate, he gave Lot first choice of the property. Lot, who did not have such a magnanimous spirit, chose the greener plains toward Sodom, a city known for its morally impure men. If he had been wiser, he would have chosen to keep his children as far from the wicked as possible.

Although Lot and his family continued to serve the Lord, they still suffered because of their association with the people of their community. When Sodom was besieged and taken captive by other nations, Lot and his family were taken captive as well; and they had to be rescued by Abram. When God judged the city for its wickedness by raining down fire and brimstone from heaven, Lot's family lost everything they had. God judges cities and

nations, as well as individuals. Lot's life was spared each time; and so he did not suffer the same judgment of death that most of the people suffered. But he did suffer loss, because of his relationship with them.



## Methods

Discuss the wisdom of the Proverbs. Understand that Proverbs is not a collection of absolutes, but of principles of wisdom. In other words, these things generally apply as we live our lives on earth. Generosity tends toward blessing and abundance, although there are stingy people who do accumulate wealth for other reasons, and generous people who are not wealthy. Not everyone who loves pleasure is financially poor; but the love of pleasure does decrease a person's wealth and potential in life, and he is certainly a poor person, overall. There is a difference between success and wealth. Success is the accomplishment of worthwhile goals in life. Discuss also the definition of good success. Why is it so important that we keep our hearts from loving the world? Why is it impossible to love the world and God at the same time? What does it mean to *"Set your affections on things above..."*? (Colossians 3:2)

Does it really pay in life to put others before ourselves? Did Abram's deference to his nephew ultimately result in his gaining the greater blessing?

# Hagar and Ishmael

Volume 5

Lesson 3



## Bible References

Genesis 16

Galatians 4:22-31



## Theme

The story of Ishmael is an important historical allegory, which teaches the difference between salvation by faith and the efforts of religion.



## Scripture Reading

Genesis 16:1-11

1 *"Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.*

2 *"And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from*

*bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.*

3 *"And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.*

4 *"And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.*

5 *"And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee.*

6 *"But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face.*

7 *"And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur.*

8 *"And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai.*

9 *"And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.*

10 "And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.

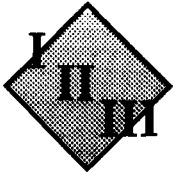
11 "And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction."



## Memory Verse

Galatians 3:29

"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."



## Outline

### I. Abraham's Test of Faith.

- A. God had promised Abram that he would be the "father of many nations."
1. This is why God re-named Abram "Abraham."
  2. Abram was about 75 years old, when the promise came.
  3. Ten years or so from the time the promise was given, it did not look as if anything was going to happen.

- B. Sarai suggested that they help God out, by having Abram take on Sarai's servant-girl, Hagar, as a second wife.
- C. Actually, God waited until Abram was 100 years old to give his wife, Sarai, a child – 25 years after the promise was given.
1. When God initially made the promise, Sarai was past the child-bearing age.
  2. God is not limited to time.
  3. The 25-year span of time was the time of testing for Abram's faith in God.
- D. God did not tell Abram that He needed help. Sarai came up with that idea, without consulting God first.

### II. Hagar.

- A. When Hagar conceived a baby for Abram, she began looking down on Sarai.
1. Wives who failed to produce children were considered inferior in that culture.
  2. Sarai became angry, and was harsh with the young woman.
- B. When Hagar fled into the wilderness, Jesus met with her.
1. This is not "an" angel of the Lord, but "the" Angel of the Lord.
  2. Jesus often appeared in the Old Testament as the Angel (messenger) of the Lord.
  3. Jesus did not say, "God will multiply...;" but He said, "...I will multiply thy seed...." (Genesis 16:10)
  4. Jesus told Hagar to go back and submit to Sarai.

5. The Lord named Hagar's son, "Ishmael," which means "God will hear."

### III. Ishmael.

A. Ishmael was the result of Abram's lack of faith.

1. Faith was his strength; but he was tested in the area of his strength.
2. This time, he missed God's best for him.

B. Abram and Sarai were trying to assist God by doing a work in their own fleshly efforts.

C. Consequences.

1. Conflicts between Sarai and her handmaid, Hagar.
  - a. Pride in Hagar.
  - b. Bitterness in Sarai.
2. Conflicts between Ishmael and Isaac.
  - a. Ishmael was technically the "firstborn."
  - b. Isaac was the son of God's promise, and the rightful heir.
3. Conflicts between the Ishmaelites and the children of Israel.
  - a. Throughout history, the descendants of Ishmael have fought with the descendants of Isaac, who are know by his son's name, Israel.
  - b. Today, the Arab world -- the descendants of Ishmael -- continue to fight with Israel. Arabs are predominantly worshippers of the false god, Allah.



## Spiritual Truths

- God is looking for people of faith, and not people with better ideas.
- Anything that is not of faith is sin, because unbelief looks to self and the flesh, instead of to God.
- A simple, pleasant wrong action can have eternal consequences.
- God will often give a vision, and then allow that vision to die, before He brings it to pass.
- Faith believes God's Word, when everything else says otherwise.
- It is always easier for the moment to do the wrong thing.
- You may suffer because someone else made a mistake; but God knows, and He will help you.
- Everyone who is born again by the Spirit is the "seed of Abraham," because we are children of the promise, by the miracle of faith.



## Lesson Material

In Genesis 15, God made a covenant with His friend, Abram. Part of that promise was that he would not have to settle for another man to serve as an heir, but that he would have his own son. For

years, Abram held to that glorious promise. But he and his wife were old, and they were growing older every day. They probably were thrilled with the news that they would finally have a child; but the years passed, and nothing happened.

Undoubtedly, Sarai became discouraged. After about ten years, she continued to try to resolve this promise. Having a child was the most important thing in her life, and the idea occupied her mind constantly. Instead of praying, she began rationalizing. She went over and over it in her mind. It is good to think -- but, praying is better.

Finally, she decided, "I am seventy-five years old. I cannot have a son. Abram is still physically able to produce seed. I will let him have my servant Hagar as a second wife, and that boy will be my son, because she is my personal servant." Apparently, it was not hard to convince Abram to be part of the plan; and Hagar became pregnant.

The Apostle Paul referred to this account in the Epistle to the Christians in Galatia. There were judaizers, who were trying to bring the Christians back under the law of the old covenant, thus rejecting salvation by faith. Paul called the story of Ishmael an "allegory." An allegory is a symbolic story used to illustrate a truth with an easily understood picture. He said that Ishmael was like the works of the law. He was the result of the efforts of the flesh to produce the righteousness of God. God's purpose was to produce a great nation for Himself; but man's best effort produced an Ishmael. Isaac was the "seed of promise" -- a miracle baby, produced by waiting on God in faith. Everyone who is born again by faith is a "miracle birth," because we cannot enter into the new covenant with God by our works of the flesh, no matter how hard we try to do good. By faith, we

recognize that the supernatural new birth is possible because of the completed work of Christ on the cross. We are not saved by being good enough, but by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

The true story of Hagar and Ishmael was used by Paul as a sermon illustration. Of course, for Hagar, it was her life. When she became pregnant by her master, she naturally felt very special. In those days, it was a great shame for a woman to be childless, and men greatly esteemed wives who produced sons. Sarai already regretted her hasty decision; and she treated the poor girl harshly.

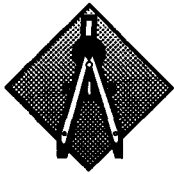
Hagar fled into the wilderness, where Jesus met her by a well. He told her that she would have a son, and that he would be named "Ishmael," because the Lord had heard her cry. He also said that He would give him a multitude of descendants, and that he would be a wild man. Ishmael did indeed grow up as a wild and troubled man; and today he has many millions of direct descendants, called "Arabs." Most of his descendants today are followers of a false prophet named Mohammed. The religion is called "Islam;" and the people are called "Moslems." The Moslem world today is large and powerful; and it is still burning with a jealous hatred for Jews (Abraham's natural heirs) and Christians (Abraham's spiritual heirs). The Arabs control most of the world's oil, and therefore much of the world's wealth. There is still great conflict between the descendants of Ishmael and the descendants of Isaac.

Abram and Sarai made a wrong decision, because they tried to do God's will in their own efforts, and worked it out with their minds instead of on their knees. How easy it is for us to think we can help God with our "common sense." Actually,

God waited about 25 years to finally give Abraham and Sarah the miraculous son of promise. Then, when Isaac was a boy, he was picked on by a jealous teenage brother, who was a troubled youth. Ishmael would have inherited a great fortune and would have enjoyed his father's blessings, if Isaac had not come along. Now, he was rejected. Abraham learned the hard way that faith trusts God to do what He said, and does not give Him a time limit in which to do it.

relating to the war in the Persian Gulf of 1991, or other events relating to the ongoing conflict between the Arabs and the Jews. Relate these world events to the seemingly insignificant act of "dead works" Abraham did 4,000 years ago.

Tie in the lesson in Galatians about salvation by faith, instead of works. Note that he also makes a contrast between Mt. Sinai (where the law was given) and Mt. Zion (where God's presence dwelled). Be sure to remind them that while our salvation is not determined by our works, we are still responsible for what we do; and we will be accountable to God.



## Methods

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Show the students a map of the Middle East, and some pictures or video footage

# Melchisedec

Volume 5

Lesson 4



## Bible References

Genesis 14:18-20

Hebrews 7

Psalms 110:4

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."*

Hebrews 7:1-3, 14-17

1 *"For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;*

2 *"To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;*

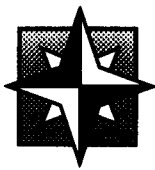
3 *"Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually."*

14 *"For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood."*

15 *"And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest,*

16 *"Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life."*

17 *"For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."*



## Theme

Jesus is our eternal High Priest, after the order of Melchisedec, Abraham's priest.



## Scripture Reading

Genesis 14:18-20

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



## Memory Verse

Hebrews 4:16

*"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."*



## Outline

### I. The Priestly Order of Melchisedec.

#### A. The office of a priest.

1. A priest was one who represented the people to God.
2. A priest was one who represented God to the people.
3. A priest offered sacrifices for the people, and prayed for them.

#### B. Abraham's priest.

1. Abraham paid his tithes to Melchisedec, King of Salem.
  - a. "Salem" means "peace" in Hebrew.
  - b. Abraham paid tithes, more than 400 years before the Old Testament law was given to his descendant, Moses.
2. The book of Hebrews has much to say about Melchisedec's priesthood.

- a. Melchisedec is described as having no parents, and neither beginning, nor end.
- b. It could be that Melchisedec was a type of Christ.
- c. There is no record of where Melchisedec came from, or where he died.
- d. Many Bible scholars believe that Melchisedec was Jesus Himself, the "Prince of Peace."

### C. The priests of the Old Covenant were from the tribe of Levi.

1. Levi was a descendent of Abraham. It was Abraham who tithed to Melchisedec.
2. The Levites were the priests of the Old Covenant; but Jesus is the Priest of the New Covenant "...after the order of Melchisedek." (Psalms 110:4)
  - a. It is a spiritual covenant for all who are born again (the spiritual seed of Abraham, by faith).
  - b. The Old Covenant was to the Jews, the natural descendants of Abraham.
  - c. The New Covenant is forever.

### II. The Bread and Wine.

#### A. Melchisedec gave Abram bread and wine, as a symbol of covenant.

1. A covenant is more than a contract.
2. A contract is a binding agreement, whereby parties exchange goods or services.
3. A covenant is a binding agreement whereby the parties give themselves to one another without reservation.

#### B. The bread symbolizes that we are "one" -- a part of each other.



C The wine is a symbol of blood, which is a type of life.

1. Jesus gave His life's blood, in order to redeem our lives forever.
2. Our spiritual, eternal life is made possible by His blood.

D. We "break bread" at the Lord's table.

1. We are commanded to do this regularly as believers until He comes. (1 Corinthians 11:26)
2. We renew covenant with one another as fellow believers, as we are reminded of our covenant with God, through the Lord Jesus Christ.

### III. Jesus, Our Eternal High Priest.

A. Jesus fulfilled the function of High Priest.

1. Jesus offered Himself as the sin offering for the people; and He offered His own blood on the mercy seat of God's throne in heaven. (Hebrews 9:12)
2. He "...*maketh intercession for us*" at the right hand of the Father. (Romans 8:34)
3. He is the One Who forgives our sins, and purifies us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)
4. He washes us in the Word. (Ephesians 5:26)
5. Jesus is the One Who baptizes us in the Holy Spirit.
6. Jesus led His disciples in the sacrament of communion; and He commanded them to continue the practice.

B. "...*A priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek.*"

1. Psalms 110:4.

2. Hebrews 5:6,10; 6:20; 7:11,15,17,21.



## Spiritual Truths

- Melchisedec was a man of mystery, who was, at the least, an exact type of Christ.
- The priesthood of Melchisedec was based on faith, rather than the law.
- Jesus became human and was tempted as we are; and so, we can never say that He does not understand what we are going through.
- Jesus is the "Lamb of God" (John 1:29) -- the sin offering. Jesus is also the Priest Who offered up His blood on the altar of God.
- Jesus became man, so that He could be our "kinsman redeemer;" and yet, He is God, and so His precious blood can atone for the sins of the whole human race.
- In a contract, you agree to exchange goods or services; but in a covenant, you give yourself.
- Heaven is the eternal home of all those who have a covenant with God, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and His blood.
- We partake of communion to signify our relationship with the Lord. Communion does not impart salvation to us.



## Lesson Material

It is important for each student to be familiar with the great historical people found in the Bible. Abraham was one of the most important figures in history; yet many writers of history ignore him, and focus their attention on people who did not know God. Ultimately, there are no truly great people whose lives reflected a rejection of God and His plan for their lives. Abraham was a great man, because he responded to God in faith.

When the disciples asked Jesus, *"...Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"* (Matthew 18:1), Jesus did not respond with "Everyone is equally important to God." He told them that the person who was the most unselfish servant of others was the greatest. As Bible teachers, we want to encourage, inspire, and exhort our students to be the best they can be. The best way to communicate this is by setting a good role model in front of them, as much as possible.

One thing Abraham did consistently in his life was to tithe his financial increase. The tithe is not merely the ten percent which belongs to God; rather, it is the regular reminder that all we have belongs to God. The tithe was not just instituted with the law. It was a part of a godly lifestyle throughout history. The basis of sin is the question of ownership. Who is going to control us and our actions? The philosophy of the world and Satan is, "Be your own person." This is completely opposite from the Christian world view. As Christians, we view ourselves as stewards in this life. A steward is one who takes care of that which belongs to his

master. This was taught by Jesus repeatedly. Those who have this understanding reflect it by giving a tenth of their income to the work of the Lord.

In Genesis, we have the account of Abram tithing and being blessed in spiritual ministry by his priest, Melchisedec. A priest is someone who represents the people before God as an intercessor and spiritual leader. In Israel, the tribe of Levi was set apart to be the family of the priesthood; and they were supported by the tithes from the other tribes. The account of Abram and Melchisedec happened much earlier -- and this was Abram's priest.

Melchisedec was a man of mystery. He is only briefly mentioned in Genesis, once by the Psalmist, and several times by the writer to the Hebrews in the New Testament. In explaining the new covenant, the author of Hebrews repeatedly quoted Psalms 110:4, which says, *"...Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."* Hebrews 5:11 relates that the author had many other things he wanted to say about Melchisedec, but he did not think the people were mature enough for more details.

It is mentioned that Melchisedec, king of Salem (king of Peace), was a man without parents, beginning, or end. It could mean that since he did not have any historically verified ancestry that he was a picture of the Lord Jesus; but it could also mean that he was, in fact, Jesus Himself. Jesus appeared in the Old Testament many times. Jesus did not begin His life or ministry in the manger at Bethlehem. That was merely the time of His incarnation (God becoming man). Jesus is eternal God, the Creator and Lord; and He has always been God the Word, the second Person of the Trinity, co-equal with the

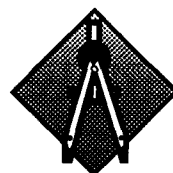
Father and the eternal Holy Spirit. It would not be unusual for Jesus Himself to be Abraham's priest. After all, Abraham was God's friend, knowing God face to face, as few people in history have known Him.

Melchisedec administered the bread and wine to Abram, as the priest of the Lord. Throughout history, God has used these two symbols to express a covenant. The bread is a symbol of unity, and the wine is a symbol of blood. A covenant is more than a contract. A contract is an agreement between two or more parties to exchange goods or services, and it is dependent upon the exchange. If one does not keep his agreement, the other is not bound to his part of the deal. But a covenant is a giving of oneself to another, and always involves blood. A covenant says, "I give myself to you."

A covenant is the strongest level of human relationship -- stronger than the physical family allegiance. That is where the phrase, "Blood is thicker than water" came from. "Water" refers to natural-born brothers, while "blood" refers to a covenant brother. It is interesting that today the meaning of this phrase has been reversed, because many do not understand the actual reference. Now, most of us think that the "blood" refers to our relatives; and we do not have any idea where the "water" concept came from.

When Abram received the bread and the cup, he was partaking of the symbols of covenant and reaffirming his eternal covenant with God. Abram was also looking prophetically to the day when the body of his Lord would be broken for him, and Jesus' blood would be shed to redeem his life back to God for eternity. When we break bread as Christians, we look with faith back to the cross; and we understand

more completely what is taking place. These elements are pictures of the body and blood of the Lord. In the act of communion, we are admonished to examine (judge) ourselves, as we grow spiritually together with God's family of believers. Jesus commanded us to break bread together, in order to "...show the Lord's death till he come." (1 Corinthians 11:26)



## Methods

Be sure that every student has an understanding of the concept of the Lord's supper; and encourage every one to make a covenant with God through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Explain that every born-again believer is a child of God, and has a covenant relationship with God.

Discuss the importance of blood, relating it to the Passover principle. Be sure to note that we do not believe the doctrine of "transubstantiation" (the bread and wine actually becoming the flesh and blood of Jesus), because it is not supported in the Bible. Communion uses symbols to portray a spiritual truth.

Note the principle of covenant, and that as Jesus gave Himself for us, we should in a very real sense give ourselves to Him, without reservation. The more we realize that we belong to Him, the better we will be able to make decisions and live a godly lifestyle based on the values of eternity, rather than living for the moment, or living for self. Remember that in partaking of communion, we are

affirming that we are not our own. Therefore, if a person is not born again, he should not take communion.

Once you have thoroughly discussed this, offer to pray with any student who

needs to be born again. Then, have your pastor or an elder come in to the class and serve communion to the class. This is, of course, subject to the permission of the pastor.

# The Promised Son

Volume 5

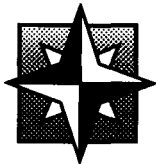
Lesson 5



## Bible References

Genesis 18

Hebrews 11:8-12



## Theme

Faith in God is more than believing. It involves trust, and a heart for God and His purposes for eternity.



## Scripture Reading

Hebrews 11:8-12

8 "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

9 "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

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

11 "Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

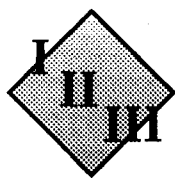
12 "Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable."



## Memory Verse

Hebrews 10:23

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)"



## Outline

### I. The Promise.

#### A. Abraham was residing in the plains of Mamre.

1. Genesis 18.
2. Three "men" visited him.
3. Abraham bowed to them, and called them "lord."
4. He prepared a feast for them.

#### B. Sarah.

1. After they ate, the men called for Sarah.
2. The Lord then promised that Sarah would have a son.
3. At this time Abram was 75; and Sarah was 65, and no longer able to bear children.
4. Sarah overheard the conversation, and laughed.
5. When the Lord confronted her, she denied having laughed, out of fear.

### II. The Test.

#### A. After about ten years, Sarah's faith grew weak; and she gave her maid, Hagar, to Abraham, in order to have a child.

1. However, the promise was that Sarah would have a son, and not just that Abraham would.
2. Sarah tried to fulfill God's promise through Hagar, because her faith was not strong enough in God to trust what He said.

B. Abraham agreed to Sarah's suggestion, and they had a son by Hagar, whom Hagar named "Ishmael."

C. When God finally healed Sarah's body and she conceived, Abraham was nearly 100 years old, and Sarah was 90.

D. It may seem that God is often slow; but, He is never late.

E. God knew that Abraham would live another 75 years, and that he would live to see his grandsons. (Genesis 25:7)

F. Hebrews tells us that Sarah did renew her faith, and bore Isaac because of it. (Hebrews 11:11)

### III. The Blessing of Faith.

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

1. Faith is not the ability to believe, so that you can get what you want from God, but rather the ability to trust God, so that He can get what He wants out of you.
2. Faith does not make God our servant; it makes us God's servants, resulting in obedience and works.
3. Faith is a "title deed" to that for which we have a positive expectation from God.

B. God is more pleased when we trust His promises, than when we trust our natural understanding or "instincts."

1. Faith looks to God and His purposes, and not circumstances.
2. Some believers try to use faith as a way of getting God to do our will.
  - a. This is not faith. It is presumption.

- b. Presumption focuses on what we want, and tries to use God.
  - c. Faith focuses on what God wants, resulting in our wanting to be used by God.
- C. Jesus was more pleased and impressed when people to whom He ministered demonstrated faith, than any other response or character quality.

- We need to learn the difference between what God has told us to do, and what God promised to do for us.
- Presumption is the effort to get what we want by naming and claiming our blessing; and it is often mistaken for faith.
- Faith responds to God as our trusted Master, while presumption subtly tries to make God our servant.



## Spiritual Truths

- Faith is necessary to keep us steady between the time of God's promise and the time of the promise's fulfillment.
- God has chosen the poor of this world who are rich in faith, because they are more motivated to look to God than those who do not need anything.
- Abraham was wealthy; but his faith was tested in other areas.
- God does not consider our circumstances in determining whether or not He can perform a miracle.
- What is impossible to us is not impossible to God.
- God is not limited by any impossibilities, but only by our lack of faith.
- Abraham tried to assist God -- not because God failed, but because Abraham's faith had faltered.



## Lesson Material

Four thousand years ago, the human race was still fairly new on the earth, and there were not great masses of people. The most important blessing of life was the birth of children, and this was one of the great desires of Abraham and his wife Sarah -- to have a son. He had a beautiful, loving wife; but she passed through her child-bearing years without conceiving. It seemed strange that the man who had such an intimate relationship with God would be denied such an important blessing. But God waited, because He wanted to further develop Abraham's faith.

When Abraham was 75 years old, he saw what Moses referred to as "three men" walking toward his camp. Abraham ran to them, bowed down, and sought to bless them. Whether they were a form or a representation of the Trinity, or the Lord Jesus with two angels, we do not know; but we are assured that Abraham was addressing and entertaining the Lord Himself. In the narration, the words "they" and "He" are used almost

interchangeably, in a way that would otherwise seem strange, unless it is a reference to God, Who is three Persons, yet one God.

After Abraham instructed Sarah and some of their many servants to quickly prepare a fine calf and some other food for their guests, the Lord informed Abraham that Sarah, his wife, would have a son. God specifically mentioned that both Abraham and Sarah would have a son. When they relied on their own understanding and produced a child through Sarah's servant Hagar, they were not acting according to faith, but through the flesh.

When Sarah overheard the promise, she laughed to herself. The Lord knew, as He always does, even the secret responses of our hearts; and He called attention to the fact that she laughed. Sarah lied, and said she "...laughed not," (Genesis 18:15) because she was afraid. But you cannot successfully lie to the Lord. The Lord replied to Sarah, "...Nay, but thou didst laugh." (Genesis 18:15)

In spite of her first reaction and her previous act of unbelief in trying to use Hagar to produce a son by carnal means, the record in the book of Hebrews indicates that Sarah was acknowledged for her great faith. She did have her moments of doubt, fear, and carnality; but in the final analysis, she proved to possess faith. At the age of ninety, she believed for the child that she had been promised twenty-five years previously.

With God, there are no impossibilities. All miracles function within the realm of the impossible; so, it is not important if something seems too difficult or impossible to happen. It was impossible for a barren woman to have a baby. It was physically impossible for a sixty-five year

old woman to have a baby. It was impossible for a ninety-year-old barren woman to have a baby. So, it merely required faith in God for a miracle.

It is significant that many of the great men of the Bible were "miracle" babies, such as Samuel, John the Baptist, Samson, and Jesus. All babies are really amazing and miraculous; but those who are conceived after diagnosed barrenness tend to be more appreciated. All children really belong to God; but those mothers who receive a miracle birth are generally more aware of that truth than those who seem to conceive children easily.

All of us were born with a need to relate to God and a need to achieve something of significance in this life. How tragic that so many in these last generations have become so entertained and influenced by a godless culture that they are wasting the years of their lives, never producing much of anything. We must strive to develop diligence and character in our lives. Abraham and Sarah needed to produce something more substantial for themselves than wealth. They needed a child and grandchildren to nurture, train, and give back to God. Indeed, the great achievement in Sarah's life was believing God for a miracle son, and then giving him back to God by teaching him to love and fear the Lord.

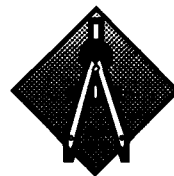
Abraham and Sarah experienced the "death of a vision," as did Joseph and many other heroes of faith in the Bible. They had a Word from God; but the Word did not come to pass, until much later. In fact, it often seemed the exact opposite of what was promised happened. Instead of having a baby, Abraham and Sarah just got twenty-five years older. During that period, their faith became a more important part of their lives. Faith was the



only substance of that for which they hoped, and the only evidence for that which they could not see. There was no medical reason to believe for a baby. No woman had ever had a baby at that age; and so there was no historical reason to have hope. The only reason they had to expect a child was that they had a Word from God. Their ability to hold to that promise was the quality, the gift, called "faith." While other women had babies, Sarah had faith for one; and that faith grasped the Word of God as true, and it came to pass.

Sarah laughed in unbelief when she first heard the promise that she would be a mother; but she laughed with joy, when she gave birth as an old woman. Isaac was the greatest hope and the brightest joy of her happy life. They named their beloved son "Isaac," which means "laughter." Children are a blessing from the Lord.

God never intended for Abraham to consider Hagar as a substitute to fulfill the promise. When Abraham produced a child with Hagar, it began a strife that is still felt in the world today. God knew He was going to give Abraham millions of direct descendants; but He did not tell Abraham that it would be another quarter of a century before he would see the son of promise. Through it all, Abraham and Sarah grew in their faith, and enjoyed the blessing even more because of the wait. The promises of God often seem slow to be fulfilled; but God is never late -- and He never fails.



## Methods

The story surrounding the birth of Isaac is an important story of faith and positive vision. A vision from the Lord is important. *"Where there is no vision, the people perish...."* (Proverbs 29:18)

*Discussion questions:*

1. What is the difference between vision and fantasy?

Fantasy is popular in the secular world, and it utilizes the imagination to focus on illusions of self-grandeur and power. Fantasy is a focus on that which is unreal, and therefore, unobtainable. Fantasy can lead to depression, fear, and great loss.

Vision, however, is from the Lord; and it is based on what God can do through us and for us. A vision is based on hope and reality, and it is necessary for achievement and fulfillment in life.

2. Has God ever given you vision for a special achievement in life? (i.e. to become an excellent musician, athlete, soul-winner, speaker, etc.)
3. Does the devil want you to achieve excellence in anything?
4. Would you like to ask God to give you a vision for your life? Share what you feel with your parents and Bible teacher, so that they can help you to keep disciplined enough to do what it takes to make it a reality.

# Sodom and Gomorrah

Volume 5

Lesson 6



## Bible References

Genesis 19

Romans 1

face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it.

14 "And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.

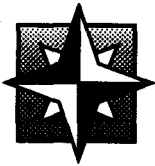
15 "And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

16 "And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

17 "And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed."

24 "Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;

25 "And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground."



## Theme

Moral perversion is rebellion against God as our Creator, resulting in judgment.



## Scripture Reading

Genesis 19:12-17, 24-25

12 "And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place:

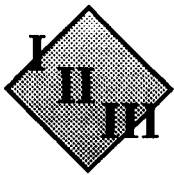
13 "For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the



## Memory Verse

Romans 1:18

*"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness."*



## Outline

### I. Lot in Sodom.

- A. Lot was a righteous man, but he made the mistake of choosing to live in a wicked city.
1. His daughters married ungodly men, who refused to go with Lot when the angels led them out; and so, they were killed.
  2. Lot was "vexed" with the lifestyle of the people, but he still stayed in town. (2 Peter 2:7)
- B. God always judges nations (people groups) when the level of wickedness becomes so great that the people are reprobate (so set on evil that they have no sense of conscience to feel guilt over their sin).
1. If God did not judge sin, He would not be a just and holy God.
  2. Calvary is the proof that God is just, because the price for sin had to be paid.

### II. The Sin of Sodom.

- A. Homosexuality is a rejection of God's moral standards for mankind; and it always brings the judgment of God on a nation.
1. Homosexuality is not a class of people, but rather a type of sin.
    - a. Sodom was known for its homosexuals.
    - b. Homosexuals (Sodomites) are people who reject God's design.
    - c. The males rebel against their identity and try to be as women, indulging in sexual perversions with other males.
    - d. Female sodomites are called "lesbians."
  2. Homosexuality is graphically described in the Bible as a type of sin.
    - a. Sodomites are called "...abusers of themselves with mankind." in 1 Corinthians 6:9.
    - b. The first chapter of Romans describes homosexuals as those who "...burned in their lust one toward another." (Romans 1:27)
    - c. Sodomy is called an "abomination." (Leviticus 18:22)
    - d. In the laws God gave to Moses, Israel was commanded to put all homosexuals to death.
- B. One of the signs that a nation is in the final stages of moral decay and on the verge of judgment is the acceptance of perversion as "normal."
1. The recognition of sodomy and other perversions as "normal" degrades and weakens the natural family unit.
  2. God designed us male and female; and He created marriage and the family to be holy and wholesome.

3. When men reject the way they were created and take on the function of women, they are declaring, "God made a mistake, when He made me." They are in rebellion against their Maker, bringing judgment on themselves and those around them.

### III. The Salt of the Earth.

- A. In Genesis 18, God told Abraham that He was going to destroy Sodom for its wickedness.
1. Abraham interceded on behalf of his nephew.
  2. He asked God to spare the city.
- B. Abraham asked God that if there were fifty righteous people, would He spare the city?
1. God said that He would spare the city for the sake of 50 righteous people -- or for 30, 20, or even 10.
  2. Some historians believe that Sodom and Gomorrah had about 10,000 people.
    - a. That means that if the righteous numbered one tenth of one percent, their presence would preserve the entire city.
    - b. Salt is a preservative; and Jesus said, "*Ye are the salt of the earth:....*" (Matthew 5:13)
    - c. The reason that our nation has been blessed is the presence and prayers of the faithful Christians throughout our society.
- C. Since there were not enough righteous people in the city, God removed the one family which was righteous. God brought the day of judgment on the rest of Sodom and Gomorrah's inhabitants.



## Spiritual Truths

- The sin of sodomy is a moral abomination in God's eyes. When a society accepts it as "normal," it is a sign that this culture has rejected God and will soon be severely judged.
- As surely as God judged the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah, He will judge any unrepentant nation that has rejected Him.
- The certainty of judgment upon nations is a sign that God is just and holy.
- Lot was "vexed" with the lifestyle of the wicked people of Sodom; but apparently he was not vexed enough to leave on his own.
- Christians are mocked and scorned in our day; but they are the ones who are keeping the land from severe and certain judgment.
- If the salt loses its savor, it is good for nothing, and will be cast out and trodden under the foot of man. (Matthew 5:13)
- The judgment of the whole earth is certain. So also is the deliverance and reward of the righteous.



## Lesson Material

Sodom was a wicked city. Lot not only pitched his tents in the area, but he wound up moving into the suburbs of the city. We need to be careful to be in the world but *"...not of the world...."* (John 15:19)

As Christians, we want to be influences to the world and win souls; but we need to be sure that the world does not influence us. God told Israel not to learn the ways of the heathen. When people do not know God, they live certain ways and have certain values. They will have a temporal values system, not considering God or eternity in their thinking.

When you remove God from your thoughts, you will justify sin in your mind, because *"...by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil."* (Proverbs 16:6) If there is no God, then I can do what I want, because there is no judgment and no accountability. When a nation becomes removed from the fear of the Lord, evil naturally follows; and it grows more and more perverse, until the people become "reprobate." Reprobation is the state of being so deep in wickedness that the conscience has been *"...seared with a hot iron"* (1 Timothy 4:2), or rendered completely insensitive to the prompting of the Spirit. Psalms 14:1 says: *"The fool hath said in his heart, {There is} no God...."* Therefore, the natural result is that *"...they are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good."*

One common result of a society that has rejected God is that the people will tolerate and indulge in all kinds of immorality and sexual perversions. God

designed a plan for the sexual relationship between a man and his wife, so that they could, in a beautiful and honorable way, express intimacy and produce children. But sin perverts that; and wicked men turn in their lust to use other men's wives, harlots, children, animals, and even each other for selfish gratification. If someone touches your private parts in a wrong way, it is because he has a wrong heart; and you should tell someone you can trust about it. They are committing a crime -- and it is not your fault.

The type of perversion most common in Sodom was the sin of "homosexuality," the practice of lewdness between people of the same sex. God calls sodomy an "abomination," because it is rebellion against God's design. Homosexuals say, "God made a mistake, when He made me." But that is a lie. God made us male or female -- and we should be what He made us to be. Boys should be boys and girls should be girls.

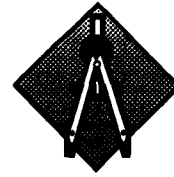
We can see what God thinks of sodomy by the way He handled Sodom. The danger point in a society is the point at which the people as a whole decide not only to tolerate this kind of lewdness, but to make it become socially acceptable. Sodomites not only want to be free to practice their sin, but they want to be accepted as "normal," or even "Christian." When a nation becomes so removed from God's Word and influence that its laws and leadership make sodomy legal and socially acceptable, watch out. It is all over for that nation. Judgment is coming.

Before God judged Sodom, He told Abraham what He was going to do. Amos 3:7 says that God always tells His prophets before He does something. Abraham immediately interceded. Intercession is the practice of praying on behalf of others.

Abraham asked God to spare the city, if there were fifty righteous people. (Genesis 18:28) The principle is that believers are "...the salt (preservative) of the earth..." (Matthew 5:13) Widespread wickedness results in national judgment. The more righteous, praying people there are in a nation, the more safety and blessing that nation will see. If there are so few righteous that there is not enough "salt" to preserve the land, God will simply remove the salty ones and bring the needed judgment.

The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah had set themselves completely against following the commandments and principles of God. When a nation, or even an individual, completely refuses the conviction of both God's law and His Spirit and does not repent, the only option left is for the judgment of God to fall.

Because there was only one righteous family in Sodom, God had them removed; and the fire came down and destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Still today, Satan wants to entice us to violate the way God created us by indulging ourselves in fleshly perversions, rather than keeping our sexual activity within the bounds of marriage. That is because he wants us to be obsessed and controlled by carnal desires, rather than be self-disciplined and controlled by the Holy Spirit. God has provision for the way He created us; but He did not design us to be morally perverted.



## Methods

Any lesson on Sodom and Gomorrah has to address the type of moral perversion which characterized the cities -- and this must be done carefully. We do want our children to know that obscene sexual behavior is an abomination to God; but we want to be careful that we do not draw undue attention to homosexuality, or any other kind of immorality. Whatever you focus attention on, you will tend to draw the heart toward. Never encourage people to focus on the "plight of the homosexuals striving for equality," or on the "gay community." There is a very active movement to gain legal preference and social acceptance of homosexuality. While we love sinners and want to win them to the Lord, as Christians, we must not compromise God's moral standards, or do anything that will encourage anyone to be attracted to the perversion of sodomy.

### Skit

This lesson can be illustrated by a short dramatic skit, emphasizing God's protection for the righteous. You can use students who could meet during the week for a practice, or adult volunteers. A minimum cast would include Lot, his wife, and his two daughters. You could also include the two "angels" who bring the warning about the destruction of the city, and the two sons-in-law who mock Lot for believing this "tale of doom." Use your imagination to make it interesting. You may wish to have Mrs. Lot mention something about packing a little salt.

The focus of the skit should be the importance of being right with God, and the certainty of judgment. Stimulate the

listeners to realize that there will be a similar, horrible judgment in their lifetime, but God has a plan for the protection of the righteous.

Be sure to explain the principle of intercessory prayer. How does this type of prayer differ from praying for my own needs? Can my prayers make a difference for others?

# Remember Lot's Wife

Volume 5

Lesson 7



## Bible References

Genesis 19:15-17,24-26

Matthew 24

Luke 17:28-32

2 Peter 3

here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

16 "And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

17 "And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed."

24 "Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;

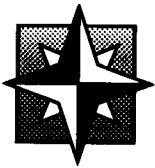
25 "And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

26 "But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt."

2 Peter 3:10-13

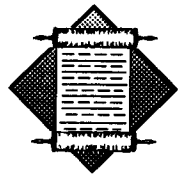
10 "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

11 "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons



## Theme

Jesus taught us to check our values system, and to focus on things that will not pass away.



## Scripture Reading

Genesis 19:15-17, 24-26

15 "And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are



ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

12 "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

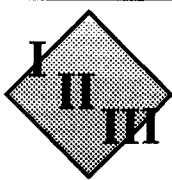
13 "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."



## Memory Verse

2 Peter 3:11

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness."



## Outline

### I. Lot's Escape from Sodom.

- A. Abraham interceded for Lot, and so God sent two angels to lead him and his family out of Sodom before the holocaust.
- B. The angels came, and told Lot to get out.

1. The husbands of Lot's daughters laughed at him, and thought that he was a fool. They were killed.
2. The angels told them to flee, and not to look back.
3. Lot's wife looked back; and she was turned into a pillar of salt.
4. A pillar is like a big post. This could have meant that she was frozen in place, as she turned into salt.

C. Jesus said that the day of His coming would be as the day of Lot. (Luke 17:28-30)

1. Again, when the people of earth become so wicked that they are reprobate, God will rain judgment and death on the earth.
2. The Bible repeatedly warns of a time of great wrath and judgment for the earth, which will come soon, with billions of deaths and great terrors.
3. But just as with Noah and with Lot, God will deliver His righteous people.

### II. Also in the End Times.

A. The principle of national judgment.

1. When a body of people becomes so completely given to wickedness that they are reprobate, God's holiness demands judgment.
2. In Noah's day, the whole world was "...only evil continually." (Genesis 6:5)
3. In Lot's day, it was the two cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

B. In both cases, God protected those who were righteous, and destroyed the rest with massive death -- once by a flood, and once by fire.

1. After the great flood, God promised Noah that He would never again send a world-wide flood.
2. The next great judgment will be world-wide (as in Noah's day), but will be by fire (as in Lot's day).

### C. Luke 17.

1. Jesus said, "...As it was the days of Lot...."
  - a. They were living life as normal (vs. 28).
  - b. Judgment came suddenly.
2. "...In that night there shall be two (men) in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left." (vs. 34)
3. Remember Lot's wife.
  - a. She had her heart set on things -- and they were all burned up.
  - b. Because she looked back, she was not saved from death, as Lot was.
4. "Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it." (vs. 33)

## III. Looking For His Coming.

### A. 2 Peter 3: The coming judgment by fire.

1. Peter saw in a prophetic vision that there would be great destruction in the end times.
  - a. He saw the "...heavens...pass away with a great noise (explosion)...." (vs. 10)
  - b. The "...elements...melt with fervent heat...." (vs. 10)
2. What Peter saw was unheard of, until this century.
3. Today, the nations of the world are very capable of great military destruction, just as Peter described.

### B. 2 Peter 3: A right values system.

1. "{Seeing} then {that} all these things shall be dissolved, what manner {of persons} ought ye to be...." (vs. 11)
2. We should be a people who place the greatest value on eternal things.
  - a. Our relationship with God.
  - b. Prayer and Bible reading.
  - c. Character-building.
  - d. Godly friendships.
  - e. Wisdom.

### C. Lot's wife had a temporal values system; and she lost her life as a result.

### D. The coming of the Lord is a day of horror and death for the world; but it is a day of glory, or "rapture" for the born-again believers (genuine Christians).

1. 1 Thessalonians 4.
  - a. "Caught up...to meet the Lord in the air...." (vs. 17)
  - b. "...Comfort one another with these words." (vs. 18)
2. "Judge" means to "make right;" and it involves the vindication and blessing of the righteous, as well as the condemnation and punishment of the ungodly.



## Spiritual Truths

- Lot stayed in Sodom; his daughters married non-believers; and his wife set her heart on "things."
- "Remember Lot's wife" means, "Do not get your heart set on things that will all burn up, someday."

- Peter said, "Since all these things of earth will be burned up, what kind of people should we be, anyway?"
- We do not really "own" anything in this life -- we are stewards, who must give an account for how we handled things.
- When you own things, they become your master and your idol.
- Jesus said that a rich man cannot get into the kingdom of God. "Rich" is not a monetary amount; but rather, it is the attitude of ownership, instead of stewardship.
- When you have the fear of the Lord, you will value the truly important aspects of life.
- We should love people and use things, rather than use people and love things.
- The world is very wicked, and it is moving toward a new world order (a satanic one-world government). It is soon headed for divine judgment.
- When you see these signs, lift up your heads, for your redemption is close at hand. (Luke 21:28)



## Lesson Material

Lot made a mistake by moving into Sodom. He probably got a good deal on a nice house, but his daughters were influenced by the wicked children of the city. They married some ungodly men, who thought Lot was a fool for leaving

town with the two "men" in white. Lot's wife had been influenced, because she had her heart on her fine home and possessions, and not on the Lord. She died, when she looked back.

We know that there will be a time of great judgment on the whole earth soon -- a "judgment by fire." The Apostle Peter spoke about it in his second epistle. It is good and healthy for us to "number our days," because the *...fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom....* (Psalms 111:10) It helps us keep our values straight. As Peter said, "*Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation (lifestyle) and godliness.*" (2 Peter 3:11) To paraphrase, "Since all the physical possessions in life are going to be burned up, do you not think that we should live our lives in purity and holiness?"

John made a powerful statement about the effect of a right values system. He said that "*...when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*" (1 John 3:2) He then goes on to make a conclusion: "*...Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*" (1 John 3:3) In other words, the Bible says that this is always the response to genuine spiritual hope -- a pure lifestyle. According to John, if a person is indulging in sin, he does not have this hope in him. If we really believe that Jesus is coming soon, and that the Bible is true concerning the horrible judgment coming on the earth, then we will live in pursuit holiness, in the fear of the Lord. The fact that we are not much different from our unsaved neighbors in our lifestyle is proof that we do not really believe it.

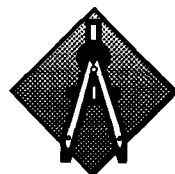
The judgment in the end times that Jesus, Peter, and John prophesied about in

the New Testament is one of great terror, with massive, sudden death and destruction throughout the world. It should stir up a healthy sense of the fear of the Lord. It should also be a source of comfort to believers who have suffered in life at the hands of ungodly people. When Jesus comes to judge the earth, He will make things right. He will bring down the proud; but He will also exalt the humble. He will destroy the wicked with bloody, fiery death; but He will preserve the righteous. The day of the Lord is the glorious hope of the children of God. The message of the coming of the Lord is a message of hope and joy for those who are right with Him and prepared for His coming.

Jesus spoke about the sudden events of the end times, and compared them to the judgment on Sodom in Lot's day. He said to "remember Lot's wife." She did not just look back to Sodom in a moment of careless disobedience to the command of the Lord, Who had said, "Do not look back." When she looked back, she revealed that the place was in her heart. She had there her fine home, and furniture, and all her possessions. They were all suddenly burned up. All that was really important was her family. But her heart was in her nice home and her things; and when she looked back, she died. She turned into a statue of salt. When God judges us, He looks on the heart.

One disturbing aspect of this is that she was a part of the covenant family. She was

a joint heir with Lot to Abraham, the father of faith. Is it possible to be so influenced by the world that we let our hearts be turned away from God, and miss our reward? There are many scriptures that warn believers to protect their hearts from the influence of the world. We need to protect our eyes and our hearts from the alluring pull of the world; and we need to keep our hearts set on "higher" things, and not on things of this world. (Colossians 3:1-3)



## Methods

Study Matthew 24, and 2 Peter 3. Get pictures and news clippings about the signs of the end times that are prophesied in the Bible, such as famines, earthquakes, plagues of diseases, wars, and "signs in the heavens." Talk about the potential in the world's military nuclear buildup, and the blessing that results when we put our trust in God.

Discuss the wisdom of looking at eternity to determine our values, and the foolishness of living our life for the pleasure of the moment.

This is an excellent time to give an altar call, and to call for full surrender to the Lord.

# The Sacrifice of Isaac

Volume 5

Lesson 8



## Bible References

Genesis 22

John 3:16

1 John 3

unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.

2 "And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

3 "And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

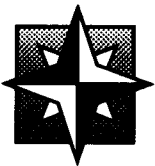
4 "Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

5 "And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.

6 "And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.

7 "And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?

8 "And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.



## Theme

God's purpose is to develop a chosen people from among selfish and sinful humanity, who genuinely love Him more than they love themselves.



## Scripture Reading

Genesis 22:1-13

1 "And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said

9 "And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

10 "And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

11 "And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I.

12 "And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

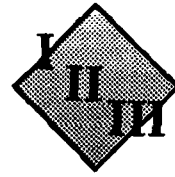
13 "And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son."



## Memory Verse

John 1:29

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."



## Outline

### I. Abraham's Test.

#### A. God tested Abraham's faith, obedience, and love.

1. A test is a situation designed by God to reveal motives and to strengthen character -- if we handle it correctly.
2. The proof that we really have faith is our level of obedience.
  - a. James 2:18.
  - b. Matthew 7:21.
3. The evidence of genuine salvation is a changed lifestyle.
  - a. 1 John 3:7-10.
  - b. 1 Peter 1:14-17.

B. God loves to bless us with the desires of our hearts; but He does not want us to love the blessings more than we love Him.

1. 1 John 2:15.
2. Psalms 37:4.

#### C. Abraham had faith.

1. "The lad and I will return to you."
2. Abraham expected to slay Isaac and burn up his body; and he believed that God would bring him back to life.
3. God had promised that "In Isaac shall thy seed be called."

D. When Abraham showed his faithfulness, the Angel of the Lord (probably Jesus Himself) stopped him and showed him that He had provided a ram to be sacrificed.

1. Normally, the point of a sacrifice was that men were to offer their own lamb.
2. But God was giving a prophetic illustration that He would provide the Lamb for the sins of the world.

## II. His Only Son.

A. Abraham offered his son Isaac as a sacrifice to God.

1. This is a picture (type) of God's offering His only begotten Son.
2. Mt. Moriah was the same place on which Jesus was offered as a sacrificial sin offering, 2,000 years later.

B. "Thine only *son* Isaac...." (Genesis 22:2)

1. The word "son" was added by translators.
  - a. The text says, "thine only, Isaac."
  - b. Did not Abraham have two sons?
2. What about Ishmael?
  - a. By having a son by the slave woman, Abraham spoiled a type of Christ.
  - b. Isaac should have been his only begotten son.
  - c. Isaac was the son of promise -- the one God recognized as fully legitimate.

## III. God Will Provide Himself a Lamb.

A. Why a lamb for a sacrifice?

1. Sin is so serious, that one act of willful rebellion against God is worthy of death.
  - a. Romans 6:23.

- b. God is holy, and so sin cannot dwell in His presence.
2. Since man first sinned in the Garden, God has provided for the covering of sins by means of a blood sacrifice.

B. Abraham was prophesying about Jesus.

1. "...God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son,...." (John 3:16)
2. Jesus was called the "Lamb of God," particularly in the Book of Revelation.
3. Vicarious.
  - a. "Vicarious" means "in the place of."
  - b. God provided a ram to be burned "in the stead of" Isaac.
  - c. God sent Jesus to pay the penalty for our sins, as a vicarious offering.
  - d. He took the guilt and punishment for our sins, although He himself was without sin.
4. The penalty for sin is not only physical death (separation from the body), but also spiritual death (eternal separation from God).



## Spiritual Truths

- Satan tempts us, in order to draw us away from God; but God tests us, in order to draw us closer to Him.
- God is faithful; and He is seeking and training faithful people.

- God loves to bless us with things, as long as He sees that we do not love the things more than we love Him.
- The world wants to make light of sin; but in the perspective of eternity, it is very serious and deadly.
- The fact that Jesus had to pay such an extreme price for sin proves that sin is an abomination to a holy God.
- Jesus became sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- God loves a cheerful giver -- not because He needs the money, but because it is such a clear evidence that we are like Him in character.
- We show our level of faith by what we do, and not by what we have.



## Lesson Material

The Old Testament is the vivid, physical portrayal of the New Testament. There are differences in the scope and specifics; but the character and principles are consistent throughout the Bible. God never changes. God has always hated sin and loved music and worship.

There are many who have looked at the Old Testament on the surface, and subsequently have come to the conclusion that God used to be harder on sin. Look at the severity of the judgments against sins. Many times we read of the deaths of thousands of people at a time, and of widespread destruction as a result of

“minor” infractions. Some think that now we are living in an “age of grace,” which means that God is much more lenient with sin. But God has never changed. God still hates sin, and He still wants to see everyone repent and be saved. The judgment of God will fall on this wicked world, just as surely and as severely as it did in the days of Noah and Lot. The world mocks Christianity, because there has been so much evil in the world that has seemingly go unnoticed by God. God is not mocked; and we will see that He is still as holy and just as He ever was.

The kinship between the Old Testament and the New is nowhere more clearly visible than in this scene with Abraham on Mt. Moriah. God led him to the very place where Jesus would give His life for the sins of the world, 2,000 years later. God commanded him to offer his “only” son, Isaac, as a burnt offering. A burnt offering was one that was slain, and then completely burned; and it demonstrated total dedication and devotion. In Abraham, we see the love of the Father; and in Isaac, the obedience and meekness of the Son. Had Isaac been a modern youth, raised on cartoons and junk food, he might have taken Dad to court and had him committed. He would have fought for his life. Yet Isaac so honored his father that he was willing to give his life.

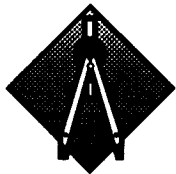
When God provided the ram in the thicket, He was giving a picture of the vicarious Lamb which He would provide. “Vicarious” means “in the place of.” Many people live vicarious lives, in the sense that they derive much of their pleasure in life from watching movies or television programs which portray other people’s joys, sorrows, pleasures, and struggles. They sit for hours at a time, letting clever people put images and ideas in their



minds, and even do their conversation for them. They are called "couch potatoes," and "soap addicts." What a sad form of deception.

It is wonderful to have a vicarious sin offering, because our sin has earned us eternal separation from God in a tormenting, fiery inferno called hell. Just as the sins of Israel were imputed to the lamb which was slain as a sin offering, so our sins were imputed to Jesus, Who was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Revelation 13:8) In other words, God has always had a perfect plan for the redemption of man. It was expressed for the first 4,000 years of human history by the sacrifice of animals, whose life's blood was shed to atone for the sins of the men who offered them to God; but it was fully demonstrated and eternally completed when Jesus Christ, our High Priest, offered His own blood on God's heavenly altar to legally atone for the sins of the whole world -- once and for all. (Hebrews 10:10) Of course, that blood is only applied to the lives of those who receive it by repentance and by faith in Jesus.

This is a widely illustrated lesson, because of its prophetic and historic significance. You should have access to various means of illustrations, such as flannelgraph, video clips, or pictures.



## Methods

There are several ways you can go in a group discussion about this story.

### 1. The principle of testing.

a. Have you ever felt that God was testing you, by allowing you to be in a difficult or awkward situation?

b. Have you ever done or said something to someone, just to see how they would react?

c. Testing is both for diagnosis and for training. (1 Peter 5:10)

### 2. The principle of sacrifice. What is the difference between a sacrifice and an offering?

(The famous story of the pig and the chicken is an illustration. They were walking together past a little church, when they overheard the pastor tell of the desperate financial need. The chicken said, "Say, you and I could help out. Let us sponsor a ham and eggs breakfast, as a fund-raiser." The pig replied, "That is easy for you to say. For you it is a contribution. For me, it is total commitment.")

### 3. The principle of the Lamb. A lamb represented innocence; and, in order to be used for a sin offering, it had to be without any spot or blemish. The sins of the people were "imputed," or "put onto the account of," the lamb. The lamb was a continuing picture of the coming Savior, Jesus Christ -- the "...Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29)

# A Bride for Isaac

Volume 5

Lesson 9

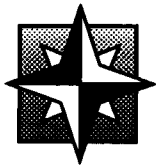


## Bible References

Genesis 24

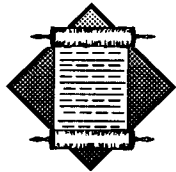
Ephesians 5

Matthew 25



## Theme

The Holy Spirit is preparing the bride of Christ, which is the church -- the company of all the redeemed of the ages.



## Scripture Reading

Genesis 24:1, 2, 4, 10-24

1 *"And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.*

2 *"And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh:"*

4 *"But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. "*

10 *"And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor.*

11 *"And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water.*

12 *"And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham.*

13 *"Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water:*

14 *"And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast showed kindness unto my master.*

15 *"And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.*

16 *"And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.*

17 *"And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.*

18 *"And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hastened, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink.*

19 *"And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking.*

20 *"And she hastened, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels.*

21 *"And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.*

22 *"And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold;*

23 *"And said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?"*

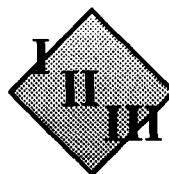
24 *"And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor."*



## Memory Verse

Titus 2:14

*"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works,"*



## Outline

### I. A Bride for Isaac.

#### A. Abraham sought a wife for his son.

1. In those days, parents were honored and obeyed.
2. It was common for parents to arrange marriages for their children.
3. In a Western culture, this seems awful and unromantic; but parents generally did a better job of finding mates than their children did.
  - a. Parents want the best for their children.
  - b. Parents are older and wiser.

#### B. Abraham sent his servant to his homeland in Mesopotamia, in order to select a wife for Isaac.

1. The servant went with a well-stocked caravan.
2. The servant went prayerfully, seeking the one who was God's

choice for Isaac.

C. God led him to look for a young woman of beauty, purity, character, kindness, and diligence.

D. The sign.

1. "When I ask for a drink, may she offer water for my camels, also." (vs. 14, paraphrased)
  - a. This was asking for an unusual thing, because the wells were deep; and ten camels can drink many gallons of water.
  - b. Also, he was a stranger.
2. Rebekah did indeed draw water for the camels, as well as for the servant.
  - a. It took her a long time, but did it ever pay off!
  - b. He gave her a gold earring and two large solid gold bracelets.
  - c. Not to mention the offer to marry a nice, good-looking, fabulously rich young man.

E. Rebekah was the daughter of Isaac's first cousin.

F. The family thought the offer to marry Isaac sounded pretty good to them, even though she would have to move to the west coast.

## II. An Allegory.

A. An allegory is a natural story that illustrates a greater truth.

B. This is a picture of God's eternal purpose in the earth: to produce a bride for the Lord Jesus Christ, for eternity.

C. The characters:

1. Abraham is a type of God, the Father, Who seeks a numerous seed.
2. The servant is a type of the Holy Spirit, Who is working in the hearts of people, preparing a perfect bride for the Lord.
3. Isaac is a type of Christ, the heavenly Bridegroom of the church.
4. Rebekah is a type of the genuine believers who together comprise a beautiful, pure, and faithful bride for the Lord.

D. The story.

1. The Spirit is sent out by the Father on behalf of the Son.
2. The bride cannot come from the world, but only from those who are born into the family of God.
3. The bride must be pure (virgin) and undefiled.
4. The bride is faithful and diligent -- a servant of all.
5. When the Spirit comes to the bride, he adorns her with gold (a type of the glory of God).

## III. The Church.

A. The Greek word for church is *eklessia* -- "called out ones."

1. No one human is worthy to be the bride; but the whole company of blood-washed saints will be.
2. After the rapture of the church, there will be the "Marriage Supper of the Lamb."
3. Revelation 21:2.

B. Other allegorical references to the church:

1. The army of God.

2. The body of Christ.
3. The flock of His pasture.
4. The city of God.
5. The light and salt of the earth.



## Spiritual Truths

- It is normal for a man to want a bride who is beautiful, undefiled, diligent, and gracious; and Jesus will have no less a bride.
- Beauty is a type of holiness; and purity is a type of righteousness.
- God illustrates the truths of eternity with natural, physical events.
- The primary task of the Holy Spirit in the earth is to seek, allure, teach, empower, and adorn with beauty the Church, the bride of Christ.
- God is not impressed with natural beauty or wealth; but He does love to see the character of Christ in us.
- God delights to give to those who have a generous heart.
- Jesus is coming for a bride without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.
- From the standpoint of eternity, it is extremely foolish not to serve the Lord in this life.



## Lesson Material

What a sublime story of true love -- the story of the romance between Isaac and Rebekah! The western culture mind set reacts in disgust at the idea of arranged marriages. "How unromantic!" Ah, but this is far sweeter than any Hollywood stereotype romance, for this is not the tale of physical attraction and lustful passion between two moony-eyed teenagers, but a story of the real kind of love that grows richer and more delightful as the years go by. This is a love that includes the love of a wonderful father, the faithful love of a devoted servant, the gracious spirit of a pure bride, and the trust and love of a young man who knows that his father's will is the best for him.

Hollywood has for decades taught the doctrine that love is a feeling, and that fathers are usually the enemies of true love. Hollywood lies. God's purpose is to "...turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers." (Malachi 4:6) God gives fathers a natural ability to detect the wrong motives of fellows who seek their daughters. Satan wants to build distrust between children and their parents; and so, parents are constantly portrayed as stupid, uncaring, or absent. This is wrong. The best source of guidance for a young person is still his parents.

Isaac knew that his wise father wanted the best for him. Instead of going around the land of Canaan with a group of party people, Isaac stayed at home. He studied and he worked, but he did not go courting. He did not go out, in order to get to know

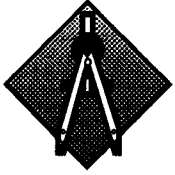
girls. He did not try to find a girl. His father knew where to look. His father, through his faithful servant, found the most beautiful, kind, and godly girl in the world. Isaac could never have found such a perfect bride, by his own fleshly efforts.

God wants us to know that He is our Heavenly Father, and that His will for our life is better than our will. How foolish we are to fret over so many decisions and struggle so hard to seek the best for ourselves, when all we need to do is turn the reins of our life over to God, and let Him be the Lord of our life. "Lord" means "owner" -- the one who has the right to make the decisions. When we have the faith of Isaac, life is less complicated and more fun. Do not seek after things. Seek after God, and let Him be Lord. *"...Seek you first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."* (Matthew 6:33) Isaac relaxed in faith; and he got the best in the world.

Abraham's servant is a great picture of the Holy Spirit. He is an unnamed servant, who is totally devoted to the father. His delight is to bless the son. He is sent out from the father into the world to prepare the bride. He finds a pure young woman who has a heart for others. What a combination! So often, when we have beautiful daughters, we "spoil them rotten." People tend to respond more favorably to those who are beautiful. This can be a disadvantage in life, if those who are so gifted use their beauty to become vain and selfish. Like wealth, beauty can be a blessing or a curse, depending on the character of your heart. Apparently, Rebekah's parents not only gave her encouragement and love, but also taught her to work and care about other people. She was happy, but not at all spoiled.

God's Word teaches us that it is possible to have a happy sense of self-acceptance and still not be vain and foolish. The key is attitude. The world promotes the concept of "self-esteem." "Self-esteem" is actually another term for "pride." If you focus on yourself and your physical beauty or natural advantages, you will become proud and selfish. You will think that others should serve you. We do not need self-esteem training, and we do not need self-assertiveness training. The opposite of self-assertiveness is meekness; and we should develop that character quality. We do not need self-esteem, but we do need self-acceptance. Self-acceptance is the sense of feeling good about who you are, because you know that God made you just the way you are. Self-acceptance is an expression of faith; and it makes you feel good about yourself.

The world's emphasis on beauty, wealth, youth, and fame is destructive, because we cannot retain them. Those who achieve them, lose them; and so, these things are poor goals for life. God emphasizes faith, and the development of character (inner beauty). When we have a good sense of self-acceptance based on faith in God, we are less inclined to be led by fads. We are more willing to stand alone against the crowd; and we seek to please God, rather than man. Life is in proper perspective, and we find that our countenance and appearance will generally reflect our attitudes. Girls will be free to dress modestly, and boys will not feel such pressure to look unkempt or worldly. We will all tend to be clean and well-groomed, because our dress reflects not only what we think of ourselves, but how we feel about others.



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## Methods

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*Discussion topics:*

How does Hollywood portray true love, and the role of the girl's father?

Do we get false or dangerous teaching from the world's cartoons, movies, and television programs?

What do you think of Isaac's method of getting his wife?

How did Samson find his wife? Compare.

What were the characteristics of Rebekah?

Did Abraham's servant have a beauty contest, or did he look for character?

How do you feel about the idea of a "Miss America" contest?

Is God's will for our lives always better than our will? Why?

# Esau and His Birthright

Volume 5

Lesson 10



## Bible References

Genesis 25

Malachi 1:3

Hebrews 12:16

25 *"And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau.*

26 *"And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them.*

27 *"And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.*

28 *"And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob.*

29 *"And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint:*

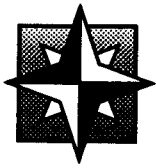
30 *"And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom.*

31 *"And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.*

32 *"And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?*

33 *"And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.*

34 *"Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright."*



## Theme

We should highly esteem our spiritual heritage, and place our greatest emphasis on eternal rather than temporal values.



## Scripture Reading

Genesis 25:24-34

24 *"And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.*

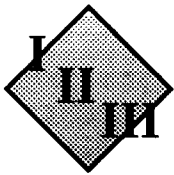




## Memory Verse

Colossians 3:1

*"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."*



## Outline

### I. The Sons of Isaac.

#### A. Miracle babies.

1. Isaac and Rebekah had been married for twenty years, and had no children.
2. Isaac prayed for her; and God enabled her to conceive.
3. Jacob and Esau were among many great men of the Bible born to previously barren women.

#### B. "Esau."

1. Means "rough," or "hairy."
2. Esau was a mighty hunter.
3. Esau was a man's man, daddy's favorite.
4. Later, when he sold his birthright, he was known as "Edom."
  - a. "Edom" means "red."
  - b. He had sold his birthright for a bowl of red soup.
5. His descendants were called "Edomites;" and they later became

enemies of Israel.

#### C. "Jacob."

1. Means "supplanter."
2. At birth, he grabbed Esau's heel.
3. This was a prophetic act, showing he would seek to take Esau's place as the honored firstborn.
4. His name was later changed to "Israel," which means "prince of God."
5. Jacob was a "mama's boy," very unlike his twin.
6. Jacob dearly wanted the birthright and the blessing. He diligently sought after blessings his whole life.

### II. The Deal.

#### A. Esau came home tired and very hungry.

1. He asked for some of Jacob's red pottage (bean soup).
2. He was so hungry, he felt faint.

#### B. Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright for lunch."

1. Esau said, "What good is my birthright if I starve to death?"
2. Esau despised (esteemed lightly) his birthright.

#### C. The birthright.

1. This means a double portion of the inheritance would go to the firstborn son, unless he forfeited the right for some reason.
2. Since there were two sons, this meant a 67% share of Isaac's wealth, who was, in our terms, a multimillionaire.
3. The one who received the birthright was also responsible to take care of

either parent, if they were old or infirm.

6. The church. (1 Corinthians 11:22)
7. Propheysings. (1 Thessalonians 5:20)
8. Employers. (1 Timothy 6:2)

### III. The Consequences.

#### A. To Jacob.

1. He had made Esau swear to give him the birthright; and a man could not take back his word, so it was his.
2. But he had taken advantage of his brother in a weak moment, and Esau was resentful about it.

#### B. To Esau.

1. Esau had valued his belly more than his spiritual calling and reward as the firstborn.
2. God "hated Esau" because he had despised what God had given him as a gift, his birthright. (Romans 9:13)
3. There is nothing worse in life than having God hate you.

### IV. Despise Not.

#### A. To despise.

1. It does not mean to "loathe, or hate," as we often think.
2. The word meant to "take lightly; to count as of little worth; to make insignificant."

#### B. We are commanded not to despise:

1. God (1 Samuel 2:30), or He will "lightly esteem" us.
2. The chastening of the Lord. (Job 5:17)
3. Wisdom and instruction. (Proverbs 1:7)
4. Our mother. (Proverbs 23:22)
5. Little ones. (Matthew 18:10)



## Spiritual Truths

- To "despise" means "to take lightly; to place little or no value upon."
- We are commanded not to despise parents, God, God's correction, wisdom, or prophecy.
- Esau was called "profane" because he despised his spiritual heritage, or birthright.
- The birthright involves greater blessing and greater responsibility.
- The basic attraction of all sin is that the pleasure is immediate, and the consequences are delayed.
- We like to think that God loves everybody equally; but the Bible says that God hated Esau, and He also hates people who sow discord in the church. (Proverbs 6:19)
- Wisdom involves a focus on eternal and spiritual things; therefore, secular television is full of knowledge and promotes some common sense, but it is devoid of wisdom.
- It is almost always more physically comfortable and immediately gratifying to do the wrong thing.



## Lesson Material

Isaac was delighted with his beautiful wife, Rebekah. He had trusted in his father to find him a good wife; and he did not go "courting" around Canaan, as he might have done. After all, he was rich and good-looking. He could have attracted any girl he wanted. But he trusted his father; and his father sent a faithful servant back to Mesopotamia, in order to bring back his gorgeous cousin, Rebekah. She was the perfect wife for 40-year-old Isaac. She had a good spirit and a great attitude. But, she was barren. They were married for twenty years, before they had a baby.

Isaac himself had been the son of a barren woman, and his parents had been married a lot longer than that, when he was finally born. God was waiting on him to ask, so that He could work a healing miracle in Rebekah. Isaac knew what to do; and he had faith to believe for children, because his parents had set a good example.

When Rebekah noticed that something unusual was going on within her, God told her that she had twins; and that each would be the father of a great nation; and that the older would serve the younger. Perhaps this is the reason she favored the younger brother. Isaac always favored his firstborn son, because he was such an athlete and hunter.

As the twins were born, the second reached out and grabbed the heel of the firstborn. He was called "Jacob," or "supplanter," because of the action of grabbing hold. Names are important. Not only do they describe different kinds of

people, but they also tend to have an effect on their behavior. Someone who is called "supplanter" will have a tendency to be a supplanter, because that name helps to create a focus on the desire to take first place. You should know the spiritual meaning of your name. You will have a tendency to respond to the vision of your parents, who named you.

Both of these men later had name changes, after significant life-changing experiences in their lives. Esau ("rough") was changed to Edom ("red"), after he sold his birthright for a mess of red pottage. This reminded him the rest of his life of his folly, which God took very seriously. Jacob's name was changed to "Israel" ("prince of God"), after he wrestled all night with the Lord and sought His blessing, as well as his father's. No longer would he be known as one who supplanted others -- he would be known as one who had sought and received God's eternal blessing.

When Esau came in from the field one day, he was especially hungry. He was desperate for food. Jacob should have freely shared with his brother; but, he had been looking for a chance to take the birthright. He seized the opportunity, and offered to sell him a meal. Esau rationalized in his mind, "What good is my birthright if I am dead?" So he sold out to Jacob. He sold that which was permanent for a temporary thing. This is a classic picture of sin. God has created mankind to live with Him forever as His children; but, since Adam, we have chosen the road of self-seeking rebellion, because of the attraction of the physical and the immediate.

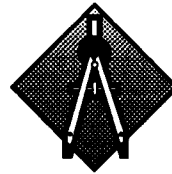
Sin always has its reward first, and the consequences later. Sin always offers to satisfy an appetite of some kind -- but it

never satisfies. Years ago, a cigarette company advertised, "Smoke \_\_\_\_\_ cigarettes. They satisfy." Someone wisely retorted that "That is ridiculous. If they satisfied, there would only be one in a pack."

Esau's sin was a classic example, because he "despised" his birthright. To "despise" means to "devalue; to take lightly." When we sin, we are focusing on the earthly and temporal values of life, while ignoring the eternal values and consequences. In light of the fact that we will live forever, sin is ultimately stupid. Sin only feels good for a moment, but the torment of hell is eternal. Sin is never worth it. The only way Satan can convince any of us to sin is to get us so focused on the pleasure of the moment that we ignore the consequences. Satan is a deceiver, who *"...hath blinded the minds of them which believe not,..."* (2 Corinthians 4:4) Since God's plan is so much better than his, the only way he can get anyone to serve sin is to make them blind to spiritual things, and overwhelm them with the vision for temporary pleasures.

Jacob kept his eyes on his goal. He wanted the spiritual birthright. He wanted the blessing. He was not always ethical, and he suffered because of the way he went about things; but God loved the fact that he was a man of tenacity and spunk.

In his hour of testing, Esau, the he-man of the family, turned out to be the real weakling. He yielded to his stomach. He could not say "No" to self. He could not deny himself (Luke 9:23); and he became disqualified in God's eyes. Romans 9:13 says, *"As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but [Esau have I hated]."* God hated Esau, because he sold out the eternal for the temporal -- as all of us do, whenever we disobey God and sin.



## Methods

This could be illustrated with a skit, with two boys. Enact the scene, using some red bean soup and a small loaf of uncut bread as the meal. Emphasize the foolishness and folly of sin; and compare the temporal rewards with the eternal rewards of righteousness.

Discuss the term, "temporal values system."

Talk about faith, and wisdom, and the rewards of righteousness.

Slogan for the day: "If I do not serve the Lord, I am really foolish."

# The Purpose of the Old Testament

Volume 5

Lesson 11



## Bible References

Psalms 119

1 Corinthians 10

Psalms 19

2 Peter 1:19-21

9 *"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.*

10 *"With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.*

11 *"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

12 *"Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes.*

13 *"With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.*

14 *"I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.*

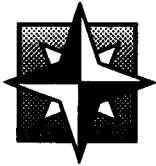
15 *"I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.*

16 *"I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word."*

19 *"I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me.*

20 *"My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times.*

21 *"Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments."*



## Theme

The Old Testament is God's inspired Word; and it is perfectly consistent in its principles and wisdom with the New Testament.



## Scripture Reading

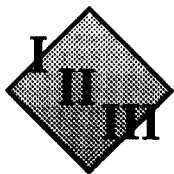
Psalms 119:9-16, 19-21



## Memory Verse

2 Timothy 3:16

*"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:"*



## Outline

- I. What Is the Old Testament?**
- A. "Old Testament" refers to God's covenants with fallen man before Jesus came and established the New Covenant, by His own death on the cross.
  - B. God made covenants with Adam, Noah, Abraham, and the children of Israel; and they involved vicarious sin offerings and principles of faith, grace, and righteousness.
  - C. The Old Testament is a vivid picture of the New, and is established on God's unchanging holiness, wisdom, and grace.
  - D. The New Testament is the spiritual fulfillment of all that is portrayed and prophesied in the Old.
- II. What Does the Old Testament Mean to Us as New Testament Believers?**
- A. The Old Testament brings light and understanding about God and His ways.
    1. *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God,...."*(2 Timothy 3:16)
    2. *"...the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple."* (Psalms 19:7)
  - B. The Old Testament teaches us about life, from the standpoint of eternal wisdom.
    1. Hebrews 9:8-12.
    2. 1 Corinthians 10:11.
  - C. The Old Testament shows us God's pattern for praise and worship.
  - D. The Old Testament shows us that God planned the Cross from the beginning, and that He never changes.
  - E. The Old Testament shows us the weakness and inconsistency of man, and the perfect stability of God.
- III. What Is the Difference Between the Old and the New?**
- A. Types and fulfillments.
    1. The Old Testament focuses on natural events and pictures that illustrate spiritual truths.
    2. The New Testament emphasizes the spiritual fulfillment and realities of God's eternal plan.

## B. Prophecy.

1. The Old Testament prophesies much about the coming of Jesus, the Messiah, and the end times.
2. The New demonstrates that Jesus fulfilled the Messianic prophecies of the Old; and it contains prophecies about His second coming in greater detail.

## C. The nature of the atonement.

1. Before the cross, the sins of men were atoned for by the vicarious sin offerings of animals. The priests offered the sacrifices on behalf of the people.
2. On the cross, Jesus Christ offered His own blood as the atonement for the sins of the whole world; and He Himself functioned as the High Priest.

## D. Israel.

1. The Old Testament focuses on Jacob's descendants, the natural seed of Abraham.
2. The New Testament focuses on those who are "in Christ" through the new birth, the spiritual seed of Abraham.

## E. Law.

1. The Old Testament presents the Law of the Lord.
2. The New Testament shows how Jesus fulfills the law through grace.

## F. Lord's Day.

1. The Old Testament emphasizes the Sabbath (Saturday) as a day of rest.
2. The New shows that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Sabbath, and that the church honored the Lord on

Sunday, in celebration of resurrection life.

- a. Jesus recapitulated nine of the ten commandments of Exodus 20, leaving out the Sabbath law.
- b. The Sabbath was a principle that showed that we are not saved by our own labors, but rather by entering into His grace by faith.



## Spiritual Truths

- The Old Testament is the greatest commentary and illustration of the New Testament in the world.
- Most statements about "scripture" in the New Testament are referring to the Old Testament. (Exception: See 2 Peter 3:16)
- Jesus did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. (Matthew 5:17)
- To say that New Testament believers are not under the law does not mean that we are free to do as we please without restraint (lawless); but rather, it is to say that God enables us to live by grace through faith.
- All of the saints who died in faith before the time of the cross had to wait until Christ's resurrection to go to heaven, because their redemption was not complete until then.
- God spent 4,000 years from Adam to the Incarnation preparing the world for the coming of the Savior.

- God has always had a people; and He has always been a God of mercy, grace, and love.



## Lesson Material

The Old Testament was written over a period of about 1100 years, from Moses to Malachi. It was the holy and accurate Word of God, given to various prophets and leaders among the descendants of Israel. The Apostle Peter said, "[For the prophecy came] not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake (as they were) moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter 1:21) In other words, the Old Testament is the Word of God, given to men through chosen men.

There have been an unfortunate few among Christian leaders who thought, incorrectly, that to be a "New Testament" Christian, you had to throw out the Old Testament. Some have even thought that since it was written before the cross, that all of its writers were not really saved, and certainly could not have been anointed by the Holy Ghost. This is a sad error, because three fourths of the Bible is in the Old Testament; and if you believe the New Testament to be the verbally inspired Word of God, then you must accept the authenticity and viability of the Old. This is because the New Testament testifies about the value and power of the "scripture," meaning, in most references, the Old Testament. (Note that in 2 Peter 3:16, Peter equates Paul's writings with scripture.) Indeed, the New Testament does not really stand alone, because the

basic principles are laid out, established, and illustrated in the Old.

While it is true that we are, for example, not bound to the Sabbath laws, we do gain an important understanding of grace, when we study the purpose and principle of the Old Testament Sabbath. When we learn about and understand the sin offerings and the blood sacrifices of old, we can see that they prepared the way for Jesus Christ, the "...Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." (John 1:29) In the Old, God laid out precise unchanging principles about life and righteousness, clearly showing us our absolute need, not only for forgiveness, but also for the grace to live as God created and designed us to live.

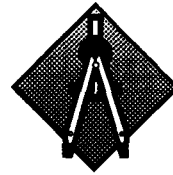
The Old Testament gives an accurate account of the people of Israel, the natural seed of Abraham. It was through this natural seed, or nation, that God gave the world the Messiah, Jesus Christ; and it was also to this nation that God gave His Word in written form. These 66 books contain the basic teachings that mankind needs to know, in order to point men to the Savior, Jesus Christ, Who is revealed in the New Testament. Every basic human conflict, emotion, and circumstance is dealt with in the Bible, including the Old Testament.

Through the Old Testament, we see the pattern of God's dealing with man unfolding, and the unchanging nature of God. God was not any more strict or callous in the Old than He is today. He has always been patient, loving, and full of grace. God is still holy and just. We get a better picture of that by seeing all of the Bible. By the way, if you think you can get away with more sin than they did in Old Testament times because God is nicer now, check out the book of Revelation. The Old Testament records the violent deaths of



millions of people; but Revelation speaks of the violent deaths of hundreds of millions, at the hand of a holy God of judgment. God has always been loving and patient. *"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."* (2 Peter 3:9)

All of the patterns of God's dealings with man, and every principle of grace, faith, sanctification, and redemption, are laid out in the precious Old Testament. Jesus is seen throughout the Old Testament, in various manifestations. The same Jesus who broke bread to feed 5,000 walked in a furnace with three Jewish boys, wrestled with Jacob, and visited Abraham. He was in the beginning with God, and He was God. (John 1:1) Through the Old Testament, we gain a rich heritage of wisdom in Proverbs, and we can learn about what kind of worship pleases God from the same book of Psalms that Paul used as his guide for worship. In the Old Testament, we see God's ways; and we have a great foundation from which to learn about and know the God Who is the great "I Am."



## Methods

### Discussion Questions:

1. What did Jesus mean by "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." (John 5:39)

The Jews thought that the key to eternal life was the Old Testament; but actually, Jesus Himself is the key. The Bible is the map that points to Jesus, who is the Way to God. (John 14:6) It is not enough to respect the Bible. You need to know Jesus personally, and then the Bible can help guide you, as you live for Him.

2. What should we do with a Bible?

Take good care of it.

Do not set your pizza on top of it.

Read it every day.

Read it from cover to cover.

Memorize key verses.

Meditate on it.

Make a vow to the Lord to read the Bible at least five minutes every day.

# Jacob's Lie

Volume 5

Lesson 12

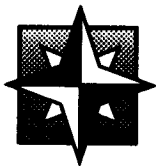


## Bible References

Genesis 27

Proverbs 3:5

Colossians 3:9



## Theme

A lie is not merely an untruth. It is a deception, and it always produces negative consequences, in the end.



## Scripture Reading

Genesis 27:6-9, 15-29

6 "And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying,

7 "Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the LORD before my death.

8 "Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee.

9 "Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth:"

15 "And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son:

16 "And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck:

17 "And she gave the savoury meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

18 "And he came unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son?

19 "And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy firstborn; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me.

20 "And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because the LORD thy God brought it to me.

21 "And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not.

22 "And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice (is) Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.

23 "And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him.

24 "And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am.

25 "And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank.

26 "And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son.

27 "And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed:

28 "Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine:

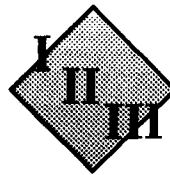
29 "Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee."



## Memory Verse

Ephesians 4:25

"Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another."



## Outline

### I. Jacob the Supplanter.

A. Jacob had taken the birthright from Esau, by taking advantage of Esau's weakness.

1. The birthright is the right of the firstborn to a double portion of the inheritance.
2. Esau sold it for a cheap meal.

B. Jacob also took Esau's paternal, spiritual blessing, by deceiving his father into thinking he was Esau.

### II. The Blessing.

A. It was a custom for a godly man to impart a special, prophetic blessing to his firstborn or favorite son, before he died.

1. This is similar to the "laying on of the hands" of the presbytery. (1 Timothy 4:14)

2. This blessing was powerful -- it carried the weight of all that the man was in God.
    - a. A man of great faith would impart a great blessing.
    - b. God honored the prophecy and provisions of the blessing.
- B. We bless or curse with our mouth.
1. With our mouth, we impart encouragement, joy, prosperity, faith, and other kinds of blessings.
    - a. James noted that we bless God with our mouth, and then use the same mouth to curse men. (James 3:9)
    - b. We should not do that. (James 3:10)
  2. With our mouth, we can also impart doubt, fear, discouragement, rejection, and other kinds of cursing.
    - a. A curse is a negative pronouncement or declaration.
    - b. If a person has no authority to effect a curse, then it means nothing.
    - c. *"...The curse causeless shall not come."* (Proverbs 26:2)
  3. *"Bless them that curse you, and pray for them...."* (Luke 6:28)
- B. Rebekah insisted that Jacob deceive his father into believing that he was Esau, so that he would receive the paternal blessing.
1. She fixed meat like Esau would, and dressed Jacob in Esau's clothes.
  2. She covered Jacob's soft skin with goat skins.
    - a. Esau must have been extremely hairy.
    - b. The goat hide felt like Esau's neck and hands.
  3. Jacob identified himself as Esau.
  4. Jacob even talked spiritually.
    - a. When Isaac asked, "How did you get back so soon?"
    - b. Jacob said, "God sent me the deer."

### III. The Lie.

- A. A lie is more than an untruth -- it is a deception.
1. You can say something that is technically true; but if your purpose is to make someone believe something to be true that is not, you are lying.
  2. "Yes, mother, I took a bath (day before yesterday)."

### C. Consequences.

1. Esau lost the blessing; and so, he hated Jacob, and vowed to kill him.
2. Jacob had to flee; and he went to his Uncle Laban's home in Haran.

### IV. Do Not Go by Feelings.

#### A. Isaac's dilemma.

1. He sounded like Jacob, but he felt like Esau.

2. Should we go by feeling, or by what we hear?
- B. We are all tempted to let our feelings rule our lives; but, instead, we should listen to the Spirit.
1. Jesus said, "...As I hear, I judge: (make decisions)...." (John 5:30)
  2. Jesus was not led by what He felt, but by what the Spirit said.
  3. Faith follows God and His Word, rather than feelings.
  4. Faith says, "God said it; and it is true, even if I do not always feel it."

- We bless God, ourselves, and others with positive, encouraging, and edifying words.
- We overcome the curses others place on us by blessing, not by reciprocating the curse.



## Lesson Material

There were two things in life that Jacob wanted more than anything: the birthright, and the blessing of the firstborn. These were both bestowed by the father; and normally they were given to the firstborn son in the family. Since Esau was obviously Isaac's favorite son, it seemed unlikely that Jacob would have a chance at them. The birthright related to the natural inheritance (a double portion), and the spiritual (the special, prophetic imparting of God's favor through the laying on of hands).

When the boys were born, God gave Rebekah a prophetic word about them. Not only would they be the fathers of great nations, but "...the elder shall serve the younger." (Genesis 25:23) She kept this in her heart, knowing that part of the father's blessing would involve the standard phrase, "thy brothers shall serve thee." The one who received the birthright would be the richest, and the one who received the blessing would tend to be the leader. Rebekah believed that God intended the spiritual blessing to go to Jacob, especially since Esau had despised his birthright by selling it for a cheap meal.



## Spiritual Truths

- A lie is a deliberate deception -- and lying is wrong.
- A lie will almost always lead to more lies.
- If you always tell the truth, you will not have to remember what you said to whom.
- There are always consequences to a lie.
- The world says, "Follow your heart (feelings);" but God says to follow His Spirit, Who will never lead you astray.
- The just shall live by faith, and not by feelings.
- When you have a Word from God, you will not have to lie to make it come to pass. God will do it.

Esau undoubtedly was angry at his own stupidity for selling such a valuable thing as his birthright. In our terms, that meal cost him millions of dollars. This is how sin deceives: we believe that somehow, it will be worth it. He sorely regretted his decision, and no way would he be willing to give up the one advantage he had left -- his blessing. His father was going to lay hands on him and prophesy a great spiritual blessing on his life. He would call on God to grant him honor, anointing, and special favor for the rest of his life. The spirit of faith his father possessed would fall on him; and he would carry on the family tradition of his grandfather, Abraham.

But it was not to be. God allowed Rebekah's plan of deception to succeed, although there were long-term consequences for both Rebekah and Jacob. They would take the blessing away from Esau; but it would mean that Jacob would move far away, in fear of his angry brother, and Rebekah would not see him again. There would be years of bitterness, fear, and separation -- and Jacob would also reap what he had sown. He would fall victim to his uncle's deception, and he also would be taken advantage of.

When Rebekah heard that Isaac had sent Esau out to hunt for deer for him, she acted quickly, in order to trick Isaac into giving the blessing to Jacob. She had worked it all out in her mind; and she was ready. She knew that God had given her the Word that the "elder would serve the younger;" and she felt that she needed to help God. (Does this sound like her mother-in-law?) This was worse than Sarah's act, because this was a lie. She made her husband believe something that was not true. Jacob would pretend to be Esau, and trick Dad into giving him the blessing.

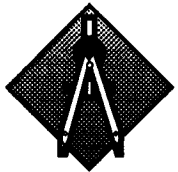
Isaac was expecting a meal of venison from Esau. Jacob brought in goat meat, flavored to taste like one of Esau's dishes. Jacob was dressed in Esau's clothes. He even had goat's hide on his hands and neck. Isaac was blind, but he was not stupid. The voice he heard sounded like Jacob, but he smelled and felt like Esau. We all deal with the same dilemma. We are given choices, and we want to know what is right. You cannot trust everyone. What do you do?

Jesus was the most spiritual Man Who ever lived. He was never led by His emotions or His natural observations. He prayed and stayed sensitive to the Spirit; and He said, "...As I hear, I judge:...." (John 5:30) God has given us a spirit, but we also have a soul. Our spirit is sensitive to God, while our soul (which is our mind, will, and emotion), is sensitive to self, people, and things. Our body is sense-conscious. The greatest problem is knowing what is from God, and what is from our own mind or emotion. The problem is that when we hear from God (or the devil), the message is communicated through our mind. In a sense, the voice of our spirit sounds exactly like God's voice. How do I determine the difference?

*"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit...." (Hebrews 4:12)*

In other words, the more you know the Bible, the more you will be able to tell the difference between what God is saying (Spirit) and what is coming from your imagination or feelings. The Bible is not written to the mind, but to the spirit of man. (John 6:63) If a man is not born again, he cannot understand the Bible. (1 Corinthians 2:14) If we want to make wise

choices in life, we must be born again, and we must fill our minds with God's Word. In the last days, Jesus said there would be much deception. Now we know what to do about it.



## Methods

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### *Discussion questions:*

What is the difference between an untruth and a lie?

Answer: A person may make an inaccurate statement, thinking it to be a fact. But a lie is a deliberate deception.

Can a person make a statement that is true, and still be lying?

Answer: Yes, if it deliberately causes people to make a false conclusion.

What does Proverbs 26:18-19 mean?

*"As a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, so is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and sayeth, am not I in sport? (I was only kidding.)"*

What is the difference between our soul and our spirit?

Can you think of a situation in which you had a hard time knowing whether you were hearing from God, or your own imagination?

# Jacob's Ladder

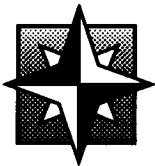
Volume 5

Lesson 13



## Bible Reference

Genesis 28



## Theme

If we seek after God with all our heart, God will meet with us, and show us His covenant.



## Scripture Reading

Genesis 28:10-22

10 "And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran.

11 "And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.

12 "And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

13 "And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;

14 "And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

15 "And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

16 "And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not.

17 "And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

18 "And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.



19 *"And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first.*

20 *"And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,*

21 *"So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God:*

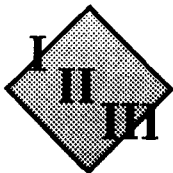
22 *"And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee."*



## Memory Verse

Jeremiah 29:13

*"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."*



## Outline

### I. Jacob and Esau.

A. Esau was bitter about losing his birthright and blessing.

1. He knew that his father was not pleased with the Canaanite girls, so

he married a daughter of Ishmael, his father's half-brother.

2. His bitterness led to rebellion; and his rebellion led to an unhappy life.

B. Jacob obeyed his parents, and went to his uncle Laban's to get a wife.

### II. Jacob's Dream.

A. On the way to doing the will of God, Jacob heard from God through a dream.

1. God can speak to us in many ways, including dreams.
2. He saw a ladder to heaven (symbolic); and he heard from God.

B. God's covenant.

1. God gave Jacob the land (that He had given to Abraham).
2. God promised that he would have millions of descendants.
3. God promised to be with him and protect him.

C. Why Jacob?

1. God hated Esau, because he had despised his birthright. (Romans 9:13)
2. God loved Jacob, because Jacob sought after God.
3. God gave a covenant to Jacob, similar to Abraham's.
  - a. God was fulfilling His covenant to Abraham, by giving the promised land to his descendent, Jacob.
  - b. God chose Jacob, because he knew Jacob would have a heart after Him.
4. Predestination.
  - a. God did not predetermine that Jacob would be a winner and Esau a loser in life; but He did

- know what choices they were going to make, because He knows everything.
- b. God's predestination is based on His foreknowledge.
  - c. Romans 8:29.
  - d. In other words, God does not know the future because He predetermined every choice, but He knows the future because He knows everything.

- b. He tithed of all his increase to the Lord, as a regular reminder that he belonged to God.

### III. Jacob's Response.

#### A. Jacob made a covenant with God.

1. Jacob responded to God by giving himself to God.
2. He called the place, Bethel, or "house of God."

#### B. When we are genuinely saved, we enter into a covenant with God.

1. God forgives our sins, and gives us an inheritance of eternal life.
2. We are adopted into the family of God.
3. When we are genuinely saved, we repent of our sins.
  - a. That means that we "turn around," and seek after God instead of being our "own person."
  - b. Genuine salvation causes us to live by grace, instead of by our carnal impulses.

#### C. The signs of covenant.

1. Jacob anointed a stone altar, and established a place to identify his relationship to God as "Bethel," the "house of God."
2. Jacob vowed to tithe, as did his father and grandfather.
  - a. "Tithe" means "one-tenth."



## Spiritual Truths

- The best place to be able to hear from God is in the will of God.
- Acts of anger and rebellion only lead us away from God's presence and away from God's voice.
- God never shouts; so if you want to hear from Him, you need to get close.
- God can speak to us in many ways, including dreams.
- God does not have any grandchildren. You cannot automatically receive God's covenants, just because your father did.
- Each of us needs to have a personal covenant relationship with God, based on the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- When we have received the new birth by the Spirit of God, our lifestyle will change, because our life source has changed.
- Tithing is just not giving God His 10%; but it is also an evidence of genuine Christianity, which is a covenant. We belong to God.



## Lesson Material

God had made a great covenant with His friend, Abraham. The covenant was to be carried out with Abraham's descendants, because God is the God Who keeps His covenants "...to a thousand generations." (Deuteronomy 7:9) In order to fulfill the covenant He made with Abraham, God would find one descendent in each generation to prosper and protect, according to His promise to the "father of faith."

God did not choose Ishmael, because Ishmael was born of the Egyptian bond-woman. He was a type of the "work of the flesh." He is a picture of cults who try to identify with true religion (seed of Abraham by faith), but are not true, because ultimately they are based on works, rather than faith. Cults reject the fact that Jesus is "God the Son," as the Bible teaches; and they always involve works as a way to heaven.

God did not choose Esau to inherit the promise, because Esau did not have a heart after God. Esau is a picture of a reprobate believer who turns his heart away from God. Esau had a legitimate birth. He was the firstborn of the seed of Abraham's faith line. He had the birthright; but he sold out for the flesh. There are many sincere Christians who believe the "once saved always saved" doctrine, or "unconditional eternal security." They argue that "Once you are born, you cannot be unborn." The question is, more accurately, once you are born, can you die? Physical death is separation from the body; and spiritual death is separation from God. Can a believer become reprobate, if he

turns from God and blasphemes the Holy Spirit? There are many scriptures that indicate that it is possible to be an Esau. The Bible says that God is "...able to keep you from falling...." (Jude 24) We would like it to say, "God will never let you fall." But the Bible does promise security for those who "abide in Him;" and we are assured that nothing outside of our own selfish choice can separate us from the love of God. (Romans 8:35-39)

God chose Jacob, because Jacob chose God. God knew from the foundation of the earth who would choose to serve Him. (Romans 8:29) God has a perfect plan for our lives, called "predestination;" but we still have to choose whether we will walk with Him on His terms, or turn aside to our own way. (Isaiah 53:6) If God arranged all our lives according to absolute predetermined control, then there would be no real virtue or fulfillment in those who choose to obey, and no justice in damning those who choose sin. But God is just; and God loves everyone. He is "...not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9)

Esau could have repented of his wrong attitudes, and he could have trusted his parents to provide a good wife for him. In his bitterness, he deliberately went to the Ishmaelites to get a heathen wife. Wrong attitudes lead to wrong choices; and wrong choices lead to unhappy lives.

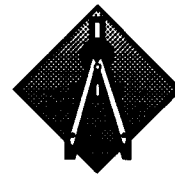
Jacob, on the other hand, obeyed his parents, and went to Haran to find a wife. Jacob had lied -- and it would catch up with him -- but he was going to receive the blessing, because he had a heart for God. It is important to understand the distinction. Jacob sinned, but he sought the Lord. In the end, he obtained the blessing; but there were still consequences to his sin. He would have been better off, if he had not

lied. God would have blessed him, anyway. Jacob was the type of a genuine believer who was not always perfectly spiritual. He made mistakes. But he was ultimately a winner, because he had a spiritual vision and purpose in life. Esau had no vision; and he lost out.

When Jacob went out in obedience and faith to do God's will, God spoke to him in the night through a dream. God made a covenant with him, promising him essentially the same things that He had promised to Abraham. God was letting Jacob know that he was going to receive the birthright and blessing -- not only from Isaac, but also from God Himself. Jacob did not automatically receive an eternal inheritance from God; he had to have a personal relationship, himself. If your parents are saved, then they are praying for you. The more they pray for you, the more God will deal with you, if you choose to sin. Their faith will expose you to more of God's grace; but they still cannot save you. You still have to repent of your sins, and you still have to take hold of God's promises by faith. If you go to heaven, it will be because you trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ, and gave Him your life. If you spend eternity in hell, it will be because you chose to reject God's ownership of your life.

Jacob had sought God's blessing on his life; and now this was the time of confrontation. He had to choose. When God made a covenant with him and gave him an eternal birthright, Jacob responded by making a covenant with God. He said, "If You are going to do that for me, then You are going to be my God, and I will be Your son. I will establish a house of God in my life as a place to regularly meet with You; and I will always be a tither, because I belong to You." When we receive genuine salvation through the spiritual new birth

-- when we have a spiritual covenant with God by the blood of His Son -- we will see a difference in our lives. *"...if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (creation): old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."* (2 Corinthians 5:17) We will naturally have a love for God's house; and we will naturally become tithers and givers. Sin makes us selfish; but Jesus in our hearts makes us givers. There are many people who have made a religious confession of some kind, but their lives and hearts are still the same. Perhaps they should check the foundation, and make sure they have repented from their sins and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. We do not need merely a religious conversion; but rather, we need a supernatural new birth that results in a new life in Christ.



## Methods

Reinforce the concept of covenant, because this is central and essential to genuine Christianity. When we have a covenant, there are responses from both sides.

What did God promise to do for you? What does God command His children to do, as a response to the covenant He initiated?

How does a good marriage illustrate God's covenant with us? (The bridegroom is the leader, provider, and protector. He will lay down his life for his bride, giving all to bless her. The bride takes his name and becomes a part of his family. She delights to bless and honor him, and she

puts him first. She produces children for him.)

In the Christian covenant, we become part of the bride, the body of Christ. We become part of His family, living for Him instead of for ourselves. We become His

Bethel as He dwells in us; and we express our part of our covenant by tithing and faithful church attendance.

Where is your home church? Are you a tither?

# Jacob and Rachel

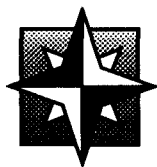
Volume 5

Lesson 14



## Bible Reference

Genesis 29



## Theme

Genuine love can always wait to give.



## Scripture Reading

Genesis 29:1, 12, 14-18, 20, 23, 25-28

1 "Then Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east."

12 "And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother, and that he was Rebekah's son: and she ran and told her father."

14 "And Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh. And he abode with him the space of a month.

15 "And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? tell me, what shall thy wages be?

16 "And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel.

17 "Leah was tender eyed; but Rachel was beautiful and well favored.

18 "And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter."

20 "And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her."

23 "And it came to pass in the evening, that Laban took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him;"

25 "And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah: and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?

26 "And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn.

27 "Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years.

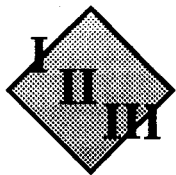
28 "And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also."



## Memory Verse

1 John 4:7

*"Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."*



## Outline

### I. Jacob Loved Rachel.

#### A. Rachel was beautiful.

1. Physical beauty: a type of holiness and true inner beauty.
2. Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel were all very beautiful.
  - a. They were types of the bride (church).
  - b. They also were all barren; and they had to have a miracle, in order to bear children.

B. Physical beauty is a gift from God; and it is to be used for God.

1. We should focus on developing the inner beauty of character, purity, and wisdom.
2. There is no physical ideal of beauty; and we should not focus on the "Miss America" or "prom beauty queen" concept.

### II. Jacob and Laban.

A. Jacob moved in with his uncle Laban, and started working for him.

1. After a month, Laban offered him a paid staff position.
2. They agreed that Rachel would become Jacob's wife, in exchange for seven years' work.

B. After the seven years of work, Laban brought him Leah at night, and said, "Here she is."

1. Jacob did not notice until morning that he had been given the wrong girl.
2. Jacob was told to work another seven years for Rachel.

C. Jacob reaped what he had sowed.

1. Jacob had gone into his father's tent, and pretended to be his brother.
2. He had received the blessing that his father had intended for Esau.
3. God is not mocked. You will reap what you sow. (Galatians 6:7)

D. Jacob loved Rachel, so that the years of working "seemed like a few days."

1. Lust can never wait to get; but love can wait to give.
2. When a guy says to a girl, "I love you so much, I cannot wait," he is not "in love;" he is "in lust."

### III. Jacob, Leah and Rachel.

- A. Leah was tender-eyed; but Rachel was beautiful.
1. "Tender-eyed" was a gentle way of saying that she was not especially good-looking.
  2. She had a good personality.
- B. Jacob was unhappy with her; and so God enabled her to bear him four sons.
- C. Jacob eventually had twelve sons by four wives.

### IV. Faith is Better.

- A. Jacob had tricked his father into giving him the blessing.
1. After 20 years of labor, he became wealthy, and did finally get Rachel for his bride.
  2. He ended up very blessed.
- B. If Jacob had trusted God to bless him:
1. He still would have received God's blessing, because that came later.
  2. If he had let his parents provide a bride for him as their parents had:
    - a. Isaac would have sought brides for his sons from his uncle's house.
    - b. Leah would have been given to Esau, because they were the firstborn.
    - c. Rachel would have been given to Jacob, and he would not have had to work for her.
    - d. God had intended Rachel for Jacob all along; but his greed and deception only created a harder life for him.



## Spiritual Truths

- True beauty comes from the inside out. It is the result of moral purity, an unselfish character, and the joy of the Spirit.
- A girl with physical beauty and impure morals is like a gold earring in the nose of a pig. (Proverbs 11:22)
- The world says that love is a feeling you get from a certain person; but God says that love is what you give out of a clean heart.
- You cannot "sow your wild oats" without harvesting a lot of bitter weeds.
- God has an ideal life's partner for everyone who is willing to wait.
- Genuine love is patient, kind, and unselfish.
- The opposite of genuine love is called "sin."
- Ultimately, God's moral laws are all functional restrictions that are necessary for the restraint of those who lack love for others.



## Lesson Material

Abraham had been told by God to go to the west coast, and to leave the land called



"Haran" in Mesopotamia. The land God gave to him and to his descendants is called "Palestine" today. Many years later, his grandson, Jacob, was sent back to Haran by his parents. As he started his journey, he received his dream of a ladder; and God promised him that land for his inheritance. He went on to finish the long journey to Haran. When he arrived, he saw Rachel taking care of her father's sheep, and he kissed her. It was not what the world calls "love at first sight," because genuine love grows and matures; but he was happy to see his cousin, and she was beautiful. She was also the right one for him. If he had only waited for God's timing, she would have been given to him, as his mother had been given to his father when Abraham sent for a wife for Isaac. But Jacob was not as patient as his father. He worked to trick Isaac into giving him the blessing; and he then found it prudent to skip town for twenty years or so.

Let us not connect too many romantic overtones to Rachel's first kiss. Note that Uncle Laban also kissed Jacob when they met. Kissing was a normal family greeting for either gender.

After Jacob had been at his uncle's for a month, it became apparent that he would be staying awhile. So Laban offered him a job. Jacob said, "I will work for you for seven years, if you give me Rachel." Perhaps he could have offered to work for two or three years; but in his excitement, he got carried away. And he loved her so much, that it seemed like a few days to him.

This is a principle that every young girl needs to know, especially in this age of sexual promiscuity. Sooner or later, most girls in our culture will hear some slick guy saying, "I love you so much, I cannot

wait to touch you." What a worn-out, old line. We all want to be loved; but unless she is wise, a girl may find herself believing that (and other) phony lines. When we have wisdom, we know the difference between love and lust. Love is a focus on the needs of the other person; and it expresses itself in giving. Real love will respect the privacy of others, and will not defraud a friend. Real love keeps his hands to himself and restrains himself from physical intimacy, until marriage.

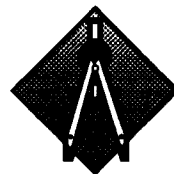
After seven years, Jacob was ready to receive his wife. We do not know if they had a wedding, or if Laban had simply delivered the bride to his tent, as Jacob's wages. Whatever happened, we suspect that Leah had a veil over her face, and it was dark; and Jacob was rather eager to be with his new wife. In the light of dawn, he looked on the face of the one who had been with him overnight, and he knew he had been deceived. Laban had agreed to give him Rachel, but he had his excuses. "It is not proper to give a younger daughter away, when the older one has not yet married." Actually, Laban was pleased with himself for getting such cheap labor, and he wanted to take advantage of his good fortune for as long a possible. He would not give Rachel to Jacob, unless he agreed to another seven years of service. Jacob decided that she was worth it. Surely Rachel must have felt loved and appreciated!

Rachel was beautiful. We need to remember that the physical is a type of the spiritual in the Bible. We can all be beautiful in God's eyes, and develop in the image of God. Physical beauty is a gift; and some have more than others. It is like money. Some people are given more, while others develop and produce more with what they have. We do know that physical beauty has no correlation to

happiness or love or character. Some people use their beauty to get other people to serve them; and they become selfish and "spoiled." Others use beauty to draw others to the Lord. Esther was beautiful; and that beauty was a gift that enabled her to save her people from a sure death at the hands of Haman.

The fact that Rachel was more beautiful than Leah does not mean that she was more important than Leah. It only meant that she was naturally more desirable to Jacob. God Himself helped Leah, by giving her four sons for Jacob. We need to be careful not to let Hollywood convince us that physical beauty equals character or happiness, because they do not. We also need to focus on developing inner beauty, which has eternal benefits. We should all be neat and as nicely dressed as we can; but we should not focus on our physical features, or seek to draw undue attention to our bodies. We should seek to draw people's attention to Jesus Christ, and

worship Him "...in the beauty of holiness...." (Psalms 96:9)



## Methods

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### *Discussion Questions*

Discuss the false values that are developed by "Miss America" and other beauty pageants.

What does our movie industry seem to believe about physical beauty and the value of an individual?

What do you think causes people to love or reject you as a person?

What qualities in others prompt you to respond favorably to them?

Who are your heroes?

# A New Name for Jacob

Volume 5

Lesson 15



## Bible References

Genesis 32

Revelation 2:17

1 Chronicles 4:9-10

25 *"And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.*

26 *"And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.*

27 *"And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob.*

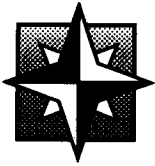
28 *"And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.*

29 *"And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there.*

30 *"And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.*

31 *"And as he passed over Peniel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh.*

32 *"Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank."*



## Theme

God loved Jacob so much, because Jacob sought God with his whole heart and did not focus his life merely on temporal things.



## Scripture Reading

Genesis 32:24-32

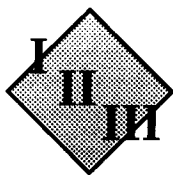
24 *"And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.*



## Memory Verse

Philippians 3:14

*"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."*



## Outline

### I. Jacob and Esau.

- A. After 20 years, Esau was still bitter over the birthright and blessing he lost; and Jacob was afraid of him.
- B. Jacob went back to Canaan, in order to seek his brother.
  - 1. He sent servants ahead with large herds of livestock, as gifts to appease his brother.
  - 2. "A man's gift maketh room for him,...." (Proverbs 18:16)
- C. Jacob sent everything he had on ahead over the brook; and he stayed behind, alone, overnight.

### II. Jacob and the Lord.

- A. Jacob wrestled with "a man" all night.
- B. He touched Jacob's thigh, and knocked it out of joint.

- C. Strange conversation. (From Genesis 32:26-28)
  - 1. "Let me go."
  - 2. "I will not let you go, until you bless me."
  - 3. "What is your name?"
  - 4. "Jacob."
  - 5. "From now on, your name is Israel (prince of God)."
- D. When Jacob asked him for his name, he did not reply, but he did bless him.
  - 1. The "man" is generally considered to be the pre-incarnate Christ.
  - 2. Jacob concluded that he had seen God face to face, and survived. (vs. 30)
  - 3. Jesus is God the Son, the perfect expression and revelation of the Godhead.

### III. The Blessing.

- A. Jacob not only received his father's birthright and blessing, but he also wanted God's blessing.
- B. 20 years earlier, on the way to Laban's, he had a vision of a ladder to heaven; and God gave him his spiritual birthright.
  - 1. God Himself made a covenant with him.
  - 2. It was a fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant.
- C. Now, he received God's blessing.
  - 1. The blessing was a new name.
  - 2. A new name goes with a new nature.
    - a. He would no longer be the "supplanter."

b. Jacob became "Israel" -- "prince with God."

D. Jacob sought the blessing, and prevailed.

1. Do not give up.
2. Do not just seek God's hand (blessing). Seek God's face.
3. Ask, seek, and knock. (Matthew 7:7)

E. Israel had a limp the rest of his life, which reminded him that He was God's man.



## Spiritual Truths

- The scripture, "A man's gift maketh room for him," (Proverbs 18:16) refers to the principle that people open their hearts when a personal gift is given, or when talents and skills are shared.
- God blessed Jacob when He saw Jacob doing something dear to His heart -- going to a brother to reconcile.
- When Jacob went to his brother, God did something special in his heart.
- God gives forgiveness only when we ask for it.
- God loved Jacob, because Jacob sought God and His blessing.
- Man never drifts upstream.
- God does not bless arbitrarily, but only as we ask, seek, and knock.



## Lesson Material

The story of Jacob is an excellent picture of the Christian life and experience. Jacob had received the birthright from God, when he had a dream of heaven on his way to his Uncle Laban's. God made an everlasting covenant with him; and he made a covenant with God. He acknowledged that he belonged to God by being a tither. Now, Jacob receives the blessing from God. The blessing involved a change in his name.

Our name is not only a way to differentiate between us, but it also relates directly to what we are. Many people in the Bible had name changes which reflected the change God had made in their lives. When we are born again, we not only receive a change in our standing, but a change in our hearts. We become a "...new creature...all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17) People who claim to receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and claim the promise of heaven, but whose habits, tastes, and lifestyles remain the same, should check out their foundation. When there is genuine repentance and faith, it will be life-changing. We are not yet perfected; but we have a new heart for God.

When we are born again, we receive a birthright and a blessing from God, our heavenly Father. Our birthright is eternal life. Our blessing is a new life in Christ. Jesus gives both imputed righteousness (right standing with God), and imparted righteousness (the ability to do right and overcome the power of sin). "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) Also, we read that in verse seven of the same chapter, that John said, "...*the blood of Jesus Christ...cleanseth us from all sin.*" There are many other references in the Bible which prove that God is not only able and willing to set us free from the consequences of our sin, but also to set us free from the dominion of sin, so that we are enabled through Christ to live a holy life. Jesus is our righteousness, because He lives in our hearts and causes us to respond to God with our lives.

Jacob was on his way back home, with a desire to be restored to his twin brother. Esau had determined to kill him, for conning him out of his birthright and stealing his blessing. Jacob sent herds of livestock ahead of him, as a gift to appease his angry brother. This is a right response. If we are going to maintain relationships, we must give to one another. The reason people break covenants and divide families is basically selfishness. Everyone is so concerned with the other person's responsibilities and their own rights, that they fuss and argue to get the other person to do what they want. But Jesus said that the way to get people to give to you is to give. *"Give, and it shall be given unto you;..."* (Luke 6:38) That is a basic principle of life. If you want people to love you, love them. If you want smiles, sow a smile. If you want to be successful, seek to make others successful. Find a need in others, and try to meet that need.

Jacob did not go to his brother, in order to try to prove that his case was right. He went to his brother with gifts. A gift is an expression of love, and indicates a desire to enhance the life of the other person. People naturally respond to a giver by giving in return. It is sad that our society today is focused on rights. People are very caught up with trying to make sure that

life is "fair." We usually start out as children, struggling with siblings for equal treatment in everything -- for our share of the pie. Some people never grow out of that, but carry their selfish pursuits into adulthood. Our court system is clogged with civil cases where people are trying to force others to yield to their "rights."

God's wisdom starts with giving. Instead of being assertive, be meek. Meekness is the character quality of yielding personal rights. Meekness does not demand for self, but seeks the good for others. Jacob gave to his brother, and that defused the anger. Jacob was saying with his gift, "Here. I am not trying to take advantage of you, anymore. I am not a threat to you. In fact, I want to add to the quality of your life. I want to bless you, because God has blessed me."

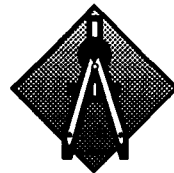
We can see that Jacob needed a name change. He was no longer the "supplanter." He was not out to "get his" in life any more. He was now a giver, who wanted to bless his brother. He had been made new by his encounter with Jesus. Note that when he had "emptied himself" by giving his possessions to his brother, the Lord met him. Here again, we see why the Bible said that God loved Jacob. Jacob was not a mediocre person. Jacob wrestled all night with the Lord, seeking His blessing. He was not just seeking more wealth from the Lord, as some seem to do. He wanted God's approval, God's presence, and God's favor in his life. He did not want to merely exist in life; he wanted to live life in God to the fullest.

The mark of Jacob's spiritual birthright was the tithe. The mark of the spiritual blessing was his walk. From that night on, Jacob walked with a limp, because the Lord had touched him in his thigh. This served as a lifelong reminder that he was a man

who walked in God's grace, and not just in his own ability. Every time he took a step, he was reminded of his encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ.

We need to understand that the most important aspect of our life on earth is our response and relationship with God. Do we seek Him with all our heart? How strongly do we want God's blessing? Many people live their lives for wealth or for the approval of man (popularity). But when the life is over, all they will really have is that which they had given to God; and the only approval that will matter will be that of the Lord's. (1 Corinthians 3) We can name people who died with great wealth, whose names are still household words, but who did not pursue God's blessing in their lives. The moment they died, they lost all of their wealth. They lost all of their happiness, because they went to hell, with no hope for eternity. Their names are still revered by people; but even so, in a thousand years, they will be forgotten. However, the name of the righteous will be in everlasting remembrance. *"For what*

*shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"*  
(Mark 8:36)



## Methods

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### *Discussion Questions:*

What is the difference between a birthright and a blessing?

If you were on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?

Have you ever had an encounter with the Lord, in which you sought Him with all your heart?

Can you see a difference between "seeking God's hand and blessing" and "seeking the face of the Lord?"

# Hell

Volume 5

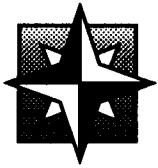
Lesson 16



## Bible References

Luke 16

Revelation 20



## Theme

Hell is an awful place of perpetual torment and suffering. People who are not born again will go there, when they physically die.



## Scripture Reading

Luke 16:19-29

19 *"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:*

20 *"And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,*

21 *"And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table:*

*moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.*

22 *"And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;*

23 *"And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.*

24 *"And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.*

25 *"But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.*

26 *"And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.*

27 *"Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:*

28 *"For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.*



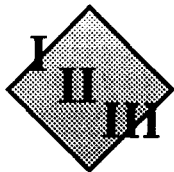
29 "Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them."



## Memory Verse

Matthew 10:28

*"And fear not them, which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."*



## Outline

### I. Eternity.

A. All of the descendants of Adam are created eternal creatures, which do not cease to exist, as animals do.

1. God made man a living soul. (Genesis 2:7)
2. Eternal existence in hell is not eternal life. It is eternal death (darkness, torment, and separation from God).

B. All humans will spend eternity in either heaven or hell.

1. There will be no second chance.

2. Your eternal destiny will be determined by your responses to God and the gospel in this life.
3. We will also be judged according to our works in this earthly life.

C. Nothing in life is as important as our eternal destiny and reward.

### II. Distinct Departments in the Spiritual Underworld.

#### A. Tartarus.

1. A prison in the lowest part of the underworld.
2. Fallen angels are chained there.
3. 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6.
4. These angels fell. Many Bible scholars believe that they are the ones referred to as "sons of God" in Genesis 6:2-4, who seduced human women and produced giants.

#### B. Paradise.

1. "Abraham's bosom." (Luke 16:22)
2. A place in the earth for the spirits of those righteous dead who died before Jesus went to the cross.
3. Jesus told the thief, *"...To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."*
  - a. Not heaven.
  - b. Luke 23:43.
4. After Jesus paid for their sins in eternal redemption, He *"...led captivity captive,..."* and took the saints out of Paradise and into heaven. (Ephesians 4:8)
5. Now, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. (2 Corinthians 5:8)

## C. Sheol-Hades (Hell).

1. The place of darkness, fire, and torments in the earth, for the souls of the wicked dead.
2. The center of the earth is known to be hot and dark.
3. The people in hell could see Paradise; but there was a great gulf between them, so that they could not cross over.
4. After the thousand year reign of Christ on the earth, the souls in hell will be resurrected.
  - a. They will stand before Jesus at the Great White Throne Judgment.
  - b. They will be cast forever into the Lake of Fire.

## D. The Abyss.

1. The Bottomless Pit.
2. Many evil spirits are there, which will be released for a time during the Great Tribulation.
3. Satan will be chained to its wall, during the Millennium.
4. Revelation 20:1-10.

## E. The Lake of Fire.

1. An eternal place of darkness, torment, and separation from God.
2. The destiny of Satan, his angels and demons, and all people who choose to live for themselves in this earthly life.
3. The only hope to escape hell is salvation through the blood of Christ.
4. Jesus said that most people go the broad way to destruction. (Matthew 7:13)

## III. Two Witnesses Who Went to Hell.

## A. The rich man.

1. He wanted to warn his brothers, but he could not.
2. He enjoyed "the good life" on earth; but he is still suffering the agony of hell, and will continue to do so forever.
3. He was a fool.

## B. Jesus Christ.

1. After dying on the cross, Jesus went to Paradise.
2. Then, He crossed over into hell and took the keys of death, hell, and the grave from Satan.
3. Jesus then went back to earth, and to heaven.
4. Jesus was not raised as a ghost; He was raised in an immortal body.



## Spiritual Truths

- Hell was designed for fallen angels. It was not intended for people.
- Hell is an intermediate place for the unbeliever, between death and resurrection unto the Lake of Fire.
- Hell is a place of eternal death (separation from God).
- Hell is full of sin. There is no righteousness in hell.

- There is no peace, no happiness, no pure thought, and no hope in hell.
- Hell is a place of torments (plural).
- People who go to hell will be there because they have rejected the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Many people, who believe that hell does not exist, tell other people to go there.



## Lesson Material

When man invents religions, he never includes the concept of an eternal hell. Man does not naturally want to acknowledge eternal judgment, or the idea of eternal torment for the ungodly. Man will choose to invent ideas like reincarnation (the Hindu concept that we come back and live many earthly lives, rather than facing judgment after this life). Some cults teach that the people who do go to hell will be quickly burned up; and so, they will not exist anymore. The natural man does not like the idea of hell, and would never invent such a doctrine. *"...It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this, the judgment:"* (Hebrews 9:27)

But God created hell for the devil and his angels. When man chose to rebel against God by sinning, he earned the same separation from God. Mankind became a sinful race; and we are all destined to go to hell, unless we repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are five distinct departments in the underworld. The first is Tartarus. It is a prison in the deepest, darkest part of hell, where rebellious angels are held in chains. (2 Peter 2:4) These angels "left their first estate" and became engaged in sexual sins with human women. (Jude 6; Genesis 6:2) This produced giants in the earth. Both Peter and Jude mention fallen angels in connection with the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah. These were cities dominated by homosexuals. Homosexuality is an abomination to God. It is called being *"without natural affection"* (Romans 1:31); *"strange flesh"* (Jude 6); an *"abomination"* (Leviticus 18:22); *"abusers of themselves with mankind"* (1 Corinthians 6:9), and so on. God has a wonderful plan for marriage and family; but, Satan perverts natural desire into that which is unnatural and evil.

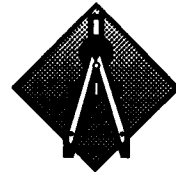
Paradise was a pleasant place. It was in the earth, but not in the same location as the tormenting fire and noxious fumes of hell. It was the place where the righteous dead went. Under the Old Covenant, the sins of God's people were covered by the sacrifices of animals; but there was no eternal redemption, until the "Kinsman Redeemer," Jesus, came to be the "Lamb of God." (John 1:29) When Jesus died on the cross, He paid for all of the sins of mankind, in a way that satisfied God's holiness and justice. Now, the covenant people of God could be led to heaven. As we understand it, Paradise is now evacuated. (Ephesians 4:8-10) To be absent from the body now is to be present with the Lord in heaven. (2 Corinthians 5:8) Of course, there will be a resurrection of the righteous dead. (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17) They will come to earth and receive their bodies, which will be resurrected like the body of Jesus -- immortal and eternal.

Hell (also called Sheol, or Hades) is that place of fire and agony in the earth for the souls of the ungodly who die. This was described in Luke 16 by Jesus. Jesus was not giving a parable or an allegory. He spoke of two real men, who really lived and died. He spoke of a real place. In fact, Jesus spoke more about hell than he did about heaven. Because of our sin, we all deserve to go there when we die. Because of Jesus, we do not have to, if we believe on His name and receive Him as our Savior and Lord. The unrighteous dead will also be resurrected -- unto judgment and the "second death." (Revelation 20:11-14)

The fourth part of the underworld is called the Bottomless Pit, or the Abyss. There are evil spirits there. Satan himself will be chained there for one thousand years, while Jesus rules the earth in peace and righteousness. (Revelation 20:2-4) What a wonderful thought: life without the accuser and the tempter. There will be very few funerals. People will be young, even at 100 years of age. (Isaiah 65:20)

But none of these places are eternal. After the great judgment, death and hell will be cast into the Lake of Fire. (Revelation 20:14) We do not know exactly where that is; but wherever it is, we do not want to go there. This is the eternal abode for Satan and his angels, the Beast, and the False Prophet. All of the unredeemed of the human race will be assigned there, to be forever separated from God, from light, and from hope. No earthly suffering can compare to the horrors of this lake of fire. It is real; and therefore, it is very

important that we live this life right, wisely preparing for eternity. We want to be sure that heaven is our home, and that our name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. (Revelation 17:8)



## Methods

It is important for us as Bible teachers to emphasize what God emphasizes in His Word. God is clear: there is a real place called hell.

Think of a volcano. A volcano is the result of a weak place in the cooled crust of the earth, where the hot magma from the earth's core spews out in a fiery inferno of molten lava. The heat and smell are a taste of hell, which burns with fire and brimstone. Have you ever been burned? Think of your body covered with third-degree burns, with no relief. The one desire of the souls in hell will be to end their torment; but that will not happen.

This is a great time to give an opportunity to repent and pray for salvation. Jude said, "*...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) The fear of the Lord is not negative thought process. It is the beginning of wisdom. (Proverbs 9:10)

# The Witch of Endor

Volume 5

Lesson 17

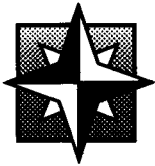


## Bible References

1 Samuel 28

Exodus 22:18

Deuteronomy 18:9-12



## Theme

It is dangerous and foolish to seek after the occult. We need to know that we have spiritual enemies.



## Scripture Reading

1 Samuel 28:7-8, 11-14

7 "Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor.

8 "And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee."

11 "Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? and he said, Bring me up Samuel.

12 "And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul.

13 "And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth.

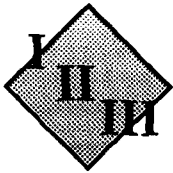
14 "And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, an old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself."



## Memory Verse

1 John 4:1

*"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God:...."*



## Outline

- I. Rebellion Is as the Sin of Witchcraft.**
- A. King Saul had become proud and vain, and had tragically lost God's anointing as the king of Israel.
  - B. Because Saul was not under God's authority, he became subject to demonic oppression and torment.
    - 1. This is the reason that rebellion against authority is like witchcraft.
    - 2. Witchcraft is coming under satanic authority or control.
    - 3. Being under God's authority is being under His protection.
  - C. Since the prophet Samuel was dead and Saul could no longer hear from God himself, he sought for a witch to give him supernatural help.
- II. Seeking a Witch.**
- A. Saul had earlier executed witches and sorcerers, in obedience to God's Word.
  - B. He found a woman at Endor who was possessed by a familiar spirit.
    - 1. A familiar spirit is a demon which can give information about other people to the one he inhabits.
    - 2. Demons cannot inhabit believers who are under God's authority.
      - a. They cannot live in someone who has the Holy Spirit living in his heart.
      - b. Demons are unholy, and they cannot stand God's presence.
    - 3. People with familiar spirits today are called "psychics," or "mediums;" and they usually do not even realize that the source of their "extra-sensory perception" is an evil spirit.
- III. "Samuel" Appears to Saul.**
- A. This woman was accustomed to conjuring up a demon spirit, who would imitate the dead person, or relay information that only a few humans would know.
  - B. Bible scholars differ in their views as to whether this was actually Samuel.
    - 1. This was not actually Samuel.
      - a. God does not violate His own Word, even to perform something supernatural.
      - b. The demon had some true things to say to Saul.
      - c. Satan disguises a pint of lies with an ocean of truth.
    - 2. This was actually Samuel himself.
      - a. This was why the witch was startled when she saw Samuel.

- b. He was able to prophesy the future to Saul.
3. Nevertheless, Saul was clearly in violation of God's Word, because he consulted a witch.

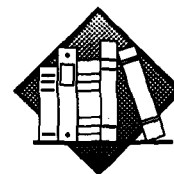
#### IV. The Consequences.

- A. Saul turned in his pride and rebellion to the occult, and committed suicide soon afterward.
- B. Satan only wants to kill, to steal, and destroy. (John 10:10)
- C. Cartoons and movies today seek to make witchcraft and the occult appear good, exciting, and rewarding.
  1. Beware of those who focus on the fantasy of power through magic or through "good thoughts."
  2. "E.T." and "Star Wars" are examples of popular movies which are based on an anti-Christian, occult theme.
- D. Halloween is a satanic holiday, focusing on the occult, death, witchcraft, and all kinds of evil.
  1. Halloween began as a celebration of death and evil by the occult Druid priests of ancient England and Gaul.
  2. They were celebrating the eve of the Feast of Samhain, lord of the dead; and they believed that the evil dead would walk about on the night of October 31st demanding food from the people, and threatening them if they did not give it.
  3. That is where "trick or treat" literally came from.



## Spiritual Truths

- There are spirit-beings in the world who can influence people.
- Good spirits protect and help us as we pray. They are called angels.
- Evil spirits seek to torment, deceive, and damage people. They are called demons, devils, or evil spirits.
- Evil spirits cannot inhabit genuine Christians.
- People open themselves to evil spirits through rebellion against authority, alcohol, drugs, bitterness, or moral perversion.
- These are the last days; and Satan is in a warfare against God's people. We need to be full of the Holy Ghost.
- Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. (1 John 4:4)
- Satan cannot conquer a believer who is under God's covering.



## Lesson Material

This is one of the saddest accounts in history. Saul was the man who had it all. He had been humble, tall, and handsome. He had been greatly anointed by God and chosen to be the first king of the great

nation of Israel -- God's special people. But when he became popular and successful, he started getting an independent spirit. He started "doing his own thing;" and he was rebuked by the prophet, Samuel. After the death of Samuel, Saul was in need of a Word from the Lord. He needed direction; and in his carnal mentality, he was foolish enough to seek out a witch. He was told that there was a woman at Endor who was possessed by a familiar spirit, who had not been executed when Saul was serving the Lord and destroying the occult influences in Israel. Saul disguised himself and went to her.

Familiar spirits are demonic beings who have no physical body; and so they look for people to inhabit and work through, in their work of deception and destruction. They cannot enter a person who has Jesus living in his heart; and so they look for people in rebellion against God, who are not under God's protective authority. Today, people who have a familiar spirit are called "psychics;" or "mediums;" or "people of extra-sensory perception."

This psychic of old made her living by sorcery, spells, and by consulting "the dead." We know from God's Word that the dead cannot come out of hell (Luke 16); but often, a demon spirit was familiar enough with the deceased person to impersonate him, or give the psychic some bits of information -- enough to convince the inquirer that the dead had indeed been contacted.

Bible scholars differ in their views as to whether this "Samuel" which appeared was a familiar spirit, impersonating Samuel, or actually Samuel himself. We will present both views in this lesson material. It is believed by some that God allowed Samuel to attend this dark

meeting to give Saul one last prophetic pronouncement of guilt and judgment. The witch's reaction to Samuel was that of astonishment, because she recognized him as Samuel himself, rather than a familiar spirit. Because he was able to prophesy concerning Saul's demise, and because what he prophesied came to pass, the person could actually have been Samuel.

Others believe that this person was actually a familiar spirit, rather than Samuel himself, because God does not violate His own Word. God was very specific in His law regarding witches, sorcerers, or any other occult practices. The people of Israel were to put to death any who practiced the occult. (Leviticus 20:27) Saul himself had obeyed the law of God, by cleansing the land of witches and sorcerers, before he became rebellious toward God. Now, in his rebellion, Saul violated the very law of God he had previously upheld, by going to consult a witch. The witch called forth a familiar spirit, which so accurately impersonated Samuel, that the witch herself was frightened at its appearance. Note that the spirit impersonating Samuel stated that Saul would soon be where he (the spirit) was, too. Saul died, at his own hand, the death of an unbeliever, in rebellion against God. Samuel died in right relationship with God; and he was in Paradise.

Saul wanted to know about his future, and "Samuel" told him he did not have much time left. He told Saul that God was now his enemy, and that God would give the kingdom to David. He also said that Saul and his sons would die the next day in national defeat. Everything he said came to pass; and Saul died in darkness and despair.



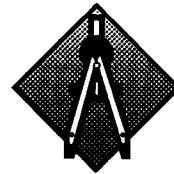
It is tragic that a man so used and blessed by God would sink so low in desperation that he would go to a witch. Yet many Christians unwittingly subject themselves to influences that are also from the dark world of the occult. The children's cartoon industry, accompanied by many toys, games, and gadgets, is being dominated by the occult. Many Christians participate in Halloween festivities. Halloween is based on the traditions and festivals of the ancient Druids, priests of the "lord of the dead" named "Samhain." The New Age Movement is sweeping the land; and it is based on occult principles and myths. Horoscopes are everywhere, and various forms of witchcraft are promoted openly in nations which once were predominantly Christian in philosophy.

God said, *"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."* (Exodus 22:18) Today, governments do not execute witches; but we can help to kill their influence by prayer and by avoiding their deceptions. Instead of being entertained by the world's magic, we should believe God for supernatural miracles. Instead of seeking guidance in horoscopes, we should read God's Word. Instead of flirting with the occult in video games and entertainment, we should hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matthew 5:6), and get as close to God as we can get. Saul was so hardened in his stubbornness that he still did not repent. He shook with fear, and cried; but he did not repent, and so he died the next day, having ended his life as a failure.

As Christians, we do not need to be afraid at Halloween. But we do need to be wise enough to avoid its popular focus on evil and death. Instead of seeking treats from strangers, why not look for ways to give to others? Learn to recognize evil in

programs that present themselves as sweet and innocent children's entertainment, and ask, "What is the underlying message in this? Are they promoting the idea that we should fear our holy God, or is there a focus on power through fantasy or magic? Is this message Christian, or humanistic? Is there a reverence for life and for the Creator, or is there a love for violence?"

*"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above (seek higher things, such as wisdom, love, godliness), where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, and not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."* (Colossians 3:1-3)



## Methods

This is a lesson that is intense, and it should be approached carefully and prayerfully. While we do not want to create a focus on fear and evil, we do want our children to understand that there is evil in the world, and that they need to *"abstain from all [appearance of evil]."* (1 Thessalonians 5:22)

Many Christians still go along with the traditions of Halloween, not realizing that they are all based on occult practices, which are not Christian in philosophy. Discuss the meaning of the phrase, "Trick or treat." (It means, "Either hand me a treat, or I will do you harm." This is called "extortion.") Is this consistent with Christianity? Discuss the focus on ghouls, goblins, witches, and death.

Encourage children and their parents to appeal to teachers in school to provide alternatives to drawing, coloring, or discussing witches. Take a strong stand, if any witches are given opportunities to lecture in schools. Encourage a de-emphasis on Halloween, and a stronger emphasis on the message of Jesus, Who said, "...it is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

If you do a skit or puppet show on this story, be sure to present the woman with a familiar spirit as a normal-looking, or even pretty person. We tend to stereotype a concept of an evil witch as ugly, old, and wearing black, and to stereotype attractive people as good. Let them know that

anyone who deals in witchcraft is evil, even if they seem "nice" and attractive. Remember, Satan does not approach people in red leotards and tails, but appears as "...an angel of light." (2 Corinthians 11:14)

Above all, emphasize that when Christ is living in our hearts, we do not need to fear the supernatural. We believe that there are more angels in God's army than there are devils, and that "*Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*" (1 John 4:4) Encourage all of them to give their lives to Jesus Christ, because "*...he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.*" (1 John 5:18)

# The Time of the Judges

Volume 5

Lesson 18



## Bible Reference

Judges 1-2

2 "And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this?"

3 "Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you.

4 "And it came to pass, when the angel of the Lord spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept."

7 "And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel.

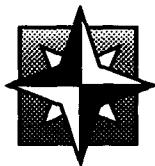
8 "And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old."

11 "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim:"

Judges 3:5, 7-11

5 "And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites:"

7 "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgat the Lord their God, and served Baalim and the groves.



## Theme

In order to become all that we can and should be as a people, we need God-ordained leaders, and a spirit of unity.



## Scripture Reading

Judges 2:1-4, 7-8, 11

1 "And an angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you.

8 "Therefore the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushanarishathaim king of Mesopotamia, and the children of Israel served Chushanarishathaim eight years.

9 "And when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.

10 "And the spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the Lord delivered Chushanarishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushanarishathaim.

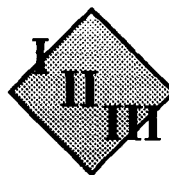
11 "And the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died."



## Memory Verse

Hebrews 13:7

"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation."



## Outline

### I. Israel Under Joshua.

A. The people served the Lord, as long as Joshua lived.

1. He lived 110 years.
2. The people also served God under the leadership of the men who had worked with Joshua.

B. King Adonibezek. (Judges 1:5-7)

1. When the Israelites captured this Canaanite king, they cut off his thumbs and big toes.
2. Ironically, he himself had captured 70 other kings, and had cut off all their thumbs and big toes.
3. You will reap what you sow. (Galatians 6:7)

C. Caleb's challenge. (Joshua 15)

1. Caleb offered his daughter, Achsah as a bride for the man who would take the city of Kirjathsepher.
2. His nephew, Othniel did it, and won his bride.
3. She asked her father for a spring, and he gave her two.
4. Our heavenly Father loves to give us what we need. (Matthew 7:7-11)

### II. The Canaanite Problem.

A. God told Israel to completely drive out the heathen nations from Canaan, lest they teach their children to do evil.

B. Israel failed to drive them all out.

1. They allowed many of them to live as servants.
2. The heathens corrupted Israel, and taught Israel to serve idols and do wickedly.
3. "...*Deliver me from the hand (influence) of strange children,....*" (Psalms 144:11)
4. When you mix the clean with the unclean, the clean do not influence the unclean -- but the unclean will defile the clean. (Haggai 2: 12-13)
5. Do not be influenced by ungodly children. Surround yourself with Christians, who will edify you.

### III. The Judgment and Judges Cycle.

- A. When the Israelites had no strong leaders, they fell into sin and idolatry.
  1. Their sin caused the grace of God to lift from them, and they became divided and weak as a nation.
  2. When they were weak, other nations would rise up and bring them into bondage.
  3. Sin always causes bondage in our lives.
- B. When Israel came under the suffering of bondage, then they would humble themselves and cry out to God.
- C. When they repented, God raised up judges (leaders, or heroes), who would help set them free from the oppression of their enemies.
- D. This cycle happened seven times during the period of the Judges (between Joshua and King Saul).
  1. Blessing and prosperity.
  2. Forgetting God and turning to idols.
  3. Suffering and bondage, as a result.

4. Misery and repentance.
5. God answering, by sending a leader to conquer their oppressors.
6. A time of peace, blessing and prosperity.
7. Cycle repeats.

### IV. The Importance of Leaders.

- A. Without leaders, "...*every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*" (Judges 17:6)
  1. This resulted in division, weakness, and national defeat.
  2. Everyone thinks his own way is right.
- B. God leads us, through leaders.
  1. God is training us to be His army for eternity.
  2. Jesus, the Great Shepherd, sends shepherds to guide the flock. (Ephesians 4:11)
  3. God reveals His plans to His prophets, who tell the people. (Amos 3:7)
- C. God has authority structures in many areas of our lives.
  1. Business (employers).
  2. Family (parents).
  3. Church (pastors).
  4. Nation (governors, courts, legislators, police, etc.).
- D. Obey the "higher authority."
  1. Obey parents, unless they command you to do something God clearly prohibits.
  2. If a school teacher gives an order that is against your parent's convictions, appeal to authority; but

choose to obey your parents, the "higher authority."

3. God and the Bible are the highest authority in life, because God is our final Judge in life.

being obedient, and not by demanding our own way.

- Obedience leads to freedom, and rebellion leads to bondage -- every time.



## Spiritual Truths

- God works through leaders which He appoints and anoints.
- God uses people to train, protect, and encourage us.
- A nation can remain strong and free, only if the people agree to let God and the Bible remain the final legal authority of the land.
- All nations rise and fall, according to their response to and relationship with Jesus Christ.
- America is a blessed nation, because it was founded by Christians and based on the Bible; but, if it continues to forget God, America will eventually become weak, and will come under the bondage of a heathen nation.
- Only a fool admires the rebel who seeks to "do his own thing."
- Fools hate to be told what to do; and they hate to be corrected when they are wrong.
- A wise young person knows that there is safety and blessing under authority; and he knows that we earn freedom by



## Lesson Material

God is perfect, and He never changes. God deals with nations in the same way He deals with individuals. We can learn about ourselves and our relationship to God by the examples in the Bible. *"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."* (1 Corinthians 10:11)

The book of Judges shows us clearly that we need godly leadership, both as individuals and as a church. The nation of Israel did well, as long as Moses or Joshua was there to lead them and tell them what God was saying. After Joshua and his group of leaders died, the people began to drift apart from God and from each other. Without a strong leader, everyone "did that which was right in his own eyes." This is the key phrase in this book; and it is used several times. The people meant well; but they lacked clear direction, and were easily influenced by the heathens in the land. They were not able to defend themselves against oppressors, because it was "every man for himself."

The people of Israel actually set up their own downfall while Joshua was still leading them. God had told them to totally destroy or drive out the seven nations

who inhabited the land; and God gave them the grace to do it. They began the work, by destroying Jericho and Ai. They destroyed many cities; but they did not finish the job. They thought it would be such a waste, and so they kept some of the people for slaves, or allowed many to live next to them, and forced them to pay them tribute. The problem was that these people influenced the people of Israel and their children to serve idols and to do evil. They taught them to use the lewd and sensual music and activities associated with their idol worship; and they corrupted their children. When Israel was without a strong godly leader, Israel fell away from God.

In the early days of America, the Christian founders of this nation based their laws and government on the Bible. Christians taught their children to read, so that they could read the Bible and be spiritually strong. Almost all of the Christians were literate. They could read and write with great skill. All of the early colleges were Bible colleges. The word "professor" means "one who professes the Christian faith." In the 1800's, the ungodly began to pressure the Christians to include heathen children in their schools, promising that they would not hinder the work of teaching the Bible. Over the years, the schools became more and more secular, until, finally, in the 1960's, the Bible was banned from the schools, and the humanists declared that "all public schools are schools of humanism." (Charles Frances Potter) Just as Israel was turned away from God when the people intermingled with the heathens, so also America has turned from God as a nation, in the name of "fairness."

Notice the cycle that is repeated seven times in the days of the judges (between the time of Joshua and the time of the

kings, which began with King Saul). Without a godly leader, the people were more easily influenced by the wicked heathens around them, and were drawn to practice idolatry. They worshipped Baal and Ashtaroht. (Judges 2:13) Baal was a god of wealth and prosperity; and Ashtaroht was probably a form of the Phoenician goddess Astarte, a goddess of sensuality. In our day, we do not make carved and painted images to worship as the Hindus do; but we do have idols. We worship money and sex, although we do not call it worship. But anything that becomes our greatest source of joy, comfort, or security in life is taking the place of God. Our hope and delight should be in God. Those things which become the central focus of our lives and our greatest delight are idols. If a man lives to make money, then he is, in a sense, serving Baal. If a person lives for pleasure, then he is like a worshipper of Ashtaroht.

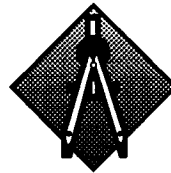
When the people of Israel forgot the Lord and turned to serving idols, they became selfish and divided. Everyone "did his own thing." Not only did they suffer personal consequences because of their wickedness, but they became weak and divided as a nation. When this happened, God allowed other nations to become strong and to conquer Israel. The people suffered; and in their suffering, they remembered that they needed God. They would cry out to God in repentance and humility, and God would have compassion on them. God would help them, by raising up a leader, or "judge," to lead them to freedom. Then, as long as that judge was leading the nation, there was peace and freedom. If he had no godly successor, in a few years the people would drift back into mediocrity and neglect their relationship with God. They would be lured back into idolatry; and then, they would again suffer the consequences. It is

important to note that rebellion and sin always result in bondage, in one form or another. Hollywood preaches that the young rebel is a "free spirit," and that rebellion leads to freedom. "Be assertive, and do not let authorities fence you in." Our movies usually encourage rebellion against parents and other authorities, and promise freedom.

This is a lie. When the people of Israel "did their own thing" and moved away from godly discipline, they were weak; and their enemies conquered them. Sin does not set you free. It makes you its slave. Many young rebels think they are free to drink, smoke, or practice sensuality; but they only become addicted to their sins. Addiction is a bondage -- a form of self-imposed slavery. They can only be free, if they cry out to God in humility. Satan promises freedom; but he is a deceiver. *"While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage."* (2 Peter 2:19)

The way to freedom is to surrender your life to God, and to obey His authority. Jesus did not come to put us under the bondage of rules, but to set us free from the bondage of sin. Sinners sin, because they are bound by sin. We serve God,

because His grace makes us free. *"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."* (John 8:36)



## Methods

### Discussion Questions:

1. Who was Othniel? Have you ever even heard about this courageous leader?
2. Is Hollywood promoting a deception, when it portrays the "angry young rebel" as one who is free?
3. Does our society tend to portray Christians as stiff, unhappy people who are bound up with laws and traditions, while heathens are generally portrayed as free and happy?
4. Can you gain more freedom at home by asserting your rights, or do you earn more freedom by submitting to your parents?
5. Did God give us parents to prevent us from having a good time, or do they protect us spiritually and socially?



# Ehud, the Terminator

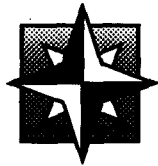
Volume 5

Lesson 19



## Bible Reference

Judges 3



## Theme

When there is bondage and fear in your life, God can set you free.



## Scripture Reading

Judges 3:12-22,30

12 *"And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord: and the Lord strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord.*

13 *"And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek, and*

*went and smote Israel, and possessed the city of palm trees.*

14 *"So the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years.*

15 *"But when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised them up a deliverer, Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man left-handed: and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab.*

16 *"But Ehud made him a dagger which had two edges, of a cubit length; and he did gird it under his raiment upon his right thigh.*

17 *"And he brought the present unto Eglon king of Moab: and Eglon was a very fat man.*

18 *"And when he had made an end to offer the present, he sent away the people that bare the present.*

19 *"But he himself turned again from the quarries that were by Gilgal, and said, I have a secret errand unto thee, O king: who said, Keep silence. And all that stood by him went out from him.*

20 *"And Ehud came unto him; and he was sitting in a summer parlour, which he had for himself alone. And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he arose out of his seat.*

21 "And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly:

22 "And the haft also went in after the blade; and the fat closed upon the blade, so that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly; and the dirt came out."

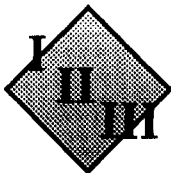
30 "So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest fourscore years."



## Memory Verse

John 8:36

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."



## Outline

### I. King Eglon.

A. Eglon was king of the Moabites.

1. The nation was descended from Lot's daughter -- the result of an immoral union.
2. The Moabites were enemies of Israel.

B. Eglon conquered Israel, and oppressed them for 18 years.

### II. Israel in Bondage.

A. Israel did evil; and so God helped Moab conquer them.

1. God uses enemies to chasten His people unto repentance.
2. Throughout Israel's history, God used many nations to turn their hearts back to Him.
3. Psalms 78 gives a concise history of Israel.
  - a. When Israel was prospering, they tended to forget God.
  - b. When they were suffering, they turned to the Lord.
  - c. "When he slew them, then they sought him:...." (vs. 34)

B. God used Moab and other wicked nations to chastise His people; and then He judged those nations for the way they mistreated Israel.

C. Obedience to God brings freedom; and rebellion brings bondage.

D. "...Trodden under the foot of men." (Matthew 5:13)

1. "Ye are the salt of the earth:...." (Matthew 5:13)
2. Salt is a preservative, as well as a flavoring.
3. If the salt has lost its savor (Christ-like quality), it is good for nothing.
4. It will be "...trodden under the foot of men."
  - a. Man, or "manism" (humanism).
  - b. Israel drifted from God, and was trodden under the foot of Moab.
  - c. The church in many nations has lost its savor; and it is being trodden (oppressed) by humanism in the courts, in the media, and in the schools.

- d. This should turn our hearts to repentance.

### III. Ehud.

#### A. Ehud was a mighty man of valor.

1. He was left-handed.
2. He fashioned an 18-inch two-edged dagger.

#### B. Ehud went to the king, offering a gift.

1. He then offered a "secret" present.
2. Eglon sent everyone out of the room.
3. Ehud killed him with the knife in his left hand, while he distracted him with his right hand.

#### C. Eglon's servants waited outside, while Ehud escaped out the window.

#### D. The battle.

1. Ehud mobilized the men of Israel, and led them against the Moabite army.
2. Eglon's soldiers were also overweight and out of shape.
3. 10,000 lusty Moabite soldiers were killed. (Judges 3:29)
4. Israel had 80 years of peace, after Eglon was killed.

#### E. The name, "Ehud" means "united."

1. When people are in one accord with each other, they can help each other to be free from bondage.
2. People who are each doing their own thing can never get complete victory over the sins that hold them in bondage.

### IV. Freedom.

A. Freedom is not the right to do what I want, but rather, the power to do what I ought to do.

B. Moab was a type of sin, which seems to be a friend, until it is strong enough to enslave us.

C. Ehud (unity in the church) is the key to freedom.

D. When Israel was oppressed by the bondage of their enemy, they cried out to the Lord; and the Lord raised up a man to lead them.

1. God uses people to minister blessing and freedom to other people.
2. God's servants seek to help people to walk in liberty, and not more bondage.
3. Satan wants us to think that there is freedom in rebellion; but true freedom is the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. (Galatians 5:1)



## Spiritual Truths

- Satan is most successful in his work to deceive and oppress, when he gets people alone.
- God is by nature a gatherer; and the devil is by nature a scatterer.
- People tend to become like the leadership they are following.

- The church tends to be trodden under the foot of "manism", when it loses its distinctive flavor of holiness and becomes like the world.
- When the church is oppressed by humanists, it should cry out to God with repentance, rather than run to court to demand its rights.
- God loves us enough to let us suffer, when we do evil.



## Lesson Material

The message of a secular world view is that "the way to freedom is self-assertiveness -- revolution. Demand what you want, and do not let some oppressive authority tell you what to do." Secular television and many educators reinforce this concept with fictional stories of young people who bucked the establishment, threw off the restraints of traditional society, and received the reward and adoration of heroes. There is, in our world, a constant barrage of scenes and stories depicting sin without consequences, and rebellion without loss.

This is a lie of a false world view. Sin is not satisfying; and rebellion is not the path to freedom. Rebellion against God-ordained authority results in loss of trust, joy, peace, protection, and freedom. Israel was a clear example of this truth over and over again, particularly during the period of the judges. Without a leader, the people became independent -- each trying to do the right thing. They drifted from God; and therefore, they were easy prey to the

heathens around them, who lured them into the worship of their false gods. The Canaanites worshipped gods who represented money, power, and sex. The Israelites who were spiritually weak were attracted by their carnal minds to do evil. They did this, even though they knew about the true God, and knew that the gods of the heathens were false. When we are spiritually weak through lack of prayer, worship, etc., we are easily deceived and scattered.

Jesus said, "*Ye are the salt of the earth: If the salt have lost his savour (Christ-likeness),...it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.*" (Matthew 5:13) The church today is being buffeted and mocked by secular society. Christians are the butt of media comedians; and Christians are made the villains in the movies. Christians are scorned in the papers and news tabloids, and are increasingly attacked in the courts. While the sodomites and other people who practice moral perversions are being accepted as "normal minorities," Christians are losing more and more freedoms. History revisionists are now teaching children that America was never a Christian nation, and that the Bible should have no part in public life.

What is going on? What happened to the nation that was "one nation under God?" The problem is that America has done the same thing that Israel did. The church in America has lost its savor. While there are some churches and individuals who are serving God wholeheartedly, the nation as a whole is full of professing believers, who simply want heaven and God's blessings without any personal responsibility or sacrifice. We want a crown without a cross, and salvation without repentance. We want

imputed righteousness so that we can go to heaven; but we do not want imparted righteousness so that we can be holy. We go to church; but, during the week, we blend in with the world like chameleons. We do not take a stand against drunkenness or divorce any more. The church is being "trodden under the foot of man (humanism)." As God allowed Eglon to oppress His chosen people until they repented, so also He is allowing secular influences and other heathen nations to step on Christians. We can fight back to some degree in the courts, legislatures, and voting booths; but we will not have freedom from such oppression, until we have a genuine spiritual revival.

As the psalmist pointed out, Israel had a tendency to become spiritually weak, when there was peace and prosperity. It was during times of hurt and stress that they got serious with God. When God smote them, then they sought Him. It is so easy to speak against the evils of communism, humanism, and the New World Order, which are seeking to destroy Christianity and freedom in the world. However, if the Christian community was strong in spirit and building godly families, these oppressors would not have such an influence. If people prayed before they voted, they would not keep voting in the kind of leaders they do.

When Israel turned from God to "doing their own thing," they got into bondage. One way or another, sin always results in bondage; but obedience produces freedom. The world says, "Be assertive, and demand your rights, and you will get respect." This is false. Try out the opposite on your parents. Notice that the more you obey and respect them, the more they will respect and trust you. This is part of the law of reciprocity -- that is, "You will reap what you sow." (See Galatians 6:7) If you

sow disrespect to authority, you will reap distrust and punishment. If you sow faithfulness, you will reap privileges and rewards. Parents tend to put more restraints on those who are the most irresponsible. The way to freedom throughout life is obedience and cooperation, and not rebellion.

Moab was an enemy nation, located to the southeast of Canaan. When Joshua was the leader of Israel, Moab had to pay them tribute (taxes). But when Israel was "independent," Moab rose up, and then Israel was oppressed and taxed. The stronger heathen nation was able to spoil their land and take what they wanted of their wealth. The Moabites killed many of them; and the rest lived in fear and poverty for eighteen years. The nation of Moab was God's rod to chasten (spank) His people, until they saw the evil of their ways, and turned back to the Lord.

When the people repented and had a genuine spiritual revival, God heard their prayers and had compassion on them. Actually, God loved them so much that he allowed Moab to conquer them, because otherwise they would have kept on in their sin. Jesus loved the Pharisees enough to call them "*vipers*" and "*whited sepulchers, ... full of dead men's bones.*" (Matthew 3:7; Matthew 23:27) It is the goodness of God that leads men to repentance. (Romans 2:4)

The story of Ehud is a fascinating, true account of the man God raised up to deliver the people of Israel. The king of Moab was an enormously large man named Eglon. He was the archetype of the self-indulgent glutton. It is interesting to note that his people were like him. When the battle against Moab was over, it was noted that ten thousand Moabites who were killed by Ehud's army were all

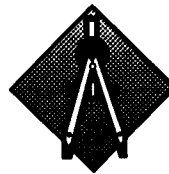
"lusty." We do tend to become like our leaders, for better or worse. Whatever we focus on, we become like. Let us focus more and more on Jesus. Jesus has no negative traits at all; and so, the more you become like Him, the better person you will be.

Ehud was talented, courageous, and left-handed. For him, it was a gift, because after he persuaded the king to meet with him alone in the royal chamber, he distracted Eglon with his right hand, while he pulled out the 18-inch knife he had made for the occasion. This was his "secret present." When he plunged the knife into the king's belly, the fat closed in around the knife, and he could not pull it out. Eglon fell dead to the floor; and Ehud escaped out the window.

The king's servants and officers waited and waited outside the door, until they were embarrassed. They thought perhaps he was in the bathroom; but this was ridiculous. By the time they came in and discovered the body, Ehud was long gone. He was then able to rally the discouraged Israelite men; and they won a great victory.

The name "Ehud" means "unity." We are weakest, when we are each trying to "do our own thing." When God rules our hearts, He gives us a greater ability to love one another and work together. Paul said that we should be "*endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*" (Ephesians 4:3) As Christians, we have to work at staying in one accord, by honest communication, forgiving one another, and restoring those who stumble. We need to speak positively about one another, and always remember that Satan loves to sow "discord," or disunity among brethren. God is a gatherer by nature; but

the more carnal Christians are, the more likely they are to break up into smaller and smaller churches, consequently having far less impact on the secular community than they would, if they had more unity.



## Methods

This is not a story that is often used in Sunday School lessons, but there are some valuable truths to be learned.

Note that this is not a story God gave to embarrass overweight people, but to illustrate a principle. It is also a true story. Discuss the spiritual principle behind the sin of gluttony, and that weight is not necessarily proof of gluttony. Also, not all gluttons are fat. Do not judge; but rather, have compassion on the "weaker" brother or sister.

*Other topics of discussion:*

Salt (the preservative element in a society, or world) losing its savor, and being trodden under the foot of "manism." Is it happening today?

How important is unity to an overcoming church? Do you see evidence that rebellion is being encouraged today by sensual music? Youth-oriented movies? Cartoons? Secular education?

Have you ever earned freedoms or privileges, by being obedient and faithful? Does rebellion result in freedom, or bondage? How?

# Deborah and Jael

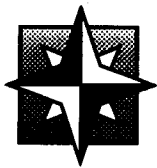
Volume 5

Lesson 20



## Bible Reference

Judges 4



## Theme

God works through people to accomplish His purposes on earth; and He uses women, as well as men.



## Scripture Reading

Judges 4:1-9

1 *"And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, when Ehud was dead.*

2 *"And the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host was*

*Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles.*

3 *"And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.*

4 *"And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time.*

5 *"And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.*

6 *"And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedeshnaphtali, and said unto him, Hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded, saying, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun?"*

7 *"And I will draw unto thee to the river Kishon Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand.*

8 *"And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go.*

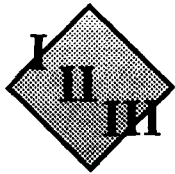
9 *"And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh."*



## Memory Verse

Psalms 18:3

*"I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from my enemies."*



## Outline

### I. Deborah, the Prophetess.

A. After Ehud's death, the people of Israel did evil again, and turned from God.

1. Again, God allowed an enemy nation to conquer them and bring them into bondage.
2. This time, it was Jabin, king of Canaan.
3. He oppressed Israel for 20 years.

B. Deborah.

1. She was a leader who could still hear from God.
2. The people recognized her as one who had wisdom.
3. She was one of the "judges," or godly leaders of Israel.

C. God uses women.

1. There were also other female prophets in Israel's history.
  - a. Huldah.

b. Anna.

2. Philip had four daughters who prophesied.
3. Esther courageously saved the Jewish people from death under the Persians.

D. Deborah was married, but her husband was not the noted leader she was.

### II. Barak.

A. Deborah called him to lead an Israeli army against General Sisera's army.

B. Sisera had 900 chariots of iron.

1. Each chariot held several soldiers, and was an effective help in battle.
2. The charioteers did not have to run or carry weapons.

C. Barak's reluctance.

1. "I will only go, if you go, too."
2. Apparently, his faith was not as strong as hers; and he recognized that she was more spiritually mature.
3. Deborah said, "Very well, but the honor of killing Sisera will go to a woman."
4. This was to be an embarrassment to Barak, because war was considered "man's work."

D. Barak and Deborah led an army of 10,000 against the Canaanite army.

1. General Sisera escaped on foot.
2. The soldiers of Sisera were all killed, because God helped the Israelites.



### III. Jael.

#### A. Jael was the wife of Heber.

1. They were descendants of Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses.
2. Jael's family was at peace with king Jabin.
3. But, Jabin did not know that they were somewhat related to the Israelites.

#### B. When General Sisera was running from Barak's army, he came to Jael's tent.

1. She beckoned him inside, and said, "Do not be afraid."
2. She gave him milk from a goatskin "bottle," and put a blanket over him, so that he could sleep.
3. While he was sleeping, she nailed his head to the ground with a long tent peg.
4. Jael was long remembered for her courage.

- One plus God is a majority against any size army of heathens.
- The key to spiritual victory is not what we can do for God, but whether or not we are yielded enough for God to do it through us.
- Sometimes we can escape an aggressive, powerful attack from a known enemy, and then be lulled to sleep and overcome by a subtle temptation while our guard is down.
- Samson was an example of a man who could not be defeated by any army; but he was defeated by one woman, when he least expected it.
- Men have greater physical strength than women; but women tend to have greater powers of influence.



## Spiritual Truths

- God uses women, as well as men, in the ministry.
- Sometimes women have an advantage in spiritual battle, because they can more easily recognize that their strength must be in the Lord.
- In spiritual warfare, and in eternity, your physical strength means little compared to the importance of being mighty in spirit.



## Lesson Material

Judges 4 is certainly a chapter of the Bible in which the women outshine the men. While most of the judges of Israel were men, we note that throughout biblical history, leadership was not limited to men. The power for effective ministry is in the Holy Spirit; and it has nothing to do with our physical or intellectual ability. The greatest heroes of faith were those who could surrender their wills to God and let God work through them by His grace. The more we try to conquer in our own strength, the more we fall in defeat.

In Jeremiah 17:5-6, the prophet said, "...Cursed {be} the man that trusteth in

*man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, (in) a salt land and not inhabited.*" In other words, if you rely on natural ability, you will not succeed in spiritual warfare.

The bondage that Israel suffered because of their sin is a picture of the bondage we suffer when we are not under God's authority. Satan lures us away from God with the promise of "freedom" to do what we want, while all along, his goal is to ensnare us with evil. Multitudes of young people have indulged in harmful substances, habits, or immoral behavior, thinking that they were free. But the result was always guilt, pain, suffering, bondage, shame, and sometimes death.

After Ehud died, the people did not have a strong spiritual leader, and so they each "did their own thing." They did not have unity; and they became weak. We need to know that we not only need God, but we need the church and its godly preachers to lead and feed us according to God's Word. Woe to the people who are allowed to "do their own thing." The safest place is always in the will of God, under God-ordained leadership.

After 20 years of oppression under king Jabin, the people of Israel again cried out to God in repentance. God showed Deborah, the prophetess, that it was time to set Israel free; and that Barak was to lead the army against Jabin's army, which was led by General Sisera. Barak was willing, but only if Deborah would go with him. He had some faith; but because he had more faith in her faith than in his own, he did not completely do the job as he should have.

Deborah then prophesied that the honor of slaying Sisera would go to a woman.

God did mightily help the ragtag army of ten thousand men under Barak. Though the army of the Canaanites was larger and well-equipped, they were no match for the men who went in the Name of the Lord. God gave them strength and strategy; and they completely wiped out the enemy -- that is, all except Sisera. He escaped on foot in the heat of battle, and made it to the tent of a woman named Jael.

Sisera probably did not know that it was a woman who had initiated this disastrous attack on his army; and he certainly did not suspect that this gentle woman who was graciously inviting him in would take his miserable life. After making him feel safe and warm, and putting him to sleep, Jael took a tent peg and nailed it through his head with a hammer. When Barak came through in his search for Sisera, she called him in and showed him the body.

This is an illustration for any of us in the warfare of life. Satan is our enemy. He seeks to destroy our relationship with God; and he wants death for everyone, especially Christians. We battle things such as bitterness, anger, lust, greed, and other temptations. Sometimes we can run from some obvious threat, and then be lured by a subtle trick of the enemy that we do not even recognize as a temptation. For instance, some people have easily overcome temptations to steal, or cheat, or to indulge in some carnal habit; but then they get caught up in gossip, seeking to "share their concerns for a brother." We can think we are doing well in the holiness department, and then get nailed by pride, or some other subtle enemy that drains our spiritual vitality. Pride is so

subtle an enemy, that we never think we have it, when actually we do. We can even become proud of our "humility," and not recognize that we are being overcome by a subtle spiritual sin. We need to always be on guard, because if the devil cannot turn us from God with one kind of temptation, he will try other, more subtle devices.



## Methods

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This lesson focuses on the principle that the most important key to spiritual victory is our ability to rely on God's strength, and not on human ability. We think of warfare as a test of our strength; but our spiritual strength comes from being humble, and not from being smart. If we are proud of our ability, we will

actually become spiritually weak and vulnerable, because *"...God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace (the desire and power to live God's way) to the humble."* (1 Peter 5:5)

This is also a lesson on the subtle aspects of temptation. When Satan cannot overcome some people with obvious temptations, he lures them with the temptation of spiritual sins, such as pride.

Why did Jesus tell the Pharisees that *"...the publicans and the harlots will go into the kingdom of God before you"?* (Matthew 21:31)

It is because the tax-collectors and prostitutes were involved in obvious sins, and therefore, they easily recognized their need of salvation. The sins of the Pharisees were spiritual, and so they thought that they were righteous before God.

# Abimelech the Bramble

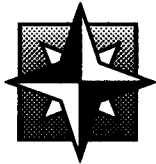
Volume 5

Lesson 21



## Bible Reference

Judges 9



## Theme

Wherever there are groups of people, there will be leaders; and we need to be careful whom we choose as leaders.



## Scripture Reading

Judges 9:5-15, 20-21

5 "And Abimelech went unto his father's house at Ophrah, and slew his brethren the sons of Jerubbaal, being three score and ten persons, upon one stone: notwithstanding yet Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left; for he hid himself.

6 "And all the men of Shechem gathered together, and all the house of Millo, and went, and made Abimelech king, by the plain of the pillar that was in Shechem.

7 "And when they told it to Jotham, he went and stood in the top of mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice and cried, and said unto them, Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you.

8 "The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us.

9 "But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?

10 "And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, and reign over us.

11 "But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?

12 "Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us.

13 "And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?

14 "Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us.

15 "And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon."

20 "But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech.

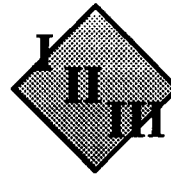
21 "And Jotham ran away, and fled, and went to Beer, and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech his brother."



## Memory Verse

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

"And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake."



## Outline

### I. The Mistakes of Gideon.

A. After Gideon delivered Israel from the Midianites, he settled down to retire, and he had many wives and children.

1. He had about 70 sons.
2. One son was by a concubine, who lived in the city of Shechem.

B. Gideon's failures.

1. He took an offering of gold and had an ephod (garment) made; and it became a snare, because the people began to worship the object as an idol.
2. He had a son by a wrong relationship; and that son destroyed his posterity.
3. He failed to raise up a successor for his leadership from among his legitimate sons.
4. He failed to lead the people of Israel spiritually; and when they turned from God, they rejected his family.

### II. The Evil Abimelech.

A. "Abimelech" is a title, which means "father of kings."

B. Abimelech wanted to be king of Israel.

1. He decided that the way to be king was to destroy all those who were legitimate heirs to the place of leadership.

2. He appealed to the people of Shechem, since he was their "brother."
3. Together, they killed the sons of Gideon (also called "Jerubbaal").

C. But Gideon's youngest son, Jotham, escaped death; and he stood on Mount Gerizim to give a prophetic word to his wicked half-brother.

### III. Jotham's Parable.

- A. Jotham shouted out a prophetic parable about the evil leadership of Abimelech.
- B. Jotham gave an analogy, which is a way of illustrating one concept by picturing it with other figures.
- C. The analogy of trees.
  1. The trees represent the people.
  2. Different kinds of plants represent different qualities in leaders.
- D. The four kinds of leaders.
  1. Olive tree.
    - a. Olives were used to produce oil.
    - b. Oil represents anointing.
    - c. People need a leader who is anointed by God.
  2. Fig tree.
    - a. Fig trees are fruitful.
    - b. If the anointed leader is not available, people will turn to someone who is productive.
  3. Vine.
    - a. A vine produces wine, which is a type of joy.
    - b. If there is no anointed or productive leadership available, at least get someone who can make us happy.
  4. Bramble.
    - a. A bramble is a low-life, thorny bush, which produces nothing of value.
    - b. When people reject good leadership, they will get bad leaders.

### IV. The Curse of Abimelech.

A. Before he ran, Jotham pronounced a curse on Abimelech and the men of Shechem. (See Judges 9:19-20)

1. "If you have done rightly in killing all of my brothers, then go in peace."
2. "If you were evil, then may you turn against each other and devour one another."

B. Three years later.

1. The men of Shechem did turn against Abimelech; and he killed most of them.
2. When he attacked Thebez, a woman in the tower threw down a piece of a millstone, crushing his skull.



## Spiritual Truths

- Sooner or later, evil people tend to turn against one another, because the root of human evil is selfishness and greed.
- A wise leader will establish a successor to his work, recognizing that he will not be around forever.

- The consequences of a sin may take years to come about; but, they will come.
- When people seek God and honor His name, God raises up good leadership for them.
- When evil people are in leadership, the people are sad. (Proverbs 29:2)
- The first and most important quality of a leader in the church is the call of God. If God did not choose him, he cannot possibly be a good spiritual leader, no matter how smart or popular he is.
- When people are living in sin, they are not able to make good decisions; and often, they support ungodly or ineffective leaders.
- We should bless our parents and pastors, because the more they are blessed, the more we tend to be blessed in life.



## Lesson Material

Gideon was a popular hero in Israel, after God used him to conquer the Midianite army and set them free. It is interesting that Gideon was so reluctant to be a leader; and yet, God chose him. Ultimately, God's purpose is to have a theocracy, which means "ruled by God." The first quality of a leader in God's economy is that he is a faithful follower of God, and a good listener. God has various reasons for selecting individuals for various positions of leadership. We should not become proud if we are chosen

to be a leader; but we should be faithful to do whatever God calls us to do.

Gideon was always a reluctant leader. The fact that he delivered Israel is far more an evidence of God's faithfulness than of his. He seemed eager to retire from public life, and he never seemed to be ambitious. He apparently made no attempts to establish one of his sons as Israel's leader. Perhaps he sought to avoid the accusation of nepotism; but this lack of foresight caused his descendants great harm. After he died, there was no legitimate leader for the nation.

Gideon had many wives and about seventy legitimate sons. When there is a leadership vacuum, wrong leadership tends to rise to power. It is also human nature that when people are living selfish, sinful lives, they tend to come under bondage one way or another. People tend in a democracy to vote themselves into bondage, because they will be attracted to leaders who appeal to their greed, instead of to their conscience. The people of Israel had turned their hearts from serving God; and God allowed them to come under wicked leadership.

In Isaiah 19, the prophet spoke against the nation of Egypt. Essentially, the curse was applied against them because of their evil ways. Among the several curses mentioned by Isaiah was the curse of foolish leadership. God said that He would see to it that they would have fools for leaders, who would make foolish decisions. They were also cursed with a severe lack of unity, a demoralized population, and an increase in humanism, astrology, and witchcraft. We always find more new age humanism, moral perversion, and cult activity in nations which turn from God and the Bible.

Abimelech was the son of Gideon and a heathen woman from Shechem. He was a "half-breed;" but, he wanted to be a king. He rallied the men of Shechem; and they murdered the seventy sons of Gideon, in order to claim the right to leadership. In nations and in churches, there are always a few who seek to have power over others. Some hope that there are no legitimate leaders, because then they can rise to power.

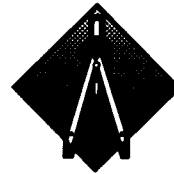
But one son, Jotham, escaped; and he stood on Mount Gerizim and shouted a curse against his half-brother before he fled. He gave the parable of the trees. This was an analogy about leadership. The trees (people) wanted a king to lead them. They came to the olive tree, but he did not want the job. Olive oil is a type of anointing. All leaders who were chosen by God were anointed with oil, as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. This is the most important quality of a leader. Is he chosen and anointed by God? He does not have to be the smartest, or the oldest, or the most popular person in the group; but if he is God's choice, he will be the best leader.

The fig tree represents fruitfulness. If the most anointed person is not available, get someone who is doing a job -- who is faithful at doing what he is doing. Some people spend a lifetime wanting to be a leader, and they never do anything of any consequence in life. Sometimes, a person becomes a leader because he is the only person around who is going somewhere.

The vine is not a tree; but the trees are desperate for a leader. The vine produces grapes; and, in the Bible, wine is a type of joy. If the anointed and productive people are not willing to lead, then at least get someone who can bless people and make them happy. Get someone who has some joy.

The bramble bush is the last choice -- the "bottom of the barrel" of leadership. Jotham was saying that Abimelech was a thorny bramble bush, and not a legitimate leader of the trees. He produces no fruit. In fact, he produces painful thorns. He brings people down, under his shadow. Lacking a good leader, the trees ask the bramble bush to lead.

Jotham then pronounced a curse on Abimelech and the men of Shechem: "...let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech." (Judges 9:20) After three years, the curse came to pass. They turned against one another; and many of the men died, fighting against Abimelech. He and his followers killed many of the people, including a thousand men and women who were in a tower in Shechem.



## Methods

Discuss the successes and failures of Gideon, and the character of Abimelech.

What is an allegory? Did Jesus use allegorical concepts, in order to illustrate human situations? Where did other Bible writers use allegories? (Psalms 1, Jeremiah 17, etc.)

Emphasize the character qualities of leaders that are illustrated by the types of trees in Jotham's story.



# An Attitude of Gratitude

Volume 5

Lesson 22



## Bible References

Psalms 95

Psalms 136

1 Thessalonians 5:18

2 "Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

3 "For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

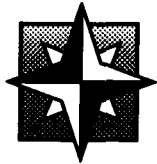
4 "In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also.

5 "The sea is his, and he made it; and his hands formed the dry land.

6 "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.

7 "For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To-day if ye will hear his voice,

8 "Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, {and} as {in} the day of temptation in the wilderness:"



## Theme

It is important for us to praise and thank the Lord every day, as well as to set aside time for worship and thanksgiving.



## Scripture Reading

Psalms 95:1-8

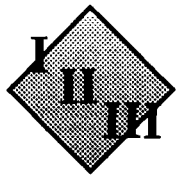
1 "O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.



## Memory Verse

1 Thessalonians 5:18

"In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."



## Outline

### I. The First Thanksgiving in America.

- A. The Pilgrims came to the New World to escape religious persecution and intolerance.
1. They braved great hardships to leave England, where they were not free to worship God.
  2. They wanted to live in a Christian community, centered around the church.
- B. The first Pilgrims sailed on the Mayflower; and they landed at Cape Cod in 1620.
1. They established a covenant under God's authority, since they were not a part of the Virginia, territory as planned.
  2. One leader was a young Christian named William Bradford.
- C. God protected and provided.
1. Almost half (47) of the people who came on the Mayflower died that first winter.
  2. But God had provided an area that had not been inhabited by Indians for several years.
  3. It had been inhabited by the Patuxet tribe.
    - a. It was a large and fierce tribe, who had murdered every white person who had come to their shores.

- b. In 1616, four years before the Pilgrims arrived, they all died with a mysterious illness.
  - c. Other Indians were afraid to settle there, for fear of the "curse."
4. That first spring, God sent an Indian named Squanto, who had been captured and taken as a slave to England.
- a. Squanto taught them to fish, hunt, and grow crops.
  - b. He had been saved from the plague that destroyed his people; and now he had a purpose for living.
5. That October, they set aside a day for a Thanksgiving celebration.
- a. 90 Indians came to join the feast.
  - b. They brought 5 deer and a dozen turkeys.
  - c. They had such a good time of fellowship that they stayed for 3 days, eating and playing games.
6. The Christian Pilgrims recognized that God had kept them alive and had provided all they needed.
- D. Thanksgiving became a part of our American culture.

### II. The Importance of Giving Thanks.

- A. *"In everything give thanks..."* (1 Thessalonians 5:18)
1. Whatever happens.
  2. *"...All things work together for good...."* (Romans 8:28)
- B. *"...For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus...."* (1 Thessalonians 5:18)
1. Everything that happens to us?

2. No. The will of God in Christ Jesus is that you give thanks to Him in everything.
  3. God wants to teach us to have the character quality of thankfulness.
- C. Giving thanks for all things. (Ephesians 5:20)
1. Not only in, or in spite of things that happen.
  2. Thank God, even when you do not see the good side.
  3. When we do not understand, but trust God anyway, that is faith.
- D. Why do some people steal?
1. Poverty does not cause crime.
  2. People do not steal because they are poor, but because they are ungrateful, and have not learned to respect money, other people, or themselves.
  3. The right therapy for a thief is hard work. (Ephesians 4:28)
- C. Other people are encouraged, when we thank them personally.
1. Express thanks to people often.
  2. People enjoy blessing those who show gratitude.
- D. Giving thanks helps us maintain a Christian world view, with God at the center of our life.



## Spiritual Truths

### III. The Benefits of Thanksgiving.

- A. The habit of giving thanks helps us to have a more grateful spirit.
1. Always receive food with thanksgiving.
  2. Gratefulness and humility go together.
- B. Thanksgiving strengthens our faith in God.
1. We remind ourselves that God is our Source.
  2. We tend to focus more on God's ability, rather than our situation.
- It is good for us, spiritually and emotionally, to habitually and lavishly give thanks to the Lord.
  - Praise is declaring God's power and goodness; while thanksgiving is acknowledging His blessings.
  - "Providence" is a word used to describe the way God works in quiet, mysterious ways in our lives.
  - God may be preparing a person now to help you with a problem or need you will have in the future.
  - God loves to meet human needs by using other people and the gifts and resources He is developing in them.
  - An attitude of gratitude is a strong defense against the spiritual diseases of bitterness and selfishness.
  - A grateful spirit is not determined by the amount of blessing or benefits received, but by the character of the heart.

- Crime is not caused by poverty, but by a selfish heart which is stirred by an ungrateful attitude.
- The cure for crime is not money or social programs; it is hard, physical work.



## Lesson Material

In the days of King James I of England, life for Christian believers was very hard. The king, although he was the one who had commissioned the translation of the Bible into English, was a weak and immoral man. The church was ruled by a group of bishops, who controlled the people with an iron fist and kept them in religious bondage. The Church of England was full of corruption, wickedness, and external pretenses.

There were two groups of born-again believers in England. One was a group who sought to purify the church, while continuing to attend the meetings. They were mockingly called "Puritans" by the bishops. The other group was the "Separatists," who felt that God wanted them to establish new churches in which they could worship God, pray, and preach the Word of God freely. Pastor John Robinson led a thriving congregation of about 600, although they were fiercely persecuted by the Church of England. They usually lost their jobs and businesses; and even the children had to work 12 to 15 hours a day for almost no pay. They were often arrested; and some were even executed for their faith. The government went along with the powerful, established

church, and eventually ordered all who would not bow to the Church of England out of the country.

Later, through great effort and hardship, some of the people made plans to go to the New World, the land called "America," which was beginning to be colonized by some British people. They knew that these colonies were ravaged by starvation, disease, and hostile Indians; but they felt that God was leading them to a land of opportunity for religious freedom. Since most of the church had to stay behind, Pastor Robinson also stayed; and he sent elder William Brewster as the pastor of the first group. For sixty-six miserable days, the one hundred and two members of the church huddled below deck on the small ship "Mayflower," in an area the size of a volleyball court. They had had many delays, and so it was late fall when they sailed, and the seas were rough and often stormy. Their room was dark, foul-smelling, and constantly pitching from side to side. One crew-member was especially harsh, mocking these "stupid" Christians, and telling them how pleased he would be to sew their bodies into bags and feed them to sharks when they died. But God is not mocked. That same sailor suddenly became violently ill with a strange fever, and died in one day. He was fed to the sharks.

In December of 1620, they sighted land and found a perfect place to settle, although it was far north of the Virginia Colony they had intended to find. God had prepared a place for them. This area (now in Massachusetts) had been inhabited by a large and fierce tribe called the Patuxets, who had killed every white person who had come there. But a mysterious plague wiped out every member of the tribe there; and other tribes feared to inhabit the area, because of "evil spirits." So they found a

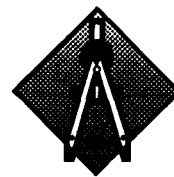
good harbor and a large, cleared area for a town and crops; and they were relatively free from Indian hostility. They labored until they were exhausted in the cold winter weather, building a common house and trying to survive on the small amount of food left on the Mayflower. Many succumbed to the harsh conditions -- forty-seven of them died before spring.

One day in March, an Indian walked into their camp; and, in perfect English, he asked them if they had any beer. They gave him a meal, and found that he was a chief who loved to travel. He had learned English from the ship captains who had given him rides along the coast. His name was Samoset, chief of the Algonquins. He told them that the Nauset tribe was hostile to white men, because some of them had been captured, along with some Patuxets, and sold as slaves in England. A few days later, Samoset returned with another Indian. He was one of the Patuxets who had been a slave in England; but he had earned his freedom and eventually returned home, only to find his people wiped out. His name was Squanto. He had been lonely and depressed, but now he decided that he had found a reason to live. Squanto "adopted" these kind Christian Pilgrims; and he taught them to fish, hunt, and trap.

During the spring, John Carver, the governor of the group, suddenly died; and William Bradford was elected to be the new leader. The summer of 1621 saw the building of a town, and, thanks again to Squanto, the beginning of trading with some Northern Indian tribes. The crops were plentiful, and so Governor Bradford declared a day of Thanksgiving. Chief Massasoit was invited. He arrived a day early, with ninety of his braves. They had brought some game for the feast. The celebration went so well that it lasted for

three days, with praise to God, fellowship, and recreation. By the way, the Pilgrims did not dress in plain black clothes. They often dressed in bright colors. Their defense leader, Captain Miles Standish, often wore a bright red cape. They also knew how to laugh and play. They were happy Christians. This was a celebration of thanksgiving to God; and it has been celebrated by Christians in America, and in some other countries as well.

Thanksgiving in America is a national "holiday" -- a purely Christian one. This holiday has been the one least corrupted and diverted by non-Christians. Of course, thanksgiving is not something we do only once a year; but it should be a part of our daily lives. We should cultivate an attitude of gratitude, by giving thanks to God every day for all that He provides and does. We should never eat a meal without expressing thanks to God; and we should begin every day and every prayer with thanksgiving. It is also good to thank people often, even for the little, "everyday" things. When we make a habit of being thankful, we become more positive, happy people. Thanksgiving is an important part of every believer's daily life.



## Methods

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Discuss the Pilgrim's Mayflower adventure of 1620.

What kind of picture did you have of the Pilgrims? Had you been led to believe that they were sour, drab-looking people?

Were you taught that they came to America, in order to escape religious persecution from the corrupt Church of England?

Do you believe that God had been working in Squanto's life for years to prepare him to help the Pilgrims? Does

God know in advance what we will need in the future?

How do you feel about people who come across as grateful? Do you like to bless them? How do we generally respond to people who seem unthankful?

# Biblical Keys to Joy

Volume 5

Lesson 23



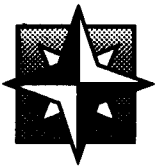
## Bible References

Psalms 42, 43

John 15

Romans 14:17

Psalms 121



## Theme

No matter what your circumstances in life, you do not have to be depressed or miserable. You can decide to lift up your head and rejoice in the Lord.



## Scripture Reading

Psalms 42:1-11

1 *"As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.*

2 *"My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?*

3 *"My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?*

4 *"When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.*

5 *"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of His countenance.*

6 *"O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.*

7 *"Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all the waves are gone over me.*

8 *"Yet the Lord will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.*

9 *"I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? who go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?*

10 "{As} with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where {is} thy God?"

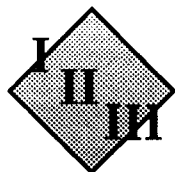
11 "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."



## Memory Verse

Psalms 42:11

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."



## Outline

### I. David's Background and Circumstances.

- A. As a boy, David had been overlooked by his father and brothers because of his youth.
  1. He was the youngest of eight sons.
  2. While his brothers were sent to war, David's job, as the youngest, was to tend sheep.

3. When Samuel asked to see his sons, Jesse at first presented only the seven oldest.

B. David was abused, mistreated, and cheated by his employer, King Saul.

1. Saul, threatened by David's popularity and success, tried many times to kill him.
2. David was hunted as a criminal and forced to live as a fugitive, even though he had done nothing wrong to Saul.

C. David was betrayed by people close to him, and rejected by many.

### II. David's Success.

A. David was called "a man after God's own heart." (1 Samuel 13:14)

1. He suffered hardships, and he made some serious mistakes; but his heart was always after God.
2. David sinned; but when convicted, he admitted his sin, and repented.
3. David was willing to be corrected; and he loved God.

B. When David was down and discouraged, he turned to the Lord.

### III. Cast Down.

A. David talked to his soul.

1. Our soul is our mind, will, and emotion.
2. Our soul is also our personality, the self-conscious part of our being.
3. Every one of us has a spirit (God-conscious part), a soul (self-



- conscious) and a body (sense-conscious).
4. David was mighty in spirit; and so he could keep his soul (emotions) under the control of the Holy Spirit.
- B. Cast down.
1. David was a shepherd, and he used a shepherd's term.
  2. Sometimes a sheep with a heavy coat would fall on its back. With its tiny legs, it could not get up, without a shepherd picking it up.
  3. This was called being "cast." A cast sheep was helpless by itself, and could die.
  4. To be emotionally "cast down" is to be depressed.
- C. "Soul, why are you cast down, and why are you disquieted?" (Psalms 42:5, paraphrased)
1. "Disquieted" means "anxious: troubled, in anguish, disturbed."
  2. David was troubled and depressed; and he confronted his emotions.
- D. What should I do, when I am depressed?
1. Decide, as David did, to focus on hope.
  2. Put your hope in God.
    - a. Hope is a positive expectation for good.
    - b. Give your expectations to God, and look up. (Psalms 121)
  3. Satan wants us to focus on our circumstances and on ourselves.
    - a. That will really pull you down.
    - b. You are depressed, when you are down and cannot lift yourself up.
  4. Hope will keep you emotionally and mentally steady. (Hebrews 6:19)

#### IV. The Key to Victorious Joy.

- A. When David was discouraged, he encouraged himself in the Lord. (1 Samuel 30:6)
- B. When David was afraid, he would focus on God, and build up his trust. (Psalms 56:3)
- C. When David lost his joy, he turned to the Lord and asked God to restore it. (Psalms 51:12)
  1. The key to joy is being in God's presence. (Psalms 16:11)
  2. And under God's authority. (Romans 14:17-18)
  3. Happiness is an emotion of the soul; but joy is a fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22)
  4. We can have joy in any circumstance, if our trust and focus is in God.



## Spiritual Truths

- If you are negative and focused on yourself, nothing can keep you happy for long.
- If your heart is focused on God, no circumstance can take your joy away.
- Joy is not an emotion; it is a positive response in our spirit to the presence of God and the hope that He brings.
- Pleasure is a poor substitute for joy; and it never lasts long.

- When you are living in God's joy, the pleasure He brings lasts forever. (Psalms 16:11)
- The pleasures of sin make you weak and defeated; but the joy of the Lord is your strength. (Nehemiah 8:10)
- You cannot be emotionally stable, without spiritual hope.
- The secret of joy is to look to God and His Word, and not to self or the world.



## Lesson Material

When you are going through discouraging times in life, there is nothing like the Psalms to lift you up and to show you the right response to any situation. David experienced every emotion you will ever face; and he learned to make the right responses. He experienced life to the fullest. He knew tremendous popularity, success, wealth, and power. He also went through many times of rejection, abuse, neglect, injustice, failure, and defeat. His secret is not that he was always perfect, for he was not. He was human, and he had some major failures. The key to his wonderful life was his attitude and his relationship with God. He genuinely, sincerely, and honestly loved God. He loved God's presence, God's Word, and God's people. He went through the gamut of human emotions; but his heart was always toward God. When he was down, he looked up to God as his help and strength. When he was successful, he acknowledged God as his source. When he was happy, he gave God the credit. When

he sinned, he took the responsibility and asked God's forgiveness. Up or down, he looked to God. God said, in effect, "That is my kind of man." (See Acts 13:22)

David had many reasons for feeling lonely and depressed. As the youngest, his job was to tend the sheep, while his older brothers were sent to defend Israel. His only chance to participate in war was to bring supplies to his brothers. When Samuel came to anoint one of Jesse's sons to become king, David, out in the fields with the sheep, was forgotten (that is, until God revealed to Samuel that David was His anointed). Instead of succumbing to self-pity, David prayed, practiced his music, and became a strong athlete. Instead of becoming bitter, he "lifted up his eyes" to the Lord, and became mighty in spirit. He could have made excuses. After all, he had a hard and lonely childhood. Instead, the hard place became a training ground for excellence.

Some children today are depressed, because they do not have all the advantages that others seem to have. Many are living with one parent; or are struggling to make ends meet. Some may have abusive or alcoholic fathers, or no father at all. Some live with parents who do not love each other; and that can really make a child insecure. If they divorce, the children feel that they are to blame; and the hurt and loss go very deep. But you do not have to let circumstances control your attitude. Hard situations will make you stronger if you learn, as David did, to let them motivate you to seek God. God does not exist to solve our problems. Our problems are there to drive us toward God. Your problems will either make you bitter or better, depending on your "I" problem, and your faith response. Your spirit is a little like your body. If you work your muscles hard, if they experience strong

resistance regularly, they will become strong. More muscle cells will develop, and you will have the freedom to do exploits. However if you spend your time lying in front of a television set or riding everywhere in a soft car, you will be bound by a sluggish and weak body. Hard work will make you strong, while a sedentary lifestyle can shorten your life.

Psalms 42 was one of the many songs that David wrote in response to his many circumstances in life. It is a classic. David starts out with a key to his success in life. He sought God with all his heart. *"As a hart panteth after a water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."* (Psalms 42:1) David was thirsty for God.

What do people desire in life? When asked, most people today would say, "I want love, peace, or happiness for myself." Most people focus on the soul, or on physical things. But David was mighty in spirit; and he focused on eternal things. He realized that things will pass away, but God and heaven are eternal. Even as a boy, David wanted God. He loved God, and he loved the house of God. He had learned the principle: *"Delight thyself also in the LORD; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart."* (Psalms 37:4)

We need to understand the difference between pleasure, happiness, and joy. Pleasure is primarily a response of the body. Happiness is an emotion of the soul. Joy is a function (fruit) of the Spirit. There is pleasure in sin "for a season." But pleasure in sin is a poor substitute for the joy of the Lord. Pleasure depends on situations and feelings. Happiness depends on happenings. We can only be happy when we feel good, and when life is going well.

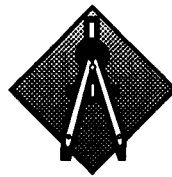
Joy is a character quality. It is a function of the spirit. Joy depends on a real relationship with God in the spirit. Joy is a result of faith and obedience to God. Joy is a part of the kingdom of God. "Kingdom" means, "king's domain." If we are under God's authority as His children, then we are free from the kingdom of darkness, and we are living in the kingdom of God. Jesus said, *"...The kingdom of God cometh not with observation (it is not something that will come as an earthly event)...behold, the kingdom of God is within you."* (Luke 17:20-21) The kingdom of God is not in Rome, or Jerusalem, or Missouri. The kingdom of God is in the hearts of those who are under the rule of the King. When sin and Satan rule our lives, we are living in the kingdom of darkness. *"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink (physical things); but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."* (Romans 14:17)

In Psalms 42, David is communing with his soul through his spirit. His spirit is alive, because he is a forgiven child of God. His spirit is stronger than his soul, and it also rules over his flesh. Emotionally, he is depressed. He sees the circumstances in his life, and he is down. Perhaps it is a gray, gloomy day. He did experience some serious rejection, betrayal, and loss in his life. He had best friends turn viciously against him. He was discouraged to the point of depression. What kind of therapy did he need?

David knew that he needed to build up his hope, because hope is the anchor of the soul. (Hebrews 6:19) That is, hope keeps you emotionally steady, even when the "sea of life" is rough and stormy. Hope will keep you from being overcome by depression. The best hope is hope that focuses on God and His purposes. God is good; and God never fails. God is also

eternal. Putting your hope and trust in God will always lift you up. Putting your hope in people, even yourself, is a problem, because people are very human -- people fail.

We build our hope by magnifying God in our thinking, and by focusing our attention on eternal things. Worship and praise the Lord. Read the Bible. Remind yourself of all the great things God has done. He has never failed yet -- and He is not going to. He is perfect, and He loves you. "Why are you cast down, soul? Why are you down? Why are you so troubled? Look up. Hope in God. I shall praise Him. God is the one who helps my countenance to reflect joy. The presence of God in my life puts the smile and glow on my face." *"...In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore."* (Psalms 16:11)



## Methods

### Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss the difference between your body, your soul, and your spirit.
2. Then, relate the differences between pleasure, happiness, and joy.
3. How would a secular psychologist counsel David?

(He would probably encourage David to blame his parents or Saul for his mistakes in life, and to deal with "guilt feelings" by exchanging guilt for bitterness.)

5. How can we build our hope up when we get emotionally depressed?
6. How did David "encourage himself in the Lord?" (1 Samuel 30:6)

# God Made Flesh

Volume 5

Lesson 24

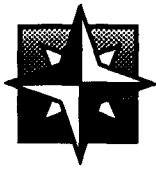


## Bible References

John 1

1 John 5:17

Isaiah 7:14



## Theme

The Incarnation is the message of Christmas. God the Word became the God the Son -- "Immanuel" ("God with us").



## Scripture Reading

John 1:1-5,10-12,14

1 *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

2 *"The same was in the beginning with God.*

3 *"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

4 *"In him was life; and the life was the light of men.*

5 *"And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."*

10 *"He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.*

11 *"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.*

12 *"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."*

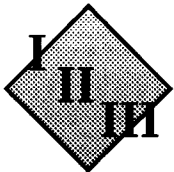
14 *"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth."*



## Memory Verse

Isaiah 7:14

*"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."*



## Outline

### I. Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)

#### A. Jesus Christ, the God/Man.

1. "Immanuel" means "God with us."
2. The message of Christmas is that the infinite, eternal, omnipotent God sent His only begotten Son into the world, to give His life for the sins of lost humanity.

#### B. Jesus is the Word.

1. "Word" means "an expression; a verbal communication."
2. Jesus is the greatest revelation of God ever given to man.
3. "...He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,...." (John 14:9)
  - a. Jesus is not God the Father, but the revelation of what He is like.
  - b. God has revealed Himself through His Son. (Hebrews 1:2-3)
  - c. Other revelations of God.
    - 1) Angelic proclamation.

- 2) Miracles.
  - 3) Creation. (Romans 1:20)
  - 4) Prophets.
4. Christians should reflect, imitate, and communicate the reality of Who Jesus is with their lives.
    - a. "...We are ambassadors for Christ...." (2 Corinthians 5:20)
    - b. "Be ye therefore followers of God,...." (Ephesians 5:1)
    - c. "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ,...." (2 Corinthians 2:15)

#### C. Jesus is the Creator of the universe.

1. Co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit.
2. Jesus is the second Person of the Trinity in order; but He is not inferior.
3. Jesus did not begin life 2,000 years ago.
4. He emptied Himself of glory, and became a man. (Philippians 2:6-7)
5. He did not rule the universe while He was a man; but He submitted to the Holy Spirit.

### II. A Virgin Shall Conceive.

#### A. Mary was a teenager with a pure heart.

1. She was engaged to be married, but she had kept herself morally pure for her wedding night.
2. She loved God with all her heart.

#### B. An angel appeared to Mary. (Luke 2)

1. He told her that she would be "overshadowed by the Holy Ghost."
2. She would become pregnant, and her son would be the Son of God.

3. Mary was not sinless; but she was honest, and she was God's chosen vessel.

### III. The Trinity.

#### A. God is three distinct Persons, yet one God.

1. The Father.
2. The Son.
3. The Holy Spirit.
4. 2500 times in scripture, God's Name ("Elohim") is in the plural form.
  - a. The singular form of the word "God" is "El."
  - b. But it is used with a singular verb.
5. God said, "...Let us make man in our image..." (Genesis 1:26)
6. We cannot understand the Trinity, because God is greater than we can imagine.

#### B. God the Father.

1. He is Spirit, and has no physical body. (John 4:24)
2. He is love. (1 John 4:8)
3. He is perfect in holiness and justice.

#### C. God the Son.

1. Jesus is an eternal, omnipresent Spirit; but He also has a physical body, which is now glorified.
2. Jesus is "...the fulness of the Godhead (Trinity) bodily." (Colossians 2:9)
3. Jesus was sent by the Father; and He became a man.

#### D. The Holy Ghost.

1. Also a Spirit, with no physical form.

2. Always glorifies Jesus.

- E. In the incarnation, the Father sent the Son, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost.

### IV. Other Messianic Prophecies of Isaiah.

- A. *"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end...."* (Isaiah 9:7)

1. He would fulfill God's promise to David that his descendent would be on the throne forever.
2. Jesus was descended from David, and was of the tribe of Judah.
3. Luke 1:32-33.

- B. *"The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek;...."* (Isaiah 61:1-2)

- C. *"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief:...."* (Isaiah 53:3)

1. John 1:11.
2. Luke 23:18.

- D. *"...He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter...."* (Isaiah 53:7)

- E. *"I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting."* (Isaiah 50:6)

- F. *"But he was wounded for our transgressions,...."* (Isaiah 53:5)

- G. *"...He bare the sin of many,...."* (Isaiah 53:12)

- H. *"And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death;*

*because he had done no violence,  
neither was any deceit in his mouth.”*  
(Isaiah 53:9)



## Spiritual Truths

- Jesus was not part man and part God, but very man and very God.
- The doctrine of the Trinity could never have been invented by man, because the mind of man cannot conceive of one God who is three distinct Persons.
- Mary was a fine young girl who was descended from David. She was not perfect; but she was chosen to be a very special mother.
- We should never pray to Mary. Jesus taught us to pray to the Father in His name. (John 14:13)
- Isaiah lived centuries before Jesus came to earth; but he prophesied about Him in amazing detail and accuracy.
- Jesus came to earth in humility and meekness; and the people who were looking for a Messiah of earthly power could not understand that.
- Jesus showed by His life on earth that the way to honor is humility; the way to receive is to give; and the key to a full life is dying to self.
- Jesus was sent to earth by the Father to redeem fallen man; and He was empowered by the Holy Spirit during His earthly ministry.



## Lesson Material

Our God is an awesome God. He is so great, that the mind of man can only receive a small part of Who He is and what He is like. We cannot comprehend infinity; and there is no limit to God. For centuries, men have struggled with the God Who is revealed in the Bible as one God, yet three Persons. Our natural intellect tends to reject that; and so we interpret the revelation of the Trinity to mean either that there are three Gods, or one Person with three personalities. Some have argued that Jesus is the Father and the Holy Ghost, because they prefer a God who can fit into their frame of reference. The natural mind can conceive a "oneness" theology, but not a Trinity. Throughout scripture, this doctrine is confirmed over and over again. Even the name "God" in the Hebrew Bible is "Elohim," the plural form of "El;" and it is generally used with a singular verb form. We see God revealed in many aspects and with many perfect characteristics; but He is revealed as three Persons. *"For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."* (1 John 5:7)

Jesus was not merely a good man who taught wise principles about life. He was, and is, uniquely the Son of God. This title, "Son of God," is a little misleading to us; but it is the closest concept we have to describe the relationship. In human terms, there is a rule that sons must be younger than their fathers. But Jesus is just as old and just as great as God the Father. He is the Creator and Lord of the universe, along with the Father. There is a perfect



sense of love and loyalty in their relationship. Jesus was sent to earth by the Father, after 4,000 years of preparing the human race for His coming. One principle of life is that the "...glory of children are their fathers." (Proverbs 17:6) Jesus always gloried in and glorified the Heavenly Father. The Holy Spirit is also part of this great bond of glorification. When He is present in people's lives, He tends to glorify the Father and Jesus. Each Person of the Trinity exalts and delights in the other Two. This is the greatest indication of the distinction of persons; and yet, They are one God.

When man sinned against God, he became unworthy of God's holy presence. God is so holy, that He cannot look on sin. Yet, at the same time, God is also perfect in love. The only way God could reconcile these aspects of His character was to both demand the death penalty for sin, and then pay the price Himself. To reconcile lost humanity to Himself, there must be a perfect sin offering which could be identified with man, the object of God's redeeming love. God had to become man, because no man could ever become God.

After centuries of promise and prophecy concerning this Messiah, or anointed leader, God sent His Son into the world. The Holy Ghost came upon Mary, a teenage girl who was untouched sexually, and fertilized the egg in her womb. The child Jesus was unique among men, because He had an earthly mother, but not an earthly father. He did not inherit the sin nature we receive at birth. He never sinned; therefore, He was a Lamb without spot or blemish. (1 Peter 1:19) He shed perfect, holy blood, as the price for the sin of the world.

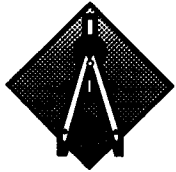
The word "incarnation" means simply "to be made flesh." Some men, inspired by

Satanic deception, invented the idea of "reincarnation," which is the teaching that our souls can be placed in bodies over and over again. This is a lie. We have one body, which will be resurrected and glorified (or cast into the lake of fire, as the case may be). At the incarnation, the "second" Person of the Divine Trinity, Who is an eternal and infinite Spirit, came to earth and received a human body in the same way that all humans (except Adam and Eve) received bodies -- through pregnancy and birth. Perhaps the Jewish leaders were looking for a Messiah who would come to earth as a gloriously arrayed adult, without the humbling process of conception and physical birth.

The coming of the Messiah to the earth was accomplished quietly and simply. The angel of God told Mary that this child was to be named "Jesus," which means "God Who is Salvation." Of course, this Man would have many other names and titles, because He would be the center of human history -- the most important Person Who ever lived. Without Him, every human would be forever cut off from God. There would be no hope and no expectation, except for the eternal torments of hell. We note that Jesus did not come to earth and die for the angels who sinned. Satan and his angels have no hope. They cannot be saved if they want to, because there is no plan of salvation for them.

But for us, there is hope. Because the death penalty has been paid, there is no need for any other sacrifice for sin. We are not to do penance for our sins; but we are commanded to repent, and to confess our sin to God, asking for His forgiveness. When we pray in Jesus' name for God's forgiveness, God is legally able to forgive us, and to wash us clean. (1 John 1:9) It is like being in court, and pleading guilty. As long as we try to justify ourselves, we are

condemned, because God has all of the evidence. He knows every sin we have ever committed. When we confess our sin, He is able to grant a full pardon, because the penalty has been paid in full. Now we can turn from living for self (this is called "repentance") and begin to live for God. We are born again spiritually, and we enter into eternal life through Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit dwells within us and enables us to live in freedom, wisdom, and joy. Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow!



## Methods

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This lesson emphasizes several important truths, which should be familiar territory to young people who

have had Bible training. The doctrine of the Trinity is an important one to reinforce, because it is constantly under attack by people who want to reduce God to the level of their comprehension. It is important that we teach young people to accept the revelation of God's Word, even if it is beyond their natural ability to understand. Indeed, so many people who teach children make the mistake of trying to make God and the Bible so simple, that the children grow up with the idea that the Bible is "kid's stuff." Remember that it is better to leave them with a sense of awe about God, and with the realization that God is far greater than we can imagine.

Another word to focus on is "incarnation," emphasizing the difference between Jesus and other people. Ask, "In how many ways was Jesus like other men? How was He unique?"

# Mary and Joseph

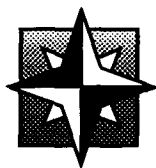
Volume 5

Lesson 25



## Bible Reference

Luke 1



## Theme

Mary was a fine young girl, who was blessed and used by God for a special ministry. She should be respected and honored, but not worshipped or prayed to.



## Scripture Reading

Luke 1:26-38

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.

36 "And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age:

*and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.*

37 *"For with God, nothing shall be impossible.*

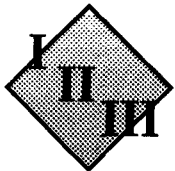
38 *"And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."*



## Memory Verse

Genesis 49:10

*"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."*



## Outline

### I. God's Plan for a Messiah.

#### A. Jesus.

1. One who would come from God and be the Savior for lost humanity.
2. He would be of the promised seed of Abraham. (Matthew 1:1)
3. He would be the Lamb of God, to take away the sins of the world. (John 1:29)

#### B. Christ.

1. The anointed one of God.
2. He would be God's Prophet, Who was promised by Moses. (Deuteronomy 18)
3. He would be the Teacher, Who would reveal God's kingdom to men.

#### C. Messiah.

1. He would be of the royal seed of David.
2. The Lion of the Tribe of Judah. (Revelation 5:5)
3. He would fulfill God's promise that a descendent of David would be on the throne forever. (Luke 1:32, Isaiah 9:7)

#### D. Son of God.

1. Conceived by the Holy Ghost. (Luke 1:35)
2. No human father.

#### E. Son of Man.

1. Jesus was of the seed of Adam, racially.
2. Son of Mary.
3. Born in a manger in Bethlehem.

### II. Mary.

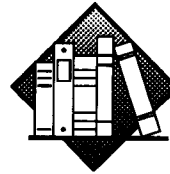
#### A. God's servant.

1. A young girl, probably about 15 years old.
2. Engaged to Joseph.
3. A virgin.
  - a. No sexual activity.
  - b. Kept pure until her wedding.

- c. Committed to a marriage, but not consummated.
- B. Descended from David.
1. The Messiah must be from David.
  2. Tribe of Judah.
  3. Born in Bethlehem. (Micah 5:2)
- C. Mary is not to be worshipped or prayed to.
1. She was an ordinary girl, who loved God, was from the correct lineage, and was a virgin.
  2. Joseph and Mary later had at least five children of their own.
  3. After the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary lived a normal, married life.
  4. We are not to pray to any angel or dead believer.
  5. Jesus taught us to pray to the Father in His name. (John 14:13)
- III. The "Magnificat."**
- A. The angel Gabriel.
1. The primary messenger angel.
  2. He appeared to Mary in her home in Nazareth.
- B. The message.
1. You are very blessed by God.
  2. You will conceive in your womb.
  3. You will have a son, and His name will be JESUS.
  4. He will be great, and will be given the throne of David.
- C. Mary's response.
1. She was troubled.
2. "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" (See Luke 1:34)
- D. The explanation.
1. The Holy Ghost will come upon you. (Luke 1:35)
  2. With God, nothing is impossible.
- E. "...Behold the handmaid (servant) of the Lord;...." (Luke 1:38)
- F. Mary went to her cousin Elizabeth, who was six months pregnant with John the Baptist.
1. When Elizabeth saw her, she was filled with the Holy Ghost.
  2. John leaped in the womb.
  3. She blessed Mary.
- G. Mary's "Magnificat" (expression of praise). (Luke 1:46-55)
1. "...My soul doth magnify the Lord,
  2. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my saviour...." (Luke 1:46-47)
  3. Mary exalted God and prophesied, by the anointing of the Holy Spirit.
- IV. Joseph.**
- A. He learned that Mary was pregnant.
1. He planned to quietly divorce her.
  2. He did not understand that she was pregnant without a physical union with a man.
- B. Gabriel paid Joseph a visit in a dream, and explained everything.
- C. Joseph and Mary went together to Bethlehem, the hometown of David's direct descendants, because of the tax proclamation of Caesar Augustus, the current Roman Emperor.

1. This fulfilled the prophecy that the Messiah would be born there.
2. In Bethlehem, there was no room for them; and so Jesus was born in the stable, where they spent the night.
3. Joseph, the "step-father" of Jesus, was also descended from David.

through His Word, the Bible, or through parents and pastors.



## Lesson Material



## Spiritual Truths

- Mary was a fine young girl, who was descended from David. She was not perfect; but she was chosen to be a very special mother.
- We should never pray to Mary. Jesus taught us to pray to the Father in His name.
- God promised King David that a descendent of his would always be on the throne. Jesus fulfilled that promise, because He will reign forever.
- God loved Joseph; but in choosing the line for the Messiah, He chose the tribe of Judah, which means "Praise."
- There are more than three hundred specific prophecies in the Old Testament about the Messiah; and Jesus fulfilled all of them.
- The birth of Jesus was a miracle, but God is never limited to natural laws which He established.
- God can speak through angels or dreams; but He usually speaks to us

The Old Testament is full of amazing and specific prophecies about the coming Messiah of the human race. Indeed, the underlying purpose of that covenant and of the nation of Israel was to bring forth this central Personage of history. From the time that God first killed animals to provide a covering for Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:21), God had been preparing mankind for the day when He would send His only begotten Son into the world as a sin offering for the human race. God's purpose in creating us was relationship with Himself. Sin broke that fellowship; but Jesus came to restore fallen man to the loving Heavenly Father, by paying the legal penalty of death for sin.

The love and character of God are really the keys to the story of Christmas. Mary and Joseph were willing servants, but they were not central to the story. Note that in all of the accounts by the apostles, relatively little is said of Mary, and almost nothing about Joseph. They were good people; but, ultimately, they were just two of the many people who figured into the life story of our wonderful Savior, Jesus Christ.

Some religious groups, notably the Roman Catholic church, have developed traditional tales over the centuries, to the point that Mary has been "deified" in the minds of millions of people. Certainly, she was blessed and favored by God; but her

whole focus was to honor and bless God. How grieved she must be as one of the "cloud of witnesses" viewing the unfolding drama of earthly events, to see that people pray to her, and even worship her as the "queen of heaven." Actually, the only reference in the Bible to the "queen of heaven" was a reference to a false idol – a goddess who was worshipped with lustful practices. (Jeremiah 7:18) All of our worship should be directed to the Father, to Jesus, and to the Holy Spirit. Jesus Himself taught us to pray to the Father in His name. (John 14:13)

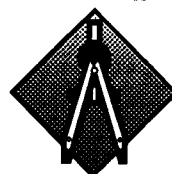
However, because of religious tradition, or out of fear for the God with Whom they have no relationship, many people do not pray to God. They are quick to pray to saints, especially to Mary, with the false notion that God is harder to approach, and that a gentle saint might make intercession for us. But the Bible clearly teaches us not to seek anyone as a "mediator" to approach God for us. We should go to God in prayer. Jesus wants us to learn to relate personally to our loving Heavenly Father. The only Mediator we should recognize between us and God is Jesus Himself. (1 Timothy 2:5) This worship of Mary is sadly reminiscent of the tendency of some early believers to worship angels -- a practice that was also forbidden by God.

As simple people developed traditions over the years centering on Mary and other mediators, they also focused much attention on relics, statues, and images. People have such a tendency to focus on images, even though God specifically forbade Israel from making any graven images. They would say, "This image just represents God;" but eventually, people would simply worship the image, instead of God. It was a constant danger for Israel; and it still is today. We tend to focus on

the vessel, instead of the treasure. Even in the most biblical of churches, our fleshly nature is to focus more on the preacher or the organization, rather than on the Christ Whom they are trying to exalt.

Mary was a vessel God used; but she was not sinless, and she was not born of a virgin, as some traditions claim. She also did not remain a virgin after the birth of the Messiah. That was not at all necessary for God's plan. She enjoyed a happy, normal life with Joseph, Jesus, and with his half-brothers and sisters. Mary needed Jesus to die on the cross for her sins, too.

Mary had a cousin named Elizabeth, who was an old, barren wife of the priest, Zechariah. God had done a miracle for her earlier, by opening her womb so that she could conceive a child. This miracle baby was John the Baptist, who would be the forerunner of Jesus, the Son of God. He was six months older than Jesus. When Mary came to visit Elizabeth after the angel appeared to her, John leaped in the womb, and his mother was filled with the Holy Ghost. (Luke 1:41) Luke recounts the "Magnificat," or the prophetic statement made by Mary to Elizabeth. Read Luke 1:46-55, and note that these are the words of a teenager who is anointed and blessed by God to speak. Mary's focus was on her loving Heavenly Father. Should we not follow her example?



## Methods

In recounting the story of Mary, we need to emphasize the imbalance that has been perpetuated and enhanced over the

centuries by religious traditions, and teach that Mary was an ordinary girl whom God used to bring the Messiah into the human race. We do not want to belittle this fine girl; but neither do we want to condone her deification.

We are not against the Catholics per se, because there are many who genuinely love God. They do believe the Apostle's Creed, which contains the basic doctrines of orthodox Christianity. ("Orthodox" means "true saying.") However, the Roman church has added many traditions and notions which are contrary to God's Word; and these errors must be opposed by those who defend the faith. These errors include infant baptism, prayers for the dead, purgatory, indulgences, penance, prayers to the saints, salvation through the church and its sacraments, and the near deification of Mary. Mary is not the "mother of God," or the "queen of heaven." We are not to pray to her, or to

ask her to pray for us. She is one of many good people whom God used to fulfill His plan for the human race. All born-again Christians are "sanctified ones," or "saints," whether living or dead; and *"...there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."* (1 Timothy 2:5)

Discuss the feelings Mary must have had through all of this. How did Joseph feel about it? Why did God not send His Son to mankind, with more glory and dignity?

Read together and discuss the Magnificat. Emphasize that Mary was anointed by the Holy Spirit in this prophetic utterance. Make sure that the students realize that the Holy Spirit desires to anoint them for His service, too.

What is a mediator? Where do we learn that Jesus is our only Mediator?



# Jesus is the Bread of Life

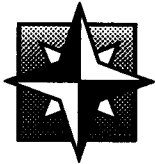
Volume 5

Lesson 26



## Bible Reference

John 6



## Theme

Jesus is the Bread of Life -- the Source of the abundant life.



## Scripture Reading

John 6:31-35, 40-41, 43-44, 47-48, 51-53, 63, 66

31 "Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

32 "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

33 "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

34 "Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

35 "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

40 "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

41 "The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven."

43 "Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.

44 "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."

47 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

48 "I am that bread of life."

51 "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

52 "The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

53 "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."

63 "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

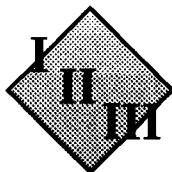
66 "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."



## Memory Verse

John 6:51

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever."



## Outline

### I. The Setting.

- A. Jesus had fed 5,000 men, plus the women and children, with one boy's lunch of five loaves and two fish.

- B. He had sent the disciples across the Sea of Galilee overnight, while He stayed to pray.

1. The storm came while they were sailing at night.
2. Jesus walked on the sea; and He taught them about faith.

- C. When the crowd saw that Jesus was gone, some got into boats to find Him.

1. They asked Him when He arrived. (John 6:26)
2. Jesus told them they were seeking Him only for bread. (John 6:27)

### II. The Bread of Life.

- A. The questions from the people. (John 6:28-31)

1. The people asked Him how to do the works of God.
2. Then they asked Him for a sign.
3. They wanted something like the manna their fathers had in the desert.

- B. Bread. (John 6:32-35)

1. Jesus told them the source of manna and the source of the True Bread were the same: His Father.
2. "...I am the bread of life:...." (vs. 35)

### III. Eat My Flesh.

- A. Jesus told them that the true bread was His flesh, which he would be giving for the life of the world.

1. Jesus gave His physical life for the sins of the whole world.
2. We are to be partakers of Christ.

**B. Transubstantiation.**

1. Some religious people believe that when we take communion, the wine and bread actually become the blood and body of Christ.
2. This is not true. They are symbols. (John 6:58, 63)

**C. This is a spiritual communion, and not merely physical.**

1. Verse 63 -- "*...The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*"
2. Jesus did not just speak to our minds, (souls). The Bible is written to the spirit.
3. That is why very intellectual people can study the Bible and not comprehend it at all, because they are spiritually blind and dumb. (1 Corinthians 2:14)

**D. Jesus spoke of a spiritual principle, which the people could not understand with their natural minds.**

1. Many of them left Him, and never followed Him again. (John 6:66)
2. Many people want a God they can comprehend with their minds.
3. God has a people who live by faith, not by sight. (2 Corinthians 5:7)

**IV. Eternal Life.**

A. When we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, we are partakers of His life.

B. He is our life source; and He will change our lifestyle.

C. We become partakers of His life spiritually, when our spirit is quickened (made alive) by God's Spirit, through the new birth.



## Spiritual Truths

- Jesus was not looking for people who wanted to be fed and blessed. He sought a people who would seek God.
- Jesus preferred to avoid the crowds and focus on those who seriously sought after Him.
- Bread is made from grain that is broken, crushed, blended, and put through the fire.
- The Bread of Life is spiritual bread, rather than physical bread. Transubstantiation is a myth that came about by trying to make a spiritual reality physical.
- Believing on Christ is not a response of the mind in agreement. It is a response of the spirit to the grace of God.
- Being born again is not just the result of having good feelings about Jesus. It is the result of repentance from sin and faith toward God.
- The disciples did not understand Jesus any more than the crowd did; but they stayed with Him, because they had faith.
- The Bible is not written to the intellect or to the emotion. It is written to the spirit. People who are spiritually dead will find it intellectually to be a dead, dry book.



## Lesson Material

After Jesus fed the multitude with one sack lunch, He sent the crowd away and went up to the mountain to be alone with God. That seems so foreign to us today. If anything, we get alone with God to prepare for a great meeting; but how many of us will avoid the crowd? Jesus sent His disciples out into the sea, knowing full well that there would be a storm that night, and that they would be afraid. He went to them, walking on the sea, and taught them a great lesson about faith.

The next day, many of the people who had eaten the miraculous fish sandwiches were looking for Jesus. They were hungry again; and when you are hungry, you think about people who can provide free meals. Some sailed across the sea, and found Jesus with His disciples. They said, "When did You come over here?" Basically, Jesus said, "You are seeking me for carnal reasons. Everyone wants blessings, but I want a people who will seek after spiritual values."

They said, "What kind of works should we do, to be spiritual?" When people think of spirituality, they often think in natural terms. That was the problem with the Pharisees. They thought that works were the key to favor with God -- that they must earn their way to heaven. Thus it has ever been with man and his religion. All false religions focus on works and rules to please God. But Jesus talked about relationship with and faith in God. Christianity is not a religion based on what we do; it is a relationship, based on what we are. When we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ with our spirit and our heart,

we are responding to God beyond the level of the mind. We not only believe that Jesus is God, but we also receive Him as the Lord and Master of our life.

Jesus engaged in a long discourse about bread. When they asked for a sign that He was really the Messiah, they mentioned the fact that their forefathers ate manna in the wilderness with Moses. Jesus replied, "*I am the living bread which came down from heaven:....*" (John 6:51)

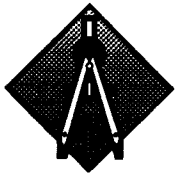
Jesus had a way of taking a physical object and using it to convey a spiritual principle. Just as the discussion at the well turned to the Living Water, so now the discussion about bread and manna turned to the Bread of Life. We obtain strength and energy by partaking of natural food; and when we partake of Jesus by receiving His Word, we gain spiritual strength and health.

In talking about bread, Jesus went on to speak about His body. For centuries, people had broken bread as a symbol of covenant, not realizing that the whole process was a picture God had instituted to illustrate the broken body of Christ on the cross. Jesus would be broken, His blood would be shed, and thus a way would be made for man to enter into a covenant relationship with God. "*But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*" (Isaiah 53:5)

Now all of this is a little "deep" for young minds. Actually, it is a little "deep" for old minds, too. The people who were listening to this were confused. Even the disciples were having trouble understanding Him, particularly when He started saying that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood. Some religious groups have inferred from this that the

elements of communion actually become the body and blood of Jesus. But note verse 63: "...The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Jesus was not talking about physically eating flesh and drinking blood. He was speaking about spiritually partaking of Himself.

We need to understand that Christianity is a spiritual relationship. There are some folks who practice a "Christian" religion, because they study and practice the words of Jesus. But to be a genuine Christian, you must be born again. There must be a real, supernatural birth. No amount of study, practice, or good works can make you a Christian and take you to heaven. There must be a covenant relationship with God through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Repent from your sins and believe on Christ; and receive everlasting life from the One Who is the Bread of Life.



## Methods

We all know about the time that Jesus fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fish; but how many Christians remember the conversation about bread

that developed the next day as a result, and the fact that there was a large "split" in the congregation over the offensive teaching that we must eat the flesh of the Son of Man?

*Why did Jesus deliberately say something that He knew would be misunderstood?*

Jesus is not looking for people who are willing to be blessed and go to heaven. He is looking for people who genuinely love Him and want to live for Him by faith. He wants relationship with people like Job, who decided to serve God even when he was not blessed at all. In fact, Job said, "[Though he slay me], yet will I trust in him:...." (Job 31:15) Job did not have a shallow religious experience -- he had a relationship based on trust. He did not understand why he was not blessed; but he had decided to trust God, no matter what.

*Discussion Topic: What kind of people is God seeking?*

Jesus knew that everyone wanted food and healing and good teaching; but not everyone wanted to live for God. He deliberately offended the crowd, in order to "weed out" those who were following Him for what they could get out of Him. Some people think that since God is a God of love, then He wants people who are wanting to be blessed. No. Since God is a God of love, He wants people who will genuinely love Him, whether they are blessed or not.

# Jesus Gives Living Water

Volume 5

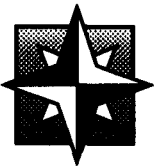
Lesson 27



## Bible References

John 7

Isaiah 12



## Theme

Jesus is our Source of joy and abundant life.



## Scripture Reading

John 7:1-6, 14-15, 37-39

1 "After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.

2 "Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand.

3 "His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.

4 "For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.

5 "For neither did his brethren believe in him.

6 "Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway already."

14 "Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.

15 "And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"

37 "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

38 "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

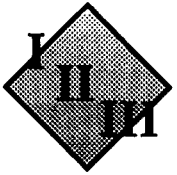
39 "But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified."



## Memory Verse

Isaiah 12:3-4

*"Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, praise the Lord."*



## Outline

### I. Jesus in Galilee.

- A. Jesus was avoiding Judea, because many Jews wanted to kill Him.
- B. The Feast of Tabernacles.
  - 1. His brothers encouraged Him to go to Jerusalem to the feast of tabernacles.
  - 2. They said that He ought to be more public with His miracles.
  - 3. His own brothers (half-brothers, because they were sons of Mary and Joseph), did not yet believe that He was the Messiah.
  - 4. He was the Son of God and Mary.
- C. Jesus encouraged them to go on to the feast.

### II. Jesus in Jerusalem.

- A. Jesus taught in the temple.
  - 1. The people were amazed, since He did not have a theology degree.
  - 2. He proclaimed that the Father had sent Him.
- B. Some of them tried to kill Him, because of His claims.
- C. Others believed that He was the Christ, because He proved it with many powerful miracles.
  - 1. Jesus did not just have nice-sounding words. He had power.
  - 2. Jesus did not yet allow them to kill Him (although He would later, at the feast of Passover, because it would then be God's time for the sin offering).

### III. Jesus at the Feast.

- A. Jesus stood and cried out.
  - 1. He got their attention, by boldly proclaiming that He could satisfy the thirsty soul.
  - 2. He cried out, because He had compassion on the people.
- B. *"If any man thirst,...."* (John 7:37)
  - 1. Everyone on earth needs Jesus, regardless of their background, ability, race, or religion.
  - 2. There is no basic human need that cannot be met by Jesus Christ.
  - 3. Sin is the result of thirsting people going in the wrong direction toward garbage, in order to satisfy the needs of their soul.

4. Sin never satisfies. You always want more.

C. "...Let him come unto me, and drink."  
(John 7:37)

1. Jesus is the answer to the cry of our heart.
2. Jesus will not force anyone to come to Him; but He invites us all to come.

#### IV. Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

A. "...Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (John 7:38)

1. Jesus was speaking of the satisfying power of the Holy Spirit.
2. The Holy Spirit would indwell believers. (John 14:16-17)

B. The Holy Spirit was not yet given.  
(John 7:39)

1. Jesus was not yet glorified.
2. After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples in his glorified body. (John 20:19-23)
  - a. He said, "...Receive the Holy Spirit." (vs. 22)
  - b. The disciples received the gift of the indwelling Spirit Himself.
  - c. All believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. (Romans 8:15-17)



## Spiritual Truths

- The Jewish leaders could not kill Jesus until He let them, because He was protected by the Father.
- Jesus only stayed away from the feast in Jerusalem until He was directed by the Father to go.
- No matter what he thinks he needs, every man needs Jesus.
- The acts of sin in our lives are evidence that we have a terminal disease in our spirit, called sin.
- What we do flows out of what we are.
- Jesus did not come only to save us from hell, but also to save us from sin.
- Sinners can experience pleasure and some happiness in life; but only born-again Christians can know a life of joy.
- The kingdom of God is not limited to a place or a time; it is a spiritual reality in the heart, involving righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. (Romans 14:17)



## Lesson Material

During the time of the Roman Empire, the area in the north part of Palestine around the Sea of Galilee was known as



"Galilee;" and the people were referred to as "Galileans." The southern part of the area was known as Judaea. That is where Jerusalem was located; and the temple was in Jerusalem. The Jews had sought diligently to preserve both the covenant they had with God (which had been given to their ancestor, Abraham), and the laws they had received from Moses, 1500 years earlier. The temple that Solomon had built had been destroyed by the Babylonians; but it was later rebuilt in the days of Ezra, after the people returned from captivity.

The Babylonians had been conquered by the Medo-Persian Empire, who in turn were conquered by the Greeks, under Alexander the Great. Later, Rome became the great world power. So in the time of Jesus, the people of Israel were under the rule of this Roman Empire, although the prevailing language of the day for scholars was still Greek. That is why most of the New Testament was written in this very precise language.

For the most part, Jesus stayed in Galilee and avoided confrontation with the Jews in Jerusalem. In all of their striving to be holy, they had missed God's purposes with the law and the covenants. Most of them were quite lost, in spite of all their religion and love for the Scriptures. They were so busy trying to live up to the law of God, that they missed the Son of God. They focused on details and missed the whole point. God was preparing the way for the Messiah, Who would take away the sin of the world by dying on a Roman cross as the Lamb of God, the perfect sin offering.

When Jesus went to the temple, He began to teach; and He taught plainly that He was the Messiah, the Son of God. He knew that some of the people would

believe on Him and receive what He had to give them. He also knew that many would become angry and seek to kill Him, because the pride and sin in their hearts would make them blind to the truth He was speaking. A man's morality will dictate his theology. We need to realize that it is with our hearts we believe unto salvation, and not with our heads. (Romans 10:10) It has always been this way. Your intellect does not determine your ability to receive truth, any more than your wealth can get you into heaven. Many intellectual giants have scoffed and rejected the claims of the gospel, not because they were not credible or valid, but because their minds were blinded by their own sin. We do not receive the Lord according to our intellectual ability, but because we are honest with God about our sin. The heart determines our response to God, and not the head or the purse.

No one can be confronted by the Lord and stay the same. You must either respond and receive Him for Who He is, or reject Him. When we resist the Holy Spirit, we become harder and more callused toward spiritual things. Each time we respond to God, we become even more responsive to Him, as He opens our spiritual understanding and does His work in our heart. Some of the people in Jerusalem heard Jesus and believed; and others wanted to kill Him.

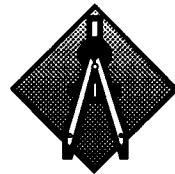
On the last day of the Jewish feast of tabernacles, the day of Atonement, Jesus stood in Jerusalem and cried out with compassion, "*...If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.*" (John 7:37) Jesus does not force His love on anyone. We are created as free moral agents. God does not want anyone to go to hell; but He gives us all a choice, whether to seek and serve Him, or go on our own way. Every human being on earth needs Jesus. Every

Hindu, Buddhist, atheist, Westerner, Moslem, Indian, Oriental, Ubangi, and everyone else needs Jesus -- "If **any** man thirst." We need to see sin, not as a river of pleasure, but as a muddy flood of dark death. The world pictures sin as the gratifying, satisfying "good life." But sin is not good, and it is not life. Sin is the evidence that we are not whole. Our selfish actions show us that we have an evil heart and that we need Jesus. We need Jesus not only to forgive us of our sins, but also to cleanse us from sin. (1 John 1:9)

In the Bible, water is not only a picture of life and joy, but also of cleansing. The brazen laver in the tabernacle was for the daily washing of the priest's hands and feet, as they went about doing their work. We all need the "...washing of water by the word." (Ephesians 5:26) Just as there can be no physical life on earth without water, so there is no spiritual life without Jesus, the "Living Water" from God. (John 4:10)

We receive the indwelling Holy Spirit, when we receive salvation through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. This is the "Living Water" that will flow from our bellies, that is, our innermost being. God lives in us by the Holy Spirit; and our bodies become the temples of the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 6:19) It is the witness of the indwelling Holy Spirit that confirms to us that we are the children of God. (Romans 8:16) The Holy Spirit is God's voice of direction, conviction and comfort in our lives.

If you see someone who is not living his life for God, you can be sure that he needs to. No matter what he may appear to be on the outside, he is dry and hopeless on the inside. Sin can make people think they are all right for a time; but sooner or later, people realize that there is something missing. If any man thirst, let him come to Jesus. We cannot make people come to God; but we can pray that the Holy Spirit works in their hearts to convict them of their sin and draw them to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. We cannot make him come; but if any man thirst, let him come.



## Methods

Discuss the universal need and provision for salvation.

Explain the concept of each student being the "temple of the Holy Spirit." Make sure that each student understands that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer upon the moment of salvation.

Discuss the concept of "grieving the Holy Spirit." (Ephesians 4:30) Are there things you do, or places you go, in which you would rather not take along the Holy Spirit?

# Jesus Gives the Light of Life

Volume 5

Lesson 28



## Bible Reference

John 8



## Scripture Reading

John 8:12-18

12 *"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*

13 *"The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.*

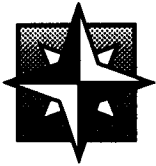
14 *"Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true; for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.*

15 *"Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man.*

16 *"And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.*

17 *"It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.*

18 *"I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.*



## Theme

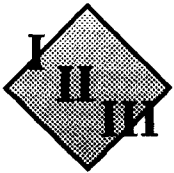
All of humanity is in spiritual darkness because of sin. Jesus is the Light of God's truth, Who gives us the light of life.



## Memory Verse

John 8:12

*"I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."*



## Outline

### I. Light.

#### A. A form of energy which illuminates.

1. Light travels at the speed of 186,282 miles per second.
2. Light rays are either absorbed or reflected by objects.
3. We see light that is reflected off of objects.

#### B. A prism separates light rays into separate colors.

1. A rainbow results when water particles in the air act as prisms, which separate the colors of the light from the sun.
2. When all colors are combined in light, the light will be white.
  - a. White is the symbol of purity and holiness. (Revelation 19:8)
  - b. White is the most colorful color in the universe.
  - c. Black is the absence of color and light.

d. Holiness is not a dull life, but rather, the most colorful and joyful life.

### C. Light reveals truth.

1. *"...Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."* (John 3:19)
2. The Holy Spirit convinces of sin. (John 16:8)
3. The same God Who said, "Let there be light" at creation, has shined in our hearts with the revelation of Jesus. (2 Corinthians 4:6)

### D. There are three primary colors, which blend to form all other colors.

1. Red, blue, and yellow.
2. This speaks of the Trinity -- three Persons, yet one God.
  - a. God the Father is Light. (1 John 1:5)
  - b. Jesus is the Light. (John 1:4)
  - c. The Holy Spirit reveals the light of God's Word. (John 14:26)

### II. Jesus is the Light of the World.

#### A. Jesus is the express revelation of the Father. (Hebrews 1:1-2)

#### B. Without Jesus, all men walk in the darkness of deception.

1. 2 Corinthians 4:4.
2. Unless you are born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God. (John 3:3)
  - a. People who are not born again are spiritually blind. (1 Corinthians 2:14)
  - b. *"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."*

(Matthew 5:8)

C. Blindness is the inability to receive light.

1. The eye receives light, and translates the various reflections into signals sent to the brain.
2. There are two reasons people cannot see.
  - a. They have no light.
  - b. They have no sight.

- Sooner or later, every secret sin will be revealed; and so, darkness does not really hide us.
- The name "Lucifer" means "light-bearer;" but his light turned to darkness, when he sinned.
- The body of Christ is like a prism, because as Jesus shines through us, different gifts reveal the "manifold grace of God." (1 Peter 4:10)

### III. You Are the Light of the World.

A. Matthew 5:14-16.

B. God has chosen to reveal Jesus to the world through His church.

1. Let Jesus be seen in your lifestyle. (2 Corinthians 2:15-16)
2. Let Jesus be seen in your relationships. (John 13:35)



## Lesson Material

Jesus gives the light of life. He not only gives spiritual life, but He is the Author and force behind all physical life. God, Who has always been, initiated life in the universe when He said, "Let there be light,...." (Genesis 1:3) By the power of His spoken word, millions of burning stars came into existence. Light is electromagnetic radiation, which exists in many forms. Radio waves, infrared waves, x-rays, and cosmic rays are some of the forms of light rays, which travel in different-sized wave lengths. X-rays are so short, that one billion waves could fit lengthwise in the eye of a needle. Television wavelengths range from 14 inches -- for ultra high frequency (UHF) signals -- to 18 feet. Each color has a different wave length.

Only some kinds of light are seen by the human eye. We see colors, because different objects absorb or reflect different light rays. When you see a red car, you are seeing an object that absorbs other colors, but reflects away red light. Black material



## Spiritual Truths

- To overcome darkness, you do not protest, curse, or attack it. You just turn on the light.
- Light and darkness cannot exist in the same place at the same time.
- The way to overcome sin and spiritual darkness is to fill your heart and mind with Jesus.
- Sin thrives in dark places, because darkness gives the illusion that there is no accountability.

absorbs light, and a white object reflects all light. That is why white objects will be cooler in the sunlight than black ones.

Light is necessary for life to exist. All green plants contain chlorophyll. This chemical absorbs the light from the sun and converts it to energy. It uses the energy to break down water into hydrogen and oxygen. It releases the oxygen into the air for us to breathe, and takes the carbon dioxide which we breathe out and combines it with the hydrogen to form sugars (hydrocarbons).

When Jesus said, "I am the Light of the World," He was saying that He is the Creator and the Sustainer of our eternal life. It is only by His grace that life continues to exist. Scientists are amazed to discover that the basic chemicals in the ground are the same ones in living things, such as plants and animals. What is the difference? Why do such complex hydrocarbon compounds exist and reproduce?

Paul said that Jesus "...is before all things, and by him all things consist (hold together)." (Colossians 1:17) Try as they will, scientists have never been able to generate even one living cell from non-living matter. They must derive life from life, because the origin of all life is supernatural. There had to be a beginning; and that beginning of life is the Creator, God. Jesus created all things, and His power keeps life going.

It is also a spiritual principle. The God who said, "Let there be light" in creation also shined in our hearts with the revelation of Jesus Christ, the Lord. (2 Corinthians 4:6) Because of our sin, we are spiritually blind. We cannot know God, nor understand His kingdom, unless Jesus shines in our hearts through the spiritual

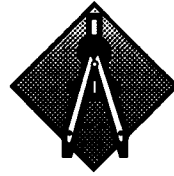
new birth. That is why Jesus said, "...Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3) He has no ability to detect spiritual activity; and he cannot discern spiritual truth.

It is interesting that Jesus told His disciples, "Ye are the light of the world..." (Matthew 5:14) He had already said that He was the Light. As He lives in us, He shines out from our lives. The greater the spiritual and moral purity of our lives, the more clearly Jesus can be seen in and through us. That is our goal -- to let Jesus be seen in our lives and in our relationships. Jesus gives us the ability to love and forgive one another. There is no need for Christians to have divisions or divorce, if they do what Jesus said to do, and if they let Jesus live and love through them.

A rainbow is an illustration of the way Jesus shines through us. When there are many water particles in the air (after a rain), the drops of water act as prisms, separating the light rays into different wavelengths, and revealing several colors. The colors are all there in pure light; but the combination of all colors is seen as bright, white light. Peter spoke about spiritual gifts, and mentioned that we are "...stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Peter 4:10) "Grace" comes from the word "gift; and grace is God working through us with His ability and power, as opposed to our own ability (works). "Manifold" grace means that there are many ways that grace is manifested. Jesus shines in love through one believer, and he prophesies. He shines through another believer, and he serves. He shines through another, and he is able to show mercy. Seven different "grace gifts" are listed in Romans 12. Jesus is the pure Light of truth, mercy, and love; and He manifests His character and power

in different ways through different believers.

Light also reveals sin. The Holy Spirit “convinces” men of sin. (John 16:8) When we are in the light, we see how we have fallen short of God's holiness; and so, we are prompted to repent and seek God's righteousness. Men love darkness, because their deeds are evil. (John 3:19) Paul said that we are to walk as children of the light. (Ephesians 5:8) We do not have to lie, because we are not ashamed of our actions, when we are walking in the Spirit. *“But if we walk in light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another,.... ”* (1 John 1:7) We should walk in the light of God's Word, and draw our energy from Jesus. Abiding in Him causes us to love one another and walk openly and honestly in sweet fellowship.



## Methods

Discuss the importance of light to life. Note that life cannot exist without light. To be the “Light of the World,” as Jesus said, was really a claim to being the Creator and Lord of the universe, along with the Father. What did the Pharisees think about this statement? What do you think about it?

Do you understand photosynthesis? Can you see the spiritual principles, which are illustrated by it?

Some people are like mushrooms. Mushrooms have no chlorophyll, and so they are not green. They do not have the ability to draw life from the sun. They draw from other life. People like that do not have any life in them. They can only feel spiritual when they are around people who have the Lord in their hearts. They can be very religious, but they are spiritually dead. They will constantly draw from others, without ever giving back.

# Jesus, the Author of Freedom

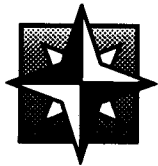
Volume 5

Lesson 29



## Bible Reference

John 8



## Theme

The world portrays sin as freedom and God's kingdom as religious bondage; but this is a lie. Sin is bondage; and true freedom is found in Christ.



## Scripture Reading

John 8:31-38, 42-44

31 "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

32 "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

33 "They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

34 "Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

35 "And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.

36 "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

37 "I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

38 "I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father."

42 "Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

43 "Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.

44 "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it. "

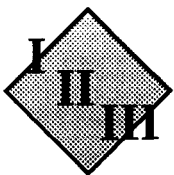




## Memory Verse

John 8:32

*"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*



## Outline

### I. God's Kingdom Versus Satan's Kingdom.

- A. Light versus darkness.
- B. Truth versus deception.
- C. Freedom versus bondage.
- D. Repentance unto salvation versus rebellion unto destruction.
- E. The gift of God is eternal life versus the wages of sin is death. (Romans 6:23)

### II. Freedom.

- A. Freedom is not the right to do as I please, but rather, the power to do what is right.
- B. Sin is bondage.
  - 1. Sin is the evidence that there is something spiritually wrong with me.

- a. Vomiting is an evidence that there is something wrong with the body.
- b. When we are spiritually and morally defective, we sin.
- c. "Salvation" means "wholeness." God's purpose is to restore us to relationship with Him and save us from the dominion of sin.

- 2. Whoever commits sin is the slave of sin. (John 8:34)
  - a. When we are sinners, we cannot keep from sinning.
  - b. Jesus came to save us from sin, and not just from the consequences of sin.
  - c. We are born with a sin nature, because we are "in Adam." (1 Corinthians 15:22)
  - d. As we practice sin, the habits become stronger; and we become slaves to specific sin patterns.
  - e. The habits that some people call "diseases" or "alternate lifestyles" are really sin patterns.

### C. Jesus came to set us free from sin.

- 1. He is able to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)
- 2. We are redeemed from our corrupt lifestyle by the blood of Christ. (1 Peter 1:18-19)
- 3. Water baptism is a burial, which illustrates that our "old man" (sin nature) is dead and buried; and we rise to walk in newness of life. (Romans 6)
- D. The message of salvation is not that we become sinless; but rather, it is that in Christ, we no longer have to live with sin as our master.
  - 1. As sinners, it was our nature to sin.

2. In Christ, we are new creatures (2 Corinthians 5:17); and now Jesus is Lord of our lives.

### III. Truth Makes You Free.

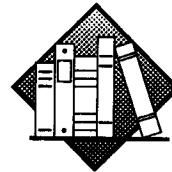
#### A. Satan keeps you enslaved by deception.

1. "Be your own person" is his motto -- or, "*...ye shall be as gods,....*" (Genesis 3:5)
  - a. No. We are all under authority, and we cannot be completely self-ruled.
  - b. If we are not under God's authority, we are automatically under the kingdom of darkness. (1 Samuel 15:23)
2. Another lie: "Sinners are free to do as they please."
  - a. No. They are bound to their sins.
  - b. Sin is addictive; and addiction is bondage.

#### B. Truth makes you free.

1. Truth is not a set of ideas, but rather, the Person of Jesus Christ.
2. Sin produces guilt, fear, and torment.
3. When you walk in light, you have nothing to hide and nothing to fear.
4. Jesus sets us free from the fear of death.

- The world promotes sin as freedom. This is a classic case of false advertising.
- When you tell the truth, you do not have to remember what you said to whom.
- Sin always brings guilt, fear, hurt, and other consequences.
- When we are servants of God, we are no longer slaves to sin.
- All sin is unhealthy and unnecessary; and it thrives in darkness.
- Water baptism is a burial, which shows that we are dead to sin and alive in Christ.
- We do not need to learn independence -- that is part of our sin problem.
- Character is what you do, when you do not think anyone is watching.



## Lesson Material

It is significant that Satan's most effective lie is the promise of freedom through the rejection of authority. The whole world system falsely portrays sin as a type of freedom. Satan started all of that back in the garden with Adam and Eve, when he said, "*...ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*" In other words, "you can be your own person. You do not need God to tell you what is best for you." He lied. Adam and Eve were free; and they were free while under authority. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a constant reminder that the whole place



## Spiritual Truths

- Freedom is not the right to do as I please, but rather, the power to do what is right.

belonged to God, and that they were stewards of God's garden. They could enjoy everything; and they were perfectly content. They had no problems, no arguments, and no fears -- not even the fear of death.

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God's rule, they declared their independence from God's authority. They were tricked into thinking that there would be a whole new life of self-serving freedom, if they cast off the restraint of God's rule over them. They took control of their own lives; and they immediately discovered that they had been deceived. They were not free. They became bound by fear, guilt, confusion, and deception. They were not their own persons. They were under the curse and the control of the prince of darkness. They had enjoyed dominion over all of God's wonderful creation. Now, by taking possession, they lost dominion.

The devil still uses the same old lie he used on them. He advertises sin as a type of freedom. He encourages young people to rebel against parents, teachers, and other authorities. He glorifies the "angry young man" who has no skills except "being cool," and no ambition in life other than to "be his own person." Satan is as a "roaring lion." (1 Peter 5:8) He loves to see us become self-centered loners, because he knows that if he can get a lamb off by itself and away from the Shepherd, he has an easy meal.

Freedom is not the right to do whatever I want. That whole concept is a myth. We are all servants in this life. We are either under God's authority as His children and servants, or we are under the authority of the kingdom of darkness. The Bible says that when we live in sin, we are the slaves of sin. (John 8:34) We have to

do what the world, the flesh, and the devil tell us to do. We become more and more ensnared by our sins, as we make the easy choices in life to do the wrong things. These choices become actions; actions become habits; and habits become a way of life.

How many young people have been enticed by the tobacco industry, or by beer and liquor, or by drug dealers, who promise pleasure, a high, and a thrill, while saying, "Do not let them tell you what to do." They take things into their bodies that are designed to make them slaves and they end up in poverty, disease, crime, terror, and death. They reject godly authority, while subjecting themselves to a new and malicious authority.

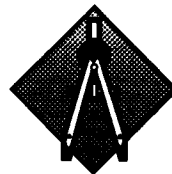
Let us look at the facts. Who loves you -- God, or the devil? The devil's only purpose is to kill, steal, and destroy. (John 10:10) He operates by deception. He will never say, "If you will do what I say, you will be my slave for life, and burn in hell with me forever." No. He keeps very quiet about that part of the bargain. He lies. He says, "You will be free, if you just assert yourself. Just be independent. Your parents do not understand." Of all the things we need to learn in life, independence is not one of them. We need parents to protect us. Very few young people in this world have parents who do not love them, even if they are not born again yet. Only the most perverse people fail to love their children. It is most likely that your parents really love you and want the best for you. The Bible says that if they really love you, they will discipline you with a rod, so that you will learn to associate pain with rebellion. If you do, it will help keep you from evil, and help keep you out of the eternal pain of hell.

Sin is not freedom. Sin is bondage. Romans 6 talks about the fact that we become servants to whatever we yield our bodies to. If we keep yielding to sin, we become the slaves of sin. If we yield ourselves to righteousness, we become servants to God; and the end result of that is eternal life. The end result of sin is death.

It is very interesting that the Jews argued with Jesus about their freedom. They said, "...We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man:..." (John 8:33) Oh? Had not Israel been in slavery under Pharaoh? Had not they been conquered by many different nations in their history? Were not they at that moment under the oppressive rule of the Roman Empire? Surely they were. They were just deceived. Sin is so deceptive, that you can be a slave to sin and not know you are a slave. Until we recognize that we are sinners (slaves to sin by nature and practice), we cannot really repent and be saved. Jesus loved the Pharisees enough to tell them that they were in slavery. He said, "*Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do....*" (John 8:44) Now, they were not actually descended from Satan; but, they were children of darkness. We all resemble our parents, because we inherited their physical traits. When we are born again, we receive godly character traits that show a family resemblance to our heavenly Father. These Pharisees were still acting like the devil; but they had been deceived into thinking that they were God's children. Our sin should show us that we are in need of a Savior. We cannot live a pure life, unless God's grace is working through us. If we are in bondage, then we should turn to God in repentance, and ask Him to set us free.

Deception brings bondage. If you are walking in the dark, you will tend to bump into things, or stumble and fall. You need light, in order to reveal obstacles and get your footing. When we are in sin, we are walking in darkness. We do not know what or whom to believe; and we do not know where we are going. We are often trying to hide what we do, while in the bondage of trying to pretend to be what we are not.

Light and truth bring freedom. If you are walking honestly, you do not have to remember what you said to whom. You do not have to keep secrets from people; and you do not have to keep hiding your activities. When you do good things, you do not mind if others know. That is why truth sets us free. Also, the truth of God's Word makes us free from the dominion of sin and the devil. We know that we are under God's authority. Satan cannot keep condemning us with our past sins, because we have already confessed that we are guilty; and so, our sins are covered by the blood of Jesus Christ. When you do not have to hide your real character, you can walk in the light of truth. "*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*" (1 John 1:7)



## Methods

*Assign a project.*

Students should watch the advertising that they are exposed to this week. They can look at ads in newspapers or magazines, or on the radio or television.

They should listen very carefully the advertisements, and see if they can detect messages that send deceiving signals. For instance, is alcohol associated with healthy, happy, trim, young people? Are cigarettes connected to "good taste?" Are people encouraged to get financial freedom by borrowing, or making "easy credit payments?" They should note how many times something destructive is promoted as good or healthy.

Notice that things that are really good for you (drinking water, eating fresh fruits and vegetables) do not need to be

advertised very much. People only need to be persuaded by massive advertising to buy things they do not really need.

What is freedom? People are really free, only when they are not bound by any addiction or controlling force that makes them do what is harmful. God never makes us do anything that is not good for us, because He loves us. When we let Him make the major decisions in our life, we are free from the worry about the future, because we have left that up to Him. We are then free to be creative under His loving authority.

# Jesus, the Good Shepherd

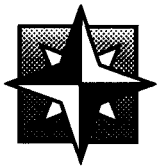
Volume 5

Lesson 30



## Bible Reference

John 10



## Theme

Jesus is our Savior, our Lord, and our Shepherd. He loves, guides, feeds, and protects His sheep.



## Scripture Reading

John 10:1-14

1 *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.*

2 *"But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.*

3 *"To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.*

4 *"And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.*

5 *"And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.*

6 *"This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.*

7 *"Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.*

8 *"All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.*

9 *"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.*

10 *"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.*

11 *"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.*

12 *"But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the*

sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

13 "The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

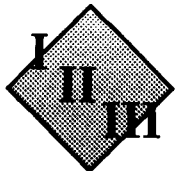
14 "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine."



## Memory Verse

John 10:10

*"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."*



## Outline

### I. We Are His Sheep.

A. Sheep: an illustration (type) of the church.

1. Sheep need to gather together in herds.
2. Sheep need a shepherd.
3. Sheep need to be led to pasture.
4. Sheep cannot defend themselves against predators.
5. Sheep reproduce the lambs.

B. Other animals illustrate character traits in different kinds of people.

1. Wolf: a self-promoting false leader, who causes division in the church.
2. Dog: a selfish person, whose life is focused on the flesh.
3. Goat: a carnal church member.
4. Swine: a greedy, self-centered person, whose god is his belly.
5. Ox: a hard-working servant.
6. Eagle: an overcomer through grace; one who overcomes the law of sin and death by walking in the Spirit.

### II. The Shepherd.

A. Qualities of a good shepherd.

1. Loves his sheep more than himself.
2. Wisdom.
3. Generosity.
4. Powerful protector.
5. Gentle care-giver.
6. He knows his sheep.

B. The work of a shepherd.

1. Guards.
2. Guides.
3. Governs.
4. Gives.

C. "...I am the door...." (John 10:7)

1. A shepherd would build a hedge around his flock, and then lay across the only opening at night.
2. No one could get to the sheep, without going over the shepherd.
3. True shepherds (pastors) are called and anointed by Jesus, and confirmed by other godly leaders.

### III. Enemies of the Sheep.

#### A. The thief.

1. Satan.
2. He gives false promises, in order to lure us away from the shepherd.
3. He only seeks to:
  - a. Steal our joy.
  - b. Kill us spiritually and physically, if he can.
  - c. Destroy our influence and potential in life.

#### B. The hireling.

1. Church leaders, whose motive in the ministry is to make money.
2. Pastoring should not be just a career; it should be a divine calling.
3. Pastors who lead well should be paid well; but the good ones are not focused on money.

#### C. The lion.

1. Satan seeks whom he may devour. (1 Peter 5:8)
2. The devil is always "lyin'."

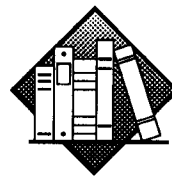
#### D. The wolf.

1. People who seek to draw disciples unto themselves, for their own glory and gain.
2. True shepherds hate division in the church.
3. True shepherds have the goal of making disciples of Jesus.



## Spiritual Truths

- All true pastors are appointed and anointed by Jesus Christ; and they are recognized by proven ministries in the body of Christ.
- Jesus, the Shepherd, gives shepherds (pastors) to His church as a gift. (Ephesians 4:11)
- False leaders usually enter the flock by gossip, trickery, or politics. They try to bypass or undermine pastoral authority.
- Jesus proved that He was the Good Shepherd, when He died on the cross. (John 10:11)
- God illustrates human character qualities with the characteristics of animals.
- The good shepherd is more concerned with the life of the sheep, than he is for his own life.



## Lesson Material

David was a shepherd who knew God intimately. He wrote the beautiful 23rd Psalm from the perspective of a shepherd, who realized that he himself had a Shepherd. He saw the many characteristics of sheep that parallel people; and he



understood well the task and heart of a true shepherd.

Sheep are not cunning, strong, or self-reliant. They need to gather in a protected environment; and they need to be led to good sources of food and water. They have no natural means of defense against predators; and they are fairly helpless, without a shepherd. They can learn to recognize their shepherd's voice; and they can develop a sense of loyalty and community.

David cared about his sheep, even though they really belonged to his father, Jesse. David was a servant; and he risked his life on two occasions to rescue lambs from the flock. God saw David's heart; and when it came time to appoint a king for Israel, He chose this humble shepherd. (Psalms 78:70-72)

We need to gather in local church congregations, or "sheepfolds." Our church is our spiritual family, and our pastor is a spiritual father. *"God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those that are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land."* (Psalms 68:6) The word "pastor" actually means "shepherd." Jesus, the Great Shepherd, sends shepherds as gifts to the church, to function as spiritual leaders, feeders, and protectors of the people. (Ephesian 4:11-12) If you are part of a Bible-believing church which has a God-fearing and anointed pastor, you are blessed; and you are in a good position to grow as a healthy and balanced Christian.

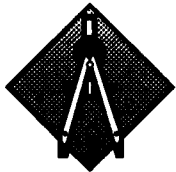
Ultimately, every true pastor realizes that the church really belongs to Jesus, the Chief Shepherd. (1 Peter 5:4) Pastors are "undershepherds," whose desire is to lift up Jesus and draw people to Him. Unfortunately, there are false shepherds

all around, who want to have disciples for themselves. They will use the people for their own gain, and cause division in the church. They are called wolves. (Acts 20:29) Paul said, *"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit,...."* (Colossians 2:8) In other words, be careful that no one is able to lure you away from a legitimate church with negative reports, sympathy, or persuasive talking. Be sure that a wolf does not win you over, so that you become "spoils of war." God plants us in church families; but the devil is always seeking to divide the church up into weak, small, and squabbling factions, in order to prevent the church from doing greater exploits for God.

Every true shepherd is appointed and sent by Jesus Christ, the functioning Head of all legitimate churches. True pastors will honor other Christian leaders; and they will tend to be recognized and ordained by proven, mature leaders. Beware of the leader who is always at odds with every church in town, and who is critical of every other minister.

Jesus is the Chief Shepherd. He said that he was the "door" of the sheep. (John 10:7) This brings to mind a common practice among shepherds of that day. He would sometimes build a hedge (wall) around his flock, choosing especially vines and plants with thorns, or using whatever materials were available. He would make one opening; and he would lay across that opening at night, so that no wolf could get in without going by him. All true leaders are sent by Christ. Anyone who becomes an influence in the church by circumventing spiritual authority is not a shepherd, but a "thief and a robber." (John 10:1) Jesus is also the only door to heaven. *"...No man cometh unto the Father, but by me."* (John 14:6)

When Jesus called Himself the "Good Shepherd," He was identifying Himself with the prophetic picture of Jehovah, the Shepherd of Psalms 23. He referred to the selfless heart of a true shepherd, who was willing to lay down his life for the sheep. (John 10:11) He was telling His disciples that He was going to literally lay down His life, by becoming the supreme sacrifice for the sins of the world. *"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."* (John 15:13)



## Methods

Read Psalms 23 in several translations; and then encourage the group to express the imagery or concept of each verse in their own words.

Contrast the leadership style and character of King Saul and King David.

### *Discussion Questions:*

Does the fact that Jesus is our Shepherd mean that we should not have any man as our pastor?

Many churches refer to their pastor as the "minister" of the church, and therefore imply that he is the servant of the people. We are all called to be "ministers," or servants to one another. What is the difference between a pastor and a minister?

While Jesus is our Chief Pastor, He is not our servant. We are His servants; and we are the sheep of His pasture. (Psalms 100:3) We belong to Him; and we should listen for His voice, so that we will know what to do. (John 10:27)

# Jesus Raises Lazarus

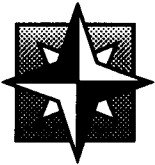
Volume 5

Lesson 31



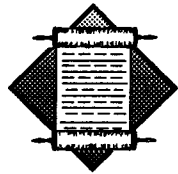
## Bible Reference

John 11



## Theme

Jesus is the Creator, the Giver of life, and the Source of resurrection power.



## Scripture Reading

John 11:1-4, 11-12, 14, 17-18, 21-27

1 "Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

2 "It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

3 "Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

4 "When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."

11 "These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

12 "Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well."

14 "The said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead."

17 "Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.

18 "Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off:"

21 "Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

22 "But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.

23 "Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

24 "Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

25 *"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:*

26 *"And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die, Believest thou this?"*

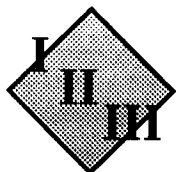
27 *"She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."*



## Memory Verse

John 11:25

*"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."*



## Outline

### I. Lazarus.

A. Had two sisters: Martha and Mary.

1. They were personal friends of Jesus.
2. This may have been the same Mary, who had been an immoral woman; but she was forgiven.
3. They lived in Bethany, a small town about two miles from Jerusalem.

B. Lazarus was dying.

1. We know little about him.
2. He was not mentioned, after his resurrection.
3. He was both a friend and a disciple of Jesus.

### II. Jesus and His Disciples.

A. Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick; but He deliberately delayed going to Bethany.

1. He wanted to teach His men about faith.
2. Nothing is too hard for God. (Mark 10:27)

B. Jesus and His disciples were in Galilee; and they were concerned for His safety in Judaea, because of the hatred of the Pharisees.

C. "He is sleeping."

1. Jesus also said of Jarius' daughter, "She is sleeping." (Mark 5:39)
2. Jesus never saw physical death as the end, but rather, as a transition.
3. The spirit of Lazarus was probably in Paradise, waiting to return to his body.

D. Thomas.

1. "Didymus" ("Ditto") -- Thomas was probably a twin.
2. "Let us go and die with him."
3. Thomas was emotional, impetuous, and loyal.

### III. Jesus and Martha.

- A. When they heard that Jesus was coming, Mary stayed in the house.
- B. Martha came out to meet him.
- C. Martha had more faith than we perhaps realize.
1. "I that know he would not have died, if You had been here."
  2. "Even now, I know that God will do whatever You ask."
- D. "Your brother will rise again."
1. "Sure -- at the resurrection."
  2. "I am the resurrection and the life."
  3. "Yes. I believe you."
- E. Martha then called Mary from the house.
1. When Jesus saw Mary crying, He wept.
  2. He wept in empathy with Mary, and not in grief over Lazarus.

### IV. Jesus and Lazarus.

- A. Lazarus was "buried" in a cave, with a large stone over the entrance. He was not buried in the ground, as people are today.
- B. Jesus said, "Take away the stone."
1. Martha said, "Lord, after four days, he stinks."
  2. Martha had the spiritual gift of serving; and she was concerned about practical matters.
  3. She was thinking about physical things; but Jesus had something else in mind.

### C. Jesus cried, "Lazarus, come forth!"

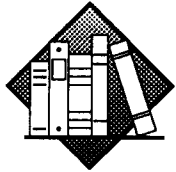
1. He shouted, so that people could hear that He was giving a command; and so that they could see that Lazarus was responding to Him, and had not been accidentally buried alive.
2. He needed to specify, "Lazarus, come forth." If He had said "Come forth," perhaps many bodies would have come forth.



## Spiritual Truths

- Christian burial of the dead is a testimony to our belief in the resurrection.
- Some sickness is unto death, and some is for the glory of God. If we know a sickness is unto God's glory, then we know that God intends to heal that person. (John 11:4)
- Reincarnation is a Satanic counterfeit to the truth of resurrection; and it decreases the fear of the Lord in those who believe it.
- Jesus wept in empathy and compassion for Mary, rather than Lazarus.
- Jesus broke up every funeral He attended that we know about, because He is the Resurrection and the Life.
- Jesus both healed the body of Lazarus, and called his spirit back, in order to raise him from the dead.

- It is fascinating to note that Lazarus made no recorded statements about his death experience.
- The account of the raising of Lazarus is as much a story of love as it is of power.



## Lesson Material

In the brief ministry of Jesus on the earth, He contributed significantly to the funerals He attended. In the cases recorded in scripture, He raised the "guest of honor" from the dead. This was one of the most relevant proofs that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, the Son of God. As a member of the Divine Trinity, Jesus was the Creator of the world. The One who gave life can also restore life. The Creator is also the Healer. Nothing is too difficult for God.

There are two kinds of death -- physical and spiritual. Physical death is separation from the body. People who do not believe in God have a difficult time defining the moment of death, because they view us as merely organic beings, with no spirit. There is great confusion among them when a person's body ceases to function for a time, and then there is a resuscitation. But we know that death occurs when the spirit of a person leaves the body.

Spiritual death is far more serious, because that is separation from God. We are taught by Jesus not to fear those who can kill the body; but we should fear God, and fear the terror of hell, because that is a place of eternal and absolute separation

from God, with no opportunity for restoration. (Matthew 10:28)

Jesus was in Galilee with His disciples. He avoided Jerusalem and Judea, because of the hatred of the Jews. As a group, the Jews were so caught up in their religion, that they missed God. They were busy in themselves, trying to keep the law and make themselves righteous; but, they had no real relationship with God. Jesus loved them enough to confront them with their need for God; and He called them "snakes" and "whitewashed tombs." (Matthew 12:34, 23:27) He knew that many of them would hate Him; and He knew that they would be the cause of His crucifixion. Later, the Romans crucified Jesus in Jerusalem, but only because of the insistence of the Jewish religious crowd.

When Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, He deliberately waited a few days before going to Bethany. He waited until Lazarus was dead and buried. He knew that Lazarus was going to die; and He wanted to teach the people about faith, and about the principle of resurrection. For Jesus, it was no more difficult to raise the dead than it would have been to heal the sick, because of Who He is. He waited until the situation was impossible, so that no one could think that Lazarus was merely in a coma. There have been many cases of people appearing to be dead for hours, and of people being buried alive because they seemed to be dead. Now there was no question. If Lazarus had been alive, he would have suffocated long before in the burial wrapping. His spirit had probably gone into Paradise, although we have no record of any comments regarding the spirit world. The gospel accounts focus on Jesus, and not Lazarus. This is a good example for us. We tend to get caught up in a person who has a "fantastic" miracle, and lose sight of the

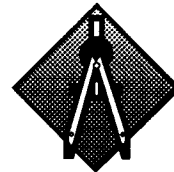
Lord Who did the work. Some people have actually become wealthy, simply by traveling from church to church giving their testimony, and being the center of attention. However, this miracle was not ignored. The town of Bethany today has a name which means "the place of Lazarus."

The difference between the resurrection of Lazarus and that of Jesus is that Jesus was resurrected in His eternal, glorified state -- a body of "flesh and bones." Lazarus was restored to the same body, although it had been healed of the illness which caused his death. Lazarus died again; and he awaits the time when he will be in the resurrection. Then, his body will become like that of Jesus. The life of that body will not be in the blood, but rather, in the Spirit of God; he will never die again.

Are there cases of resurrection from the dead today? Certainly. Although the secular news media does not like to report them, there are many cases around the world in which the power of God has worked through believers to raise the dead. Jesus told the church, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and [greater {works}] than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.*" (John 14:12) Everything Jesus did, He did by the power of the Holy Spirit working through Him; and that power is available to us today. There is an American missionary named David Hogan, who ministers primarily in Mexico. Through him and his team, God has raised at least twenty people from the dead, in the past few years. He has testified that it takes an average of at least five hours of intense praying to see such a miracle. The people who were raised were dead for many hours, or even a few days. Rev. Hogan is a man of intense prayer. He

is deeply devoted to God, and he fasts often. Great faith in a great God can produce great results. Many other believers have testified of raising the dead, or of being raised themselves. Jesus is the Life-giver!

In these cases, as in the case of Lazarus, they are "unto the glory of God." (John 11:4) That is, God calls the church to pray and fast, so that He can be glorified through a miracle. The greatest purpose of miracles is not to prolong life, but rather, to give us more opportunities to witness for the Lord. We each have an appointment with death; and we need to be sensitive to know when it is someone's time to die. Death should not be a morbid time of denial and deception. The death of a believer is a sweet time of transition to a better life, and a time to say good-byes. "[*Precious in the sight of the LORD (is) the death] of his saints.*" (Psalms 116:15)



## Methods

*Discuss the basic differences between the Hindu religion and Christianity. They are:*

1. Reincarnation vs. resurrection.
2. Polytheism (many gods) vs. monotheism (one God).
3. Darkness vs. light.
4. Fatalism vs. hope.

*Discuss these topics:*

1. Death, burial, and resurrection.
2. Death from a biblical perspective.
3. Christian death and hope.

# Mary Worships Jesus

Volume 5

Lesson 32



## Bible References

John 12

Psalms 150

John 4

2 "There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

3 "Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

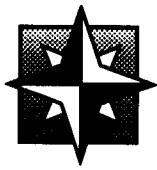
4 "Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,

5 "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?"

6 "This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

7 "Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.

8 "For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always."



## Theme

Worship is an important part of the life of a Christian. It is pleasing to God.



## Scripture Reading

John 12:1-8

1 "Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.



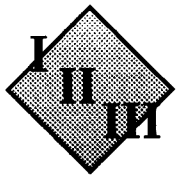
## Memory Verse

Hebrews 13:15

"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."



## Outline

### I. Jesus in Bethany.

A. Again, Jesus visits the home of his personal friends.

1. Martha is still serving (but not complaining).
2. Lazarus is visiting with Jesus.

B. Before the Passover.

1. Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem.
2. Jesus knows He will be crucified in a few days.

### II. Mary.

A. Her past.

1. Many Bible scholars believe that this same occurrence is mentioned in the other Gospels.
2. The other Gospels give the account of a woman who had been very immoral, and who had been forgiven much.

B. Mary was very grateful to the Lord.

### III. The Ointment.

A. A precious, expensive treasure.

1. True worship involves giving our hearts to the Lord.

2. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Luke 12:34)

B. The alabaster box.

1. This ointment was kept in a sealed container, with no lid.
2. It had to be broken and used at one time.
3. It was generally kept by the family for anointing the body of an important family member, upon his death.
4. Unless we are broken in spirit, we cannot reflect the fragrance of Christ's love and purity.
5. We are useless, until broken before the Lord (in repentance and humility).

### IV. Worship.

A. Definitions.

1. Old English word, "worth-ship." We respond to God because He is worthy to be praised, adored, and magnified.
2. Greek word *proskunio* -- "to kiss toward."
  - a. True worship is an expression of a love relationship based on trust and gratefulness.
  - b. God designed marriage to be a picture of the love relationship that the church should have with Christ, the Husband of the church (bride). (Ephesians 5:31-21)
  - c. We should all love God with all of our hearts. This is the first and great commandment. (Luke 10:27)
  - d. When we love God, we will naturally love people as a result.

## B. Mary, a picture of true worship.

1. Mary sacrifices her treasure as a gift to the Lord.
2. Mary humbled herself, in order to approach the Lord in this manner.
3. Mary touched Jesus.

## C. What is worship?

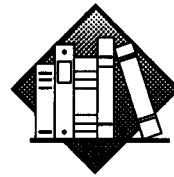
1. Worship always involves giving, adoration, and honor.
2. "Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts." (Psalms 96:8)
3. True worshippers worship in spirit and in truth. (John 4:23) The only people who can do this are believers.
4. Worship to God can only be given by people who are pure. (Psalms 96:9)
5. We can praise God with our bodies (flesh) and soul (mind, will, and emotion); but we can only worship God with our spirit. (John 4:24)

- As the alabaster box could not release the fragrant ointment until it was broken, so also we cannot communicate the love of Jesus, unless we are broken.
- Mary was probably no more evil than the others; but her sins were more obvious, and so she knew she needed forgiveness.
- There were some people who were closer to Jesus than others; and so He was able to more copiously bestow His love on them.
- Judas did not have a heart for the poor. He had a heart for money.
- If Judas lived today, he would probably criticize the church's use of tithes and offerings in the Lord's work.
- We will always have poor people with us, because of the many weaknesses in the sinful human condition. (John 12:8)



## Spiritual Truths

- Martha was a faithful servant; but service is not necessarily worship. That which Mary did was worship.
- You cannot worship God, without giving a sacrificial gift.
- God calls us to offer our bodies to Him as a living sacrifice, so that we can always realize that we belong to Him. (Romans 12:1)



## Lesson Material

Mary and Martha provide here an excellent picture of what worship is, and of what people tend to equate with worship. Many people think that worship means work and service. Both of these sisters loved Jesus, but they expressed it in different ways. We should serve the Lord with gladness, but it is even more important that we "...enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise:...." (Psalms 100:4)

If we are going to genuinely worship the Lord, there must be sacrifice. Worship is the natural expression of covenant; and there is no covenant without sacrifice. Worship and covenant involve a giving of yourself to someone else. While Martha is to be commended for giving her time to serve the Lord, we see Mary giving her heart; and that is the real motive of God. God is not looking to be worshipped, so much as He is seeking worshippers. He is looking for and developing a people who love Him more than money or pleasure. God wants us to love Him more than we love ourselves, because only then can we enter into the kind of eternal relationship that His plan is all about. Heaven is not a place for everyone who wants to go there, because no one wants to go to hell. Heaven is for those who have made Jesus the Savior and Lord of their lives, because heaven is a place of continual praise and worship to the Lord. If you are the center and focus of your life, you would be uncomfortable in heaven, because Jesus is the only "Star" there. Everyone will be constantly honoring and adoring Him, the Focus of all attention.

Almost every preacher has repeated the story of the pig and the chicken. They were walking together down the road. As they passed the little church, they heard the pastor tell of the financial need. The chicken said to the pig, "I would like to bless that church. Why do not you and I sponsor a ham and eggs breakfast, as a fund raiser?" The pig replied, "That is easy for you to say. For you, it is a contribution. For me, it is a total commitment." Martha was making a contribution; but Mary was making a total commitment.

Not only was this container of ointment precious and expensive, but it also was a container which had no reusable lid. It had to be broken and used

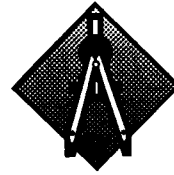
all at one time. This is a picture of the believer. Paul said, "*...we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*" (2 Corinthians 4:7) Jesus is the Treasure; and the goal of true believers is to be so transparent and broken in humility, that Jesus can be sensed through our lives. When a person is full of the Holy Spirit, there is a kind of spiritual "fragrance" about him that reminds people of the Lord. The more spiritually pure and mature a person is, the more he reflects the Lord's joy and character; and the less he is identified by his humanity or natural attributes. Paul said, "*...we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ,....*" (2 Corinthians 2:15) Spiritually, we "smell" like Jesus. If believers are sensitive in spiritual things, they can sense the spirit of another believer. Our spirits "bear witness;" and we often know one another, even before a word is spoken. We know the fragrance of Christ in the heart of a believer, and the light of Christ on his face.

While Mary is the picture of the worshipper, Judas becomes the picture of the carnal mind. People who are not spiritually minded try to appear compassionate; but their hearts are really for themselves. They have a focus on money, because money is power and pleasure to the "natural man." Paul said, "*...the love of money is the root of all evil:....*" (1 Timothy 6:10) Money represents possession; and possession is deep at the core of the sin problem. The basic question in the life of man since the Garden of Eden has been, "Do I belong to God, or am I my own person?" When we take possession of our own life, we will tend to look to money as our source; and that is idolatry. God is our Source -- the One we serve in life. The purpose of life is to find His will and do it, rather than to "find out what you want to do."

Judas tried to act concerned for the poor. Jesus taught that we should be generous with the poor; and so, He was not being insensitive to them. He was, however, aware of the root problem in the heart of Judas. He had an attitude about money.

Whenever a church builds a nice building as a place of worship, there will be some cynical people saying "You could have fed thousands of poor people with all that money. What a waste, to spend so much on a building for yourselves." Now, while it is possible to go overboard and spend a fortune on an elaborate monument to a man, this is rarely the case. We generally build nice, but functional buildings, in order to help carry on the ministry and facilitate the worship of a large flock of Christians. If we build with a right spirit, we will build to the Lord the nicest and most beautiful building we can. The key is the motive. We should build as unto the Lord, and build as an expression of what we feel about Him. We should build beautiful, large, and functional buildings; and we should keep them clean, because our God is holy and good, and He loves a big family. We should build according to the funds that God has provided, and not be presumptuous. If we build anything for ourselves, or for the ego of a man, we are wrong. But if we build to the Lord, let it be the best we can do. We should ignore the "Judas" kind of people who cry, "Why this waste?" And we should ignore the pressures of those who would say that we

are wasting our lives in the service of the Lord. A life "wasted" for God is the only life preserved in eternity! (Matthew 16:25)



## Methods

Discuss the difference between praise and worship.

Sing several praise songs; and then move into one or two worship songs.

Distinguish between a tithe (10% of your increase), an offering (giving beyond the tithe to express love for the Lord), and a sacrifice (offering to God out of your need).

Tithes and offerings are part of praise and obedience to the Lord; but real worship involves sacrifice.

Take an offering as an act of worship.

*Ask the following questions in class:*

Have you ever known of someone who complained of "this waste," when money was given to the Lord's work?

Why did Jesus say that we would always have poor people with us?

Are you willing to "waste" your life in doing God's will?

# Jesus Washed Their Feet

Volume 5

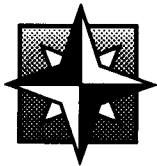
Lesson 33



## Bible References

John 13

Philippians 2



## Theme

Jesus is our great Example of humility and a servant's heart. We should follow Him in every way.



## Scripture Reading

John 13:1-9, 12-15

1 "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

2 "And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;

3 "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

4 "He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

5 "After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

6 "Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

7 "Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

8 "Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

9 "Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head."

12 "So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

13 "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

14 *"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.*

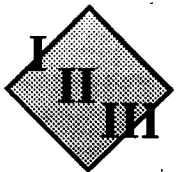
15 *"For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."*



## Memory Verse

Galatians 5:13

*"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."*



## Outline

### I. The Last Supper.

#### A. Before the Passover.

1. Jesus was about to be killed.
2. Yet, He was seeking to bless and encourage His disciples.

#### B. A great leader.

1. We measure success by how many people work for us.
2. God measures success by how many people we serve.
3. Jesus never asked His disciples to do anything He was not willing to do.

4. Jesus was seeking to make them successful.
5. Jesus washed Judas' feet, knowing that Judas was not loyal to Him.

### II. The Posture of a Servant.

#### A. The practice of washing feet.

1. A common custom of hospitality, for people had been walking hot, dusty roads in rough sandals; and it was very refreshing.
2. But the host would not wash feet. This was done only by the lowliest servants.

#### B. Jesus washed their feet.

1. This is a great expression of love and concern for others.
2. Jesus girded Himself with a towel.
3. The "Host" did the job of the lowliest servant.
  - a. This is an expression of open trust, and vulnerability.
  - b. This is humility, because our garment is an expression of our status and position in life.
  - c. Jesus *"...made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant,...."* (Philippians 2:7)
4. He washed their dirty, tired feet, and wiped them with the towel He was wearing as the servant's garment.

### III. Washing Peter's Feet.

#### A. Peter was impulsive, but sincere.

1. "You will never wash my feet!"
2. Peter did not want Jesus in the position of being his servant.

3. Peter later was crucified in Rome. He asked to be crucified upside down, because he said he was not worthy to die like Jesus did.

B. "Unless I wash you, you will have no part with Me."

1. "Lord, wash my hands and head, too!"
2. All of us need to be washed by Jesus.
3. We are sinful; and we need not only to be forgiven, but also to be cleansed by His blood. (1 John 1:9)
4. There is also a washing of our hearts, as we humble ourselves in Christian baptism. (Acts 22:16)
5. There is also a washing of our minds, as we read the Word of God. (Ephesians 5:26)
6. Some people want an eternal covenant with God through salvation; but they do not want to be washed from their sins. How tragic.

#### IV. Washing One Another's Feet.

A. Refreshing the saints.

1. Ministry of encouragement.
2. Hospitality.

B. Blessing fellow believers.

1. Focus on the needs of others in the family of God.
2. Help one another.
3. "*Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*" (Galatians 6:2)

C. It is also good to occasionally share a time of foot-washing among Christians.

1. This can be a special time for reconciliation, restoration, or renewal of fellowship in the Lord.
2. We should always carry these attitudes toward one another, regardless of whether we express them in a foot-washing ceremony.



## Spiritual Truths

- God does not measure our success by the number of people who serve us, but rather, by the way we serve others.
- To be a true Christian leader, you must always see yourself as serving under the people, rather than ruling over them.
- When we see ourselves as better or more important than others, we have lost the servant's heart that Jesus had.
- We should always look at others as valuable and important, and seek their good.
- The world says that leaders should gain respect by hiding their faults; but Jesus made Himself completely open and vulnerable to his disciples.
- We wash one another's feet every time we encourage, bless, or refresh a believer.
- We are washed in baptism, in the Blood, and in the Word; and so, we do not have to live like we did before.

- Human pride is evidence of weakness and inferior character, and not of excellence.



## Lesson Material

What a powerful picture of humility and love this is! Jesus knows He is about to be crucified; and yet, He takes on the posture and attitude of a lowly servant, in order to refresh and teach His disciples at their last supper. They knew that the washing of feet was a common gesture of gracious hospitality by a host, for the roads were hot and dusty, and feet got tired and dirty. This task was given only to the lowest of the servants, for it was personally demeaning to bow down and wash smelly feet. In posture and in gesture, you were indicating that the person you were ministering to was the greater.

The disciples were amazed; and Peter was incredulous. He wanted to honor and glorify Jesus, and this was certainly not the way to do it. It was a humiliation to his Lord; and he did not understand the bigger picture. Jesus had told them that *"...whosoever of you will be the [chiefest], shall be servant of all."* (Mark 10:44) Now that Jesus was giving a living illustration of this principle, Peter had problems with Him. He was looking at the scene with one purpose in mind, but the Lord had a higher vision for this last supper. Jesus was giving them something that would stay in their minds the for rest of their lives, giving them God's perspective on what a true leader should be.

A man's station and achievement in life was reflected by his clothing. To some extent, that is still true today. People of wealth tend to wear nicer clothes. Professional people wear more formal attire as a rule. We always make statements with the way we dress. When Jesus set aside His garments, He was making a statement about humility. He was being open and vulnerable. He was taking on the form of a servant. (Philippians 2:7) The servants were the ones who had little with which to cover themselves.

The disciples were amazed at this scene: the Son of God, kneeling humbly before them, washing their feet as would the lowest of slaves. Years later, the Apostle Paul would address his letters in this fashion: "Paul, a *doulos* (bond-servant) of Jesus Christ." (e.g., Romans 1:1) The leaders of the early church were very aware of the attitude of the servant, which had been taught to them by their Lord and Master on this night.

One amazing truth that impressed their minds only later was the fact that Jesus washed the feet of Judas, while both of them knew full well what Judas was about to do. If we love, it is not because of the loveliness or "lovability" of other people; it is a response to the love that God has put into our hearts. When we are genuinely forgiven by God, we can forgive anybody. When we know that God loves us, we are free to give, and share, and love even our enemies. Jesus washed the feet of Judas, because no matter what Judas would do, Jesus wanted him to know that He loved him.

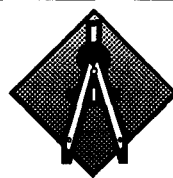
We think, "How could anyone go out and betray someone as perfect and loving as Jesus?" Then, we realize that we, too are betraying Him, when we choose to do



wrong. We deny Him, when we make our choices in life based on money or selfish motives. When Judas got his focus on money, he became blind to love; and he denied the Lord.

Jesus told us to "...wash one another's feet." (John 13:14) This command is not only fulfilled when we participate in a "foot-washing service;" but we also fulfill that in spirit, whenever we lay aside our pride and selfish pursuits, in order to encourage and bless one another. Foot washing is a picture of personal ministry -- of refreshing the saints. We all get weary; and on the road of life, we pick up the "dust" of secular influences. If we are not "washed" by the Word regularly, we can accumulate the "bacteria" of bitterness and become stinky, bitter people. We all need to be blessed by other believers from time to time. We all need to be praised and rewarded when we do a job well, and built up when become weak.

Remember that God has not given any of us a "gift of criticism." He is never impressed with people who have a special ability to detect faults in others; but, He is impressed by people who can restore those who have been exposed in a fault. We are called to be a body of foot-washers, and not finger-pointers. When you get close enough to people that you can wash their feet, you get down to where the dirt is. You see the frailty; but you love and forgive and restore. Satan is the accuser; and so, on whose team are we, when we accuse, criticize, and condemn? Who are we really glorifying, when we expose a believer's weakness? God is love. God is a restorer. God is so good, that He teaches us that love covers a multitude of sins. (1 Peter 4:8)



## Methods

After you teach the lesson, do some foot washing. The senior teacher should wash the feet of one or two members of the teaching team.

Normally, men wash the feet of men, and women the feet of other women, for the sake of propriety. Of course, this must be planned ahead of time, so that everyone will be prepared and dressed appropriately.

You will need some kind of water basin, a towel, and warm water. Be kind -- come with clean feet and fresh socks.

If there are members of the teaching team who need to forgive one another, they should be especially encouraged to participate.

Generally, each person will wash the feet of one other in the group.

Because of time limitations, you will probably just minister to one or two people, as an illustration of the lesson.

If there is time, you may want to open this to the students. If so, be sensitive to anyone who does not want his feet washed, and make sure you minister to that one. During a foot washing service, you do not thoroughly scrub any feet. You dip each foot in the water, and wipe it off with the towel, speaking a blessing on the person, and praying for him.

# In My Father's House

Volume 5

Lesson 34



## Bible Reference

John 14

2 *"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

3 *"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

4 *"And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.*

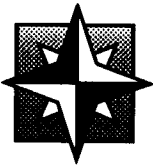
5 *"Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?*

6 *"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

7 *"If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him."*

11 *"Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very work's sake.*

12 *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."*



## Theme

God not only has a place for us in heaven when we die, but He also has a good plan for each of our lives now.



## Scripture Reading

John 14:1-7,11-12

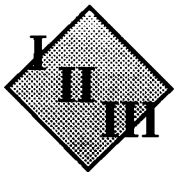
1 *"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.*



## Memory Verse

John 14:6

*"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*



## Outline

### I. Let Not Your Hearts Be Troubled.

- A. Jesus had just told Peter that he would deny Him three times, before the rooster crowed in the morning.
  - 1. This conversation took place the night before Jesus was betrayed, arrested and crucified.
  - 2. Peter said that he would die for Jesus. (John 13:37)
  - 3. Jesus was telling him that he was not as committed as he thought.
- B. "You will deny Me tonight, but do not let your heart be troubled."
  - 1. "Believe in me."
  - 2. "I am going to prepare a place for you."

### C. "In My Father's house."

- 1. Heaven.
  - a. The word translated "mansions" really only means "dwelling places."
  - b. The nature of our domicile in heaven is not known, but it will be very wonderful.

### II. The Way.

- A. Jesus: "You know where I am going, and you know the way."
- B. Thomas: "Just two questions: Where exactly are You going; and what is the way?"
- C. "I am the way."
  - 1. Jesus is the Way to the Father.
    - a. We cannot become acceptable to God through religious ceremonies or good works.
    - b. We can only come to God, when we come through the cross.
    - c. We must repent (turn from living for self and seek God) and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.
    - d. We plead "guilty" to the charge of sin and rebellion. When we do, God is legally able to forgive us, because the price was paid in full by Jesus, the "Lamb of God."
  - 2. Jesus is also the Truth and the Life.

### III. The Truth.

- A. Truth is not a set of ideas, but a Person.
- B. True religion is not just a creed or set of rules, but rather, a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

C. The Bible is the written revelation and expression of Jesus, as given by the Holy Spirit.

1. The Bible is a map which points to Jesus. (John 5:39)
  - a. The Bible, without Jesus, is dead works and legalism.
  - b. Religion without the Bible is confusion, error, and deception.
2. Without a relationship with Jesus and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the human mind cannot receive or understand the Bible, no matter how intellectual.
  - a. John 3:3.
  - b. John 14:26.
  - c. 1 Corinthians 2:14.

D. Today, many are *"ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth (Jesus Christ),"* because they are seeking truth with their minds, and not with humility before God. (2 Timothy 3:7)

#### IV. The Life.

- A. Jesus is the Creator -- the Source of all life.
- B. He is the Lord and Owner of all -- the One Who sustains life.
- C. He is the Great Physician -- the One Who restores life.
- D. *"...I am come that they might have life...more abundantly."* (John 10:10)



## Spiritual Truths

- Jesus knew you before creation, thought of you while on the cross, and designed you with a purpose and task in mind.
- There is a job for you to do in life, and a place for you in heaven, if you will seek God with a humble heart and give your life to Him.
- If Jesus, Who is perfect, gave His life for us, how can we even think to be our own person, and not give ourselves to Him?
- We do not come to know truth by being intelligent or educated. We come to know truth by having an honest heart before God.
- It is wise to think often of the wonders and beauty of our home in heaven; and it is also wise to regularly imagine the torture and misery of hell.
- It is easy to get a troubled heart, if you focus on the negatives in life and let them get you down.
- Jesus is the Way to God, the Truth about God, and the eternal Life of God.
- False religion is tested on the issues of the deity of Jesus Christ and the power of His blood to atone for the sins of the whole world.



## Lesson Material

After Jesus had His last supper with His disciples and had broken bread with them, Judas went out into the night to make his deal with the Jewish leaders and betray his Lord. Jesus continued to pour insights and encouragement into the remaining eleven followers; and He sought to prepare them for the traumatic night ahead. None of them had any idea of the events about to unfold; and they had a hard time dealing with it all. When Jesus said, "You cannot follow me now to where I am about to go," impulsive Peter blurted out, "I want to go, too. I would even die for You." Jesus knew Peter's heart far better than Peter did; and He said, "Peter, before the rooster crows in the morning, you will deny Me three times."

Now this was late at night; and the roosters crow at the first hint of early dawn. This was an amazing prophecy, especially to one who seemed the most zealous of all His followers. *But, of course,* it came to pass. That night, Jesus was arrested in the garden after being pointed out to the Jewish leaders by a treacherous kiss from Judas. Peter tried to defend Him with his sword; but he was rebuked. Through the night, the events moved quickly, and hopes faded quickly in the hearts of the disciples. Confusion turned to fear; and when someone said, "You are one of His disciples," Peter denied it. (John 18:25) Immediately after he denied knowing Jesus, emphasizing his claim with a curse, the rooster crowed. Peter then realized what he had done; and he wept bitterly in repentance before God. Church historians record that, many years

later, Peter and his wife were crucified; and *this time, Peter stood firm for His Lord.*

Here is the difference between Peter and Judas. Jesus let Judas know that He knew what Judas was going to do; and Judas knew that Jesus loved him, anyway. Judas could have repented; but, he did not. He allowed a demon spirit to persuade him to hang himself. Suicide is a serious sin, for it is an expression of rebellion against God. God appoints the time of our death (Hebrews 9:27); and we have no right to take our own life. This shows that Judas had taken possession of his life; and he died a horrible death in rebellion. He had been chosen by the Lord. He had walked with the Lord; but he turned back to sin and died a reprobate. He could have been restored as Peter was, if he had only repented and received God's forgiveness. Judas and Peter both knew the Lord; and they both denied Him. One turned to bitter despair, while the other turned to God in repentance. One was lost, and one was restored.

When Jesus said, "Peter, you will deny me tonight," He went on to say, "Do not let your heart be troubled." In other words, "Do not focus on your failure; focus on your heavenly Father. He has a place for you; not only in heaven, but also in His economy." The Greek word translated "mansions" here is actually a word which means "dwelling places." In the King James Version, the word is "mansions;" and that is the only time it appears in the Bible. This one weakly translated word has sparked the imagination of countless songwriters through the years; and it has inspired thousands of songs about mansions in heaven. Actually, this is a picture of the Father building onto His house a dwelling place (or, "apartment") for each of His children, in much the same way as Jewish fathers added onto their

homes, when their sons started their own families.

Now, we do know that heaven is wonderful, and that Jesus is preparing a place for each of the overcomers. But the Bible really emphasizes the place that we are to build for God to dwell in. There are dozens of whole chapters in the Bible about the place we are preparing for God. The truth is that we as a church are a spiritual temple for God. (1 Corinthians 3:9; 2 Corinthians 6:16) He dwells in the midst of our praise. (Psalms 22:3) His habitation is the focus of scripture, and not our habitation.

We also are reminded from this that there is a place for us in the economy of God. God has a plan for our lives; and we are each valuable. We seek to know His will and calling; and then we do the ministry He has designed us to do.

It is rather humorous to note the exchange between Jesus and Thomas. Jesus said, "You know where I am going, and you know the way." Thomas responds, "Lord, where are You going, and what is the way?" They had been with Him full-time for over three years; but they still did not fully understand what was going on. Later, it would all make sense to them. But now, Jesus was training them in faith. Even when they did not understand the purpose and the method, would they stand the test and believe the Lord, or would they turn away in anger and confusion, as so many had done?

When Thomas asked the question, Jesus did not ridicule him for being so ignorant. James said, *"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all {men} liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."* (James 1:5) Jesus is like that. He did not take a shot at

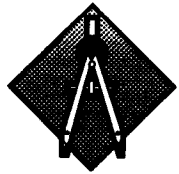
Thomas. He patiently answered his question. He was the Way; and His objective was the presence of the Father.

Jesus is the only Way to the Father. There are many religions in the world, and all of them seek truth. They all somehow try to relate to a supreme being (God). But all false religions (non-Christian and pseudo-Christian cults) have a problem with both Jesus as God, and the only Way to the Father. Only biblical Christianity reveals the Trinity, portraying Jesus Christ as both Lord and Savior of all born-again believers. The ultimate evidence of true religion is the "blood" test: "Can I get to heaven based on the blood of Jesus Christ, and only on that basis?" Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christian Science, Mormonism, etc. all involve some other way to God, either by rejecting the blood of Jesus, or by adding other conditions for salvation to the blood of Jesus. No. Jesus is the only Way to the Father.

Jesus is the Truth. All false religions contain some truth, because they all borrow ideas and truths from the Bible. The problem with false religions is that they mix the truth of God with lies. There are two sources of lies: the satanic spirit world, and the minds of men. There is one source of truth: Jesus Christ. Jesus is the revelation of God. Truth centers in Him and flows from Him. Truth as revealed in Jesus is accurate, comprehensive, and immutable. That means that truth does not change with the times. Jesus Christ is *"...the same, yesterday, and to day, and for ever."* (Hebrews 13:8)

Jesus is the Life. Life is not only quantitative, but qualitative. Some have argued that hell could not last forever, because that would be eternal life. If you could ask anyone burning in hell if that is

living, they would scream, "No!" They are existing; but that is not living. God's purpose is not just our survival, but to give "...life...more abundantly." (John 10:10)



## Methods

Contrast the sin of Judas with that of Peter. Could Judas have been forgiven and restored? Could Peter have fallen into despair, and killed himself in remorse?

Carefully teach that suicide is not of God. Suicide is unnatural; and it is a very serious sin against God. Many teens have committed suicide because they wanted attention; but consider the eternal consequences. Be careful that you do not glamorize teens who have committed

suicide, because you might encourage the same sin in someone else who is bitter against God. God is a God of light and life; and He is a God of hope, Who "...will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able;...." (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Do you know of any false religions?

What is a pseudo-Christian cult? (This is one which tries to appear Christian, but which denies basic truths about Jesus and biblical salvation. Some of these are Jehovah's Witnesses, the Way International, Herbert W. Armstrong's Worldwide Church of God, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.)

Non-Christian cults are false religions invented by man and inspired by Satan. They do not even try to pretend to be Christian. Some of these are Scientology, Unity, B'hai, Hari Krishna, and the New Age movement.

# Jesus is the Vine

Volume 5

Lesson 35



## Bible References

John 15

Psalms 15

Jude

2 "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

3 "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

4 "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

6 "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

7 "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

8 "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

9 "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

10 "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.



## Theme

Jesus is more than our ticket to heaven -- He is Lord. We must seek Jesus daily and live in His presence, in order to be overcomers in life.



## Scripture Reading

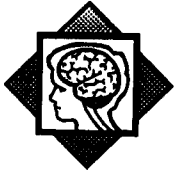
John 15:1-12

1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.



11 "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

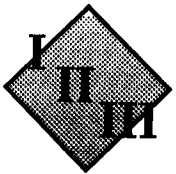
12 "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you."



## Memory Verse

John 15:7

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."



## Outline

### I. The Analogy of the Vine and Branches.

- A. This is a picture of our relationship with Jesus Christ.
1. We are dependent upon Him to sustain our spiritual life, as a branch is dependent upon the tree trunk.
  2. The branch is supported by the vine.
  3. The vine draws nourishment and water out of the ground and sends it to the branches, which produce fruit.
  4. If the branch is cut off from the vine, it will dry up, and will only be good for firewood.

5. If we cut ourselves off from Christ, we can produce no worthwhile fruit in life; and we will die.

### B. Other analogies about our relationship with Jesus.

1. Shepherd and sheep. (John 10)
2. Potter and the clay. (Isaiah 64:8)
3. Head and body. (Ephesians 5:23)
4. Husband and bride. (Matthew 25)

### II. The Importance of Bearing Fruit.

A. Fruit is that which our life produces, as a result of the love and anointing of Jesus flowing through us.

1. Plants produce fruit, as a result of the overabundance of sweetness the branches receive from the roots and trunk.
2. When Jesus lives in our hearts, the result is a godly lifestyle and positive influence on the lives of others.
3. The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) is:
  - a. Love.
  - b. Joy.
  - c. Peace.
  - d. Longsuffering.
  - e. Gentleness.
  - f. Goodness.
  - g. Faith.
  - h. Meekness.
  - i. Self-control (temperance).

B. If a branch is in Me and bears fruit:

1. The Father purges it so it can bear more fruit. (John 15:2)
2. Trials and persecutions make us stronger, sweeter, and able to produce more for God's glory.

3. Pruning: another process which is painful, but helps to produce more fruit.
4. God does not want any shade trees. We are all expected to produce fruit.

### C. If a branch in Me does not bear fruit

1. He takes it away. (vs. 2)
2. This means "cut off from the vine."
3. Branches which do not produce fruit are cut off and burned, because they only burden the tree. (John 15:6)
4. These branches drain the tree, but give nothing.
5. The presence and Spirit of Jesus in our hearts makes us givers -- we care about others.
6. When Jesus saw a fig tree that did not bear figs, He cursed it. (Mark 11:13-14, 20-21)
7. That tree immediately withered up and died.

### III. Abide in Jesus.

#### A. We become grafted into Jesus, the Vine, by being born again.

1. The Jews were the "natural branches;" but they rejected the Messiah. (Romans 11)
2. Gentiles (non-Jews) can be "grafted in," when they receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior through repentance from sin and faith in God.
3. A branch that is grafted in becomes part of the tree; and it receives life and sweetness from the main tree.

#### B. We abide in Him by continuing to seek Him, and by living for Him.

1. If we keep His commandments, we will abide in His love. (vs. 10)

2. Psalms 15:1-4 -- "*Lord,...who shall dwell in thy holy hill?*"
  - a. He that walks uprightly. (vs. 1)
  - b. Works righteousness. (vs. 1)
  - c. Is honest. (vs. 1)
  - d. Does not backbite (talk negatively about others behind their back). (vs. 2)
  - e. Is not mean to others. (vs. 4)
  - f. Keeps his word. (vs. 4)

### IV. If Ye Abide in Me.

#### A. Cause and effect.

1. Conditional promises.
2. We make choices every day, whether to do God's will, or to do our own selfish will.
3. Those who do not abide in Jesus cannot expect to receive the same benefits as those who do.

#### B. "*If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you,...*" (John 15:7)

1. You shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.
2. If His word is abiding in us, we will have His will in mind.
3. This is not a way to get God to do what we want, but rather, a way to shape our will so that we will do what He wants.
4. When we are asking in the will of the Father, we can ask in faith, and He will do it.
5. Abiding in Christ is more than just claiming salvation.
  - a. Some people wonder why God does not grant all of their selfish wishes.
  - b. Those who truly abide in Christ will have right motives.

## C. Your joy will be full.

1. Joy comes from doing God's will.
2. Joy is a fruit of the Spirit.



## Spiritual Truths

- God did not design any of us to be merely shade trees. We should all bear fruit.
- Fruit is the positive influence of my life that naturally results from abiding in Jesus and letting the Holy Spirit flow through me.
- Jesus said that branches which never bear any fruit will be cut off and burned up.
- If we are fruitful, we can expect to be pruned and purged (tested and tried), so that we will grow better and stronger.
- Some people excuse their tendency to judge others by calling themselves "fruit inspectors;" but we are told to only judge ourselves.
- Jude said that God is able to keep you from falling. We like to think that God will never let you fall, but that is not what it says.
- There is a difference between entering in and abiding.
- Joy does not come from getting my way, but rather, from letting God have His way.



## Lesson Material

Jesus often taught in analogies. An analogy is an object lesson. We see a natural situation that illustrates a higher, spiritual truth. Perhaps the most accurate test for intelligence is the ability to understand analogies. For example, it takes little brain activity to watch television, because the images are given to you, as well as the words. With radio, you have to take the words and then form images in your mind. The best mental exercise is reading, because there your mind takes transcribed symbols and forms the words, and then creates mental images to correspond to the words.

In an analogy, the mind takes one image and superimposes it onto another, seeing the correlation. A conductor is to a train as a \_\_\_\_\_ is to a plane. The answer is not pilot, but steward(ess). Similarly, a sheep is to a shepherd as a believer is to Jesus.

When Jesus said, "I am the vine and you are the branches," He was speaking about an analogy. He was saying, "Just as a branch must draw its nourishment, sweetness, and life from the vine, so are you entirely dependent upon Me to supply and sustain your physical and spiritual life." It is the branch which bears the fruit; but it would have no life, no sap, and no fruit, unless it had a viable and functioning connection to the main stem, which draws the necessary nutrients from the ground through its root system. There are many other analogies, which are word pictures, to illustrate various aspects of our spiritual life.

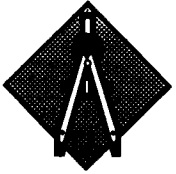
Paul said that God specifically designed marriage between a man and a woman to be an analogy of Christ and the church. (Ephesians 5:31-32) God did not design the human race and then say, "Hey, this is neat. I can see some similarities between a husband-wife relationship and the church's response to Jesus." He knew that He designed mankind for a covenant relationship with Himself; and then He created our life to reflect eternal life. The marriage analogy speaks of our covenant relationship with the Lord.

The vine and branch analogy is disturbing to some, particularly when Jesus said, *"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away:..."* (John 15:2) and *"If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."* (John 15:6) It is natural for us to want to believe that once a branch is in Christ, there is no possibility of ever being lost. Some say, "Well, once you are born, you can never be unborn." No, but you can die; and the Bible speaks many times about the dangers of falling away and becoming a reprobate. The Bible is very clear. God is faithful; and He will never leave us or forsake us. (Hebrews 13:5) Everyone in the Bible who ever turned away from God did so by his own choice. Romans 8 states that no external force or situation outside of your own will can ever separate you from the love of Christ. If you abide in Christ, you are eternally secure; and no person or power on earth or in hell can take eternal life from you.

Jesus gave this analogy to His disciples, in order to emphasize the importance of maintaining an ongoing relationship with Him by the Holy Spirit. They were never to become so adept at their work for God that they stopped letting God work

through them. That is the principle of God's grace. Grace is more than letting God do for you. Grace is also letting God live and work through you. Our lives produce the fruit; but the reason is, first of all, relationship. Righteousness is, first of all, positional. When we are in Christ, then we are in a position to receive His grace to live right, just as a branch must be rightly connected to the tree, before it can receive life from it and produce fruit.

To take the analogy a step further, consider the importance of grafting. Grafting involves cutting a clean notch in the tree, and then cutting the branch at the base to fit cleanly into the notch. If it is done properly, the branch will bond with the tree. The cells will grow as one; and the many fibers will begin to open up and allow sap to flow into the branch. You could firmly tie a branch onto a tree. You could nail it or glue it on; but it will become part of the tree and get life, only if it is grafted in. Some people become converted to a religion. They join a church and learn the motions; but, they are not really born again. To be really born again, there must be true, spiritual repentance from sin, and genuine faith toward God. You do not just accept Jesus with your mind, or feel good about Him. You turn from a selfish, sinful life, to a desire to live for Him. You give Him the right to rule over your life, making Him Lord (or Owner) of your life. When there is genuine repentance, there will be a desire to be buried in the waters of baptism, to seal this new relationship that is dead to self and alive to God. You become a *"...new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."* (2 Corinthians 5:17)



## Methods

### *Demonstration:*

Illustrate the structure of a tree. Bring to class a tree sapling that has been grafted; and explain how we are "in Christ" when we are born again, and how we are dependent upon the tree (Jesus) for our life.

### *Self examination:*

We are commanded not to judge one another, but we are also told to judge ourselves. Paul said, "*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith;...*" (2 Corinthians 13:5) Encourage each student to be his own "fruit inspector" by asking himself the following questions:

If I am genuinely born again, do I have evidence in my life?

Do I really love others? Do I really love God? Do I love His Word, the Bible?

Do I love His house? Do I have genuine joy in my life? Do I have the "peace that passes all understanding" (Philippians 4:7), or am I moody and troubled a lot?

Am I sure that I am really grafted into Christ?

Am I "abiding in Christ?"

Do I find myself doing good things that I would never have done in my own will or self effort?

### *Teacher's Note:*

Draw attention to the word "IF" in this discourse. Does Jesus apply His promises according to the condition of our response? Yes. God has designed a perfect plan. He is a very loving God; but He deals with each of us according to the way we respond to Him.

# Servants, Friends

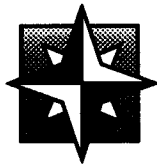
Volume 5

Lesson 36



## Bible Reference

John 15



## Theme

God's highest purpose in the earth is to gather a people unto Himself who will have an intimate and eternal relationship with Him.



## Scripture Reading

John 15:12-20

12 *"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.*

13 *"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

14 *"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*

15 *"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.*

16 *"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

17 *"These things I command you, that ye love one another.*

18 *"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.*

19 *"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

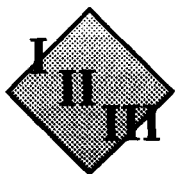
20 *"Remember, the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also."*



## Memory Verse

John 15:16

*"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."*



## Outline

### I. Love One Another.

A. Love is the key character quality in the kingdom of God.

1. Love is the opposite of sin.
2. Sin focuses on self, using others for selfish gain.
3. Love focuses on God and on the needs of others.
4. Sin takes. Love gives.
5. Sin lives for the moment. Love lives for eternal values.

B. The more we love God, the more we will naturally love other people.

1. It is impossible to love God and not love people. (1 John 4:20)
2. The sin nature loves the world, because the world exalts human ego and human pleasure.
3. If you love the world, the love of the Father is not in you. (1 John 2:15)

### II. As I Have Loved You.

A. Jesus gave His life for those He loved.

1. He took on the form of a servant. (Philippians 2:7)
2. Jesus washed the disciples' feet. (John 13:4-10)

B. Laying down your life means also giving up your rights for the sake of others.

1. Meekness is the character quality of giving up rights.
2. We become angry, when we feel our rights have been violated.
3. If you are meek, you will not become angry, because you are focused on the needs of others, and not on your own desires.
4. Selfishness is the evidence that we are not dead to self like we should be.

C. In Christ, we are able to love even our enemies.

1. That does not mean that we become intimate friends.
2. It means that we can honestly desire and pray for their good, because we see their hurt and their need, and not just their offense.

D. Christians love others, not because everyone deserves to be loved, but because of God's love in and for them.

1. I love you, not because of what you have done for me, but because of what Jesus had done for me.
2. I love others, not because everyone is lovely, but because God is love.
3. If I do not love you, it is not because something is wrong with you, but because I have a spiritual problem.

4. People who abuse or molest others have deep spiritual and mental problems; and their victims are not the cause.
  - a. Your self-worth should be linked to God's love for you, rather than to what other people have done to you.
  - b. You cannot control what other people do; but you can decide to forgive, and to have joy in your own life.

### III. I Call You No More Servants, But Friends.

- A. This is spoken to the apostles, after more than three years of leadership training and intimate relationship.
  1. This is not spoken to every believer.
  2. Always look at the context.
  3. "Every promise in the book is mine" is really not an accurate statement, because there are specific promises to specific people.
- B. Even if Jesus calls us "friends," we should still see ourselves as servants.
  1. Paul and the other apostles called themselves servants of Jesus Christ.
  2. A servant does not know what his master does.
    - a. We should obey God at all times, even though we usually do not understand what He is doing in our lives.
    - b. True faith will produce obedience, even when it does not know what is going on.

### IV. I Have Chosen You.

- A. Commonly misused statement.
  1. Some have misapplied this to every believer.
  2. Jesus is speaking to His apostles about their ministry.
- B. Wrong application -- salvation.
  1. Some have suggested this verse as a proof for absolute predestination (or "irresistible grace").
  2. This is the idea that our eternal salvation is totally dependent on God's arbitrary choice.
    - a. That is, God picks who will be saved, and who will be lost.
    - b. Then there is not much sense in evangelism, because if someone is not "chosen," he cannot be saved.
  3. This is contrary to scripture.
    - a. God is not willing that any should perish. He wants everyone to be born again. (2 Peter 3:9)
    - b. "Whosoever will" may come to God, repent, and be born again. (John 3:16)
    - c. Jesus initiated the covenant on the cross; and He offers the gift of eternal life to all who will repent and believe on His name and accept it.
- C. Right application -- ministry.
  1. Many people were followers of Jesus.
  2. Out of the many, Jesus chose a few to be His personal disciples.
  3. The Greek word for church is *ecclesia*, which means "called out ones."

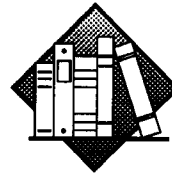


4. "For many are called, but few are chosen." (Matthew 22:14)
5. God does not choose who will be saved; but He does choose who will be pastors, evangelists, prophets, etc.
6. "I have chosen and ordained you, so that you will be fruitful in your ministry."

**V. The World Will Hate You.**

- A. Darkness hates light, because it is irritating to eyes accustomed to the dark.
- B. The more you do for God, the more you will be hated and persecuted by the ungodly.
- C. The world hates godly preachers.
  1. Again, Jesus is speaking to His apostles, and not to all believers.
  2. The more diligently you serve God, the more the world will hate you.

- If you do not love people, you cannot genuinely love God.
- Love is the opposite of sin.
- Sin is the focus on self and selfish motives. Sin loves things and uses people. We should love people and use things.
- We see the love of God in Jesus, because He made Himself a servant and He laid down His life for us.
- When we are in Christ, God sees us as sons and friends; but we should always see ourselves as servants.



**Lesson Material**

God is love. His character by nature is one of giving and caring. God is perfect. God was a perfect Heavenly Father to Adam and Eve. That is what made their selfish choice so serious, in the light of God's holiness. By disobeying God's command, they were declaring their independence and establishing themselves as lord of their own lives. They were saying, "I will be my own person." This was the introduction of sin into the human race; and it is an ongoing battle in humanity today.

When we are born again, we do not just get a ticket to heaven by deciding we want to go there. No one wants to go to hell; yet sin is so serious that it requires the death penalty. If we do not apply the price paid by Jesus on the cross, we must pay it ourselves with spiritual death, which is eternal separation, in an unholy



**Spiritual Truths**

- God desires eternal salvation for every human being on earth; but He leaves the choice up to us.
- God does not choose who will be saved; but He does sovereignly choose who will serve in leadership ministry.
- God chooses some of us for leadership, not to bless or reward us, but to use us to bless His church.

hell, from a holy God. We must repent of sin to be genuinely born again. That is, we must turn from a life focused on self, take self off the throne, and turn to seeking God and His righteousness instead. We must also believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. That is not just something we do with our head; we do it with our heart and spirit. When the Holy Spirit deals with our heart about sin, He also imparts the faith to receive the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross to atone for, or cover, that sin.

In true repentance, our life turns around. Something replaces the sin focus in life. That new quality is called love. As born-again believers, we turn back to the relationship man was designed to have with God. God was in charge (Lord); and mankind was the servant, as well as the friend and child of God. Everything belonged to God; and man was given dominion over God's creation. Man enjoyed creation; and God and man enjoyed each other. Salvation is a relationship, and not just an experience. When God sets us free from sin, we are free to love.

While sin is preoccupied with selfish pursuits, love seeks the benefit of others. On who loves is a servant and a giver. Love is "your good at my expense." Sin is "my good at your expense." Have you ever seen someone play a "practical joke" on a weaker person? That is an example of folly; and it is not part of the Christian ethic. When someone enjoys seeing another person embarrassed or humiliated, there is something spiritually wrong with him. Christians desire to bless and encourage others, because of the love that God has put in their hearts.

Love is caring and sharing. It is a response to God's love. People in the world react to love. They will love when

they feel they are being loved, or nicely treated. A dog will do that. Train a dog with kindness, and he will be a "loving" dog. But we love, not just because people are loving or lovable, but because God loves us. If I know that God loves me, I can receive His love, and then be free to love you. That means we can love anyone, even those who not only do not love us, but who seek to do us harm. That is an "enemy." (Matthew 5:44) To love an enemy does not mean that you must go to his house and eat pizza with him; but it does mean that you can be free from bitterness or retaliation, and honestly desire the best for him. Instead of reacting in kind to his attacks, you can "*...overcome evil with good.*" (Romans 12:21)

Jesus told His disciples, "From now on, I call you friends, and not just servants." They had been faithful disciples and servants for years; and now Jesus was calling them His friends. Note that they still called themselves servants. We should always have a servant's heart, even when we have been walking with God for years. What is the quality mentioned here that qualifies a person to be called a "friend" by Jesus? "*...If ye do whatsoever I command you.*" (John 15:14) If you live the kind of life that is utterly yielded to the will of God, you will enter into a rich and rewarding kind of relationship. Abraham would do absolutely anything for God. Abraham was called God's friend (Isaiah 41:8); and we notice that God also did many things for Abraham.

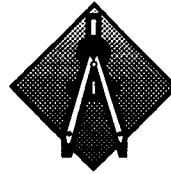
One of the most misused verses in scripture is verse 16: "*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you,....*" The problem is that some people apply everything to salvation. If we do, then this would seem to indicate that our choice has nothing much to do with

whether we go to heaven or not. "Well, it is not my choice. God chooses whom He will to be saved." No, that is not what Jesus is talking about. We already know that God does not want anyone to be lost, and that "whosoever will" may be saved. The issue here is leadership ministry. Jesus is not talking to the multitude on a mountain. He is talking to the apostles -- the leaders of the church. We do not decide to take on apostolic callings. People who choose the ministry as an occupation for themselves cannot bear much lasting fruit, because God will not anoint those He does not appoint. If God calls you to a preaching ministry, then by all means preach. If He does not send you, do not go -- you will be in for a great deal of heartache, because fleshly effort will not produce much fruit or joy. Do what God calls you to do. Then, if you are fruitful in God's work, you should not be proud, because it was God's choice. Those He appoints, He anoints.

God does not choose leaders like we choose them. We always look for the brightest and best among us. But the Apostle Paul said,

*"...Not many mighty, not many noble, are called...But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise...that no flesh should glory in His presence." (1 Corinthians 1:26-29)*

The calling of God is neither a reward nor a curse. It is simply an assignment, based on God's choice. Our salvation, on the other hand, is based very much on our decisions in life, because Jesus died for "whosoever will."



## Methods

This could easily be a two week lesson.

Lesson One: "LOVE ONE ANOTHER  
AS I HAVE LOVED YOU."

I and II in the lesson outline.

### Discussion:

What is genuine love? The secular world talks much about the topic, but is that version genuine? What is the difference between the world's concept of love and the biblical one?

A brother is someone with whom you have a relationship.

A neighbor is someone with whom you have contact and interaction.

An enemy is someone who seeks to do you harm in some way.

How can we love our enemy?

If someone were attacking you or your sister, and you had the power to shoot him to save her life, would you do it? Would you be able to say you love that enemy, even if you are doing him great bodily harm?

Yes. Love seeks the best for others; but there is a place for defense, because there is a choice. Your love for your sister compels you to stop the attacker, even if it means taking his life, if necessary. It is not an act of malice, but one of necessary defense. Many Christian police officers fight crime and criminals because they have a great love for people; and they want to protect

the innocent from those who will do them harm. Stopping a criminal can be an act of love, because it prevents him from carrying out evil plans that will harm others, and eventually himself.

Lesson Two: "I HAVE CHOSEN YOU"

*Discussion:*

What is the doctrine of absolute predestination?

It is the idea that God controls every detail of human life, and that He chooses who will be lost and who will be saved

and go to heaven. It is based on the misapplication of this verse to our salvation.

As the lesson explains, Jesus is speaking about the fact that He has chosen a few of His disciples to be apostles. It is noteworthy that none of these men would have been ordained by the church leaders of their day. They were ordinary men; but Jesus used them in extraordinary ways.

What do you think Paul meant when he said, "*...not many wise men after the flesh (intellectual), not many mighty, not many noble are called...*"?

# The Comforter

Volume 5

Lesson 37



## Bible References

John 15

Acts 1-2

1 Corinthians 14

17 *"Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

18 *"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."*

26 *"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

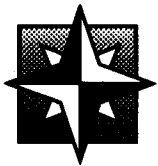
27 *"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."*

John 16:7-8, 13-14

7 *"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

8 *"And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:"*

13 *"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*



## Theme

Jesus sent us the Holy Spirit, Who is the third Person of the Trinity, to work in us and through us for God's glory.



## Scripture Reading

John 14:16-18, 26-27

16 *"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*

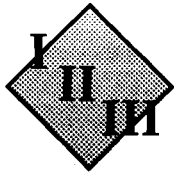
14 "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you."



## Memory Verse

John 16:13

"When he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."



## Outline

### I. I Will Send the Comforter.

#### A. Comforter.

1. Greek *Parakletos* -- "One who stands beside; an advocate."
2. One who strengthens, supports, encourages, empowers, undergirds, enables.

#### B. Not a "comforter" in the sense that we may think of.

1. His purpose is not just to make us feel comfortable.
2. He is not an emotional crutch, but rather, a spiritual strength.

#### C. I will send Him.

1. After Jesus ascended to Heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to baptize and fill the believers in Jerusalem who were at the meeting.
2. The Holy Spirit worked through the believers to continue the work Jesus began on earth, but on a much larger scale.
3. The book, "The Acts of the Apostles" could be more accurately titled "The Acts of the Holy Spirit."

### II. The Spirit of Truth.

#### A. Truth is not a set of ideas. It is the Person of Jesus Christ.

#### B. The Holy Spirit never lies; and He always focuses on Jesus.

#### C. Error takes true ideas from the Bible and mixes them with enough falsehood to take us off track and keep us from serving God.

#### D. The Holy Spirit as the Teacher.

1. He anoints those who are chosen to teach others.
2. He guides us into all truth as we seek God and search the scriptures.
3. He bears witness in the hearts of believers when truth is preached.
4. He helps us discern the source of wrong teaching.
5. He makes the Word of God come alive (quickens it to our hearts).

### III. He Shall Glorify Me.

#### A. Pure hearts never exalt self.

1. Jesus always honored the Father above Himself.
2. When He works through people, the Holy Spirit always exalts the Name of Jesus.
3. The Father glorified the Son.

#### B. A sure evidence of the presence of the Holy Ghost is the fact that the Name of Jesus is exalted above all.

1. No flesh should glory in His presence. (1 Corinthians 1:29)
2. We should be careful not to exalt any singer or preacher as a "star."

are so many people through whom the Holy Spirit can work at any given time.

- One of the very first works of the Comforter in our lives is to make us very uncomfortable with sin. (John 16:8)
- Each member of the Trinity exalts and glorifies the others, in perfect love and harmony.
- We should always seek to praise and honor others, and not ourselves.
- The world tries to give peace through circumstances. Jesus gives peace by imparting faith and renewing our minds.

### IV. My Peace I Leave You.

#### A. Jesus gives peace in the hearts of those who seek Him.

#### B. The world attempts peace by trying to eliminate conflict, danger, or strife.

#### C. Jesus gives peace that will reside in the believer, in spite of the conflict or storm.



## Lesson Material

As Jesus was sharing His last evening on earth with His disciples, He poured into them the things they would need to understand, in order to go on in the work He began for the human race. God's eternal purpose could not be fulfilled merely by convincing large numbers of people to adopt the Christian religion, or to somehow agree that Jesus was acceptable to them. The purpose of God was and is to have a people who live for Him, instead of for themselves. Christianity cannot be effective merely as a religion; there must be relationship with God, and there must be an indwelling power to enable the believers to work the works of Christ, and to demonstrate to the world that Jesus is risen in power.



## Spiritual Truths

- The primary purpose of the Comforter is not to make us comfortable, but to make us courageous and strong.
- The church can do greater works than Jesus (John 14:12), simply because there

We do not merely echo the wise ideas of Christ as a Far Eastern monk would parrot the sayings of Confucius or Buddha. Our goal is to allow God to live in us, and establish Jesus on the throne of our hearts. It is "...*Christ in you, the hope of glory.*" (Colossians 1:27)

When Jesus ascended to heaven (Acts 1), He instructed His followers to wait in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. After about ten days of prayer meeting and waiting, the number of believers who were waiting had thinned out. On the day of Pentecost, very early in the morning, one hundred and twenty of them experienced the initial outpouring of the Holy Ghost, as prophesied by the prophet, Joel. (Acts 2) This was the "baptism" in the Holy Spirit.

Now, everyone who is genuinely born again has the indwelling Holy Ghost in their lives. The Holy Spirit is the "earnest of the inheritance," or a first taste and promise of the glory and beauty of heaven. (Ephesians 1:13-14) The Holy Spirit is the One Who convinces the world of sin. (John 16:8) He makes us aware of the awfulness of sin; and He leads us to repent before God. No one can come to God, unless the Holy Spirit draws him. Before Jesus ascended, He breathed on the disciples and said, "...*Receive ye the Holy Ghost.*" (John 20:22) Later, He told them to wait for the outpouring of the Spirit. Obviously, this first "dose" was not a baptism; and yet, it was an impartation of the same indwelling Person of the Holy Spirit.

Most Bible scholars recognize no difference between the name "Holy Spirit" and "Holy Ghost." In the English language, they are equally correct, although there are some connotations to the terms ghost and spirit that do

distinguish them in some applications. The important thing to recognize is that the Holy Spirit is a distinct Person, and not just an invisible force or presence. In the world of the occult, there is a general focus on impersonal "forces," and an emphasis on human power. As Christians, we recognize a personal and loving God, with an emphasis on His power and purposes.

In seeking the baptism in the Holy Spirit, we sometimes emphasize the experience more than the relationship. Certainly it is a wonderful "high" to be immersed in the Holy Spirit; and many people have been "drunk" in the Spirit, unable for a time to speak in their known language, or even walk. As on the day of Pentecost, it is still a time of overwhelming joy to be thus baptized and then speak in an unknown tongue; but remember that this initial experience is the beginning of a new dimension of the Christian walk, and not just a one-time thrill. Jesus baptizes believers in the Holy Ghost to give them greater spiritual power, and not just to make them feel good.

Jesus spoke of Him as the Comforter, or "One who stands beside." A better translation of that title might be the "Sustainer," or the "Strengthener." Again, the work of the Holy Spirit is not so much to comfort as it is to empower for service to God and to others. The Holy Spirit works in and through believers in much the same way that Jesus did with His disciples on earth. The primary difference is that the Holy Spirit can be everywhere at once, working through many people at the same time. In His earthly ministry, Jesus was limited by his physical body to being only one place at a time.

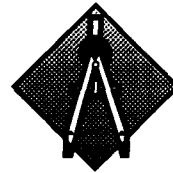
We understand that this same "glossolalia," or speaking in tongues, is the



initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 12, the Apostle Paul lists nine "manifestations" of the Spirit. For many years, Bible teachers have been calling them the nine "gifts" of the Spirit, because of the reference in verse one, where he begins by saying, "*Now concerning spiritual {gifts}, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.*" If we read carefully, we note that in the text the word "gifts" has been supplied by the translators; and it is not a part of the original text. Paul goes on to say in Chapter 12, "There are many gifts...many different ministries...many different operations...but the manifestation of the Spirit..." and then, he lists nine of them. Jesus gave one Gift (the Person of the Holy Spirit); and here are listed nine manifestations, or operations (Greek -- "spirituals") of His work in the lives of believers.

Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit both as the Comforter and as the Teacher. He promised that the "Spirit of Truth" would lead us into all truth. (John 16:13) This by no means excludes or precludes anointed Bible teachers, because God certainly has an important place for them. It does mean, however, that the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit will prompt and direct us toward right doctrine. When a preacher is declaring truth inspired by the Bible, the Holy Spirit "bears witness" in our hearts, saying "Amen. That is right." In the same way, when some strange or unbalanced teaching comes along, we have an immediate sense that "Something is wrong here." It does not seem right in our spirit. We may not even understand in our minds what is wrong; but we know in our spirit that there is something

wrong. Perhaps this has happened to you if you attend a secular school. In America, public schools teach the doctrine of evolution, falsely calling it "science." (1 Timothy 6:20) You should sense in your spirit that this is a false belief, because it came from the hearts of wicked men, who wanted desperately to adopt an alternative to creation. After all, if creation is true, then we must answer to a personal Creator. The Holy Spirit is your Teacher, Who will help you discern truth from error, if you have an honest heart before God.



## Methods

### *Survey:*

How many of you have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, with the evidence of speaking in tongues? Do you "pray with the spirit" regularly, or even occasionally? (See 1 Corinthians 14:15)

### *Prayer meeting:*

Offer to pray for those who are born again, but who have not received the Holy Spirit baptism according to Acts 2. Emphasize that Jesus desires to baptize all believers in the Holy Spirit, young and old alike. If you are not sure how to lead the students into the Holy Spirit baptism, be sure to plan ahead for your Pastor or local church elders to assist in ministering to the class.

# Jesus in Jerusalem

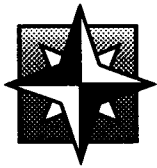
Volume 5

Lesson 38



## Bible Reference

John 12



## Theme

Jesus prepared Himself for Calvary. Jesus had a servant's heart; and He came to earth to do the will of His Father in heaven.



## Scripture Reading

John 12:23-32

23 "And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

24 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

25 "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

26 "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve men, him will my Father honour.

27 "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

28 "Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

29 "The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

30 "Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.

31 "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

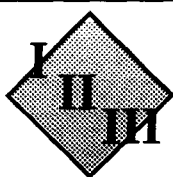
32 "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."



## Memory Verse

John 12:32

*"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."*



## Outline

### I. All Men Seek Thee.

- A. Jesus was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, just before His death.
- B. Some Greeks came to Philip, and said, "Sir, we want to see Jesus." (vs. 20-22)
  1. People who are lost need to see Jesus in us.
  2. The Greeks were the humanists and intellectuals of the day.
- C. Philip and Andrew said to Jesus, "All men seek You."
  1. Everyone needs Jesus, whether they realize it or not.
  2. When men seek wealth, popularity, or pleasure, they are looking for things that try to satisfy their need for the abundant life in Christ.

### II. A Grain of Wheat: The Seed Principle.

- A. "The time is come for the Son of Man to be glorified."
  1. Jesus saw the shameful crucifixion as "glory," because of the joy it would bring through salvation. (Hebrews 12:2)
  2. Jesus began to prepare His disciples for His death.
- B. If a grain of wheat dies, it brings forth fruit.
  1. Jesus used the analogy of a seed: it must be buried in the soil and die, before it can germinate and produce a great plant.
  2. Jesus had to die, in order to bring life to a fallen, sinful human race.
- C. He that loveth his life shall lose it.
  1. In order to be a part of God's kingdom, we must "die" to self and fully belong to Him.
    - a. Repentance is turning from a self-centered life to a Christ-centered one.
    - b. This idea is quoted in all four gospels at least once. It is very important.
  2. To "die to self" is to take our selfish nature off the throne of our heart, and make Jesus the Lord of our life.

### III. What Shall I Say?

- A. "What shall I pray? Should I pray, Father, save me from this hour? No. Because this is the reason I came into the world. I will pray, 'Father, glorify Thy name.'"

1. This is a more accurate interpretation of vs. 27-28.
  2. The Greek language does not use punctuation.
  3. Jesus was not asking the Father to "save Him from this hour."
  4. He was asking a hypothetical question.
- B. "Father, save me from this hour." (vs. 27)
1. This can be misinterpreted as Jesus asking the Father to deliver Him.
  2. O God, solve my problems, and do not let people hurt me.
  3. Jesus had no intention of asking the Father to protect Him, because "for this cause came I unto this hour."
  4. For Jesus, death was the purpose and the fulfillment of God's plan -- not the end.
  5. How much of our praying is "Father, save me from this hour?"
- C. "Father, glorify Thy name."
1. This is the mature, unselfish prayer of Jesus; and it should be ours, too.
  2. Our highest purpose in life is not to get God to make us happy, but to glorify God with our lives.
  3. Many churches focus on "Look what God can do for you," rather than teaching balanced, biblical discipleship.
  4. The key to real success is not getting what you want, but surrendering your heart and will to Jesus.

#### IV. The Thundering Voice.

- A. God spoke in an audible voice, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." (vs. 28)
1. The Father also spoke over Jesus at His baptism and at the Mount of Transfiguration. (Matthew 3:16-17; Matthew 17:1-9)
  2. The voice came for the sake of the people with Jesus.
  3. Not everyone understood that it was a voice -- some thought it was thunder.
  4. Not everyone has spiritual hearing.
- B. "Now is the judgment of this world; now is the prince of this world cast out." (vs. 31)
1. Jesus was speaking about the defeat of Satan when He died on the cross.
  2. Satan did not understand it, because he was trying to get Jesus killed; and thus he was working to his own demise.
- C. "If I be lifted up..."
1. Jesus was speaking about being crucified; but they did not understand.
  2. Jesus was made a curse for us, so that we might receive the blessing of God. (Galatians 3:13)
  3. God gave a picture of this when Moses lifted up a brass serpent in the wilderness. (Numbers 21:6-9)
    - a. The serpent was a cursed creature.
    - b. Those who looked up to the brazen serpent were saved from the death of the venom, while those who did not look up according to Moses' word died.



## Spiritual Truths

- Seed faith is not a way to get God to do what we want. It is a way to understand the surrendered life, so that God can get us to do what He wants.
- Every human being needs to be born again through the blood of Jesus, regardless of their background or training.
- When we sin, we are looking to the world and the flesh to satisfy a need that only Jesus can really meet.
- In God's economy, the way to honor is humility; the way to joy is through sorrow; and the way to find life is to die.
- If our goal in life is pleasure, we are sure to have an unhappy, empty life. If our goal is money, we will lose it all. If our goal is to do God's will, we will find life at its fullest.
- If we love pleasure more than we love God, then pleasure is our god -- and we are idolaters.
- "Father, glorify thy name" is a far more mature prayer than "Father, solve my problems."
- Jesus is drawing all men unto Himself through the cross; but lost people are blind and in need of someone to point the way to Him.



## Lesson Material

Throng of people were in Jerusalem for the annual Passover celebration. For fifteen hundred years, the Jews had kept this great feast instituted by Moses after God delivered the children of Israel from the death angel in Egypt. For those who had slain the lamb for their family and had applied the blood to the door posts of their homes, there was deliverance from death. For those who did not have the blood applied, all their of firstborn died suddenly.

This was a picture of sin and death. Because of the sin of humanity, all of us are born with a death sentence over us. Our sin makes us unworthy of God's presence; and we deserve to be separated from God forever. The death angel will come to all, eventually. But to those who have applied the blood of the Lamb of God (Jesus Christ) to their lives, the death penalty has been paid. Because of the blood, they will have eternal life.

Until the cross, this Passover was not just a symbol of their deliverance -- it was their atonement. When Jesus died on the cross, He fulfilled the demands of God's justice once and for all, so that it was no longer necessary to have any other sacrifice for sin. (Hebrews 10:10)

Jesus had come to Jerusalem, amidst throngs of admirers who cried "Hosanna!" They were looking for Him to set them free from Rome. Jesus came there to die on a Roman cross -- to be the perfect "Lamb of God" -- and take away the sins of the world. As the people were preparing for Passover, Jesus began to prepare His

disciples for the greatest event in human history -- His death and resurrection.

He told them that the time had come for the Son of man to be glorified. (vs. 23) Jesus saw His death as the culmination of His purpose on earth, and not as the end of his ministry. He saw the results; and so, He gladly endured the suffering, and He counted the shame as nothing, compared to the glory that was to be revealed. (Hebrews 12:2)

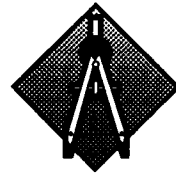
Jesus told His disciples about the principle of a seed. A seed must fall into the ground and die, in order to bring forth abundantly. If it falls on good ground, it will reproduce itself many times over. When He had told them "If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed..." perhaps He was not speaking about a small amount of faith, but rather about the way the seed operates. (See Matthew 17:20) Real faith is a focus on God and His purposes. It is not trying to get God to give us what we desire. Real faith dies to self; and it produces a servant's heart.

Jesus was thinking about His death and its results. He saw a far-reaching principle that applied to all men, and not just to His impending death on the cross. When a man loves his earthly life, and he puts all his focus on getting for himself, he misses the higher purpose of life, which is to prepare for eternity. God is looking for a people who choose to give themselves to Him in a covenant relationship. A covenant is a mutual giving of self to another. Jesus gave Himself for us; and He will give eternal life to those who give themselves to Him in return. Heaven is not for all those who want to go there, because everyone wants to go to heaven. But most people live for themselves, and want God on their terms. They want to be in control of their lives. They want to be

lord. They will live for themselves; but will die in their sins.

"Repentance" means to "turn around." In salvation, it means to turn from a self-centered life to a Christ-centered one. Our goal is not to manipulate life in order to do what we want, but to glorify God through it all. We are those who live for Jesus. Since He gave His life for us, we should live our lives for Him. Faith recognizes that Jesus paid the penalty for our sins, and that we are born again as we receive Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord.

Jesus said, "My soul is troubled. What should I pray? Should I pray, 'Father, save me from the cross?' No, because that is the reason I am here. Father, glorify your name." Jesus established that He was the example of that grain of wheat that had to go into the ground and die. He knew that His death would bring forth a great harvest of lives for eternity. His goal was to bring about a great company of redeemed humanity; and He knew that it meant death for Him. Jesus did not conquer Satan by the sword or by military strategy. He conquered Satan by laying down His life as a Lamb.



## Methods

In our ego-centered culture, it is easy for the church to get focused on an immature version of Christianity, which exalts self. In many circles, the emphasis is "Look at what Jesus can do for you!" "Come to church to get your blessing." "Give to get." Jesus did not come to earth

to "live it up." He came to die. Talk about the importance of death to self and ego, and how that is the key to the abundant life.

As long as we are living for ourselves, we cannot live for God. If we seek to "be our own person," we are functioning in the realm of humanism and darkness. The world is seeking to get us to assert our rights; but Jesus said that we should "deny self." The world seeks to build our self-esteem (pride); but God resists the proud (James 4:6); and He teaches us godly self-acceptance, which is a sense of worth based on Christ and His work in us.

Have the students pray intercessory prayers. Ask each of them to pray a prayer

for their fellow students, or one of the class leaders, or for the church. Encourage them to look for ways to enrich others, and make the world a little brighter place because of their positive influence. Be grateful that Jesus did not try to defend His own rights.

Discuss the difference between the two prayers: "Father, save me from this hour;" and "Father, glorify Thy name." Evaluate your own prayer emphasis when you pray. Do you only pray when you want something from God, or do you have an ongoing relationship with Him, in which you are seeking to live and work for Him?

# Betrayed, Denied

Volume 5

Lesson 39



## Bible References

John 18

Luke 22

20 *"Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.*

21 *"But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.*

22 *"And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!*

23 *"And they began to inquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing."*

31 *"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:*

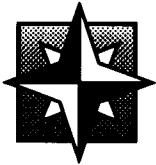
32 *"But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.*

33 *"And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.*

34 *"And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt deny that thou knowest me."*

54 *"Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off.*

55 *"And when thy had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.*



## Theme

God is not impressed with our appearance or natural abilities, but He is impressed with faith and character.



## Scripture Reading

Luke 22:19-23, 31-34, 54-60

19 *"And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.*



56 "But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.

57 "And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.

58 "And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.

59 "And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilean.

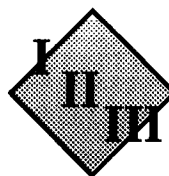
60 "And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew."



## Memory Verse

1 John 1:9

*"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*



## Outline

### I. Jesus was Crucified for Our Sins.

#### A. Rejected by the Jews.

1. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." (John 1:11)
2. The natural descendants of Abraham generally rejected Jesus as their Messiah because:
  - a. They were not sensitive to God.
  - b. They did not understand the prophecies of the Bible.

#### B. Jesus was God's sin offering for the human race.

1. Sin is serious.
2. God's holiness demands the death penalty for sin. (Romans 6:23)

#### C. Kinsman redeemer.

1. Under covenant law, only a near kinsman could buy back a lost inheritance.
2. Also, only a perfect sacrifice could be accepted by God.
3. Jesus was the only One Who could redeem the human race.
  - a. He was God, the Son. (John 1:1-3)
  - b. He was also fully man.
  - c. He never sinned.

## II. Judas Betrayed Jesus.

### A. He broke covenant.

1. "Betray" means "to smite...from beside."
2. By definition, only a friend can betray you.
3. Covenant says, "I will never turn against you."

### B. Motive: the love of money.

1. Judas had greed in his heart.
2. "...*The love of money is the root of all evil:....*" (1 Timothy 6:10)

### C. When Judas saw the damage he had done, he was overcome with grief.

1. He could have repented; and he would have been forgiven.
2. He committed suicide because:
  - a. He was proud and selfish.
  - b. He was under satanic influence.
3. Suicide is an unnatural sin.
4. Suicide is demonically inspired rebellion against God.

## III. Peter Denied the Lord.

### A. He also broke covenant.

1. Covenant says, "I will always defend you."
2. Peter was confused.
  - a. He had tried to defend Jesus with fleshly effort (his sword); and he was rebuked.
  - b. He cut off a man's ear with his sword.
  - c. He was not a good swordsman.
3. When people recognized him as a disciple during the night, he denied even knowing Jesus.

### B. Motive: fear and confusion.

1. *"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired {to have} you, that he may sift {you} as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."* (Luke 22:31-32)
2. Satan wanted Peter to focus on his physical life, and leave the Lord.

### C. When Peter saw what he had done, he, too was overcome with grief.

1. He wept bitterly.
2. He might have killed himself; but instead, he repented in sorrow.

### D. Why did Peter not also commit suicide?

1. His dominant motive was fear, and not pride.
2. He was not under demonic influence to the degree that Judas was.
3. Demons seek to kill and destroy lives.



## Spiritual Truths

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- Both Peter and Judas sinned against the Lord; and both needed to repent and receive God's forgiveness.
- Both Peter and Judas were called and chosen by the Lord to be apostles; but Judas lost his place, because he let his heart get focused on money.

- There is a difference between being filled with Satan, and being tempted or tricked by Satan.
- Jesus broke bread with Judas and washed his feet, even though He knew that Judas had turned his heart against Him.
- Judas betrayed the Lord in his heart, long before he completed the act.
- We can get discouraged when our fleshly efforts to help God only create more problems, as in the case of Peter's sword play.
- Both Peter and Judas broke covenant with Jesus and then wept bitterly; but Peter repented, while Judas turned to a fleshly effort.
- Suicide is yielding to Satan's plan for man. It is an expression of unbelief, selfishness, and rebellion against God.



## Lesson Material

On Easter, we recall again the scene that is the central event of human history, and the full expression of a loving and holy God. The most important day of history was the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, because only then could God redeem lost and sinful man back to Himself and still maintain the integrity of His perfect justice and holiness. In the cross, we see at once the awfulness of our sin, the perfection of our holy God, and His amazing compassion and love for unlovely humanity.

Jesus died a vicarious death for man. "Vicarious" means "in the place of." When Adam and Even first sinned against God, they broke their covenant relationship with Him. Covenant says, "I belong to you." Adam and Eve belonged to God. In return, God gave them dominion over the earth. When they took possession of their own lives, they broke that relationship. By disobeying, they declared their independence, and signed their own death warrant. Death was not part of God's plan for man; but sin came, and sin always produces death. (Romans 6:23) From the first, God provided a "covering" for the sin of man with the death of animals. (Genesis 3:21) God taught man to express repentance and faith by the vicarious sacrifice of his domestic animals. For four thousand years, those of the human race who sought the true God participated in these animal sacrifices.

These temporary sacrifices were a preparation for the perfect and eternal sacrifice God was sending at the right time in human history. God sent His Son, Jesus, to live among men as a man for 33 years, and then suffer and die a cruel and humiliating execution as "*...the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*" (John 1:29) This was not just an annual covering for sins, but rather, a way to pay the price in full, washing away the sins of "whosoever will" repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Because of His great act of love, we have the opportunity to be forgiven and to be born again by the Spirit, adopted into the family of God. We have the hope of eternal life, because Jesus died and paid the penalty we deserved for our sins.

Jesus was slain on the very day that the Jews celebrated the annual Passover feast. It was on this day that they sacrificed the lamb for the sins of the people of Israel.

They had been doing this for 1,500 years. But when Jesus died, it was no longer necessary for any man to offer any animal sacrifice to God. From then on, it would be an abomination, because it would deny the blood of Christ.

The night before His crucifixion, Jesus was preparing His disciples for His death. He knew that Judas would betray Him to His enemies who sought to capture and kill Him; but He still broke bread with him. Of the twelve, the stories of Judas and Peter are most significant on that night. Judas had been setting his heart on money for some time. Also, Jesus recognized that Satan had filled Judas' heart. Money had turned his heart from the love of God; and now he was open to demonic control.

Judas met some religious leaders who were trying to capture Jesus; and he led a great mob in the night to the garden where Jesus was praying. He had told them that the One Whom he would kiss would be the One they sought. (Matthew 26:48) Jesus said, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" (Luke 22:48) Jesus turned to the crowd and said, "Whom do you seek?" When they told Him, He said, "I am he." (John 18:7-8) At this, the men fell backward to the ground. That is but one of the many things that happened, that few of us really consider. What power in those three words, that would knock a crowd of men to the ground!

When people operate with their own human effort, and in their carnal egos, there is always anger and hurt. Even Peter got caught up in the carnality of the crowd; and he tried to defend Jesus with his sword. Peter was a fisherman, and not a soldier; and, in wielding his blade, he failed to hit a significant target. All he did was sever an ear -- and that ear belonged to

a mere servant. Jesus rebuked him gently, and put the ear back on the man's head. (John 18:10)

Perhaps Peter was bewildered and confused, as he saw Jesus led away and put through the mockery of a trial by a mob that was predisposed against Him. As he watched from the background, he was confronted three times by people who recognized him as one of Jesus' disciples. Each time he denied even knowing Jesus. At least once, he used some cursing language. That does tend to indicate that one does not know God, because, as the tongue reflects the heart, so a dirty heart will result in a dirty tongue. But Peter was acting out of fear. As he was speaking his third denial, he heard the rooster crow; and he remembered that Jesus had told him, "Peter, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times."

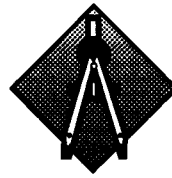
Peter wept bitterly; and in his heart, he immediately repented of his sin. He agonized miserably until a few days later, when he saw Jesus again after His resurrection. Then he was comforted. Peter had acted out of confusion and fear; but his heart was still tender toward his Master. Though he failed, he was restored, when he admitted his wrong.

Judas, on the other hand, also failed the Lord; but he reacted in a far different manner. We are not sure of all that went through his mind that fateful night; but he was probably very surprised to see Jesus suffer like that. His motive was not hatred or bitterness. His motive was greed. He very likely thought that Jesus would escape again, and that he would just have a little extra spending money. However Jesus allowed Himself to be taken, and mocked, and tortured, and then crucified. Judas was horrified. He reacted in a carnal way. Instead of asking God's forgiveness in

humility, he took his own life. Led by the demonic powers of darkness, he engaged in his final act of rebellion against God.

When we hear of a suicide, our desire is always to comfort the family; and so, we may rationalize ways to justify the senseless death, and "preach them into heaven." But we need to be honest, and recognize suicide as sin. God appoints the time of our death. (Hebrews 9:27) Suicide rejects God's timing, and says, "God has put on me more than I can bear." But that, too is unbiblical. (1 Corinthians 10:13) Suicide (self-destruction) is never justified. It is sin. It is part of Satan's plan, but not God's. Jesus said, "...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10)

Judas did not realize that all of this was in God's eternal plan to redeem humanity. He focused himself on things, rather than on God; and he lost out eternally. He is most probably suffering now the torments of hell; and one of those torments will be the knowledge that he had walked with Jesus for three and one half years, and he could have had a part in God's eternal victory. Jesus died for Judas too; but Judas was so full of greed and selfishness that he could not see it, or receive forgiveness.



## Methods

### *Discussion Topics:*

Satan desired to control both Judas and Peter. Why was he not able to have Peter?

1. Someone was praying for Peter against Satan.
2. Peter got distracted, but his heart never turned from faith.
3. Peter was not motivated by pride.

What opened Judas to the spirit of greed and suicide?

1. Judas let the love of money get into his heart, which quenched the Spirit of God.
2. Judas was the team treasurer; and he got caught up in the natural things of life.
3. Pride.

What causes people today to open their lives to a spirit that can destroy them?

1. Drugs and or alcohol.
2. Rebellion against authority. (1 Samuel 15:23)
3. Focus on temporal values.
4. Neglect of spiritual things.

# He is Risen

Volume 5

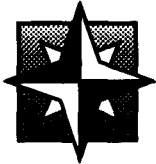
Lesson 40



## Bible References

Matthew 28

Luke 24



## Theme

Christianity is unique in the fact that we serve a Savior Who died for the sins of the whole world, and Who is alive forevermore.



## Scripture Reading

Matthew 28:1-8

1 *"In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.*

2 *"And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.*

3 *"His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:*

4 *"And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.*

5 *"And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.*

6 *"He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.*

7 *"And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.*

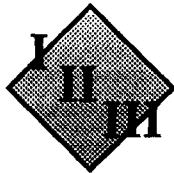
8 *"And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word."*



## Memory Verse

Revelation 1:18

*"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."*



## Outline

### I. The Symbol of Christianity is Not a Manger.

- A. The manger speaks of Jesus coming in humility as a servant.
  - 1. It speaks of His humanity.
  - 2. It reminds us that God does not force Himself into our hearts, even though He could.
- B. Jesus came as a babe; but He grew up, became a man, and is forever God the Son.

### II. The Symbol of Christianity is Not a Crucifix.

- A. A crucifix is a statue of Christ dying on the cross.
- B. The crucifix reminds us of God's love.
  - 1. Jesus was the supreme sacrifice for our sins.

- 2. We do not have to pay the death penalty for our sins, because Jesus went to the cross.

### C. But Jesus is not on the cross.

- 1. He died and was buried in a borrowed tomb. (He did not need it for long.)
- 2. He is alive; and He is seated at the right hand of the Father.

### III. The Symbols of Christianity are the Empty Cross and the Empty Tomb.

#### A. This says it all.

- 1. Yes, Jesus died. His spirit left His body for three days.
- 2. But He is not on the cross, or in the grave.

#### B. Moslems hope that their prophet, Mohammed will someday rise from the dead; but our Lord is alive.

#### C. Because He lives, we shall live also. (John 14:19)

### IV. The Women at the Tomb.

- A. Early on Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene and Mary went to the tomb,
  - 1. They loved the Lord, even if He was dead.
  - 2. The Sabbath was over.
- B. There was an earthquake; and an angel rolled the stone away from the tomb.
  - 1. The Roman soldiers fell down.
  - 2. They had been posted, to keep the disciples from stealing the body.

3. They were terrified at the sight of the mighty angel.
  4. The stone was rolled away, not to let Jesus out, but to let the disciples in.
- C. The angel told the women, "Fear not. He is not here, He is risen."
1. "He is going ahead of you into Galilee, and you will see Him there."
  2. They went with fear and joy – a strange combination of emotions.
- D. Jesus met them.

- We do not just respond to the wise teachings of Jesus; we respond to Him personally.
- We do not just minister the words of Jesus; we minister Jesus to people.
- The Roman soldiers were "slain" (they fainted), because they could not stand the power of the presence of the angel.



## Spiritual Truths

- If you seek Jesus, you will find Him.
- Sunday is not the Sabbath; it is the Lord's day, when Jesus rose from the dead and met with His disciples.
- Thomas missed the first Sunday night service. He missed a great meeting, because Jesus appeared in Person to them.
- The manger and the crucifix represent aspects of Christian history; but they do not represent our message, like the empty cross.
- Some people feel less threatened by thinking of Jesus in terms of the manger or the crucifix, because they do not want to relate to Him as a powerful risen Lord and Judge.



## Lesson Material

It is important that we as Bible teachers always communicate the present reality of the power of God in our lives. The fact of the resurrection is a unique quality of the Christian faith. Most religious groups believe in some kind of afterlife, or a spiritual resurrection -- at least, a reincarnation (receiving a new physical birth and starting life all over again). This is a heathen concept, which is inspired by Satan; and it produces a fatalistic view of life. If this life is just one is a long series of lives for me, then it does not matter so much what I do with it. But "*..it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this, the judgment.*" (Hebrews 9:27) I only get one life on earth; and my eternal destiny will be determined by what I do in this life, particularly by how I respond to Jesus Christ, the Lord.

The Bible teaches a physical (and not just a spiritual) resurrection of Jesus. This is clear, in that the tomb was empty. The presence of the guarding Roman soldiers and of the mighty angel is testimony that this was not a hoax by some grieved disciples to perpetuate a myth about their



Messiah; He was risen indeed, and He had a bodily resurrection.

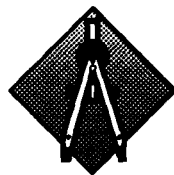
In order to have a resurrection, there must be a death. Jesus was not just in a coma, and then resuscitated. His blood had been drained from His body in the execution process, and His spirit had gone into the earth to commune with the souls of the righteous dead in Paradise. (Luke 23:43; Ephesians 4:8-9) When Jesus died, the guilt and weight of the sin of the whole human race was upon Him. Just as the priest had, for hundreds of years, transferred the guilt of God's covenant people onto a lamb and then took its life for a sin offering to our holy God, so Jesus was the Lamb of God, Who shed His unique blood as God's Son to atone for the sins of those who would receive Him as Savior and Lord of their lives. (John 1:29)

Jesus died; and His spirit left His body. Early on Sunday morning, the power of the Holy Spirit flowed through that lifeless body, and it was changed in an instant. There was still no blood, for the life of His body was now the Spirit of almighty God. It was a changed and glorified body of flesh and bone. There would be no more corruption, or decay. This changed body would never die. He could now travel at will, even to heaven. Jesus appeared to many of His disciples for 40 days (the biblical number of testing); and then, He ascended in the clouds to heaven. (Acts 1:2-12)

Many people prefer to relate to an image of Jesus still in the manger, or on the cross. He is less threatening as a little newborn baby, than as the sacrificial Lamb of God suffering in the agony of the cross. But He is not in a tomb, or hanging on a cross. Our Christianity is symbolized by an empty cross. The cross is the place of the curse -- *"...Cursed is everyone that hangeth*

*on a tree."* (Galatians 3:13) Hanging implies dishonor, as well as death. Jesus became cursed for us, that we might receive the blessing of God by faith. But now, He is alive. He is alive as our High Priest, the Head of the church, and our soon-coming King. He has all authority in heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18); and if we are "in Christ" and authorized by Him, we can go "in His name" and do what He did, by the power of the same Holy Spirit. (John 14:12)

Other religions follow the "wise" teachings of their dead leaders, revering their memories. We learn from the teachings of those through whom God spoke, such as Solomon and Paul; but we are not merely followers of the teachings of Jesus. He is present when we gather in His name. (Matthew 18:20) He is able to hear and answer our prayers. (John 14:14) He makes intercession for us to the Father. (Hebrews 7:25) He is completely, eternally, uniquely, wonderfully alive. Jesus is not hanging on a cross. He is risen!



## Methods

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### Discussion Questions:

What are the historic evidences that Jesus is alive?

Is there evidence in your own life that Jesus is really alive?

What kind of future can we hope for, if Jesus did in fact rise from the dead as the Bible says?

What is the difference between teaching the words of Christ and being "ministers of Christ?" (1 Timothy 4:6)

Why do Christians worship on the Lord's day, and not the Sabbath?

(The Sabbath was fulfilled in Christ, Who did the work for our salvation. We

do not have to work for salvation through our own labors. (Ephesians 2:8-9) We celebrate Jesus' resurrection on Sunday, the day the early church met for Christian celebrations and giving of tithes. (Acts 20:7)

# The Early Church

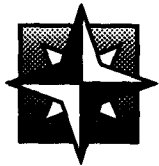
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## Bible Reference

Acts 2-3



## Theme

The early church was a vibrant church, which experienced explosive growth in the midst of hardship and persecution.



## Scripture Reading

Acts 2:37-45

37 "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

38 "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39 "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

40 "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

41 "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

42 "And they continued stedfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

43 "And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

44 "And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

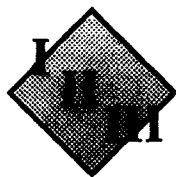
45 "And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need."



## Memory Verse

Acts 2:42

*"And they continued stedfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."*



## Outline

### I. Peter's Sermon on the Day of Pentecost.

#### A. After the 120 were baptized in the Holy Ghost:

1. Peter was the spokesman for the eleven apostles.
2. A large crowd gathered around them.
3. There was already a large crowd in Jerusalem, because it was the annual Jewish Feast of Pentecost.

#### B. "This is that."

1. This fulfilled Joel's prophecy about the Spirit being poured out in the last days. (Joel 2:28)
2. With the Lord, "...a thousand years (is) as one day." (2 Peter 3:8)
3. There had been 4,000 years of human history since Adam.
4. There would be two more "days" (or millenniums) before the final

seventh day of rest, when Christ would come to earth to rule.

5. The final 2,000 years of history are the "last days."

#### C. Jesus.

1. Much of the sermon was to show the Jews that Jesus, Whom they had crucified a few weeks earlier, was the true Messiah -- the long-awaited Christ.
2. Jesus is the Savior of the world; and He was the Source of this power that the disciples had.

## II. Repent, and Be Baptized.

### A. Repent.

1. Realize that you have sinned against God.
2. Turn around from living for yourself to living for God.
3. Confess your sin and rebellion to God, and ask His forgiveness.

### B. Be baptized.

1. Means to be buried in water.
2. For the remission of sins.
  - a. To bring the disease of sin into remission.
  - b. An outward expression of an inward work.
  - c. A public testimonial of identification with Christ.
  - d. A funeral service for the "old man."

### C. And receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost.

1. The Gift is the Holy Spirit Himself.
  - a. The Holy Spirit was given to believers after Jesus' resurrection. (John 20:22)

- b. The Holy Spirit does the work of regeneration in our spirits. (John 3:5-6)
- 2. "For the gift is unto you, and to your children."
  - a. The Holy Spirit indwells all believers. (Romans 8:15-17)
  - b. The Holy Spirit encourages, convicts and empowers us.

### III. Save Yourself from this Perverse Generation.

- A. God saves us from the power of sin, and also from hell; but we must save ourselves from the influence of this perverse generation.
- B. Perverse generation.
  - 1. "Untoward" means "warped; crooked; perverse."
  - 2. There are people who want to influence you to do evil, so that they will not feel guilty about their own wickedness.
  - 3. Proverbs 1.
- C. Save yourselves.
  - 1. Protect yourself from the influence of wicked children.
  - 2. Save yourself from evil influences by surrounding yourself with godly influences.
    - a. Associate with wise people. (Proverbs 13:20)
    - b. Get good counsel. (Proverbs 11:14)
    - c. Listen to good teaching. (Mark 4:24)
- D. With many other words.
  - 1. This was not a short sermon, as some have thought.

- 2. Most of the sermon was about protecting yourself from this perverse generation.
- 3. How did Peter say to do that?
- 4. By repenting and being born again through faith in Jesus Christ.

### IV. The Activities of the Early Church.

- A. They continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine.
  - 1. They heard and studied the teachings of the apostles.
  - 2. "Apostle" means "one sent."
  - 3. They listened to the leaders that God sent to them.
- B. And fellowship.
  - 1. *Koinonia* -- sharing your lives together in the Lord.
  - 2. You cannot have spiritual fellowship with an unbeliever, because you do not have the same goals in life. (2 Corinthians 6:14)
- C. Breaking of bread.
  - 1. Sharing the Lord's table (communion) regularly.
  - 2. To focus on the Body of Christ.
  - 3. To examine yourselves, and to restore relationships in the church. (1 Corinthians 11:26-28)
- D. And in prayers.
  - 1. Prayer is the key to any strong, spiritual church.
  - 2. God allows difficulties in our lives to motivate us to pray.



## Spiritual Truths

- God protects us from demons and sets us free from sin; but He says "Beware of men."
- We are responsible to protect ourselves from the influence of this perverse generation.
- We save ourselves from this untoward generation by seeking to be influenced by godly leaders.
- The first word of the gospel is "Repent;" and repentance is necessary for a legitimate new birth.
- Every believer receives the wonderful Gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit.
- Some folks "heap to themselves teachers" (See 2 Timothy 4:3); but we should listen carefully to the teachers whom God sends into our lives.
- The early Christians did not just share meetings together; they shared their lives together, and they opened their homes to one another.
- The fact that the early church was the true church was affirmed by supernatural signs and wonders, and not just by words and ideas.



## Lesson Material

The purpose of Jesus on the earth was primarily to give His life as a sin offering for the human race (to satisfy God's holiness and justice); and then, to establish the true church. The church of Jesus Christ is not any one organization on earth -- it consists of all genuinely born-again believers. There are many "churches" which claim to be Christian, without really teaching salvation by grace through faith in the blood of Jesus Christ. False churches tend to reject an eternal hell, while mixing grace with works in order to earn salvation. They also will have doctrines and creeds; but they will have no real supernatural power, as the true church had. There were many supernatural signs and wonders in the early church, because the sovereign God of the universe was working in and through the believers.

Jesus taught His disciples extensively; and then He died on the cross, rose from the dead, and spent 40 days confirming the resurrection to many people. He ascended to heaven; and then He sent the Holy Spirit to empower the faithful 120 people who were still waiting obediently in Jerusalem for Him to arrive. Early in the morning on the day of Pentecost, they were all filled with the Spirit; and they spoke in languages they did not learn or understand. They were so full of joy, and so overwhelmed by the Spirit, that other people thought they were drunk. (Acts 2)

Peter began to preach to the crowd that had gathered. It was a long sermon. He spoke boldly about the fact that the Man that they had crucified 50 days earlier was, in fact, the Messiah that they had been

looking for. Peter had denied the Lord while He was being arrested, mocked, and tried; but now, full of the Holy Ghost, Peter was very bold. He knew that these Jews who had killed Jesus might kill him, but he did not care. He was mighty in the Holy Ghost; and he preached with power and conviction.

As he preached, the people became convicted in their hearts, because they realized that he was right. They had murdered the very Son of God. They were grieved over their sin. They asked, "What shall we do?" Peter said,

*"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."* (Acts 2:38)

"Repent" means to "turn around." Our sin nature causes us to live only for ourselves. We cannot serve God, if we are serving the god of self. Sin keeps us from doing right, and from making right choices. Some people want to receive eternal life and make heaven their home without true repentance; but the Bible is clear that repentance is essential to a legitimate, spiritual birth. Indeed, if we have a true encounter with the Holy Spirit, we will be grieved to realize how unholy we are, and how much in need of forgiveness we are.

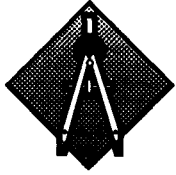
One response of genuine salvation is the willingness to be baptized in water, or to be "buried with Christ." (Romans 6:4) Peter said that this was for the "remission of sin." (Acts 2:38) When a disease is conquered, it is brought into "remission." Not only is water baptism an act of obedience and testimony, but it is also a picture of our being placed, or baptized, into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit, when we receive salvation. (Romans 6)

Most of Peter's sermon was on the topic, *"...Save yourselves from this untoward generation."* (Acts 2:40) It was a long sermon. We do not have the details of the message, but we have the theme. We can reasonably assume that their actions were in response to his sermon. We know that about 3,000 people were saved and baptized right away. In order to grow in Christ and become spiritually mature, they continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine, and in fellowship, and in communion and prayers. These things are essential, if we are going to keep ourselves free from the evil influences of the wicked around us.

There are always people who will try to corrupt those who want to serve God. The Bible teaches us that darkness hates light; and that we are a reminder of God, and therefore of judgment, to those who do not serve God. Naturally, they will try to get you to stumble. People of the world will try to pull you down, so you will not bother their consciences so much. Now God promises to protect us from demons and set us free from sin; but we have to save ourselves from the influence of this perverse generation. Jesus said, *"...Beware of men:..."* (Matthew 10:17) God allows people to make their own choices; and He will not force them to leave you alone. We can cast out evil spirits by the power of God; but we cannot cast out people. You have to make sure that you are free from the world's influence, by seeking to be influenced by godly believers.

The early church was not a one-day-a-week activity. Because of persecution, the people were together every day. Their whole life was centered in preparing for eternity; and Jesus was the focus of their conversation and lifestyle. They were in the Word; and they were in each other's homes. They ate together and shared

everything they had with one another. They were a spiritual family, with one central purpose in life: to make Jesus the Lord of their lives, and to take as many people with them to heaven as they could. It is no wonder that the church grew so fast, and that there were people saved every day of the week.



## Methods

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Compare the focus and the spirit of the early church with the church today, and perhaps with your own local church.

When you think of the local church, do you think of the leaders, the building, or of yourselves in general?

What was the key to the astounding success of the early church?

Why did so many people get saved, even though they knew it might cost them their jobs, or even their lives, to confess Christ?

Is it possible to go to church and be converted to the Christian faith, without being genuinely born again by repentance and faith?

Why did Peter say, "Save yourselves from this perverse generation?" Are we supposed to save ourselves? (Philippians 2:12)



# They Had Been with Jesus

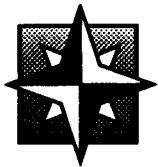
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## Bible References

Acts 3 and 4



## Theme

When people have genuinely been with Jesus, their lives will be transformed, and they will have faith in God.



## Scripture Reading

Acts 3:1-7

1 "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.

2 "And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;

3 "Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.

4 "And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.

5 "And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.

6 "Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

7 "And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength."

Acts 4:1-4, 13

1 "And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,

2 "Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

3 "And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.

4 "Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand."

13 "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they

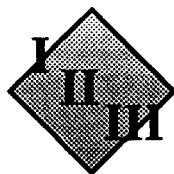
*marvelled; and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus."*



## Memory Verse

Acts 4:13

*"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus."*



## Outline

### I. The Lame Man at the Gate Beautiful.

#### A. Peter and John.

1. They made a great team.
2. Peter was a bold preacher, who was impetuous and strong in declaring truth.
3. John had a strong compassion for people and a gentle nature.
4. This is unity with diversity.

#### B. They were going to the Temple for the prayer meeting.

#### C. The lame man.

1. All of his life, he had made his living by begging.

2. He expected to receive something from Peter and John.

#### D. Alms.

1. This is one type of giving.
2. Other kinds of giving.
  - a. Tithe -- 10 % of our increase, which belongs to God.
  - b. Offering -- giving to the Lord's work above the tithe.
  - c. Sacrifice -- giving in obedience to the Lord, when we cannot afford to.
  - d. Alms -- sharing what we have with the poor.
3. "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD;...." (Proverbs 19:17)
4. When you give alms, do it in secret. (Matthew 6:1-4)

### II. The Healing of the Lame Man.

#### A. "Look on us."

1. The man asked for alms.
  - a. It was against the law for able-bodied people to beg.
  - b. "Give to him that asketh thee" (Matthew 5:52) refers to truly needy people. This is not being asked for money by lazy people who could work.
2. Peter said, "Look at us."

#### B. "Silver and gold have I none."

1. These apostles had no money.
2. Some today would argue that they did not have much faith, if they could not come up with enough money between them for a handout.
3. But they did have enough faith for God to use them to heal a lame man.

4. Wealth is good; but it is not proof of spirituality, or of faith in God.
- C. "Such as I have, give I thee."
1. When God gives us spiritual gifts, they are given to enable us to give to others.
  2. We cannot give what we do not have.
- D. "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth."
1. This was not just a "magic formula."
  2. They were acknowledging that they were sent by Jesus, and that He had given them the authority to do His ministry in His stead.
- E. "Rise up and walk."
1. God worked the gift of healing through the apostles.
  2. The man had to respond, in order to receive the blessing.
  3. He had to get up and walk.
  4. He jumped up, walked, and praised God.
  5. This got people's attention; and it became a great time for Peter to preach again.
  6. This time, about 5,000 men got saved.

### III. The Trial.

- A. The Jewish religious leaders again felt threatened by the success of these early Christians.
1. A few of them, like Nicodemus, were converted.
  2. Most of them were too busy fighting this new movement to realize that they were really fighting something

from God.

- B. "Who gave you the right to do this?"
1. Where did you get this power? (Acts 4:7)
  2. Peter replied, "Jesus, Whom you crucified."
  3. "And by the way, Jesus is the cornerstone of God's eternal plan -- the only way to salvation."
- C. "They took knowledge of them."
1. The rulers realized that Peter and John did not have degrees in the ministry, but that they did have a personal relationship with Jesus.
  2. They noticed the boldness of these men, and not their material success.
    - a. When you are filled with the power of God, you can be bold.
    - b. The early Christians prayed often for boldness to witness, and rarely for their own safety.
  3. They had been with Jesus.
    - a. The most important activity and quality in life.
    - b. Genuinely being with Jesus is the best thing that can happen to anyone.
    - c. This relationship changed their lives, giving them vision and purpose.



## Spiritual Truths

- The lame man is a type of all of us. Spiritually, we cannot walk right, because of a birth defect called sin.

- The beggar was in the right place at the right time. People who go to prayer meetings are not the richest, but they tend to be the best givers.
- Churches who can no longer say, "Silver and gold have I none," also generally cannot say "Rise up and walk" to the lame.
- We cannot give what we do not have.
- Signs and wonders are not just for the sake of the needy, but for the sake of the people who need to hear the gospel.
- When you do anything for God, you will upset some people; and they will usually be religious people.
- Bible college can be helpful; but the most important credential for the ministry is a BWJ (been with Jesus) degree.



## Lesson Material

Peter and John had spent more than three years with Jesus as His chosen disciples. They had not only heard His teaching, but they had seen His lifestyle and the many miracles He had performed by the power of the Holy Spirit. After Jesus ascended, He had sent this same Holy Spirit to empower and encourage His followers, so that they could continue to do what Jesus began to do on earth. Jesus had, in the normal course of His day, blessed and healed people; and He had constantly pointed them to God. Now, Peter and John were living the same type of selfless life they had seen in their

Master; and they were full of the same Holy Spirit, Who had enabled Jesus to make the lame walk.

In Jerusalem, shortly after the day of Pentecost, Peter and John were going to the temple at the hour of prayer. They were probably going to a prayer meeting. They passed a lame beggar, who made his living there by asking people for alms. Begging was a legal way to make a living, as long as the beggar was legitimately handicapped. If a person was able-bodied, he was committing a serious crime in asking for alms. Many Christians feel that they must always give when someone begs, or "panhandles" for money. Many cults have been able to get money from Christians by begging, because we are naturally givers. We need to be careful, because people on the street may use the money to buy drugs or alcohol; or that nice person at the airport raising donations for "education" or "helping poor children" will probably use it to train children in a false, satanic cult. Alms should not go to people who are able to work. The Bible says, "*...If any would not work, neither should he eat.*" (2 Thessalonians 3:10)

To merely give to everyone who asks of you could not only be poor stewardship, but it could contribute to an anti-Christian purpose. Even if you are giving to the poor, it is rarely wise to give cash. We usually try to give them such things as food, or shelter, or clothing.

Peter and John were quite a team. It is obvious that they had different personalities and different spiritual gifts; and yet, they were a good balance. In Romans 12, Paul spoke about spiritual gifts and the importance of developing them. Some call these seven areas of service "grace gifts," or "motivational gifts." Peter was strong in declaring truth. Notice that

when the rulers confronted him about "In what name did you do this," he did not just say, "Jesus." He said, "The same Jesus Whom you crucified and rejected. He is the stone that the builders rejected, and He is made the main cornerstone by God." He did not give a nice, simple answer. He wanted to make sure they got the point. He risked their wrath, even endangering his own life, to speak the truth clearly. John was far more sensitive to the feelings of others, and was far less likely to offend. He was an intimate friend of Jesus; and he demonstrated the compassion of the Lord is his ministry. Each of them had a good gift; and they each needed each other, in order to bring balance to their ministry.

When they came into contact with the lame man, it was Peter who again was the spokesman. He said, "*...Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee:...*" (Acts 3:6) It is noteworthy that the two leading apostles of this church with thousands of excited members did not have enough money between them to buy this man's lunch. You would think they could have taken some dynamite offerings, after the meetings they had. But their emphasis was not on money. They were so excited about the Lord, that their whole lives were consumed with Him. We should always want to bless preachers financially; but if money is the motive for a ministry, it is in trouble. Money is a natural reward for work -- even for church work; but we must always see ourselves as working for God, rather than for money.

The story is often told of Saint Francis of Assisi, who was visiting a high official of the Roman Church centuries ago. The Bishop took him around to see the fabulous buildings, manicured gardens, gilded statues, and masterful artwork, and remarked, "As you can see, we can no longer say, 'Silver and gold have we

none.'" Francis replied, "Yes, and neither can you say, 'In the name of Jesus, rise up and walk.'" James said, "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" (James 2:5) That is because faith is not the ability to get what you want from God, but rather, a focus on God's purposes and provision. People who do not have needs tend to be less motivated to seek God than those who are keenly aware of an immediate need.

"In the name of Jesus" refers to the principle of delegation. If a king wanted to communicate with another leader, but was unable to go himself, he would often send an ambassador. An ambassador is someone who is authorized to represent someone else. The king would say, "You know me, and what I would do. Since I cannot go personally, I am sending you in my place. I give you the right to speak in my name." The king's name denotes authority. Saying "In the name of Jesus" has no power, if Jesus did not authorize you to use His name. Just ask the sons of Sceva. (Acts 19)

When Peter said "In the name of Jesus," the same thing happened to this lame man that happened to the lame men that Jesus healed. He was healed; and he began leaping and praising God. He was emotional. As a result of this miracle, thousands of people were saved. The man was blessed; but the sign and wonder performed was primarily a way to draw people to God.

So many people turned to the Lord, that it stirred up the wrath of the religious leaders in Jerusalem. The high priest and many other leaders had Peter and John thrown in jail; and then they questioned them the next day. Peter boldly told them

that they had done it in the name of Jesus, Whom they had crucified. When the leaders saw such boldness, they marvelled. They knew that Peter and John were not formally educated. But they also realized that these men were like Jesus. They were simply doing what Jesus did.

The purpose of every legitimate preacher of the gospel is to draw people to Jesus, and lead them into a personal walk with Him. Any other training is secondary to a personal relationship with God. When you walk with God daily, the results will be seen in your life. If you act no differently as a Christian than you did as a sinner, you should check your foundation: and *"examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith."* (2 Corinthians 13:5)

We are influenced by the people we spend our time with. If you spend much time with Jesus, you will tend to think and act like Him; and that is the ideal life for any human on earth.



## Methods

### *Skit*

During the week, recruit some students, or some other adult workers, to

read this story thoroughly; and then, work out a scene to illustrate it. You may want to use people in their regular clothing, rather than in costumes. When confronted by the beggar, Peter and John might turn their pockets inside out, with a few pennies shaken out. "We have some pennies and nickels, but no silver or gold." Make sure the "lame" man acts emotional. After all, he has never walked in his life; and now he is instantly healed. He jumps, yells, and gets excited. Thousands of people gather, and "Peter" preaches about Jesus. Let the rest of the class be the crowd.

The second part would be the trial with the Jewish religious leaders. Peter and John are arrested, and they boldly defend themselves. The leaders recognize that Peter and John had been with Jesus. They confer; and then they decide that they cannot do much about it, other than command them to keep quiet about Jesus. Peter (or John) replies, "No way. We cannot help but talk about what we have seen and heard." The leaders threaten them, and then let them go.

### *Discussion:*

Has anyone ever reacted to you because you were too much like Jesus?

Have you noticed, like, how quickly, you know, that people, like, pick up the language of, like, the people they, like, hang around?

How can we spend time with Jesus?

# Ananias and Sapphira

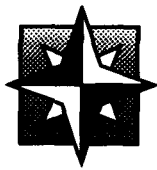
Volume 5

Lesson 43



## Bible Reference

Acts 5



## Theme

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.



## Scripture Reading

Acts 5:1-11

1 "But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,

2 "And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

3 "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost,

and to keep back part of the price of the land?

4 "Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

5 "And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

6 "And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.

7 "And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

8 "And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

9 "Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.

10 "Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.

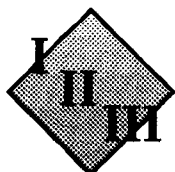
11 "And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things."



## Memory Verse

Psalms 111:10

*"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever."*



## Outline

### I. The Early Church Community.

#### A. Acts 4.

1. When Peter and John were threatened and persecuted for preaching the gospel, the church prayed for boldness.
2. They did not merely pray for safety.

#### B. God answered their prayer.

1. Acts 4:31 -- "When they had prayed...."
2. "The place was shaken."
3. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.
4. They spoke the Word with boldness.

#### C. The believers were in one accord.

1. They had great supernatural power.
2. They shared their possessions.

3. Some sold their goods and shared it with the church family.

### II. Ananias and Sapphira.

#### A. They wanted to appear to be totally committed.

1. They went through the motions of dedication.
2. They sold some land; and then they decided to keep part of the money for themselves, while testifying that they gave it all.

#### B. Ananias presented the money to the leadership.

#### C. What was their sin?

1. They did not steal money, because it belonged to them.
2. They could have given part of their capital gains income.
3. The sin was lying.
4. They tried to pretend that they were fully committed, when they were not.

### III. The Apostle Peter.

#### A. The man who had the spiritual power to heal the sick also had the power of a word of knowledge.

1. The Holy Spirit residing in him knew of the deception in Ananias.
2. Prophets can know things by the Spirit of God.

#### B. Peter's rebuke to Ananias.

1. Why has Satan filled your heart?
2. You have lied to the Holy Ghost.



3. No one said you had to give this money.

C. Ananias' response.

1. He fell down dead, right there on the spot.
2. The young men buried him.

D. Sapphira later came in and repeated the lie.

1. She also repeated the response to Peter's rebuke.
2. She dropped dead.

E. The church gained respect in the community; and the fear of the Lord came upon them all.

#### IV. The Holy Ghost.

A. The Holy Spirit is a Person.

1. "Why did you lie to the Holy Spirit?"
2. You cannot lie to a "force."

B. The Holy Spirit is God.

1. Compare verses 3 and 4.
  - a. Why did you lie to the Holy Ghost?
  - b. You have not lied to men, but unto God.
2. This passage confirms the fact that the Holy Spirit is a distinct Person of the Trinity, and that He is Deity.



## Spiritual Truths

- In the face of hardship, it is far better to pray for strength and boldness than for an easy life.
- One evidence of true revival is the desire to share with other believers.
- The story of Ananias and Sapphira shows us what God thinks about people who testify to being more dedicated than they really are.
- You can fool some of the people some of the time, and you can even fool yourself; but you can never fool God.
- Sometimes we do not remember to relate more personally to the Holy Ghost, because He is always glorifying the Father and the Son through the believers He fills.
- You may have intelligence, savvy, and common sense; but if you have no fear of God, then you have no wisdom at all.
- The fear of the Lord involves reverence, respect, and awe; and it also involves plain old realistic fear.
- The fear of the Lord is not a negative. It is a wonderful and healthy part of a wise perspective on life.



## Lesson Material

When Peter and John were released back to the church, the people began to pray more fervently than ever. In the face of danger and persecution, how would we pray today? We often pray for God's protection, or even for the wrath of God on our enemies. Instead, the church prayed that they would have boldness to preach in the face of danger. What a good attitude!

God loved it. When they prayed that kind of God-honoring prayer, God answered them in a mighty way. The whole building shook with God's power; and everyone in the meeting was mightily filled with the Holy Spirit. There were two specific results of that great meeting. The first was that they did speak for God with boldness. The second was their relationship with each other. They were in one accord. They were for one another. There was no grasping for position, or seeking to be the most popular. They were all seeking to glorify God; and so, no one cared who got the credit. They were full of love for each other, so they did not talk about each other behind their backs. They defended and built up each other.

There was also a spirit of giving. No one was trying to "get ahead," because they were all so busy giving. What a blessing to see the wealthier believers come to a meeting and give their extra wealth to distribute to the poor Christians. For a time, there were among the Christians in Jerusalem no very wealthy ones, and no very poor ones. This could be called a "voluntary communism." The reason that these believers in Jerusalem came together

in this fashion was the persecution they suffered. Their coming together and pooling of resources was necessary for their survival.

Let us understand that what we know of "communism" in our world today is far different from what the Jerusalem church had during this revival. For one thing, that which is called "communism" today is really "socialism." "Communism" means "having all things common;" and that does reflect the attitude of true believers. We love to share, and we love to give. We realize that all of our accumulated wealth really belongs to God; and we are ready to give it any time when the Spirit leads. Socialism is basically the ownership by the state. The people become slaves to the few in power; and they do not effectively own much of anything.

In this wonderful setting of the joy of sharing, one couple enters the picture. They are caught up in the business of church; but it is not really in their hearts. They want to be a part of this great group, but they want to make sure they have plenty for themselves first. Ananias and his wife, Sapphira, decided to sell some property and give most of the money to the church. They would testify that they had "given their all" to the Lord's work. How many of us try to give a testimony that we have "given our lives to Jesus Christ," or are "sold out for God," when we really keep back part of our hearts for the world. We want to go to heaven, and we want to be part of the church of God; but we also "keep back" part of our hearts, because we love pleasure, or we are greedy for money.

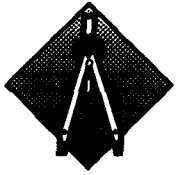
It is never right to lie, especially to the Lord. A few years ago, a young man became a Christian and began to attend a Spirit-filled church in California. Some

preachers with a strong prophetic anointing were ministering to the people for several nights; and the young man wanted to receive the laying on of hands. He had been a drug dealer in his early days; and then he was converted, and he had given up his life of crime. But a few days before the meeting, he decided to make some extra money; and so, he did one more drug deal. No one knew that this fine young man had broken the law; but God knew. When the pastor laid his hands on the young man as he knelt in prayer, the Spirit of the Lord came on him, and the pastor felt a strong sense of anger in himself. He shouted, "You fool!" to the startled young man, and let him know immediately that God knew exactly what he had done.

Somehow Ananias and Sapphira had lost the sense of the fear of the Lord. They saw the church as a group of nice people -- perhaps as a good social program. But God is omniscient. That means that He knows everything. The fear of the Lord is not a bad thing. The fear of the Lord is the one thing that keeps us from doing evil. (Proverbs 16:6) Now we know that "...*God hath not given us the spirit of fear;...*" (2 Timothy 1:7); but that does not mean that we do not fear God. Indeed, when we have a healthy fear of the Lord, we will not fear anything else. The fear of the Lord is the awareness that God is holy and perfectly just, and that we will give an account to Him for the way we have lived our lives on earth. The fear of the Lord is the healthy sense of the importance of pleasing God. This sets us free from the fear of man, and from a wrong focus on temporal values. The fear of the Lord does not keep us from loving Him. In fact, if you really love God, you will hold Him in great reverence and fear.

Since Ananias and Sapphira did not fear God, they made their plans to impress people by playing religious games. They acted as if they were more dedicated than they were. They tried to make people believe something that was not true. It was not wrong to keep part of their money; but it was wrong to lie. Note that Peter said, "*Why hath Satan filled thine heart...?*" (Acts 5:3) He realized that these people had allowed the deceiver to fill their hearts -- so much so, that they did not even see God in the situation. They only saw themselves and other people; and, being themselves deceived, they tried to deceive the church. But Peter had a word of knowledge, which is information received from the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:8) He knew exactly what they had done. When he confronted each of them, they fell down dead.

In the midst of a great and glorious revival, when so much love and joy were being spread throughout this booming Spirit-filled church, this was a great lesson on the fear of the Lord. This is a needed balance. Let us not only preach love and happiness, but let us also learn the fear of the Lord. That is what keeps Christians from seeking the destructive pleasures of the world. That quality keeps us free, and wise. "*By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life.*" (Proverbs 22:4) Our God is an awesome God. He is to be feared above all the earth.



## Methods

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This is a great story to have students act out in an improvised skit. Note that Peter was not the quiet, passive leader that so

many people today think preachers ought to be. He was firm and direct. God is a God to be feared. There are at least 31 benefits mentioned in scripture from the fear of the Lord. Most of them are in Proverbs. Have the class look through Proverbs and see if they can locate them. Discuss each one as it is found.

# Timothy's Great Mother

Volume 5

Lesson 44



## Bible References

Acts 16

2 Timothy 1

Proverbs 31

*Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek:*

2 *"Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.*

3 *"Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.*

4 *"And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.*

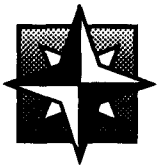
5 *"And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily."*

2 Timothy 1:3-5

3 *"I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;*

4 *"Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;*

5 *"When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also."*



## Theme

Mothers are very important influences in our lives. We should appreciate, honor, and respect them.



## Scripture Reading

Acts 16:1-5

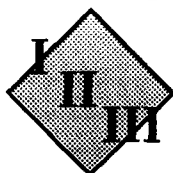
1 *"Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named*



## Memory Verse

Proverbs 15:20

*"A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother."*



## Outline

### I. Timothy.

#### A. A great Christian leader from Lystra.

1. He and his mother became Christians during Paul's first missionary journey.
2. He later became a part of Paul's missionary team.

#### B. He traveled occasionally with the Apostle Paul.

#### C. He served for a time as a pastor in Ephesus.

#### D. He was ordained by a presbytery group from Derbe and Lystra.

1. It was led by Paul.
2. They laid hands on him, and imparted spiritual gifts.

#### E. His personality.

1. He was a hard worker.
2. Extremely conscientious.
3. He knew the Word of God.

4. He tended to be timid and fearful.
5. He was intimidated by his young age; and so, Paul said, *"Let no man despise thy youth;..."* (1 Timothy 4:12)

### II. Timothy's Parents.

#### A. His father.

1. A Greek man.
2. An unbeliever.
3. He refused to let Timothy be circumcised as a baby.
4. We have no record that he was ever saved.

#### B. His Mother, Eunice (U-Ni-Cee).

1. She was a Jewish woman.
2. We have no idea why she married a heathen; but she was not a Christian at the time.
  - a. God encourages wives who become Christians not to leave their unbelieving spouses. (1 Peter 3; 1 Corinthians 7)
  - b. God can honor her and work on the husband by His Spirit.
3. She was saved under Paul's ministry.
4. She trained Timothy in the Word of God daily.
5. She was probably the primary trainer for Timothy.

#### C. His grandmother Lois.

1. Also a godly Christian woman.
2. She was also a strong influence in Timothy's life.

### III. The Influence of a Mother.

#### A. Primary care-giver.

1. Her spirit sets the atmosphere of the home.
2. Christian mothers tend to be the most loving, caring, and unselfish friends we can have in life.

#### B. Almost all men and women who become great have good mothers.

1. "The greatest occupation in the world is not being an engineer, doctor, or a statesman; but it is motherhood." --Theodore Roosevelt
  - a. Mr. Roosevelt was extremely close to his mother.
  - b. She wrote letters to him, calling him "Darling, beloved little motherling," even when he was a man.
2. "All that I am, or ever hope to be, I owe to my mother." --Abraham Lincoln
3. Franklin Roosevelt's mother went with him to Harvard, and organized his schedule for him for sixty years.
4. Harry Truman often conducted presidential business from his mother's bedside.
5. Dwight Eisenhower and John Kennedy were also very close to their mothers, as were many other presidents of the United States.

### IV. Susanna Wesley.

#### A. The mother of John and Charles Wesley.

1. They were two of history's greatest Christian leaders.
2. Founders of the Methodist movement.
3. Leaders of great revivals, and writers of many hymns.

#### B. Wife of Samuel Wesley.

1. She was the youngest of 25 children in her family.
2. She was the mother of 19 children.
3. Her husband was a preacher; but he was a poor businessman, and a weak father.
4. Susanna was brilliant, godly, and very diligent.
5. She home-schooled all of her many children; and they all became well-educated.
6. She taught her children to fear the rod, which she used often.
7. She was also lavish with praise and encouragement.



## Spiritual Truths

- Statistically, one of the most important keys to real success in life is a godly Christian mother.
- A good mother will use the rod with firmness; and she will also praise, pamper, and encourage.

- Most of us tend to be very much like our mother in temperament and attitude.
- The power of a mother to influence is usually greater than any power to rule.
- We are far more likely to follow the faith and spirit of our mothers, than we are to heed their words and wishes.
- If you have a mother who knows how to pray, and if you also are determined to live in rebellion against God, you are in for a rough time.
- If we have too much free time without our parent's supervision, we are likely to make foolish choices, and to be influenced by fools.
- The mother of Moses influenced his life as a pre-schooler more than the world did in nearly 40 years of education in Pharaoh's house.



## Lesson Material

We do not have much information about Eunice and Lois from the record of scripture; but we do have a glimpse of these special mothers. They were honored by no less than the Apostle Paul as examples of godly mothers, because their influence shaped the life of a great Christian leader. The fact that Timothy knew the Bible so well is clearly attributed to the diligence of these women, because his father was a pagan.

Eunice was a Jewish woman who had married a Greek man. She lived in the

town of Lystra. When the Apostle Paul went on his first missionary journey, he preached the gospel there; and Eunice, her mother Lois, and her son Timothy were wonderfully saved. They had already learned much about the Old Testament, because they were good Jewish people who faithfully followed their heritage. Paul came and carefully showed the people that the Old Testament was full of prophecies about the Messiah, and that Jesus Christ had fulfilled every one of them relating to His first coming to earth. They knew enough of the scriptures to quickly see that he spoke the truth; and the powerful miracles done by the Holy Spirit through these preachers added to their credibility. The Lord confirmed to their hearts that this was the truth; and they became faithful Christians.

When Paul returned years later, he found Timothy to be a spiritually mature and strong young man, with an intense devotion for God. Since he was a Jew, Paul found it necessary to circumcise him, in order to avoid offending the Jewish believers. Paul found in Timothy a true disciple and servant; and they were very close from then on. Undoubtedly the great apostle personally identified with his young friend and "son in the faith" (1 Timothy 1:2), because he also was raised by a Jewish mother and a gentile father.

Timothy's mother and grandmother had provided him with both an excellent Bible education and with strong character training. He was a hard worker; and he was very sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. He learned to be kind and loving; and he adapted quickly to the hard and sacrificial life of the apostles.

We all have to make our own choices in life; but we also do have the power to influence others. The way we live our



lives will tend to draw others either closer to God, or further away from Him. Mothers are especially influential, because they are the ones who carry us in the womb, and who are the primary caregivers in the early, formative years of life. Other influences come in life, but usually none surpass the influence of our natural mother. Note that Moses was raised and trained in Pharaoh's heathen house for 40 years; but that influence could not overcome the good influence his real mother gave him, when she nursed him as a small child and instilled in him a love for God and for Israel, before he started school.

There are many fascinating stories of men who were considered "mama's boys," or who were "tied to mama's apron strings," who became strong leaders. The list of presidents of the United States seems to read like a "Who's Who of Mama's Boys." Most of them were very close to their mothers, and were primarily influenced by them.

Today, many eastern cultures overdo parental respect, for they teach children to worship their ancestors, instead of God. Our western culture, with its teaching of secular humanism, goes to the other extreme, by esteeming parents too lightly. We are encouraged to "be our own person," and to reject parental authority. The results are even worse. Without parental influence, we tend to make many more wrong choices, marry the wrong people, and get easily caught up in behavior that is destructive. No one loves you like your mother; and wise is the boy or girl who stays close to mom through life.

There are many great mothers in history. In fact, there are few great men or women who did not have exceptional

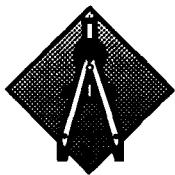
mothers. However, our records are very weak when it comes to recognizing the contributions of mothers to the success of their children. I strongly suspect that in heaven, this will be far different. There will be many mothers who will be given due credit for the way their selfless lifestyles have shaped the history of the world.

One of the great mothers of history that we know about is Susanna Wesley. She was one of 25 children, and a special delight to her parents. She was pretty and bright; and she loved the Lord. She married Samuel Wesley, who was a preacher. Samuel was a sincere man, but not nearly as intelligent or as organized as his wife. Samuel and Susanna got into a political argument, and they separated for a time. But they got back together. This was fortunate for us, because they later had John and Charles, for a total of 19 children. At one point, the deacons in his church were so upset with him, that they burned his house down. John Wesley was only 5; and he almost died in the fire.

Since the life of John Wesley has been recorded in great detail, we know much about his mother. She was often sickly (perhaps from having so many children); but she was a great educator and was well-organized. She home-schooled all of the children. By the time they were 11 or 12, they had what would be the equivalent of a good college education, by our standards. The children found that they could get around Dad; but Mother was always consistent to use the rod on them. She had a rule that they would not be spanked if they confessed their wrong; but, if they were caught disobeying, there was great pain involved. Susanna was also the one who gave most of the praise and encouragement, for she loved her children. She also scheduled time to tutor

each of her children privately in the evenings. Every Thursday evening, John got to spend time alone with his mother.

We all need to thank God for our mothers, and give them due honor. We should find ways to bless them regularly, and not just on Mother's Day. Also, if you have a stepmother, or grandmother, you should seek to bless and encourage her, and allow her to give you good counsel. She is for you; and she wants, more than anything, to see you grow to become all that God has created you to be.



## Methods

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Make sure that you are aware of the family situation of each of your students; and be sensitive to them in the way you

teach about mothers. Are they all living with their natural mothers, or do they have stepmothers, or are they being raised at the moment by single fathers? This is not as common as those with single mothers, but it is increasingly the case. Some children might tend to be very sorrowful now, if their mother is dead, or has left them. Encourage them to honor the memory of their mother as much as they can; and be sure to allow God to provide that kind of motherly care and nurturing that comes from a woman's hand, whether it be from a grandmother, aunt, a teacher, or a godly mother in the church who can "adopt" them on occasion. Be sure to encourage children to honor those women who have reached out to them the most.

Talk about ideas for gifts for mom, or projects to do as a special blessing for the mothers or the mother-figures in their lives.

# Stephen, the Martyr

Volume 5

Lesson 45

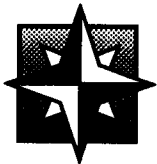


## Bible References

Acts 6 and 7

Matthew 24

2 Timothy 3



## Theme

Evil men hate the message of the gospel, and have killed millions of Christians because of their faith. Christian martyrs, beginning with Stephen, are the greatest heroes of history.



## Scripture Reading

Acts 6:9-15

9 "Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and

Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.

10 "And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.

11 "Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.

12 "And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council,

13 "And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law:

14 "For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.

15 "And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel."

Acts 7:54-60

54 "When they heard these things (Stephen's testimony), they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.

55 "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

56 "And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

57 "Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,

58 "And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

59 "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

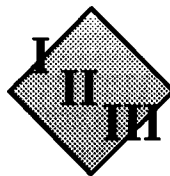
60 "And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."



## Memory Verse

Matthew 24:9

"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake."



## Outline

### I. You Shall Be Witnesses.

#### A. Greek word for "witness" is *martus*.

1. Means "one who testifies, or bears record."
2. This is the root of our word "martyr," or "one who bears witness by his death."

#### B. Jesus told His disciples that they would suffer great persecution from people who hated Him.

1. All of the original apostles were killed for their faith by enemies of Christianity except John, who was boiled in oil and exiled to a prison island.
2. Later, Paul would be beheaded in Rome.
3. Millions of Christians have been martyred for their faith, since Stephen became the first Christian martyr.
4. Thousands of Christians were put in Roman arenas with hungry lions, or burned as human torches to entertain Nero and other Roman emperors, during the early years of the church.
  - a. The Roman Empire used many methods of torture to try to stamp out Christianity.
  - b. Often, the Jewish religious crowd stirred up the Romans to kill the Christians.
  - c. Christianity flourished, because the people saw that this faith was worth dying for.

5. During the Dark Ages, and during the Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church killed hundreds of thousands of Christians because of their faith in Jesus Christ and their love for the Bible, which was outlawed.
6. In the 20th century, 65 million people have been slaughtered by the Communist attempt to take over the world. A large percentage of these people were Christians.
7. Today, Christians are being killed in large numbers for their faith in the Far East, Africa, and other parts of the world.
8. Many Christians have been killed by extremist Muslims, who have made themselves sworn enemies of our faith.

## II. Stephen, the First Christian Martyr.

- A. He was one of the first deacons of the early church.
  1. He was full of the Holy Ghost.
  2. His life was focused on Jesus.
- B. Some synagogue leaders debated with Stephen.
  1. They could not match his wisdom.
  2. They could not overcome his excellent spirit.
  3. When they could not defeat him with their words, they set up evil men to falsely accuse him.

## III. Stephen's Defense.

- A. Stephen was more concerned with defending Jesus than he was about saving his own life.
  1. At his trial, he was allowed to defend himself.
  2. Instead, he gave the history of Israel, showing that Jesus was the Prophet Moses had told about in Deuteronomy 18.
- B. Stephen talked and talked about Jesus.
  1. Then, he told the Jewish leaders about their sin, trying to lead them to repent and be saved. (Acts 7:51-53)
    - a. Stephen was bold in declaring the Lord Jesus.
    - b. He was also bold in calling the Jews, "you stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart" (stubborn and impure).
  2. They were "cut to the heart;" but instead of repenting, they reacted violently to Stephen, biting him, and shouting.

## IV. Stephen's Death.

- A. Stephen saw the glory of God; and he saw Jesus Christ.
- B. They threw him out of the city, and they threw rocks at him to kill him.
- C. Stephen's last words.
  1. He said, "...Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." (Acts 7:59)
  2. Verse 60: "...Lord, lay not this sin to their charge...." (He asked God for their forgiveness.)
  3. Saul of Tarsus watched over the coats of the men who stoned Stephen.



## Spiritual Truths

- In eternity, those who are found faithful, even unto death, will receive great reward.
- There have been many martyrs killed for their faith in Jesus Christ since the time of Stephen.
- If you preach biblical repentance in the fear of the Lord, you will help some people turn to God; and you will cause others to hate you.
- Jesus said that if you live a pure, godly life, you will be hated and persecuted, and possibly killed for it.
- It is wonderful to be loved by people who love Jesus; and it is glorious to be hated by people who hate Him.
- Somewhere in the world today, there are probably people being killed because of their faith in Jesus Christ.
- Stephen was more concerned with defending Jesus than he was about defending his own life; and God was extremely pleased with him.
- The pain of being cut and broken by flying stones was nothing, compared to the glory of being honored and blessed forever by God.



## Lesson Material

The topic of martyrdom is seldom emphasized today; and yet, it is a part of our Christian heritage, and a part of our ethics. Jesus prepared His disciples for it; and He taught them that if they lived a fully dedicated life of purity in an evil world, that they could expect to be persecuted, hated, and put to death. Hebrews 11 gives a brief history of God's people, focusing on the Bible's "Hall of Fame." We can see that many of the great people of history were miraculously protected and delivered from death. However, many of the most faithful people who ever lived suffered violent deaths at the hands of wicked men. Beloved prophets like Jeremiah and Isaiah were brutally killed for their faith, to name a few notable examples.

When we preach about God's love and protective care, we can easily neglect the perspective of eternity, and the balance of the wickedness of man. While God is very good, it is obvious that man, in his state of sinful rebellion, is not. Man is capable of unspeakable cruelty, when he is blinded by Satan. Fox's Book of Martyrs documents historical cases in which thousands of Christians were tortured, humiliated, and put to death, simply because they openly declared their faith in Jesus Christ, and refused to renounce their loyalty to Him. Of the original twelve apostles trained by Jesus in His earthly ministry, only one, John, died of old age. And John lived only after a miraculous survival from being boiled in oil.

During the Dark Ages, the Inquisition, and the Reformation, hundreds of

thousands of Christians were murdered by the established Roman Catholic Church, because the Christians believed in salvation by grace through faith. The Roman church had great political power; and it controlled people's lives with the doctrine that only through the church could people get to heaven; and they taught that the church could grant, or refuse to grant, pardon from sin. There were many corrupt and wicked leaders of the church world through the centuries, who, in order to strengthen their own power, ordered the slaughter of whole towns and cities, in which the Bible was being preached. Multitudes of humble believers were slain as martyrs for their faith by established religion, much like the early Christians were slaughtered by the Romans. Roman emperors such as Claudius, Caligula, and Nero had immense power; and they could do as they pleased. They could kill anyone that they wanted to, if it suited them. Nero was known to balance his budget by having some rich men killed, and then confiscating their wealth as his own. He also ordered the deaths of many Christians, hoping to eliminate them. He burned much of Rome, and then he blamed the Christians.

Jesus told His disciples that they would be persecuted and hated for His name's sake. (Matthew 24:9) The light of the gospel is delightful to those who can see with their spiritual eyes; but to those who live in darkness, light is irritating. The message that Jesus is Lord and that He is coming again is exciting to those who love Him; but to those who have rejected Him and live in sin, that message is negative. It means that they will be judged for their wickedness -- and they do not want to be reminded of that. Men have tried to exclude God from their thinking altogether. They want to erase God and

godly thinking from their culture, as much as possible. Godless men have invented the doctrine of evolution to replace creation science. And they seek to eliminate the Bible, prayer, and Christian witnessing from schools, television, public programs, and government. Even in America, a nation founded on religious freedom, Christians are being jailed for defending unborn babies from the slaughter of abortion; prosecuted for spanking their own children; and barred from talking about Jesus in a public school; while murderers and drug dealers are routinely set free to commit more crimes and bring more death.

Today, there are evil forces who are killing Christians, although it is seldom exposed in our news media. Many of the people killed in Nicaragua and other Central American nations are Christians being slaughtered by the communist Sandanistas. Fidel Castro has executed many Christians in Cuba, hoping to wipe out the Christian element that threatens his control over the people. In Uganda, an African nation, Idi Amin, while in power a few years ago, ordered his army to kill every Christian preacher and his family. In 1991, a Christian was found guilty by a court in Iran of witnessing about Jesus to an Iranian; and he was executed. In Laos, Cambodia, Red China, and many nations in the Far East, Christians have been hunted down and massacred for their faith in Jesus. Millions of Christians have been killed by communists. Extremist Moslems, members of the world's fastest growing religion, are sometimes taught that it is a great honor to kill a Christian.

Prophetically, we know we are living in "perilous times," as the apostle Paul predicted in 2 Timothy 3:1. We should note that while he was speaking of our day as dangerous, there already were

Christians being killed for their faith regularly; and he himself was facing execution by the cruel Roman Empire. We need to have a perspective on eternity, and be willing and prepared, should we ever have to face the possibility of martyrdom. Remember that eternity is most important. God's love does not preclude persecution by the world. When King Nebuchadnezzar threatened to kill the three Hebrews who would not bow to the image, note that they were not sure if God would keep them alive, or if God would take them to heaven. (Daniel 3:17-18) They said, "Either way, we are putting God first." God may deliver you from suffering or violent death; or, God may deliver you by it. All things considered, the important thing is to be willing to die for Jesus. Then we are in a position to really live for Him. And if we are truly living for Jesus, then we are in a position to die for Him.

Stephen was not an apostle. He was a faithful deacon, who was full of the Holy Ghost. He loved to talk about Jesus and win people to the Lord. Some religious leaders began to argue with him, but he had such sound wisdom and such a sweet spirit that they could not gain any influence over the people who were listening. The more they argued, the more foolish they appeared.

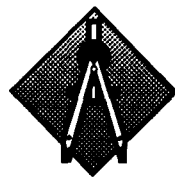
Instead of admitting that Stephen's theology was right, they worked out a plan to destroy his influence. Ultimately, that is what Satan wants to do with Christians. He will try to destroy your influence by destroying your name, or your life. They set up some false witnesses to twist the words of Stephen and falsely accuse him. By attacking Stephen, they also attacked Jesus Christ.

Stephen was taken to a religious "court." When the high priest said, "Is this

true?" Stephen went into a lengthy discourse defending Jesus. He gave the history of Israel, showing them again that the Christ Whom they had crucified was indeed the Messiah they had been looking for. He went on to let them know that they were wretched sinners, in need of such a Savior.

When people hear a message about the fear of the Lord, they will either want to repent, or get mad at the preacher. Some would say that Stephen's sermon was "legalistic;" but it was motivated by love. The men became insanely angry. They screamed, and they bit Stephen with their teeth. The more they vented their hatred on him, the more Stephen saw the glory of God. He became excited when he saw heaven and the glory of God; and he saw Jesus Himself.

The men became enraged as Stephen, in his joy, said that he could see heaven and Jesus. They immediately took him outside the city and stoned him to death with some of the many rocks that littered the stony area. As he was dying from the deep cuts and crushing blows, Stephen prayed for the men who were killing him, much as His Lord Jesus had done on the cross. Stephen was very much like Jesus, in his attitude and in his death; and we know that all of heaven was delighted, when his spirit left that bleeding body and moved right up to Glory.



## Methods

In Acts 7, Stephen gives a one-chapter account of the history of the world.



Compare his emphasis with the version of history you were given in school. Was Jesus presented as the central figure in human history?

The purpose of this lesson is to make young people aware of the millions of Christian martyrs who have given their lives for the Lord, and the fact that there are many even today. Some Christians believe that they are going to be martyrs for Christ. While most of us are not excited about that idea, we should all

consider what we would do if we had to make such a choice. It is not an impossibility.

Talk about what you would do if some foreign soldiers invaded your land and said, "Renounce Jesus Christ, or die." Do we really love Him more than life? Do we really believe that if we are true to Him, we will live forever in heaven? If we are willing to die for Him, then are we also willing to live for Him?

# Philip the Missionary

Volume 5

Lesson 46



## Bible References

Acts 8

Acts 1

Matthew 28

Mark 16

26 "And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

27 "And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,

28 "Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

29 "Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

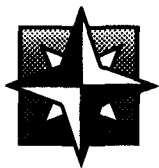
30 "And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readeest?

31 "And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

32 "The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

33 "In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

34 "And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the



## Theme

While all Christians are called by God to some kind of ministry, there are some specifically called and anointed to spread the gospel to "the uttermost parts of the earth" as missionaries.



## Scripture Reading

Acts 8:26-40

prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

35 "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

36 "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

37 "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

38 "And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

39 "And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

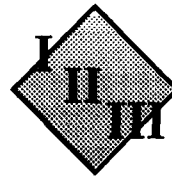
40 "But Philip was found in Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea."



## Memory Verse

Mark 16:15-16

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."



## Outline

### I. Revival in Samaria.

A. Philip was a deacon, who was on fire for God.

1. Stephen was a deacon who served as a teacher, and who died a martyr.
2. Philip did the work of an evangelist; and many signs followed his ministry in confirmation that he was anointed by God.

B. In Samaria, Philip cast out demons and healed the sick.

1. There was great joy in the city.
2. Real revival should be accompanied by miracles, healing, and joy.

C. Simon the sorcerer.

1. People thought that his witchcraft was the power of God.
2. He would be called a "psychic" today.
3. Witchcraft, astrology, and psychic phenomena are Satanic counterfeits of the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit.
4. Simon believed the gospel; and he was baptized a Christian.

D. Peter and John.

1. Were sent from Jerusalem to help the revival.
2. When they came, they prayed for many of the new Christians; and they received the baptism in the Holy Ghost.

3. The people spoke in tongues.
4. This is not expressly stated here; but there was supernatural evidence, because Simon was so impressed that he offered money to be able to impart this gift. (Acts 8:19)
5. Peter's response: (Acts 8:20-23)
  - a. No way. You cannot buy God's power.
  - b. Your heart is not right with God.
  - c. This proves you have bitterness and iniquity in your heart.

## II. Philip is Sent Out.

- A. The Lord told Philip to leave, just when the revival was going strongly in Samaria.
- B. Philip was sent by the Lord to carry out a mission.
- C. Philip was a missionary evangelist.
  1. An evangelist is a preacher, whose primary focus is soul-winning.
  2. A true evangelist will motivate and teach others to win the lost.
  3. An evangelist will tend to travel, and will often do missionary work.
  4. A true evangelist will be likely to have a ministry accompanied by signs and wonders, because the lost need to see the power of God.
- D. Other ministry gifts. (from Ephesians 4:11)
  1. **Apostles** are often church planters.
    - a. An apostle is "one who is sent."
    - b. Apostles generally oversee pastors and churches.
    - c. We often call those who do the work of apostles "bishops," which means "overseers."
  2. **Prophets.**
    - a. "One who speaks for God."

- b. God sometimes sent prophets with a word for a nation.
  - c. In the church, prophets are "forth-tellers," whose ministry is that of edification, exhortation, and comfort. (1 Corinthians 14:3)
  - d. The ministry gift of prophet in Ephesians 4 is a person; the operation of prophecy in 1 Corinthians 12 is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit through any believer He chooses at a given time.
3. **Pastors.**
    - a. "Pastor" means "shepherd."
    - b. Many pastors have been sent to foreign mission fields to plant and shepherd new churches.
    - c. Pastors tend to focus on discipling people in one congregation.
  4. **Teachers.**
    - a. Nurture and feed the people with the Word.
    - b. Although all Sunday School teachers should be called to teach, this calling differs from the apostolic gift of "teacher" in Ephesians 4.

## III. The Ethiopian Eunuch.

- A. Ethiopian.
  1. Ethiopia is an African nation.
  2. A member of a different race and culture than Philip.
- B. Eunuch.
  1. In full time service to the palace.
  2. Specifically trained for service.
- C. Head of the treasury department under Queen Candace.

1. He was an important government official.
2. He was intelligent and well-educated.

D. Reading from Isaiah the prophet.

1. He was seeking truth.
2. God took Philip from the great revival to minister to this key man.
3. A great way to win a city or nation to God is to disciple people of influence.
4. Philip joined him in the chariot; and he explained that Isaiah was talking about the Lord Jesus Christ.

E. Baptism.

1. "Look! Here is water! What hinders me from getting baptized as a Christian?"
2. This was in a desert.
3. Many believe that the appearance of a body of water large enough for a baptism was a miracle.
4. Philip took him down and "buried" him in the water, to affirm that he was dead to his old life of sin, and was "in Christ."

F. After the baptism.

1. Philip was caught away by the Spirit.
2. Another supernatural occurrence.
3. The eunuch was rejoicing.

#### IV. What is a Missionary?

A. Generally, those who are called to minister to a different culture, race, or language, are referred to as "missionaries."

1. It simply refers to one who is on a mission.

2. He has been sent out to do a job for God.
3. In the broad sense, all Christians are called to be missionaries to all of the unsaved around them.

B. "Missionary" is not a Bible term.

C. It is good for us as individuals to give to the needy; and it is also good for churches to give to other ministries.



## Spiritual Truths

- Some would argue that Philip was making a poor career move to leave Samaria to talk to one man; but doing God's highest will is never a poor move.
- The story of this eunuch illustrates the fact that God wants us to win individuals who can influence others with this same gospel.
- Philip did not have a high office in the church; but he was highly anointed and mightily used of God.
- Because of the nature of their ministry, evangelists need more signs and wonders following to confirm their message to the world.
- We need to stay "prayed up" and sensitive in our spirit, so that we are ready to teach or help people when they are spiritually open and ready to listen.

- God was working on the Ethiopian man's heart, even while He was preparing Philip to go to him.
- God loves to use believers to reach and to teach other people.



## Lesson Material

Philip was a faithful deacon in the church, and a ready evangelist for God. He had great faith in God; and he was used by God to stir up a mighty revival in the city of Samaria. Some of the Jews had problems with Samaritans, because they were "half-breeds." Their ancestry was half Jew and half gentile. There had been so many conflicts with the Jews that the Samaritans had set up their own temple on Mt. Gerizim, so that they would not have to go to Jerusalem and be mistreated and put down by the other worshipers.

Philip was sharing about Jesus Christ in Samaria. The people quickly believed his teaching, because he had such anointing. There were mighty miracles done in the name of the Lord, to the point that even the town sorcerer gave up his psychic business and was baptized a Christian. Later, when Peter and John came to help with the revival, Simon wanted to buy this ability to baptize people in the Holy Ghost. Although this account does not specifically mention speaking in tongues, it is obvious that there was a dramatic supernatural evidence with the baptism, or he would not have been so moved. Peter rebuked him, noting that his action demonstrated a wrong attitude of heart. Simon humbly received the correction.

Just when the revival was going well, an angel of God appeared to Philip and told him to leave and go to the desert south of Jerusalem. There he met a high government official from Ethiopia, who had gone to Jerusalem to worship God. His heart was hungry for God; but he still was not saved. God saw the man's desire; and He sent this fired-up evangelist to him. Some suggest that this act shows how much God cares about an individual. He does; but it goes beyond that. God cares about crowds too, because crowds involve a whole bunch of individuals for God to love. We note that the Bible writer is careful to record this man's office and his social standing. He was a man of influence. God sent Philip to this man, because he would be able to powerfully witness to many people of his conversion, and take the gospel to his people.

It is good and admirable that some are willing to be missionaries and live with people of a different tongue or race as an evangelist or pastor. But it is so often better to train up a leader of that race, and let him go. This method of missionary evangelism is being employed in the United States in a very effective way today. This is especially wise in reaching nations that are officially closed to the gospel, particularly Arab and communist countries. These nationals can usually do a far more effective job of evangelism than foreign strangers.

Philip was a missionary evangelist, because he was on a mission. The angel of God directed him to a specific place. When he saw this Ethiopian man reading from Isaiah on his way home from Jerusalem, he knew that God had sent him to the man -- especially when he realized that he was not saved. This is the best type of witnessing: when the Holy Spirit is dealing with the person, and you can go

with a Word from God for him. The man was open and eager. He had been seeking God; and he needed someone to show him how to be saved. How sad to know that there are many people in the world seeking God, while the Christian they need right then is out of touch with God, or too preoccupied with his own affairs to hear the voice of the Spirit directing him to go. "...How shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14) You see, the Holy Spirit was doing the work. All He needed was a willing vessel, who was sensitive enough to hear and obey.

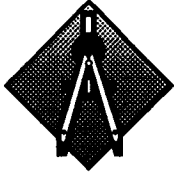
The eunuch was reading about Jesus in the prophecy of Isaiah. Isaiah had such a clear picture of Jesus that he is often called "one of the five gospels," even though he predates the apostles by hundreds of years. Isaiah was a musician, who wrote much of his prophecy in verse. He had tremendous insights into the life and suffering of Jesus; and he foretold events concerning the Messiah with great accuracy. Philip was able to easily present a gospel message from Isaiah.

This Ethiopian was an easy convert, because he was hungry for God. As soon as he was saved, they came to a body of water. Some consider this another miracle, because they were, after all, in a desert. "Look! Water! Why cannot I be baptized?" Philip said, "If you believe with your heart, you may." There is a difference between believing in Jesus, and believing in your heart on the Lord Jesus Christ. Some people agree in their minds that Jesus is God's Son; but their heart is still set on the world. James said, "*Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.*" (James 2:19) They know who God is; but they are not believing on the name of Jesus. This kind of believing is not head knowledge, but a heart response. When

you believe in your heart, you surrender your life to Him; and you want to obey and serve Him. If you just want a ticket to heaven so that you can live for your own desires, you have mental assent, but not heart faith. Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ brings you salvation. (Acts 16:31)

As in other Christian baptisms in the Bible, Philip buried the man in the water, and he came up rejoicing. Sprinkling is a poor substitute for baptism. The very word "baptize" means "to be covered over; to be immersed completely." You do not bury someone by sprinkling dirt on their heads. Philip had to get down into the water with the man to baptize him. He was "buried with Christ," and he rose "to walk in newness of life." This baptism was a testimony that he now belonged to Christ, an outward sign of the work of the Holy Spirit in baptizing him into the body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:13; Romans 6:1-4) He was a Christian from that day forth; and he "went on his way rejoicing."

After this incident, another miracle happened. The Spirit caught up Philip and moved him to another location. The eunuch never saw him again. He "was found" in Azotas. Later, he settled with his family in Caesarea, Philippi. (Perhaps he was known as Philip of Philippi.) He had four daughters who were also full of the Holy Ghost. The Bible said that all four of them prophesied by the anointing. (Acts 21:8-9) This is perhaps the greatest testimony of the quality of man Philip was. All of his daughters served the Lord with anointing and power.



## Methods

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*Discussion:*

How would you like to be used by God like Philip, the deacon?

Has God ever led you specifically to witness to one person whom He was dealing with to get saved? Will you pray for Him to do that for you?

Have you ever had the joy of leading someone to Jesus Christ?

Have you ever tried to witness to someone who had a hard heart, and who wanted nothing to do with God?

Discuss the advantages of this missionary plan: discipling a foreign national to Jesus, and sending him to his own people to win others and start a church.

Review Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well in Samaria, who took the message of salvation to her entire town. (John 4)



# Paul is Accepted

Volume 5

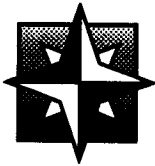
Lesson 47



## Bible References

Acts 9

Psalms 134



## Theme

When we accept the person God sends to minister to us, we are able to receive what he has to give.



## Scripture Reading

Acts 9:23-31

23 *"And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill (Saul of Tarsus):*

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.*

26 *"And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.*

27 *"But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.*

28 *"And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.*

29 *"And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.*

30 *"Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.*

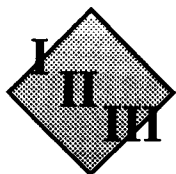
31 *"Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."*



## Memory Verse

Acts 9:31

*"Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."*



## Outline

### I. The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus.

- A. A zealous Jewish leader.
  1. Highly educated.
    - a. Taught by Gamaliel, a brilliant scholar. (Acts 22:3)
    - b. It is believed that he spoke 27 languages.
  2. He was given authority by the Roman government to arrest Christians. (Acts 9:1-2)
- B. The road to Damascus. (Acts 9)
  1. He was going to persecute Christians, as a defender of Judaism.
  2. Jesus confronted him with a blinding light and an audible Voice.
  3. Apparently some of the Christians were praying for their enemy; and God spoke to him.
  4. Saul was blind for three days.

5. God sent Ananias to pray for him, and to baptize him in water.

C. Saul was probably named for King Saul, a giant among men.

1. Actually, he was small of stature.
2. His name was changed to "Paul" by the Lord.
3. "Paul" means "little."
4. The proud and zealous persecutor became the humble and zealous Christian.

### II. Paul Is Rejected by the Jews.

A. In Damascus, Paul began immediately to preach the gospel.

1. Paul was a great Bible scholar.
2. He could prove that Jesus was the true Christ, their Messiah.

B. People were amazed at the transformation.

C. Some of the Jewish leaders decided to murder him.

1. They set a trap for him by the city gate.
2. Some Christians lowered him over the city wall in a basket, so that he could escape Damascus.

### III. Paul is Accepted by the Church.

A. Paul went to Jerusalem to meet the Christian leaders there.

B. The Christian leaders were afraid of him.

1. He had been a fierce enemy.
2. They knew he was clever.

## C. Barnabas.

1. Barnabas was a kind apostle.
2. His name means "son of consolation."
3. He encouraged the Christians to trust and accept this new friend.

4. We should fear and love the Lord at the same time.
5. It is a false and scripturally unbalanced to teach the love of God without teaching the fear of God.
  - a. Jesus spoke more about hell than He did about heaven.
  - b. He taught much about judgment and the fear of the Lord.

## IV. Why Did the Church Grow?

## A. "Then...

1. When the believers accepted this new brother in the Lord.
2. Jesus said, *"He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward;..."* (Matthew 10:41)
3. That means, if you receive the minister, then you are able to receive from the ministry he has to offer.

## B. "...had the churches rest....and were edified."

1. The persecution let up for a season.
2. "Edify" means to "build up; strengthen."
3. There was a sense of peace and calm in the church, while at the same time they were challenged and built up in the Lord.

## C. "...and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."

1. How can fear and comfort go together?
2. The fear of the Lord is the realization that we belong to Him, and will give an answer to Him for our lives.
3. If you fear the Lord, you will not fear man, death, or failure.

## D. The result of balancing comfort and the fear of the Lord: Church growth.



## Spiritual Truths

- The best way to handle hurtful people is to pray for their genuine salvation.
- The more we pray for unsaved individuals, the more God deals with them and puts divine opportunities in their paths.
- Until Saul was blinded by the Lord, he had no idea that he had been spiritually blind all along.
- When you become a genuine Christian, people who hate God will tend to hate you.
- You cannot receive a Christian's spiritual gift and ministry, if you do not receive the person ministering.
- A great hindrance to church growth is the inability of Christians to receive one another as brothers and sisters.
- When the early church received this man God had raised up, they enjoyed growth. There was a sense of peace and

rest, while at the same time, they were being edified.

- To be biblical, you must teach the fear of the Lord as well as love, or you will tend to lead people to an incomplete repentance and a mediocre faith.



## Lesson Material

Most of us are very familiar with the story of Paul's conversion, but less familiar with the events that followed. Certainly it is an important story, because we all want to encourage our listeners to repent and be assured of salvation; but there is more to this story than that. Remember that the Bible was written to Christians, and that it is full of "instruction in righteousness" for believers. (2 Timothy 3:16) Some churches have a habit of preaching mostly salvation messages to groups that are 99% converted, gearing everything toward the 1%. Yes, they are important; but what about the nurturing and caring that the group needs? If your class is made up of believers, then teach them the Bible. Build their character, get them edified, and then preach the gospel to the lost. Also, encourage your students to do the same.

All conversion is miraculous. It is wonderful to be convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit, and to know the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus Christ. Saul of Tarsus is a classic example; and he was quick to point out that he was "chiefest of sinners." (1 Timothy 1:15) He persecuted Christians. But when Jesus dealt with him,

he responded with an honest heart; and he was gloriously saved.

Saul of Tarsus was immediately changed. That is what it means to be "converted." In fact, he declared:

*"Therefore if any man (be) in Christ, (he is) a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17)*

His purpose in life was completely changed. His goals were changed. Even his name was changed to reflect what he really was. He began to preach the gospel in Damascus, and to prove from Old Testament scripture that Jesus was the true Messiah of the Jews.

For a time, Paul was in a precarious position. The Jewish leaders decided that he was a threat to their religion, and so they agreed to murder him. They set a trap for him at the city gate, because people could not go out of the city, except through that gate. Now the Jewish leaders hated him; and the Christian leaders were afraid of him.

However, some of the believers in Damascus trusted him. When they learned of the plot to kill him, they lowered him to the ground outside the city wall with a basket; and he escaped to go to Jerusalem. There he looked for the Christian leaders, because Jerusalem was still the center of this Christian revival that was sweeping through the land.

But the Christians had a hard time believing that this bitter enemy, who had caused some of their friends to suffer or even die for their faith, was really a defector. What was his motive? We are all tempted to judge people's motives, especially when we have found out that some people who preach the gospel or

claim to be Christians have fallen into sin, and have been deceiving their followers. We have to be careful to avoid judging, because it is our tendency to rely on our natural minds, rather than on the Holy Spirit.

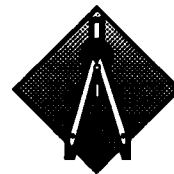
The brethren were afraid of Paul; and they had a hard time believing that he was for real. They wondered if anyone could be so radically changed. Perhaps they had forgotten how much God had changed their own lives. There was one precious brother named Barnabas ("son of consolation"); and he was a peacemaker. He undoubtedly had a pure heart, because he was quick to receive his brother in the Lord, in spite of his record. He saw the hand of God on Paul's life; and he received him into his heart.

We are not called "believers" for nothing. We are not called to be skeptics or critics. We need to keep our hearts open and learn to trust God to work in and through other people. People who will not receive anything unless they get it "personally from God" will miss much of what God is saying, because God speaks and ministers through people. 2 Chronicles 20:20 says, "*...Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.*" When love is our motive, we tend to "believe all things" (trust). (1 Corinthians 13:7) Love tends toward the positive.

Something happened when the believers believed Paul, and the result was church growth. There was a fascinating combination of seemingly contradictory elements. First, the church had rest, and was edified. Today, the churches who are preaching the full gospel and challenging the people to grow and give are more volatile. They tend to have more turnover, because someone is always

getting offended or "hurt." Other churches get a reputation of being "peaceful" havens of rest, where everything is love and sweetness, and no feathers get ruffled. The preacher speaks only of love and goodness, and "seldom is heard a discouraging word, and the skies are not cloudy all day." But to have both peace and edification, that is an amazing feat!

Also, they had the "fear of the Lord," and "the comfort of the Holy Ghost." The same seeming conflict applies here. Some churches preach hell-fire and damnation. They seem to focus on repentance, and the fear of the Lord. Others become "comfort stations," where every message is on heaven, hope, or love. Again, the early church, in an atmosphere of acceptance of this fireball teacher, had both. They had gentle Barnabas and his new fanatic friend Paul -- and they had balance. Life was not dull in this early church. No wonder people were getting saved and added to the church every day.



## Methods

### Teachers' Notes

The conversion of the Apostle Paul is one of the most familiar stories in the Bible. It is also very important, because it is recounted three times in the Book of Acts; and the Holy Spirit never repeats anything that is not important. We want to be careful to emphasize many characters and principles of the Bible. Some Christian teachers are so busy trying to make a few stories very familiar with children that they give the impression that there is not much to the Bible. When children hear a

few stories over and over, especially when there is little analysis or application, they tend to come to the conclusion that the Bible is "kid's stuff," or "boring." It is better to get too "deep" and leave them with a sense of awe, than to make things so simple that it comes across as shallow and dull.

*Discussion Questions:*

What would you do if your life was threatened, because of your faith in Jesus Christ?

How much of a change did becoming a Christian make in your life?

Do you trust God to bring into your life the leaders He wants?

Discuss 2 Chronicles 20:20, and the difference between believing God and believing His prophets.

Have you ever been in a church that was a "comfort" church?

Have you ever been to a "fear of the Lord" church?

Can we have such a balance today?

Do we as a group have a sense of the fear of the Lord?

# Cornelius, the Gentile

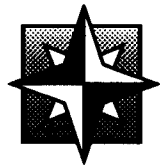
Volume 5

Lesson 48



## Bible Reference

Acts 10



## Theme

God, Who is just and righteous, rewards us according to our response to His love and grace. God is no respecter of persons.



## Scripture Reading

Acts 10:1-5, 25-28, 34-35, 44-46

1 *"There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band,*

2 *"A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.*

3 *"He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.*

4 *"And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.*

5 *"And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter:"*

25 *"And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.*

26 *"But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.*

27 *"And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.*

28 *"And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean."*

34 *"Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:*

35 *"But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."*

44 "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

45 "And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

46 "For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God."



## Memory Verse

Galatians 3:28

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."



## Outline

### I. Peter's Vision.

#### A. In Joppa.

1. At the home of Simon the Tanner.
2. Peter was praying on the rooftop.
  - a. This was normal.
  - b. Roofs were flat, and were often used as open rooms.
3. It was lunch time, and Peter was hungry.

4. While they were fixing lunch, Peter fell into a trance.

#### B. The vision.

1. A container, like a great sheet, came down from heaven.
2. It contained all kinds of animals that had been designated as "unclean" by the Lord.
3. God had given Israel strict dietary laws, to prevent them from eating the animals which were most likely to contain harmful bacteria, viruses, or parasites.
4. A voice said, "Arise Peter, kill and eat."
5. "No, Lord. I do not eat any unclean animal."
  - a. "Lord" means "sir."
  - b. Peter did not understand how he could violate the dietary laws.
6. "What God has cleansed, do not call common."

- #### C. This exchange was repeated two more times.

## II. The Prayers and Piety of Cornelius.

### A. Cornelius was an Italian.

1. He was a Centurion.
  - a. A captain over 100 men.
  - b. A leader in the Roman army.
2. He was a gentile (non-Jew).
3. Jesus had said, "Go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."
  - a. Matthew 10:6.
  - b. The Jews were God's first priority for salvation, because of His covenant with Abraham.
4. Cornelius was a good man.
  - a. He honestly sought God.
  - b. He feared the Lord.



- c. He did good for others, and he helped the poor.
- d. God sees our hearts and our deeds, whether good or evil.

#### B. The vision.

1. He saw an angel come to him in the afternoon.
2. "God has seen your prayers and your good works."
  - a. God looks on the heart. (1 Samuel 16:7)
  - b. God sees our works. (Acts 10:4)
  - c. In our emphasis on the idea of salvation by grace, we must not give the impression that God does not care how we live.

### III. God Accepts Cornelius.

A. God gave Peter the vision of the "pigs in a blanket" to show him that he was to minister to the gentiles, as well as the Jews.

B. God prepared Peter's heart; and God told Cornelius to send for him.

C. Peter's message.

1. God is no respecter of persons.
  - a. That means that God will not reject anyone on the basis of his race, nationality, sex, background, or ability.
  - b. It also means that God will not favor anyone because of who he is.
  - c. God deals with each of us according to:
    - 1) Our heart's response to Him.
    - 2) Our honesty.
    - 3) Our prayers.
    - 4) Our works. (Psalms 18:20)
    - 5) The prayers of believers for us.

2. Who is accepted by God?
  - a. Those who fear God.
  - b. Those who work righteousness.
3. We know that our salvation has been purchased by Christ on the cross, and that we are saved by grace through faith. (Ephesians 2:8-9)
  - a. But true repentance is necessary to really believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - b. And is not possible without the fear of the Lord.
  - c. And that we are created "unto good works." (Ephesians 2:10)
  - d. We are justified by works, and not just by faith alone. (James 2:24)
    - 1.) But not by works alone.
    - 2.) Works are the outward evidence of faith -- no works, no faith.

### IV. The Holy Ghost Fell on Them.

A. As Peter spoke to them.

1. The Holy Ghost fell on them.
2. They began to speak with tongues.
3. This was a sign to Peter that they were genuinely baptized in the Spirit.
4. It was the only sign he needed.

B. This let Peter know that they were genuine Christians, so that they could then be baptized in water, as a testimony of their faith.



## Spiritual Truths

- God sees our works, as well as our hearts.
- The biblical emphasis is not on the question of whether I accept Christ, but on the question of whether God accepts me.
- We do not get into heaven just by being good people; but if we are genuinely born again by grace through faith, we will become good people.
- If God accepts you, it is of little eternal consequence if people do not.
- There are people who are loved, adored, and exalted by the world today, who will be utterly forgotten ten thousand years from now.
- Hearing gentiles speak in tongues convinced Peter that these people had genuinely received the Holy Ghost.
- God is no respecter of persons; however, the more blessings and opportunities you have in life, the more God will require of you at the judgment.
- We are not saved by good works. We are saved by grace through faith unto good works.



## Lesson Material

Cornelius was an important figure in history, because he was used by the Lord to help open the gospel to the gentiles. God had made a special covenant with Abraham and his descendants. This involved special care and blessing for them, because God wanted the nation of Israel to show the world how life could be for the people who truly served Him in a theocracy (under God's rule). Of course, the people of Israel generally fell short of God's good plan, for they were involved in much idolatry and wickedness during their long history.

It is important to note that this covenant did not exempt Israel from troubles or judgment. In fact, they were more prone to receive God's wrath, because God is absolutely righteous, and He is no respecter of persons. We tend to focus on the blessing of the covenant, while ignoring the curse of the covenant. The blessing was: If Israel honored and obeyed God, He would bless them abundantly. But the curse of the covenant was: If Israel chose to disobey God and live like the world, God would punish, chasten, and discipline them. They would be cursed exceedingly. (Deuteronomy 28)

Jesus came "...to the lost sheep of the House of Israel." (Matthew 15:24) "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." (John 1:11-12) This was a principle that John, Peter, and the other apostles came to fully appreciate after this incident with Peter, and largely because of it. These

Jewish apostles were busy showing the Jewish people that Jesus was their Messiah of prophecy, and that they needed to be born again. There were many who were saved, baptized, and discipled as Christians; but most of the natural descendants of Abraham rejected Jesus Christ and tried to perpetuate the old covenant. Jesus became the sin offering once for all for the sin of the world. (Hebrews 10:10) It was now an abomination to God to offer up the inferior blood of animal sacrifices for sin.

After the church was established in Jerusalem, God began to work in the hearts of His people to take the gospel to the non-Jews. God used a special vision to prepare Peter to go to Cornelius. While the servants of Cornelius were traveling to Joppa to get Peter, Peter was out on the roof praying. It was about noon, and he was hungry. The people in the house were preparing lunch; and the apostle fell into a trance. God showed him a "vessel," or container, like a great sheet, with all kinds of animals that had been designated by God as "unclean." As we now know, there were certain creatures that were not generally good for food, because they were most likely to contain harmful bacteria, viruses, or parasites which would cause disease. God gave to Moses in the Pentateuch (first five books of the Bible) a detailed list of "clean" and "unclean" animals. When Israel kept these and other sanitary laws, they were assured of longer, healthier lives. During the Dark Ages, people knew nothing about bacteria; and they had no idea how diseases spread, because they left garbage and waste in the streets, and they did not wash their hands. They thought those ceremonies of washing were for Christians and Jews. In some cases, people died by the millions. Some, in their ignorance and superstition, blamed Jews for causing the deaths, since

the plagues were not affecting them very much.

Today, we do not observe the dietary ordinances of Moses, because they are considered part of the ordinances of the Old Covenant, and, unlike the moral laws of God, were not included in the New Covenant. We are also able to detect and isolate sources of disease in foods; and we are able to safely use more creatures for food. However, many of us still have no desire to eat snails. It will not hurt you to eat worms; but they still taste like dirt.

God gave Peter the vision about unclean animals to show him that He could save anyone from sin, and that the new covenant with God was for "whosoever will." (Revelation 22:17) When the men came to ask him to go to their master's house, Peter was ready.

Cornelius was a godly man who feared God. This is so important for salvation. In the western Christian world, we have, in our day, so emphasized God's love and grace that many of our young people have no fear of God. Indeed, when some are convicted by the Holy Spirit over their sin, we may interpret that as condemnation and rush to assure them of their salvation, reminding them that we are not saved by works. The problem is that we can overemphasize one truth, and miss another one.

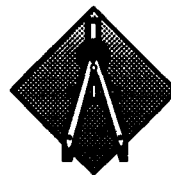
The Bible emphasizes the fear of the Lord. Jesus talked more about hell than about heaven; and believers are constantly warned about the dangers of sin. It is only by the fear of the Lord that any of us depart from evil (Proverbs 16:6); and God definitely calls us to get out of the sin business. We need to see, as Cornelius did, that we are going to give an account to God, and that we will be judged for all eternity according to the way we lived this

short life on earth. Cornelius was a good and generous man, because he feared the Lord.

Peter told him that God is no respecter of persons. This is an important principle that everyone needs to understand. God will not reject you because of anything you have done. He created you; and so, He does not care if you are male or female, white or black, fat or thin, beautiful or ugly, rich or poor. God looks at your heart; and He responds to you, according to your motive. We also need to realize that, since God is not a respecter of persons, He will not give special favors to anyone, just because he is a certain nationality or family. Peter said, "In every nation, God accepts those who fear Him and work righteousness." (Acts 10:35) We tend to teach that the important thing is that we accept Jesus; but the Bible says that the important thing in life is whether God accepts us into His kingdom.

Cornelius feared the Lord, and his lifestyle showed it. Works do not save us, but they are an indicator of what is in our hearts. If we belong to God, and live according to God's principles, we will live with an eternal perspective. We will try to live in righteousness, and overcome temptation. John said, "*Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not* (does not abide in a sin-dominated lifestyle). *Let no man deceive you: he that does righteousness is righteous....*" (1 John 3:6-7) In 1 John 3:10, he said that this is the way the children of God (and the children of the devil) are manifest. In other words, what we do flows out of what we are. If we find that we are living in unrighteousness with no power over sin, we need to judge ourselves and repent, and make sure we are under the blood.

When Peter shared with Cornelius and his family, something supernatural happened. The Holy Spirit fell on them; and they spoke in tongues and magnified God. There was revival in that place. All of them spoke in tongues. This let Peter know immediately that God was baptizing them in the Spirit. They received both the indwelling Holy Spirit (as do all believers at regeneration) and the baptism in the Holy Spirit at the same time. Their hearts were right; and they were willing to receive all that God had for them. When God poured out His Spirit on them, Peter knew without question that these were genuine believers, and that they were ready to be baptized as Christians.



## Methods

Look in Leviticus and find the scriptures for God's dietary laws regarding unclean animals. Why do not we observe these ordinances today? Are there principles that apply to us that are illustrated in these ordinances?

Jesus told us not to judge each other (Matthew 7:1); but we are commanded in scripture to judge ourselves. (2 Corinthians 13:5) What is judging, and what is the difference between judging others and judging ourselves? Judging is deciding about the heart motives. "She does not love us" is a judgment. "He is insincere" is a judgment. But with ourselves, we should be able to say, "I was really selfish in acting that way. I am going to ask him to forgive me."

# Peter in Jail

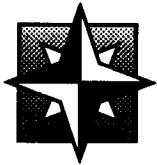
Volume 5

Lesson 49



## Bible Reference

Acts 12



## Theme

God is well able to set us free, but we need to have faith and receive that freedom.



## Scripture Reading

Acts 12:1-10

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.

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.

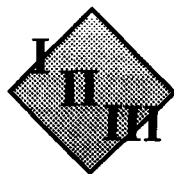
10 "When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him."



## Memory Verse

Psalms 124:7-8

*"Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth."*



## Outline

### I. Persecution.

- A. King Herod Agrippa the First turned against the Christians, in an effort to please the Jewish leaders of the day.
  1. He had been appointed by Caesar to rule over Palestine.
  2. He had James, the brother of John executed.
  3. He decided to kill Peter, also.
- B. Peter was put in prison.
  1. Sixteen soldiers were assigned to guard him.
  2. He was chained with two chains (instead of the usual one chain).
  3. He slept between two guards.
  4. Herod took extreme precautions, to insure that Peter would not escape.
- C. Why did God protect Peter, but allow James to be killed?

1. God still had more for Peter to do on earth.
2. The church was moved to intense prayer as a result of James' death; and they prayed diligently for Peter's deliverance.
3. Later, Peter had the privilege of dying a martyr's death for the Lord.

### II. Peter Is Set Free.

- A. The Christians were in an all-night prayer meeting.
  1. Peter was scheduled to be executed.
  2. There would be no reprieve from the government.
  3. It would take a miracle to save his life.
- B. An angel came to Peter.
  1. The angel hit him to wake him up.
  2. He picked him up bodily, and said, "Get up quickly!"
  3. The chains fell off.
  4. Apparently the two guards had been knocked out, or put to sleep.
  5. The angel said, "Get dressed, and put your sandals on."
  6. He led Peter out; and the gate opened by itself.
  7. When Peter was outside the prison, the angel disappeared.
  8. Up to that point, Peter thought it was all a vision.

### III. The All-Night Prayer Meeting.

- A. Peter went to the prayer meeting at the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark.
  1. They were still praying for him.
  2. Peter knocked on the door.

**B. Receiving the answer.**

1. A young girl named Rhoda answered the door.
2. She was so excited to see him, she ran to the group without letting him in.
3. They did not believe he could be there.
4. They had been praying for a miracle; but they could not believe it had happened.
5. "Maybe it is his angel."
  - a. They thought he had died already.
  - b. Only Rhoda was sure it was Peter.
6. Finally, they let him in, after he kept knocking.

**C. "Go and tell James."**

1. This was not the apostle that had been executed by Herod, but another James (probably the one who later became the apostle over the church in Jerusalem).
2. Peter left town.

**D. Herod.**

1. Had the soldiers who had guarded Peter executed for letting him go.
2. When God decides to set someone free, no amount of human effort can stop Him.

**IV. Herod's Pride.**

A. Herod was humiliated, because he could not kill Peter.

B. Later, Herod gave a speech.

1. He was clothed in royal splendor.
2. The people said, "It is the voice of a god."

3. He did not give God the glory for his ability; and so, God smote him.
4. He was eaten of worms (perhaps worm eggs in some food, which hatched inside his body and ate him).
5. What a humble way for a proud man to die.
  - a. "I was eaten by worms."
  - b. This is called "poetic justice."




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## Spiritual Truths

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- When God sets you free, no man can keep you bound up.
- God is far more able to answer our prayers than we usually realize.
- Christians are at their best under persecution and adversity, because they are more intense in prayer.
- Man is in his finest hour and his highest pinnacle of greatness, when he is bowed on his knees before God.
- While man in his pompous fleshly glory is most impressive to people, he is as utterly unimpressive to God as worm feed.
- Revival is often received first by the young people, who find it easier to believe with simple trust.
- Prayer with intensity and unity is powerful.
- Pride is a serious sin, because it takes credit for that which God has done and

given; and it makes self the center of life.



## Lesson Material

This chapter in the life of the early church begins with tragedy, but then develops into a delightful episode in our history. People by the thousands were being saved and filled with the Holy Spirit; and the believers were loving one another and winning the lost every day. The people in Judea were still under the power of the great Roman Empire, and each emperor seemed to be more evil than the last. The governor, or "king" over the area was appointed by Caesar. At this time, the king was an unsavory character named Herod Agrippa I. He was a true politician. He did whatever he found necessary to gain and hold the office. Since the Jews were the predominant religious and cultural group in Judea, he sought their favor. The Jewish leaders who had rejected Jesus Christ were increasingly upset at the growth of His following; and they desperately sought to stop Christianity. Since the Jews were under Roman rule, they did not have the legal power to execute Christians, without permission from the Romans.

King Herod had one of the apostles, James, arrested and quickly executed. The Jews were delighted. Surely this would make these Christians realize that they should give up this loyalty to their Messiah. He decided to kill Peter, as well. He had Peter arrested and put in prison, with sixteen guards assigned to him. But Herod had no idea of the power of prayer.

Historically, when Christians suffer persecution, they are actually the strongest, because they are highly motivated to go to their knees. The death of James sparked intense prayer; and one result of that prayer was the miraculous release of Peter from jail by an angel.

A natural question arises: Why did not God protect James, as He did Peter? First of all, we need to see that death is not the worst thing that can happen to a Christian. To be a martyr for the cause of Christ is a great blessing, when we look at it from an eternal point of view. All of the apostles were killed for their faith, except John; and he was tortured and persecuted. Peter was martyred; but because of the prayers of the church, he was given extra years to minister for the Lord on earth. The death of James was actually James' promotion day; and it stirred the church to intense prayer and fasting.

Peter had denied the Lord when He was being tried, beaten, and crucified. However, Peter repented with bitter tears; and he never denied the Lord again. He boldly proclaimed Jesus to everyone, in spite of beatings and threats against his life. Peter fully expected to be killed as a martyr; and so, he was not surprised at being arrested and given the death sentence by Herod.

But the Christians began praying. Some of them gathered in the home of a woman named Mary, who was the mother of John Mark. They were determined to pray all night; and they probably expected to pray for Peter until they received word of his execution. These were perilous times; and they prayed fervently.

During the night, God miraculously answered their prayers. He sent an angel to the prison to get Peter out. Peter was sleeping peacefully between two armed



guards, in spite of the two heavy chains that bound him to the cold wall. When you have a clean conscience and you are ready to meet the Lord, you tend to sleep well. Peter was all set to go.

Then the angel came, slapped him on the side, and said, "Get up." Now, is this any way to treat a preacher? When Peter stood up, the locked chains simply fell off his wrists. The angel said, "Get dressed, and put your shoes on." Peter got up and followed the angel, thinking all the while that this was a vision from the Lord. The angel put all of the guards to sleep, and then he opened all of the gates. Peter walked out of the prison.

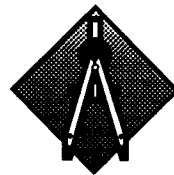
Prison and slavery are types of sin. Every one of us is born under the bondage of sin; and we are powerless against its control over our hearts. One of the great deceptions of Satan is to convince people that sin is freedom. They see Christianity as many rules and restrictions. "You Christians cannot drink, or smoke, or cuss like we can." They are deceived. They are the ones who cannot stop doing the very things that destroy their lives and their joy. We do not live in sin, because we are free from its power. Jesus sets us free. (John 8:36)

Peter was free. The first thing that he wanted to do was to go to the prayer meeting and testify. He knocked on the door, and a young girl named Rhoda answered the door. She was so excited at seeing Peter, that she forgot to let him in. She ran to tell the people that he was at the door. The people were upset that she would interrupt their prayer meeting. "Hey! Can you not see that we are praying for poor Peter?" When she told them that she saw Peter, they said, "You are crazy." Then, someone said, "Maybe he is dead, and that is his ghost." Do you get the

impression that their faith was a little less than strong at that point?

Finally, Peter got into the meeting; and everyone rejoiced. God had answered their prayers. In the meantime, the soldiers were greatly upset to find Peter gone. This turned out to be a reasonable reaction, because they were all executed for letting him go.

The end of the story for Herod is also tinged with dark humor. When he made an oration (speech), the people were very impressed with his presentation and with his appearance. They praised him highly; and his heart swelled with pride. God is not pleased with pride in people, because we really have nothing that God did not ultimately provide. All glory belongs to God. (1 Corinthians 1:31) In Proverbs 6:17, Solomon said that God hates "a proud look." Ironically, God dealt with Herod's pride by smiting him with worms. He may have eaten some half-cooked meat that had been contaminated, and the parasite eggs hatched in his bloodstream. Then they grew into worms, which ate his flesh. What a gross way to go! That is a very unpleasant thought; but that is what God thinks of pride. "*A man's pride shall bring him low:....*" (Proverbs 29:23) How much more glorious to die as a hero -- a martyr for Christ, like James.



## Methods

John Wesley said, "Without God, we cannot; and without us, He will not." Write this quote on 3"x5" index cards; and give one to each student. Remind them

that God has designed His relationship with the human race to center on prayer. Teach and demonstrate the importance and power of corporate prayer, by having group prayer during the class time each week.

Another principle to emphasize is the power of God to set us free. Freedom is not the ability to do whatever we want. It is the power to do what we should. Use the story of Peter in prison as an allegory for the bondage of sin and our freedom in Christ.

One other clear lesson, from the perspective of Herod, is on pride. Pride is more than thinking too highly of yourself.

It is a part of the basis of sin, which is a focus on self instead of on God and His purposes. Put the word PRIDE on the chalkboard, and then circle the middle letter. Put the word SIN on the chalkboard, also circling the middle letter. Show that the center of SIN and PRIDE is the "I" (self). Explain to the students that Satan hates it, when we consider God in our decisions and when we include Him in our conversation. When man does not include God in his thinking, he compares himself with baser men and with animals; and he tends to exalt himself. But "*a man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.*" (Proverbs 29:23) Herod's pride certainly brought him low.

# Legalistic Grandpa

Volume 5

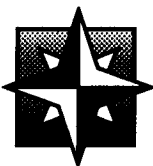
Lesson 50



## Bible References

Jeremiah 35:1-19

Exodus 20:12



## Theme

God is able to lead and protect us through our parents, even when we do not understand their reasoning.



## Scripture Reading

Jeremiah 35:1-2, 5-10, 18-19

1 "The word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying,

2 "Go unto the house of the Rechabites, and speak unto them, and bring them into

the house of the LORD, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink."

5 "And I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites pots full of wine, and cups, and I said unto them, Drink ye wine.

6 "But they said, We will drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, (neither ye), nor your sons for ever:

7 "Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have (any): but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land where ye (be) strangers.

8 "Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab our father in all that he hath charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, nor our daughters;

9 "Nor to build houses for us to dwell in: neither have we vineyard, nor field, nor seed:

10 "But we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed, and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us."

18 "And Jeremiah said unto the house of the Rechabites, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you:

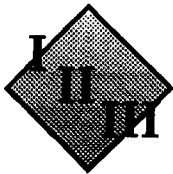
19 *"Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever."*



## Memory Verse

Ephesians 6:2-3

*"Honor thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise: that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."*



## Outline

### I. God's Test for the Rechabites.

- A. God told the prophet to offer them wine in the temple.
- B. God wanted to see if they were really committed to keeping the command of Jonadab, who had been dead for many years.
- C. It would seem like the right thing to do, since the offer was from a prophet of God; but they refused this honor.

### II. The Command of Jonadab.

- A. No descendent in the Rechabite clan of Israel was to ever drink any wine.
- B. They were commanded to live in tents, and never to own property or build permanent housing.
- C. They were not to grow crops or vineyards; but they were to be wandering nomads.
- D. They were not told why this was important -- only that it was the family "tradition."
- E. The rules were "unfair." Most of the other Israelites had land and homes, and could drink wine. Everyone else was doing it, and there was "nothing wrong with it."
- F. Undoubtedly, some people ridiculed them for obeying Grandpa's dumb rules.

### III. The Blessing of Obedience.

- A. Jeremiah pronounced a prophecy of God's blessing, after the Rechabites refused the wine in the temple and explained their commitment.
- B. Soon after that, the Babylonians, under King Nebuchadnezzar, conquered the nation of Judah.
- C. The Babylonians destroyed the cities, including Jerusalem; and they slaughtered many home-owners and their families, and took all of their belongings.
- D. The fact that the Rechabites were nomads saved their lives, because the

Babylonians left them alone. They could also move easily to a safer place.



## Spiritual Truths

- We should obey our parents, grandparents, and pastors, because God can show them ways to protect or help us that we do not understand.
- They may not even know the reason for the command themselves; but they can have a word from the Lord for our benefit.
- God may use other people to test both our faith and the strength of our commitment.
- Honoring parents tends to add years to our life -- not just because we will have less stress and anxiety, but because their insights will help to protect us from harm.
- God may give some people a special conviction to avoid something that may not even be a sin in itself; but He knows that they should not do it.
- God's purpose for authority is for our protection and blessing, and not for our oppression.
- God can bless us and lead us, even through a father who is not yet a Christian.



## Lesson Material

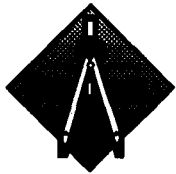
God told the prophet, Jeremiah to invite some of the Rechabites to the temple and offer them wine. They were all descended from an Israelite named Rechab. God knew that several generations before, Jonadab, the son of Rechab, had given an order that all of his descendants were never to drink wine or own land or houses. They were commanded to be nomads.

Now great-great Grandpa had been dead for a long time; and most of the Israelites had their own homes, vineyards, and farms. It was also normal for Israelites to use wine daily. No one would have condemned the Rechabites for drinking wine or buying a home; but, they obeyed Grandpa's command. Even when the great prophet Jeremiah himself offered them wine from the temple, they refused, and told him, "No, we cannot, because Grandpa told us not to." God was testing their obedience by telling Jeremiah to offer them wine.

Grandpa had given an order that would be considered "legalistic." Why should we have to live by his personal convictions? He is dead anyway. What right did he have to deprive us of something good, like our own place?

The family obeyed, even though they did not know that there was a reason behind Grandpa's order. When Nebuchadnezzar and his mighty Babylonian army came and conquered Israel, they destroyed the cities and took the property of the people. Home owners and vineyard owners were killed for their

property; and many families were wiped out, or taken to Babylon as slaves. But the Rechabites were nomads (people who lived in tents, or temporary dwellings). They were not killed for their real estate, because they did not have any. In the end, they were very happy that they obeyed their "legalistic" Grandpa.



## Methods

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Think of an incident in your life in which you were protected or benefited by

obeying your parents; and share that testimony.

Ask two or three students, several days in advance, to talk with their parents about a possible related testimony to share with the class.

Discuss the topic of "nomads;" and explain the lifestyle of these homeless people. Consider how they could make a living. (Livestock was the primary focus of their commerce.)

Note the parents who bring their children to Sunday School. Be aware of any children who are dropped off or brought by other families or buses; and be sensitive to any child who does not have a Christian father living with him.

# Values Clarification

Volume 5

Lesson 51

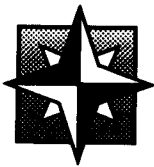


## Bible References

Psalms 139

Romans 1

Ecclesiastes 12



## Theme

Your values system is determined by your world view, which is the way in which you view life. This strongly affects the way we make choices every day.



## Scripture Reading

Proverbs 4:1-8, 14, 17-18, 23

1 *"Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.*

2 *"For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law.*

3 *"For I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother.*

4 *"He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live.*

5 *"Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.*

6 *"Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee.*

7 *"Wisdom is the principle thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.*

8 *"Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her."*

14 *"Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men."*

17 *"For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.*

18 *"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."*

23 *"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."*

**Psalms 119:9**

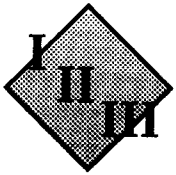
*"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word."*



## Memory Verse

**Proverbs 4:7**

*"Wisdom is the principle thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding."*



## Outline

### I. Values Clarification.

#### A. Man's wisdom. (James 3:14-16)

1. Earthy.
  - a. Focused on temporal values.
  - b. Emphasis on the physical things of earth.
2. Sensual.
  - a. Focus on physical pleasure.
  - b. "If it feels good, do it."
  - c. Living life like a dog, which has no spirit.
3. Devilish.
  - a. Thrives on rebellion.
  - b. Deceptive, dark, negative.
  - c. Leads to bondage, destruction, death.

#### B. Secular humanism.

1. "Secular" means "to leave God out."
2. Humanism: the belief that man is supreme and self-existent -- his own savior.
3. Humanism teaches that right and wrong are determined by what people think, and by the situation.
4. Moral relativism: it may be right or wrong, depending on the situation and on how you feel.

#### C. What is "values clarification?"

1. A course of study, which is designed to lead people to a secular world view of life.
2. The emphasis is on self, and self-determined choices.
  - a. "You have the power to choose."
  - b. "It does not matter what choices you make. The important thing is that you feel you are the one who makes the choices, and not God."
3. Values clarification is a direct attack against Christianity, which teaches that human life is sacred, and that God has the right to make the final choices.
4. Values clarification exercises, such as "lifeboat" or "bomb shelter," place people in a situation to decide who will live or die.
  - a. It puts people in the place of God, according to Satan's false promise to man.
  - b. It teaches that not every life is worth living.
  - c. It promotes death as oblivion, and a false solution to life's problems.
  - d. It teaches that the purpose of life is our personal happiness, rather than God's glory.



**II. True Wisdom.**

- A. Wisdom is seeing things from God's point of view.
1. Wisdom considers the eternal consequences of actions.
  2. Wisdom sees God and God's higher purpose, and not just the immediate feelings.
  3. *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom:...."* (Psalms 111:10)
  4. Some people are very intelligent; but if they have no fear of God, they have no wisdom at all.
  5. Wisdom is not "common sense" or intelligence. It is spiritual perception, and not mental exercise or visualization.
- B. Wisdom from above. (James 3:17)
1. Pure.
  2. Peaceable.
  3. Easy to be entreated.
  4. Full of mercy and good fruits.
- C. Wisdom is a function of the spirit, viewing life according to God's kingdom principles.
- D. God's wisdom is generally the opposite of man's wisdom.
1. Honor comes from being humble, and not by hiding your faults.
  2. To really live, you must die to self, rather than indulge yourself.
  3. Joy comes from seeking to please God, rather than seeking happiness.
  4. To receive in life, you must give, rather than grabbing for yourself.

**III. Secular World View.**

- A. The view that there is no God.
1. Life is just an accident, with no ultimate purpose or design.
  2. "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow, you die." (See Luke 21:19)
- B. "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'"
1. Psalms 14 and 53.
  2. The result of this world view: (Psalms 53:1)
    - a. They are corrupt.
    - b. They have done abominable works.
    - c. There is none that does good.
- C. False concepts of life, which are the result of a secular world view.
1. Lack of the fear of the Lord.
  2. All kinds of evil.
  3. Abortion is not wrong, because we are merely breeding animals.
  4. Suicide is all right, romantic, heroic.
  5. Homosexuality and other forms of moral perversion are merely lifestyle choices; and people who indulge themselves cannot help it.
  6. Religion is all right, as long as you pick your own, and as long as it is self-determined.
  7. Man finds the answers to life within himself, through research, experience, or transcendental meditation.
  8. Authority is repressive; and rebellion is freedom.
- D. Humanism sees self as the center and focus of life.

#### IV. Christian World View.

- A. Since the world has such an intricate design, there must be a Designer.
- B. Since there is such a wonderful creation, there must be a Creator.
- C. If God created us, then He has the right to be Lord of our lives.
1. We will give an account to Him for the way we lived our lives on earth. (Romans 14:12)
  2. Everything in life is on loan from God.
  3. To whom much is given, of him shall much be required. (Luke 12:48)
- D. When in doubt, read the Manufacturer's instructions (the Word of God).
- E. Some conclusions based on a Christian world view.
1. Life does not just happen. There is order, purpose, and design.
  2. Authority comes from God; and we are most free when we submit to godly authority.
  3. God designed us male and female; and homosexuality is a type of rebellion against God. (See Romans 1:18-32)
  4. Man, left to himself, will always find confusion and hopelessness.
  5. We should meditate on God's Word, and not empty our minds.
  6. History verifies the value of seeking and obeying God, and the danger of any society rejecting God's values.
- F. Christianity sees God as the center and focus of life.



## Spiritual Truths

- All education is based on a world view, and involves shaping attitudes, as well as giving information.
- Your world view determines the way you interpret world events, and the people you give your attention to.
- Ungodly historians tend to focus on ungodly people, and ignore God's work and the Christians who shaped world events.
- Secular Humanism is a religion based on the doctrine of evolution; and it is becoming the official state religion of many nations.
- The only thing that prevents evil is either the fear of the Lord, or the fear of capital punishment.
- The knowledge that we are created by God affects our decisions and lifestyle every day.
- Satan wants all of us to focus on the moment, rather than thinking about eternity or about God's purposes.
- "If it feels good, do it" is the life philosophy of dogs and fools.



## Lesson Material

It is vitally important that we teach children the Word of God, with the goal to instill in them a Christian world view. Our world view is the basic perspective we have on life in general; and it determines our values system. When we have a Christian world view, we have a high opinion of human life and worth; and we see ourselves as God's servants and children. We develop a Christian world view, first of all by being born again, and secondly, by being taught wisdom from God's Word, the Bible.

A secular world view shapes the way historians write history, and also the way the news media shape their reports on world events. God is really at the very heart of the course of all nations, because nations respond according to the world view of the leaders in power. We have "wars and rumors of wars" (Matthew 24:6), because of the basic greed and lust in the hearts of evil men. Nations become strong, when godly values promote strong families; and nations become weak, when false religions or philosophies displace God's Word.

For example, the United States was originally founded with a Christian world view. Its government was shaped by an understanding of the natural sinfulness of man; and there were many safeguards put into the constitution to protect the nation from an excessively powerful government. The early history of the nation was shaped by Christian work ethics and property rights; and the laws were based on the biblical truths.

In this century, this nation has moved progressively away from a Christian world view; and it is being dominated by a humanist philosophy. A secular world view controls most of its legal system, news media, entertainment, and public education, so that America is no longer considered by some to be a Christian nation. While there is still some freedom and prosperity left as a result of years of Christian influence, the humanist influence has weakened its economy by establishing a huge welfare state, decreased its freedom to openly practice the Christian faith, and has brought the nation closer and closer to the loss of national sovereignty and individual freedom. America is in serious moral decline, as the spiritual vacuum leaves a wake of violent crime, addictions, and deadly moral impurity.

The nation of Haiti is another example. During the 1700s, Haiti was a wealthy, prospering island. But in the early 1800s, the people agreed to adopt the religion of voodoo, if the devil would free them from French rule. Today, the nation that rejected Christianity is now one of the poorest in the world, with severe misery in the wake of their false religion. Many of the people survive only because of the generosity of thousands of Christians.

If you read any history book written by a humanist, you will find no reference to God, and usually no reference to any godly people -- although all of history centers on Jesus Christ. We even form our calendars around His life, dating things either B.C. (before Christ) or A.D. (*anno domini*, which is Latin for "the year of our Lord"). Humanists love to focus their writings on Greek humanists like Plato and Aristotle, even though they had relatively little impact on history, outside of their immediate circle of influence. The great

men of history were men like Noah (we are all descended from him), Moses, David, and Paul.

Psalms 14 tells us that the basis for evil works in the world is a secular world view. A secular world view is saying in your heart, "there is no God," and, therefore, no one to whom I must give an account for my life, when it is over. If I am just a cosmic accident, just a mammal as it were, then I can be my own person and live for the moment. The purpose of life is to be happy. The result of this world view is an evil lifestyle. "...*They are corrupt...there is none that doeth good.*" (Psalms 14:1)

The debate over abortion sharply divides America at this writing; but it will never be settled by government, because it is a basic conflict of world views. People who have a secular world view generally view the issue as one of women's rights -- the right to choice. The goal is pleasure without consequences -- rights without responsibility. If God does not create babies, then it is all right to kill them, especially if they might not live a happy life. Those with a Christian world view see the baby as someone God created, with a right to life. People who believe in evolution and humanism will never change from a "pro-choice" position, unless they learn to see life from a Christian world view.

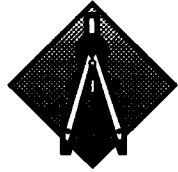
It is ironic that the people who promote abortion generally oppose capital punishment (the death penalty for murderers). We need to understand that it is from the same world view. If there is no God, then life just happens; and we are merely a product of our culture. So people who kill others are, in a sense, victims, and not fully responsible for their crimes. They seek to play God; and they quote the

Bible's "*Thou shalt not kill*" (Exodus 20:13) in opposition to executing killers. Actually, one of the first principles of God's law is capital punishment. Genesis 9:6 says, "*Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.*" In other words, human life is so sacred, that to take a life requires the death penalty at the hand of society. Capital punishment and the pro-life movement are two of many principles that are based on a Christian world view.

Basically, all of our choices are shaped by our world view. Do I see myself as "my own person," or as God's servant? Does life revolve around me and my desires, or does life center around the Lord Jesus Christ? "*Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it {are} the issues of life.*" (Proverbs 4:23) In other words, keep the center of your life and affects carefully focused on God, because your lifestyle flows from the heart. Ultimately, you will do what you want to do. People who love God want to please Him; and they will desire to obey His Word and His Spirit. People who do not love God will be led by their appetites; and they will do what feels good for the moment. We need to promote the understanding that we belong to God, and that He deserves our praise and love.

Wisdom is another word for a Christian world view. Wisdom is not intelligence or common sense, but rather, a function of a born-again spirit. "*The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord,....*" (Proverbs 20:27) We can only know God with our spirit. We develop our Christian world view by studying the Bible and meditating on it, and through praise, worship and anointed preaching. Regular prayer also helps shape our world view, as well as listening to teaching from a Bible

perspective. Satan loves to see to it that we are trained from a secular world view, and that we get our values shaped (clarified) by those who reject the Lord Jesus Christ. Be on guard against philosophies that are "science, falsely so called." (1 Timothy 6:20)



## Methods

---

Can you recognize teaching from a secular world view?

Does our moral character shape our world view, or does our world view shape our moral character? The answer is yes. Our morality shapes our theology, and our theology determines our moral choices.

How does our world view influence the way we teach history? Science? Math? Language? Can any subject be taught without a moral and philosophical bias? No.

Why does a secular world view promote rebellion against parents?

Why does wisdom cause us to be closer as families?

# **Section 9**

# **Activity Pages**

# Solve the Code

## Abram, Man of 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



# Mystery Word

## Abram and Lot

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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.

Abram was rich in silver and  \_\_\_\_\_. (Genesis 13:2)

\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_ had flocks and \_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_ and tents.

(Genesis 13:5)

"Is not the \_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_ land before thee?" (Genesis 13:9)

\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_ dwelled in the land of

\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_ . (Genesis 13:12)

Lot pitched his tent \_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_ Sodom.

(Genesis 13:12)

Abram allowed Lot to \_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_ his land.

(Genesis 13:11)





# Scrambled Words

## Hagar and Ishmael

Unscramble the words below and write the correct word in each blank.

1. RINDLECH

4. LAGEN

2. OVECI

5. LASHEIM

3. GRAHA

6. RISEMOP

1. Sarai still did not have any \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(Genesis 16:1)

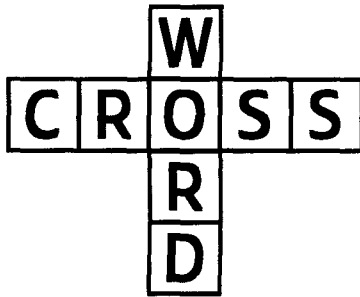
2. Abram listened to the \_\_\_\_\_ of Sarai.  
(Genesis 16:2)

3. \_\_\_\_\_ was Sarai's maid. (Genesis 16:3)

4. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord appeared to Hagar in the wilderness. (Genesis 16:7)

5. The Lord named Hagar's son \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(Genesis 16:11)

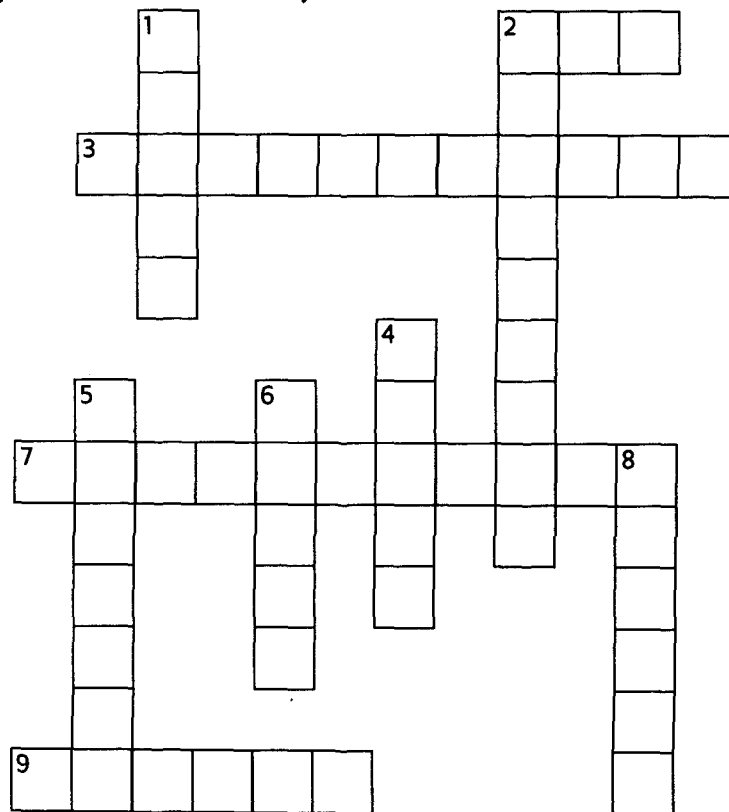
6. We are heirs of God because of His \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(Galatians 3:29)



# Crossword Puzzle

## Melchisedec

Using the clues below, solve this Crossword Puzzle!



**ACROSS**

- 3. A priest abides \_\_\_\_\_. (Hebrews 7:3)
- 7. A priest is not made after the law of a carnal \_\_\_\_\_. (Hebrews 7:16)
- 9. Melchisedec was the \_\_\_\_\_ of the most high God. (Hebrews 7:1)

**DOWN**

- 1. After the similtude of Melchisedec, there \_\_\_\_\_ another priest. (Hebrews 7:15)

**DOWN (continued)**

- 2. Melchisedec met Abraham returning from the \_\_\_\_\_ of the kings. (Hebrews 7:1)
- 4. Our Lord sprang out of \_\_\_\_\_. (Hebrews 7:14)
- 5. "Thou art a priest \_\_\_\_\_ after the order of Melchisedec." (Hebrews 7:17)
- 6. Melchisedec was king of \_\_\_\_\_. (Genesis 14:18)
- 8. Abraham gave \_\_\_\_\_ to Melchisedec. (Genesis 14:20)



# Word Search

## The Promised Son

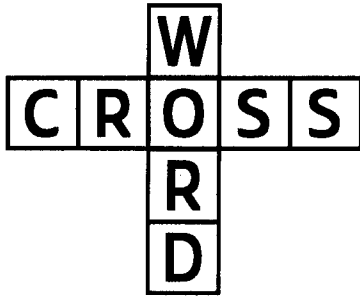
Find the hidden words in the puzzle below.  
Circle the words when you find them.



ABRAHAM  
CHILD  
CITY  
COUNTRY

FAITH  
ISAAC  
MAKER  
MULTITUDE

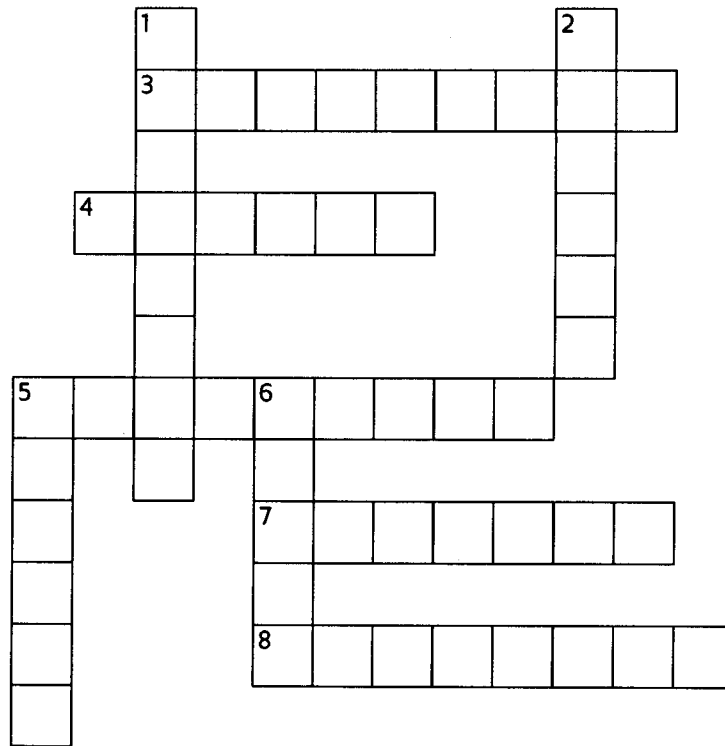
OBEYED  
PROMISE  
SARAH  
SEED



# Crossword Puzzle

## Sodom and Gomorrah

Using the clues below, solve this Crossword Puzzle!



**ACROSS**

- 3. God \_\_\_ the cities, the plain and all the inhabitants. (Genesis 19:25)
- 4. In the morning, the \_\_\_ told Lot to hurry. (Genesis 19:15)
- 5. The Lord rained fire and \_\_\_ upon the cities. (Genesis 19:24)
- 7. The angels were sent to \_\_\_ the city. (Genesis 19:13)
- 8. God was \_\_\_ to Lot. (Genesis 19:16)

**DOWN**

- 1. Lot's family was to escape to the \_\_\_. (Genesis 19:17)
- 2. The fire and brimstone came from \_\_\_. (Genesis 19:24)
- 5. Lot and his family were not to look \_\_\_ them. (Genesis 19:17)
- 6. The names of the cities God destroyed were \_\_\_ and Gomorrah. (Genesis 19:24)



# Mystery Word

## Remember Lot's Wife

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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.

\_\_\_\_\_ said His coming would be as the days of  
Lot. (Luke 17:28-30)

While Lot \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_, the men laid hold  
upon his hand. (Genesis 19:16)

Men also laid \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_ upon Lot's two  
\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_. (Genesis 19:16)

"Escape to the  \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_."  
(Genesis 19:17)

The Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah \_\_\_\_\_   
and \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_. (Genesis 19:24)



# Scrambled Words

## The Sacrifice of Isaac

Unscramble the words below and write the correct word in each blank.

1. HIRMOA

4. RATAL

2. CASAI

5. CLADEL

3. POWSHIR

6. FRIFOGEN

1. Abraham took his son to the land of \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(Genesis 22:2)

2. His son's name was \_\_\_\_\_ . (Genesis 22:2)

3. "I and the lad will go yonder and \_\_\_\_\_ ."  
(Genesis 22:5)

4. Abraham placed Isaac on the \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(Genesis 22:9)

5. The Angel of the Lord \_\_\_\_\_ unto him.  
(Genesis 22:11)

6. God provided the \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(Genesis 22:13)



# Word Search

## A Bride for Isaac

Find the hidden words in the puzzle below.  
Circle the words when you find them.

C	A	W	P	H	D	F	M	I	I	D	K
P	A	B	A	S	D	J	H	R	L	N	B
I	E	M	R	T	I	D	J	O	I	R	R
T	M	A	E	A	E	P	G	R	A	V	E
C	J	I	L	L	H	R	D	C	A	B	B
H	J	C	N	E	S	A	E	H	K	J	E
E	B	Q	M	G	Q	L	M	P	E	T	K
R	S	C	Q	R	E	P	I	I	G	K	A
L	U	L	O	T	P	D	V	S	R	H	H
D	O	H	S	L	T	O	I	V	A	S	G
X	A	F	T	N	A	V	R	E	S	A	V
N	J	K	B	G	N	I	R	R	A	E	C

ABRAHAM  
BRACELETS  
CAMELS  
DRINK

EARRING  
GOLD  
ISAAC  
NAHOR

PITCHER  
REBEKAH  
SERVANT  
WATER

# Solve the Code

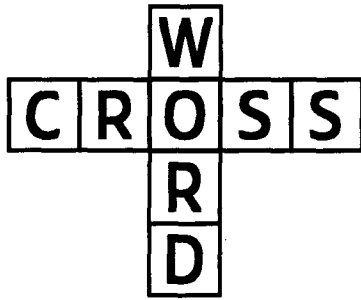
## Esau and His Birthright

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

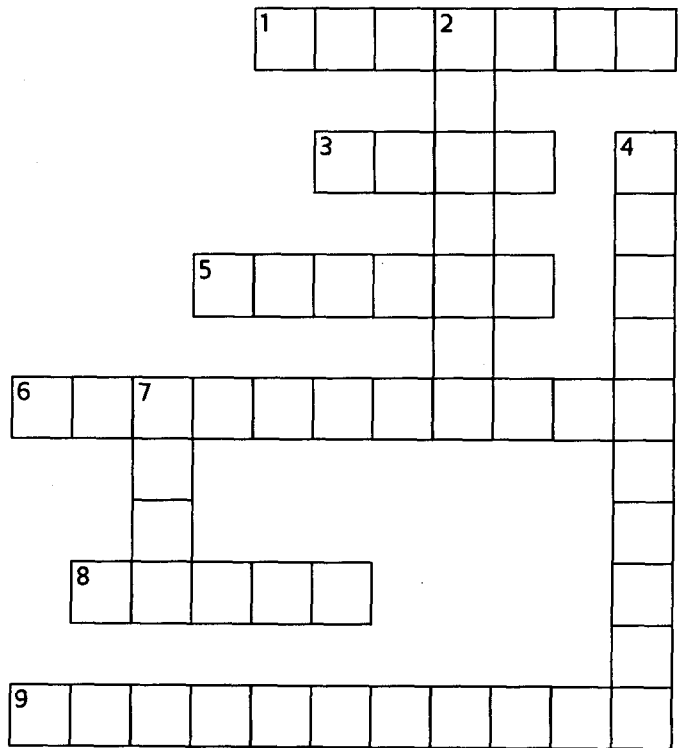




# Crossword Puzzle

## The Purpose of the Old Testament

Using the clues below, solve this Crossword Puzzle!



**ACROSS**

- 1. I will \_\_\_ God's ways. (Psalms 119:117)
- 3. A young man should heed God's \_\_\_\_\_. (Psalms 119:9)
- 5. I will not \_\_\_ God's word. (Psalms 119:16)
- 6. All scripture is given by \_\_\_ of God. (2 Timothy 3:16)
- 8. Hide God's Word in your \_\_\_\_\_. (Psalms 119:11)
- 9. All scripture is good for \_\_\_ in righteousness. (2 Timothy 3:16)

**DOWN**

- 2. The law of the Lord is \_\_\_\_\_. (Psalms 19:7)
- 4. Scriptures are written for our \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Corinthians 10:11)
- 7. The testimony of the Lord is \_\_\_\_\_. (Psalms 19:7)



# Mystery Word

## Jacob's Lie

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.

Isaac believed that it was Esau, because of his

\_\_\_\_\_ hands. (Genesis 27:23)

"I am Esau, thy \_\_\_\_\_  ."

(Genesis 27:19)

Rebekah helped Jacob \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_ his father.

(Genesis 27:6-9)

Rebekah put animal \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_ on Jacob.

(Genesis 27:16)

"Bring me venison, and make me savoury \_\_\_\_\_ , that  
I may eat..." (Genesis 27:7)

Jacob was the  \_\_\_\_\_ son.

(Genesis 27:15)



# Scrambled Words

## Jacob's Ladder

Unscramble the words below and write the correct word in each blank.

1. NARAH

4. SEDLEBS

2. LILPOWS

5. HEBLET

3. DERDAL

6. NETTH

1. Jacob went to \_\_\_\_\_ to find a wife. (Genesis 28:10)

2. He used stones for his \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Genesis 28:11)

3. Jacob dreamed about a \_\_\_\_\_. (Genesis 28:12)

4. God said, In you will all the families of the earth be  
\_\_\_\_\_. (Genesis 28:14)

5. Jacob built an altar and called it \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Genesis 28:19)

6. Jacob made a vow to give a \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord.  
(Genesis 28:22)

# Solve the Code

## Jacob and Rachel

Use the code at the bottom of the page to solve this message.




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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
												



# Word Search

## A New Name for Jacob

Find the hidden words in the puzzle below.  
Circle the words when you find them.

G	B	Y	C	H	N	N	K	W	E	P	E
F	O	X	G	H	A	K	E	B	Y	E	M
E	H	D	J	P	Z	N	O	D	E	N	A
W	X	D	Q	W	I	C	E	R	F	I	A
V	R	Z	J	S	A	L	Q	U	D	E	Q
F	G	E	E	J	I	F	C	B	Q	L	K
Z	R	M	S	A	J	T	L	Y	B	G	I
P	A	W	V	T	B	P	H	H	Z	C	S
N	Y	E	O	I	L	L	O	I	B	P	R
N	R	R	G	N	O	E	E	W	G	T	A
P	P	T	T	R	V	W	D	S	E	H	E
P	R	I	N	C	E	E	K	P	S	R	L

BLESS  
GOD  
ISRAEL  
JACOB

NAME  
PENIEL  
POWER  
PREVAILED

PRINCE  
SINEW  
THIGH  
WRESTLED



# Scrambled Words

## Hell

Unscramble the words below and write the correct word in each blank.

1. ZALSURA

4. FOOTCREMD

2. RIPADASE

5. HATED

3. HAMBARA

6. HISPER

1. The beggar's name was \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(Luke 16:20)

2. The thief on the cross went to \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(Luke 23:43)

3. The rich man called to \_\_\_\_\_ from hell.  
(Luke 16:24)

4. Lazarus was \_\_\_\_\_ in the arms of  
Abraham. (Luke 16:25)

5. The lake of fire is the second \_\_\_\_\_. (Revelation  
20:14)

6. Those who believe in Jesus will not \_\_\_\_\_ , but  
have everlasting life. (John 3:16)



# Mystery Word

## The Witch of Endor

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.

"If ye be risen with Christ, <sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ those things which  
are above." (Colossians 3:1)

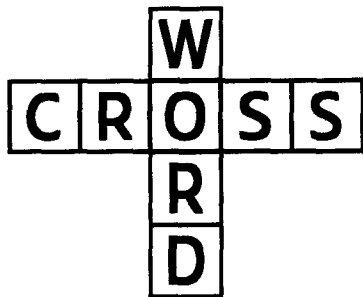
"Seek me a \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ that hath a familiar spirit."  
(1 Samuel 28:7)

The spirit looked like an old <sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ . (1 Samuel 28:14)

"Set \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ affection on things above."  
(Colossians 3:2)

The woman was from <sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ . (1 Samuel 28:7)

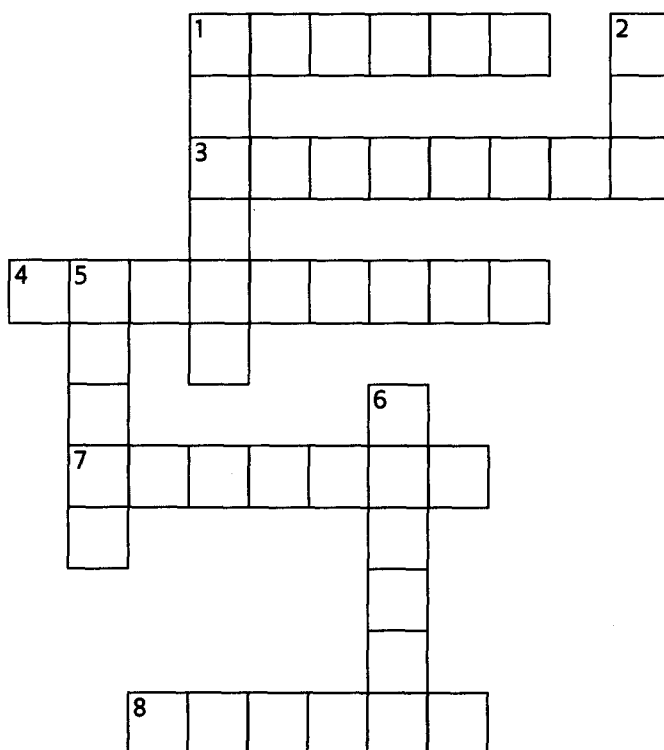
"... Your <sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ is hid with Christ in God."  
(Colossians 3:3)



# Crossword Puzzle

## The Time of the Judges

Using the clues below, solve this Crossword Puzzle!



### ACROSS

1. The children of Israel did evil and served \_\_\_\_\_. (Judges 2:11)
3. God said He would never break his \_\_\_\_\_. (Judges 2:1)
4. When the children of Israel cried out to God, He \_\_\_\_\_ them. (Judges 3:9)
7. Joshua was an \_\_\_\_\_ and ten years old when he died. (Judges 2:8)
8. Joshua saw the great works of the Lord that He did for \_\_\_\_\_. (Judges 2:7)

### DOWN

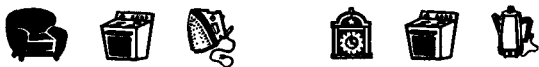
1. An angel of the Lord came from Gilgal with a message for \_\_\_\_\_. (Judges 2:1)
2. The anger of the Lord was \_\_\_\_\_ against Israel. (Judges 3:8)
5. God sold the children of Israel to the king of Mesopotamia and they served him for \_\_\_\_\_ years. (Judges 3:8)
6. "And you shall make no \_\_\_\_\_ with the inhabitants of this land." (Judges 2:2)


























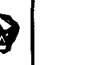


# Solve the Code

## Ehud, the Terminator

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
												



# Word Search

## Deborah and Jael

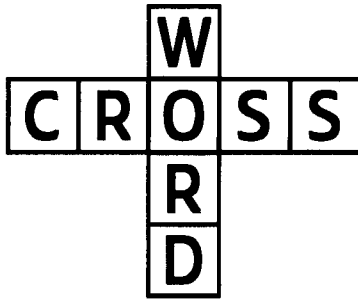
Find the hidden words in the puzzle below.  
Circle the words when you find them.



ARMY  
BARAK  
CANAAN  
CAPTAIN

CHARIOTS  
CHILDREN  
DEBORAH  
GENTILES

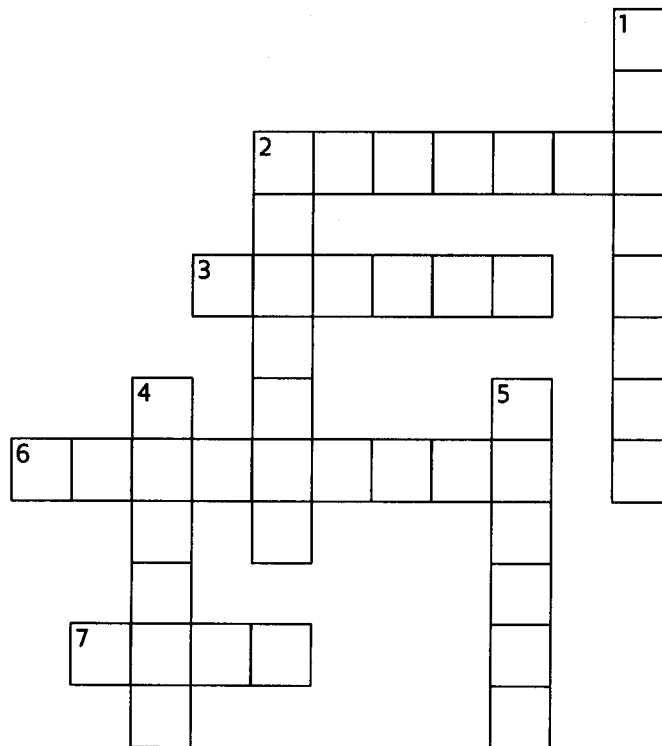
ISRAEL  
JUDGMENT  
KING  
PROPHETESS



# Crossword Puzzle

## Abimelech the Bramble

Using the clues below, solve this Crossword Puzzle!



### ACROSS

2. The trees asked the \_\_\_ to rule over them. (Judges 9:14)
3. \_\_\_ lifted up his voice and told a story about the trees. (Judges 9:7, 8)
6. The men of Schechem made \_\_\_ king. (Judges 9:6)
7. Jotham ran away, and \_\_\_. (Judges 9:21)

### DOWN

1. Abimelech slew his \_\_\_. (Judges 9:5)
2. Abimelech was Jotham's \_\_\_. (Judges 9:21)
4. Godly leaders are to be esteemed very \_\_\_. (1 Thessalonians 5:13)
5. "Put your trust in my \_\_\_." (Judges 9:15)



# Mystery Word

## An Attitude of Gratitude

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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 the Lord is a <sup>1</sup>  <sup>2</sup>  \_\_\_\_\_ God above all gods.  
(Psalms 95:3)

"In His \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>3</sup>  \_\_\_\_\_ are the deep places of the earth."  
(Psalms 95:4)

"\_\_\_\_\_ <sup>4</sup>  us come before his  
\_\_\_\_\_ <sup>5</sup>  \_\_\_\_\_ with thanksgiving."  
(Psalms 95:2)

"The sea is his and he made it; and his hands  
<sup>6</sup>  \_\_\_\_\_ the dry land." (Psalms 95:5)

"O come, let us sing <sup>7</sup>  \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord." (Psalms 95:1)

"In everything give thanks: for this is the \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>8</sup>  of  
God..." (1 Thessalonians 5:18)



# Scrambled Words

## Biblical Keys to Joy

Unscramble the words below and write the correct word in each blank.

1. DIMETAY

4. EARTH

2. RIPESA

5. PHEL

3. THREGTNS

6. HETHAL

1. The Lord commands His lovingkindness in the  
\_\_\_\_\_ . (Psalms 42:8)

2. "I shall yet \_\_\_\_\_ Him." (Psalms 42:11)

3. David said, You are the God of my  
\_\_\_\_\_ . (Psalms 43:2)

4. God said that David was a man after His own  
\_\_\_\_\_ . (1 Samuel 13:14)

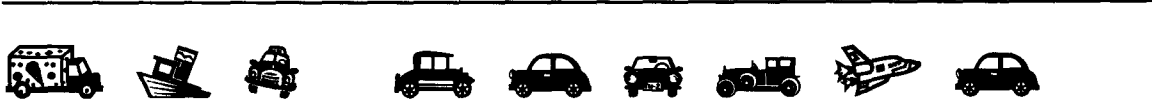
5. My \_\_\_\_\_ comes from the Lord. (Psalms 121:2)

6. God is the \_\_\_\_\_ of my countenance.  
(Psalms 42:11)

# Solve the Code

## God Made Flesh

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



# Word Search

## Mary and Joseph

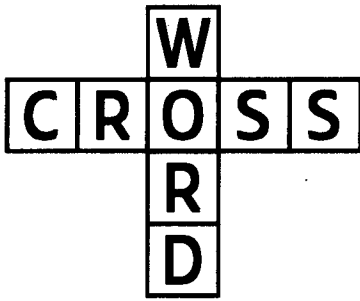
Find the hidden words in the puzzle below.  
Circle the words when you find them.

M	J	B	L	E	S	S	E	D	T	I	N
F	A	O	A	A	T	P	Y	L	R	S	D
J	G	R	S	C	Q	S	Y	S	Z	R	R
U	A	D	Y	E	O	W	P	G	O	F	Y
N	B	Q	J	U	P	N	R	L	D	S	P
A	R	W	N	P	B	H	C	I	U	K	B
Z	I	U	E	Z	Z	V	A	E	H	Z	G
A	E	O	Y	T	S	M	L	B	I	Z	X
R	L	E	R	D	D	E	Q	S	O	V	T
E	Q	M	R	N	G	R	D	I	O	R	E
T	V	O	A	N	T	R	F	P	L	N	N
H	W	H	A	B	C	L	O	I	Y	B	W

ANGEL  
BLESSED  
BORN  
CONCEIVE

GABRIEL  
HANDMAID  
JOSEPH  
LORD

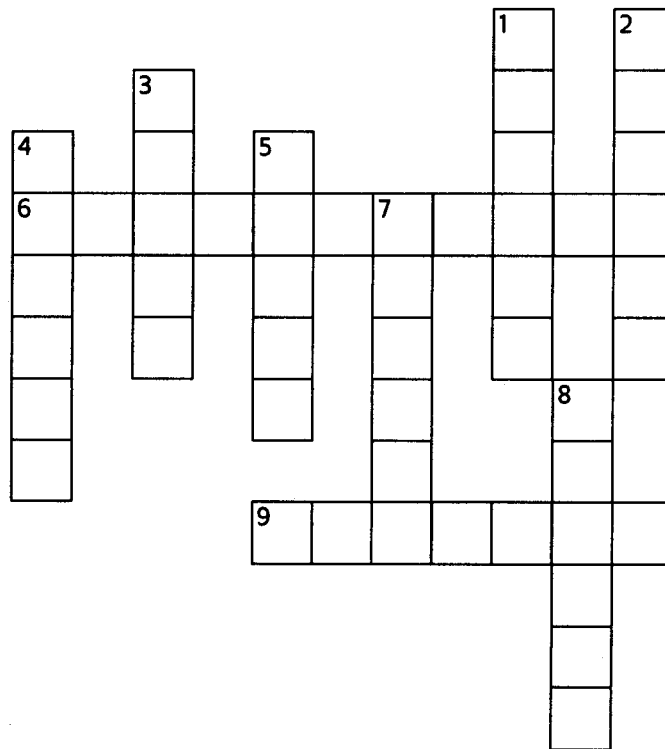
MARY  
NAZARETH  
SON  
WORD



# Crossword Puzzle

## Jesus is the Bread of Life

Using the clues below, solve this Crossword Puzzle!



**ACROSS**

- 6. Everyone who believes in the Son will have \_\_\_ life. (John 6:40)
- 9. "Our \_\_\_ ate manna in the desert." (John 6:31)

**DOWN**

- 1. Jesus is the \_\_\_ bread that came down from heaven. (John 6:51)
- 2. He who comes to Jesus shall never \_\_\_. (John 6:35)

**DOWN (continued)**

- 3. Jesus is the \_\_\_ of life. (John 6:35)
- 4. God the Father gives the true bread from \_\_\_. (John 6:32)
- 5. The bread that Jesus gives is His \_\_\_. (John 6:51)
- 7. The words that Jesus speaks are \_\_\_ and life. (John 6:63)
- 8. Jesus told the Jews not to \_\_\_. (John 6:43)





# Mystery Word

## Jesus Gives Living Water

1	2	3	4	2	5	6	7	8
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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.

"And in that day <sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ you say,

\_\_\_\_\_ <sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord." (Isaiah 12:4)

"He that believeth on me ... out of his \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ shall

flow \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ of living water." (John 7:38)

"If any man \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, let him come unto me, and  
drink." (John 7:37)

When Jesus spoke of rivers of living water, He was referring to the

\_\_\_\_\_ <sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. (John 7:39)

Jesus said that His time had not yet \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>7</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. (John 7:6)

The Holy Spirit was \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>8</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ yet given because Jesus was  
not yet glorified. (John 7:39)



# Scrambled Words

## Jesus Gives the Light of Life

Unscramble the words below and write the correct word in each blank.

1. LOWDR

4. SNAKERDS

2. HITEW

5. THILG

3. DESBELS

6. MOKDING

1. "I am the light of the \_\_\_\_\_." (John 8:12)

2. \_\_\_\_\_ is the symbol of righteousness and purity.  
(Revelation 19:8)

3. "\_\_\_\_\_ are the pure in heart." (Matthew 5:8)

4. Whoever follows Jesus will not walk in  
\_\_\_\_\_. (John 8:12)

5. God said, "Let there be \_\_\_\_\_." (Genesis 1:3)



























6. You must be born again, to see the \_\_\_\_\_ of  
God. (John 3:3)

# Solve the Code

## Jesus, the Author of Freedom

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
												



# Word Search

## Jesus, the Good Shepherd

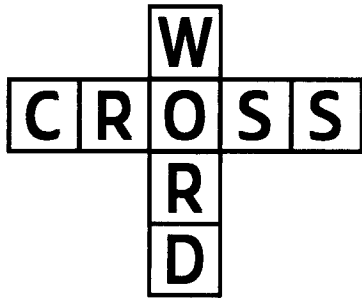
Find the hidden words in the puzzle below.  
Circle the words when you find them.



DOOR  
GOOD  
HIRELING  
KNOWN

LIFE  
PARABLE  
PASTURE  
SHEEP

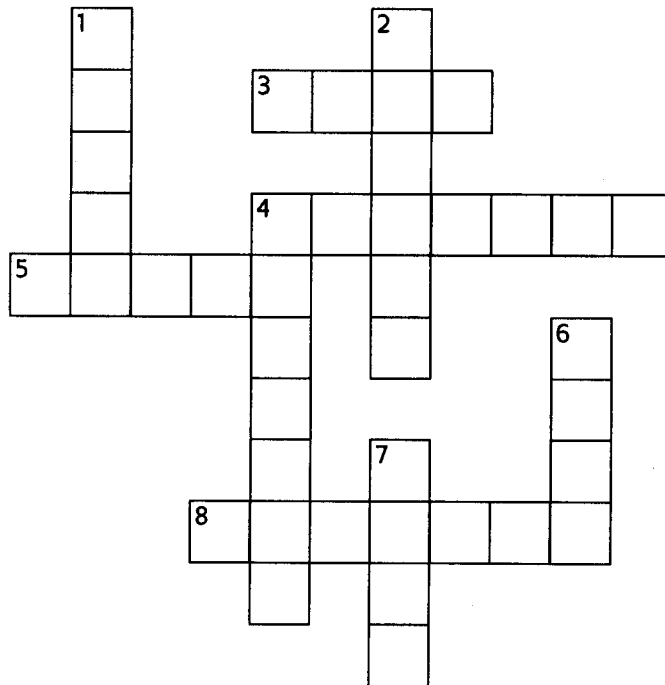
SHEEPFOLD  
SHEPHERD  
STRANGER  
WOLF



# Crossword Puzzle

## Jesus Raises Lazarus

Using the clues below, solve this Crossword Puzzle!



**ACROSS**

- 3. Jesus told his disciples that Lazarus was \_\_\_\_\_. (John 11:14)
- 4. Lazarus was from the town of \_\_\_\_\_. (John 11:1)
- 5. Whoever believes in Jesus shall \_\_\_\_ die. (John 11:26)
- 8. Martha said, "Yes, Lord, I \_\_\_\_\_." (John 11:27)

**DOWN**

- 1. Jesus told His disciples that they were going to \_\_\_\_\_ Lazarus. (John 11:11)
- 2. The sisters of Lazarus were Mary and \_\_\_\_\_. (John 11:1)
- 4. Martha said, "Lord if you had been here, my \_\_\_\_\_ had not died." (John 11:21)
- 6. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the \_\_\_\_\_." (John 11:25)
- 7. Mary and Martha told Jesus that Lazarus was \_\_\_\_\_. (John 11:3)



# Mystery Word

## Mary Worships Jesus

1	2	3	4	5	6	3	4
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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.

Mary \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ <sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ the feet of Jesus.  
(John 12:3)

Mary wiped Jesus' feet with her \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ <sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_ . (John 12:3)

Jesus came to \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ <sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_ , six days before  
the Passover. (John 12:1)

Judas was a <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ . (John 12:6)

Jesus had raised Lazarus \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ <sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_ the dead. (John 12:1)

Jesus said, "Let her \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ <sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_ ." (John 12:7)



# Scrambled Words

## Jesus Washed Their Feet

Unscramble the words below and write the correct word in each blank.

1. TRAPED

4. SHAW

2. EYBRAT

5. TREEP

3. SANTVER

6. PAXELEM

1. Jesus knew He was going to \_\_\_\_\_ out of this world. (John 13:1)

2. The devil tempted Judas to \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus. (John 13:2)

3. The Son of God took on the form of a \_\_\_\_\_ . (Philippians 2:7)

4. Jesus began to \_\_\_\_\_ the feet of all the disciples. (John 13:5)

5. \_\_\_\_\_ refused to obey Jesus at first. (John 13:8)



























6. Jesus set an \_\_\_\_\_ for us to follow. (John 13:15)

# Solve the Code

## In My Father's House

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
												





# Word Search

## Jesus Is the Vine

Find the hidden words in the puzzle below.  
Circle the words when you find them.

B	C	T	C	R	E	M	A	I	N	E	T
G	R	O	L	K	A	X	P	I	N	I	N
L	A	A	M	O	J	I	S	I	U	A	J
O	L	T	N	M	V	N	V	R	M	Z	A
R	X	D	D	C	A	E	F	D	C	N	P
I	H	C	W	K	H	N	N	L	K	G	Q
F	Y	R	G	H	R	A	D	J	W	B	H
I	O	R	U	E	B	P	A	M	O	P	Y
E	F	C	H	S	Z	J	F	B	E	Y	J
D	O	T	U	V	A	H	Y	N	I	N	D
T	A	H	J	G	Z	J	S	C	S	D	T
F	I	D	I	S	C	I	P	L	E	S	E

ABIDE

BRANCH

COMMANDMENT

DISCIPLES

FATHER

FRUIT

GLORIFIED

HUSBANDMAN

JOY

LOVE

REMAIN

VINE



# Mystery Word

## Servants, Friends

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.

"These things I <sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ you, that ye love  
one another." (John 15:17)

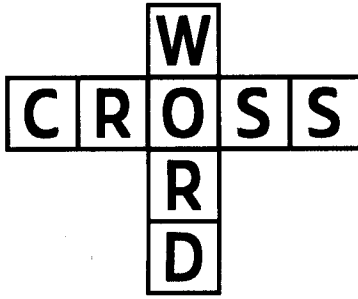
"As the \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ hath loved me, so have I loved  
you." (John 15:9)

Jesus has <sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ us to go and bring  
forth fruit. (John 15:16)

"The <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ is not greater than his lord."  
(John 15:20)

"Ye are my \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ if ye do whatsoever I  
command you." (John 15:14)

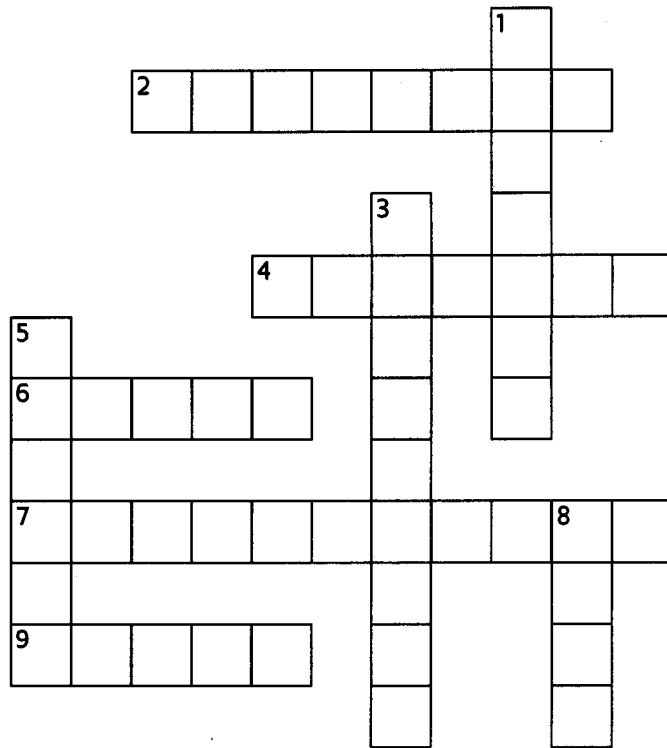
"... All things that I have heard of my Father I have made  
\_\_\_\_\_ <sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ unto you." (John 15:15)



# Crossword Puzzle

## The Comforter

Using the clues below, solve this Crossword Puzzle!



### ACROSS

2. "Let not your heart be \_\_\_\_." (John 14:27)
4. Jesus said of the Holy Spirit, "He shall \_\_\_\_ me." (John 16:14)
6. Jesus said, "\_\_\_\_ I leave with you." (John 14:27)
7. The Holy Spirit will bring all things to our \_\_\_\_\_. (John 14:26)
9. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of \_\_\_\_\_. (John 16:13)

### DOWN

1. The world cannot \_\_\_\_ the Holy Spirit, because they do not know Him. (John 14:17)
3. The Father will give another \_\_\_\_\_. (John 14:16)
5. The \_\_\_\_ which proceeds from the Father shall testify of Jesus. (John 15:26)
8. Jesus said the Holy Spirit will show us things to \_\_\_\_\_. (John 16:13)



# Scrambled Words

## Jesus in Jerusalem

Unscramble the words below and write the correct word in each blank.

1. ROHU

4. FIDTLE

2. WOLFLO

5. FIRGLOY

3. GNUTJEMD

6. URFIT

1. Jesus knew that His \_\_\_\_\_ had come. (John 12:23)

2. To serve Jesus, we must \_\_\_\_\_ Him.  
(John 12:26)

3. "Now is the \_\_\_\_\_ of this world."  
(John 12:31)

4. "And I, if I be \_\_\_\_\_ up from the earth, will draw  
all men unto Me." (John 12:32)

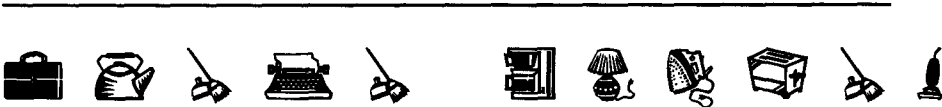
5. "Father, \_\_\_\_\_ Thy name." (John 12:28)

6. When a grain of wheat dies, it brings forth much  
\_\_\_\_\_ . (John 12:24)

# Solve the Code

## Betrayed, Denied

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



# Word Search

## He Is Risen

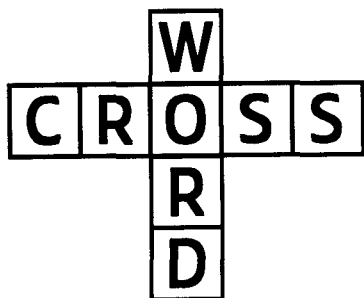
Find the hidden words in the puzzle below.  
Circle the words when you find them.

M	S	A	D	E	I	S	W	N	H	Y	N
A	K	T	N	I	V	Z	L	V	R	W	Z
G	E	X	O	G	S	X	M	A	A	E	Z
D	S	I	V	N	E	C	M	D	K	Q	L
A	A	C	X	T	E	L	I	A	Z	Z	J
L	B	O	X	F	C	E	U	P	S	D	H
E	B	J	Z	R	E	Q	N	F	L	Z	Y
N	A	R	U	L	H	E	W	Q	E	E	X
E	T	Q	I	T	S	Z	X	I	E	A	S
O	H	L	R	I	E	J	D	T	W	P	R
C	A	A	R	T	X	M	N	M	M	D	A
G	E	X	S	E	P	U	L	C	H	R	E

ANGEL  
DAWN  
DISCIPLES  
EARTHQUAKE

FEAR  
GALILEE  
MAGDALENE  
MARY

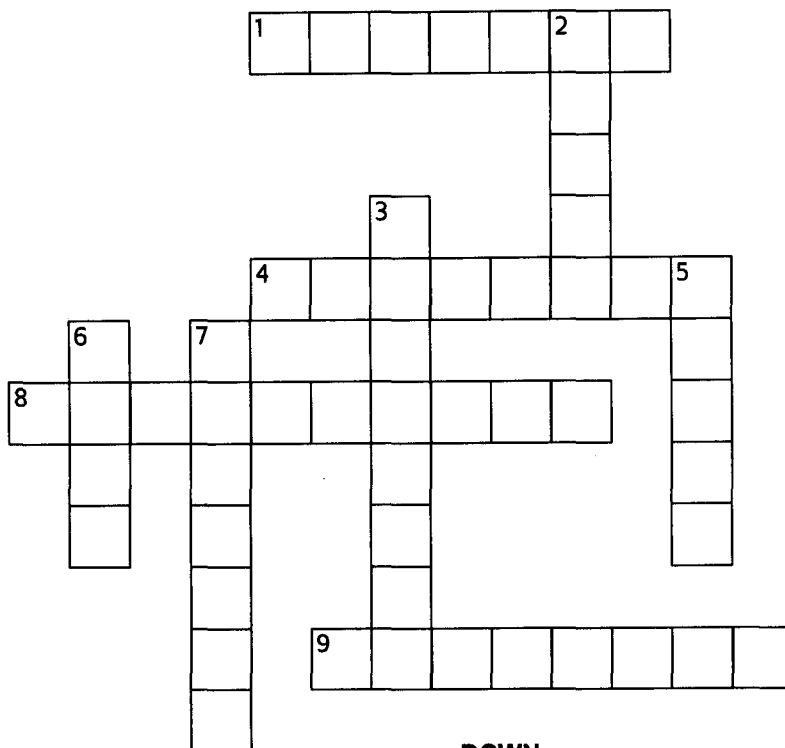
RISEN  
SABBATH  
SEPULCHRE  
STONE



# Crossword Puzzle

## The Early Church

Using the clues below, solve this Crossword Puzzle!



### ACROSS

1. Peter said the \_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit is for everyone. (Acts 2:39)
4. The men asked a question of Peter and the rest of the \_\_\_. (Acts 2:37)
8. Peter exhorted the crowd to save themselves from this untoward \_\_\_. (Acts 2:40)
9. Those that gladly \_\_\_ Peter's word were baptized. (Acts 2:41)

### DOWN

2. "Men and brethren, what \_\_\_ we do?" (Acts 2:37)
3. They continued in the apostles' \_\_\_ and fellowship. (Acts 2:42)
5. Many wonders and \_\_\_ were done by the apostles. (Acts 2:43)
6. \_\_\_ came upon every soul. (Acts 2:43)
7. With many words did Peter \_\_\_ and exhort. (Acts 2:40)



# Mystery Word

## They Had Been with Jesus

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.

Many of those who heard the word

\_\_\_\_\_ . (Acts 4:4)

Peter and John went into the  \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(Acts 3:1)

Peter said, "Silver and  \_\_\_\_\_ have I none." (Acts 3:6)

A man was at the  \_\_\_\_\_ of the temple, which was  
called Beautiful. (Acts 3:2)

People thought Peter and John were

\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_ men. (Acts 4:13)

"In the name of Jesus Christ of

\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_ rise up and walk."  
(Acts 3:6)





# Scrambled Words

## Ananias and Sapphira

Unscramble the words below and write the correct word in each blank.

- |               |           |
|---------------|-----------|
| 1. SMIDOW     | 4. DURBIE |
| 2. PASHPAIR   | 5. RIPITS |
| 3. NOSEPOSISS | 6. HUCCRH |

1. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(Psalms 111:10)
2. Ananias was married to \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(Acts 5:1)
3. They sold a \_\_\_\_\_ , in order to  
give an offering. (Acts 5:1)
4. Both Ananias and Sapphira died and were  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 5:6, 10)
5. Do not tempt the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord. (Acts 5:9)
6. Great fear came upon all the \_\_\_\_\_ . (Acts 5:11)

# Solve the Code

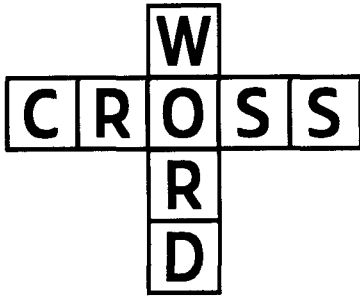
## Timothy's Great Mother

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

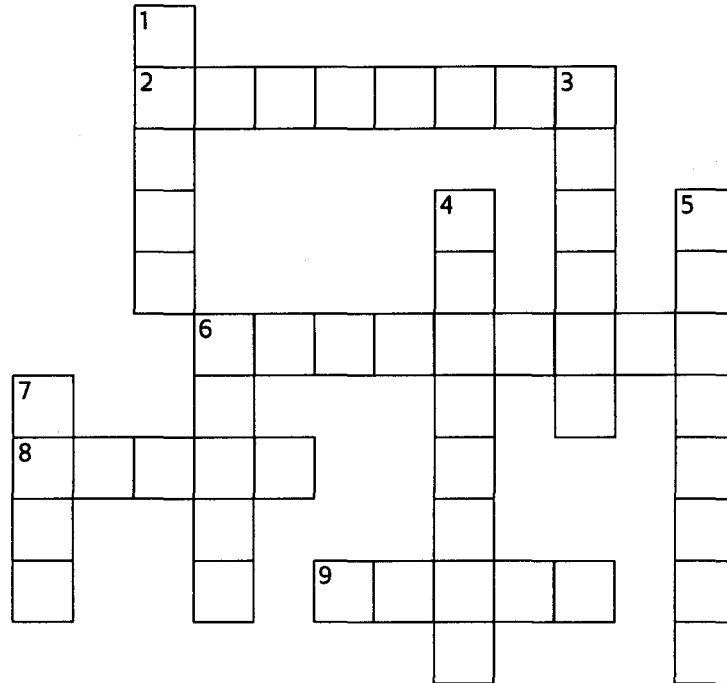
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z



# Crossword Puzzle

## Philip the Missionary

Using the clues below, solve this Crossword Puzzle!



**ACROSS**

- 2. Philip met a man from \_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 8:27)
- 6. The man Philip met was reading from the \_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 8:32)
- 8. Philip received instructions on where he was to go from an \_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 8:26)
- 9. The man Philip met was a servant of Candace, the \_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 8:27)

**DOWN**

- 1. After Philip shared, the eunuch believed in Jesus with all his \_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 8:37)
- 3. The Spirit of the Lord took Philip away to \_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 8:40)
- 4. The man asked Philip if he could be \_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 8:36)
- 5. Philip \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus to the eunuch. (Acts 8:35)
- 6. "He was led as a \_\_\_\_\_ to the slaughter." (Acts 8:32)
- 7. Philip was to go to \_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 8:26)



# Mystery Word

## Paul is Accepted

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	2	8
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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   \_\_\_\_\_ wanted to kill Saul. (Acts 9:23)

It was \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_ who took Saul to the  
apostles. (Acts 9:27)

Saul had preached boldly in the Name of \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Acts 9:27)

Saul was from \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 9:11)

The disciples let Saul down the \_\_\_\_\_   \_\_\_\_\_ in a basket. (Acts  
9:25)

The churches had rest and walked in the  
\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 9:31)



# Scrambled Words

## Cornelius, the Gentile

Unscramble the words below and write the correct word in each blank.

1. OVINIS

4. CREEPSTER

2. POPAJ

5. SLINGEET

3. UVOTED

6. STNEOGU

1. An angel came to Cornelius in a \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(Acts 10:3)

2. Cornelius sent for Peter in \_\_\_\_\_ . (Acts 10:5)

3. Cornelius was a \_\_\_\_\_ man. (Acts 10:2)

4. "God is no \_\_\_\_\_ of persons."  
(Acts 10:34)

5. The Holy Ghost was poured out on the  
\_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 10:45)

6. They began to speak with other \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(Acts 10:46)

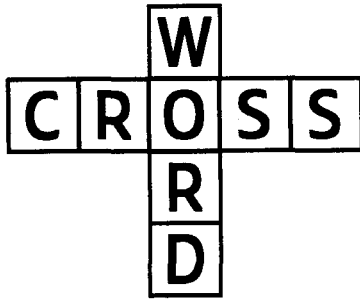
# Solve the Code

## Peter in Jail

Use the code at the bottom of the page to solve this message.



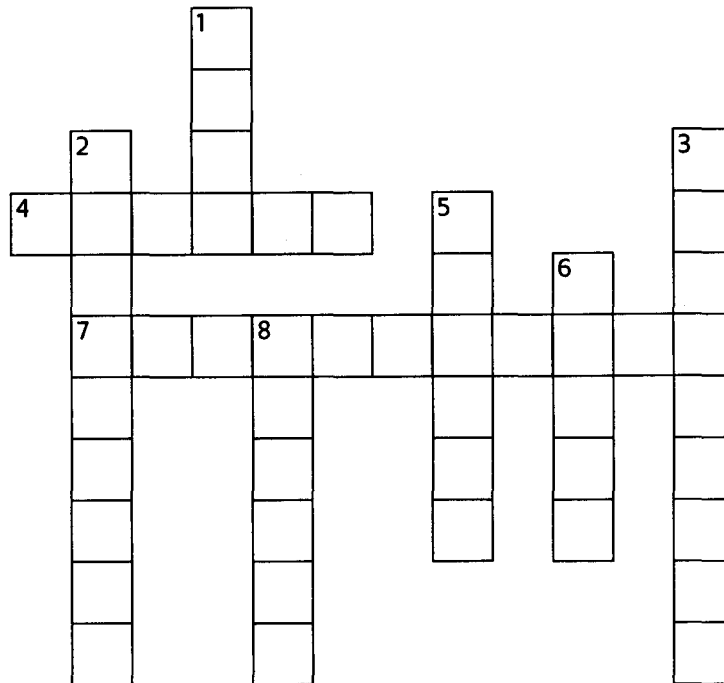
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z



# Crossword Puzzle

## Values Clarification

Using the clues below, solve this Crossword Puzzle!



**ACROSS**

- 4. We are to get \_\_\_ and understanding. (Proverbs 4:5)
- 7. Children should hear the instruction of their fathers. (Proverbs 4:1)

**DOWN**

- 1. We must take heed according to God's \_\_\_\_\_. (Psalms 119:9)

**DOWN (continued)**

- 2. Keep your heart with all \_\_\_\_\_. (Proverbs 4:23)
- 3. Wisdom is the \_\_\_ thing. (Proverbs 4:7)
- 5. Do not enter the path of the \_\_\_\_\_. (Proverbs 4:14)
- 6. The path of the just is as a shining \_\_\_\_\_. (Proverbs 4:18)
- 8. "I have \_\_\_ thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths. (Proverbs 4:11)

# Activity Sheet Answer Key for Volume 5

## Lesson 1

Abram was known as the friend of God.

## Lesson 2

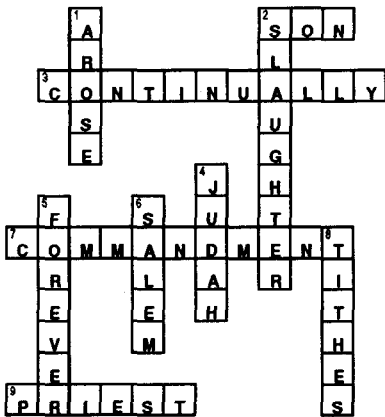
Mystery Word = Gomorrah

1. Gold
2. Whole
3. Abram
4. Lot
5. Toward
6. Herds
7. Canaan
8. Choose

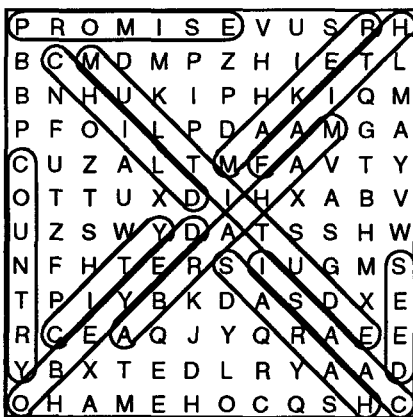
## Lesson 3

1. Children
2. Voice
3. Hagar
4. Angel
5. Ishmael
6. Promise

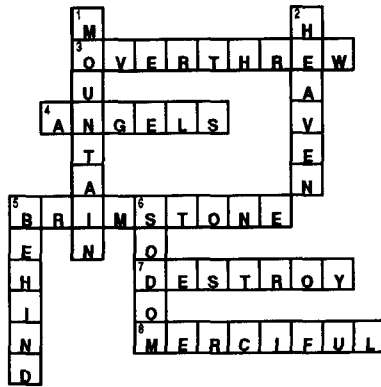
## Lesson 4



## Lesson 5



## Lesson 6



## Lesson 7

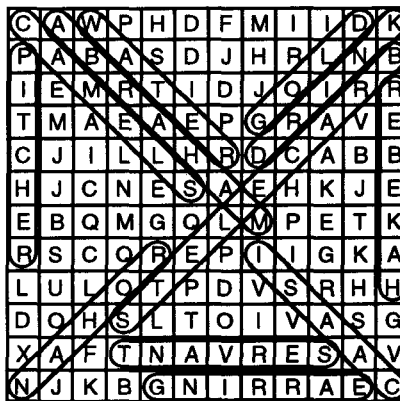
Mystery Word = Judgment

1. Jesus
2. Daughters
3. Hands
4. Lingered
- 5, 7. Mountain
6. Fire
8. Brimstone

## Lesson 8

1. Moriah
2. Isaac
3. Worship
4. Altar
5. Called
6. Offering

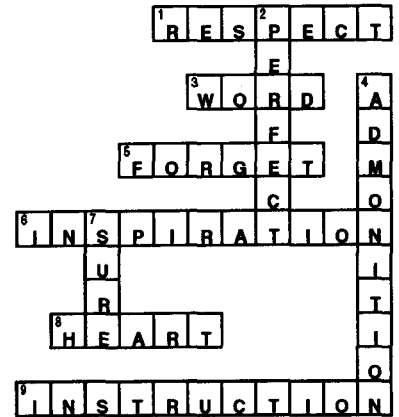
## Lesson 9



## Lesson 10

Set your heart on the things which are above.

## Lesson 11



## Lesson 12

Mystery Word = Honesty

1. Hairy
- 2, 3. Firstborn
4. Deceive
5. Skins
6. Meat
7. Younger

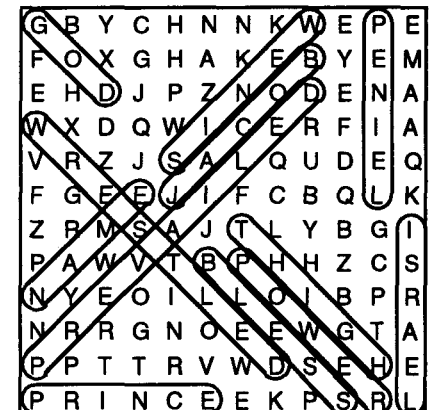
## Lesson 13

1. Haran
2. Pillows
3. Ladder
4. Blessed
5. Bethel
6. Tenth

## Lesson 14

Inner beauty comes from the Holy Spirit.

## Lesson 15



## Lesson 16

1. Lazarus
2. Paradise
3. Abraham
4. Comforted
5. Death
6. Perish

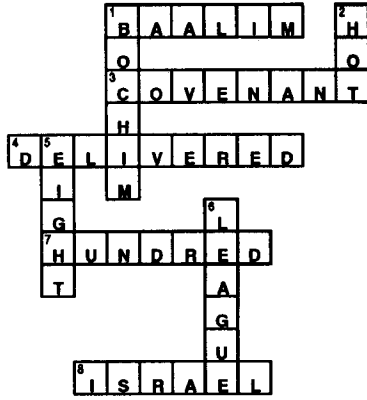


**Lesson 17**

Mystery Word = Samuel

- 1. Seek            4. Your
- 2. Woman        5. Endor
- 3. Man            6. Life

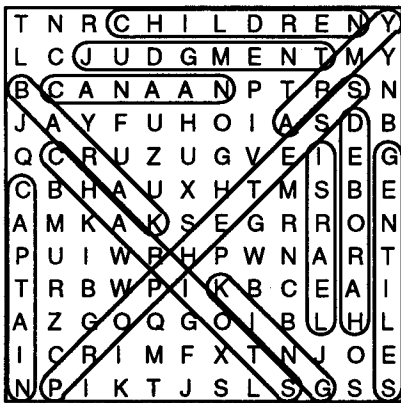
**Lesson 18**



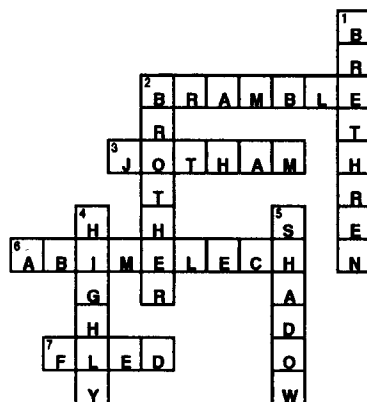
**Lesson 19**

Christian unity is working together for God.

**Lesson 20**



**Lesson 21**



**Lesson 22**

Mystery Word = Grateful

- 1,2. Great        6. Formed
- 3. Hand          7. Unto
- 4. Let            8. Will
- 5. Presence

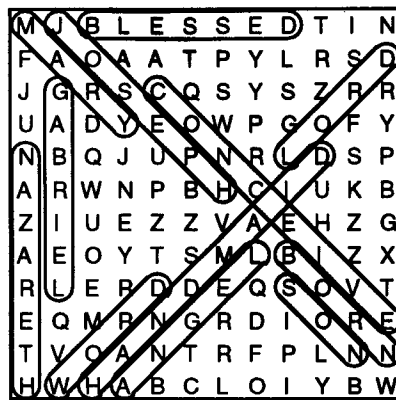
**Lesson 23**

- 1. Daytime       4. Heart
- 2. Praise        5. Help
- 3. Strength      6. Health

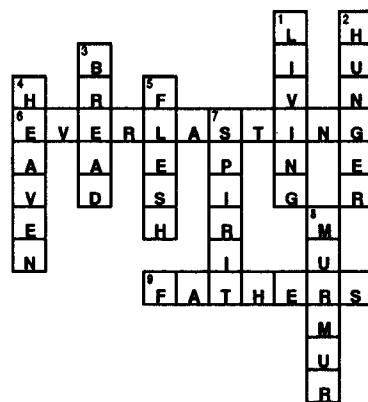
**Lesson 24**

The eternal God became a man - our Lord Jesus.

**Lesson 25**



**Lesson 26**



**Lesson 27**

Mystery Word = Salvation

- 1. Shall            5. Thirst
- 2. Praise          6. Holy Spirit
- 3. Belly            7. Come
- 4. Rivers          8. Not

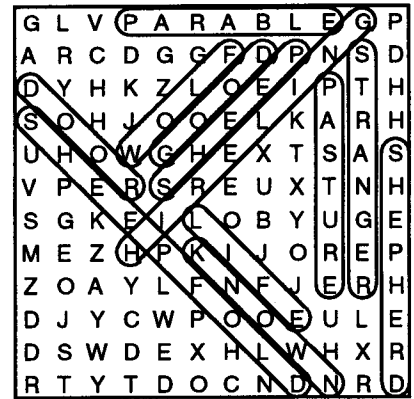
**Lesson 28**

- 1. World            4. Darkness
- 2. White            5. Light
- 3. Blessed         6. Kingdom

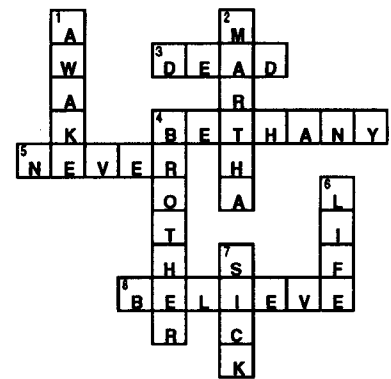
**Lesson 29**

Knowing the truth will make you free.

**Lesson 30**



**Lesson 31**



**Lesson 32**

Mystery Word = Ointment

- 1. Anointed       4. Thief
- 2. Hair            5. From
- 3. Bethany       6. Alone

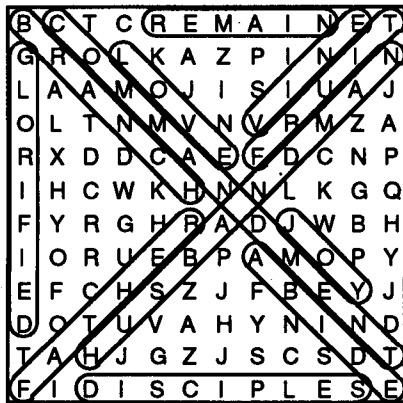
**Lesson 33**

- 1. Depart          4. Wash
- 2. Betray          5. Peter
- 3. Servant        6. Example

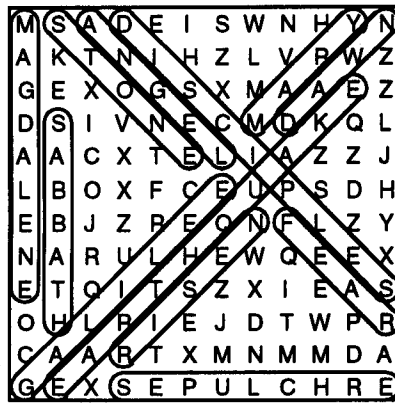
**Lesson 34**

The only way to heaven is Jesus Christ.

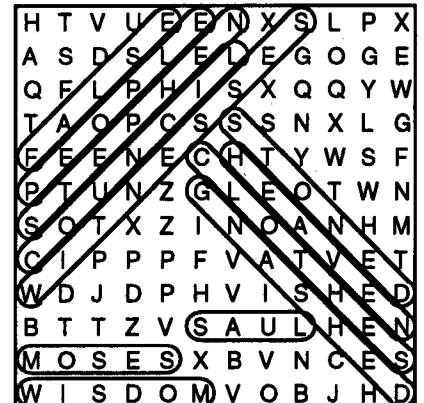
Lesson 35



Lesson 40



Lesson 45

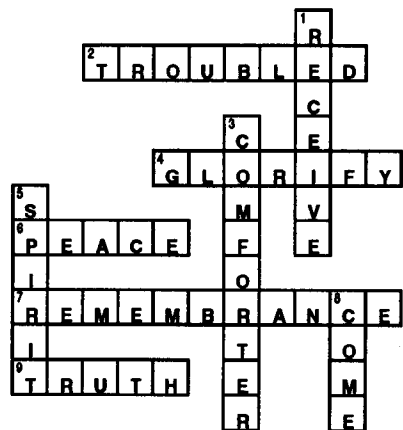


Lesson 36

Mystery Word = Chosen

- 1. Command    4. Servant
- 2. Father     5. Friends
- 3. Ordained   6. Known

Lesson 37



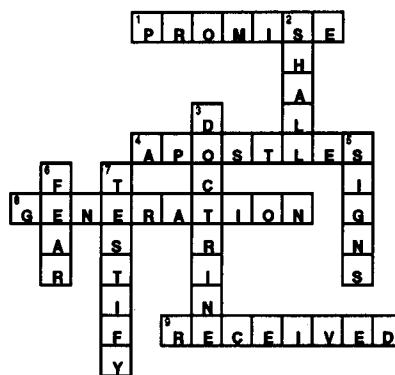
Lesson 38

- 1. Hour        4. Lifted
- 2. Follow     5. Glorify
- 3. Judgment   6. Fruit

Lesson 39

The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses all of our sin.

Lesson 41



Lesson 42

Mystery Word = Beggar

- 1. Believed    4. Gate
- 2. Temple     5. Ignorant
- 3. Gold        6. Nazareth

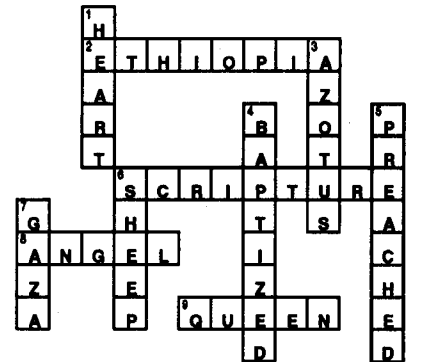
Lesson 43

- 1. Wisdom     4. Buried
- 2. Sapphira   5. Spirit
- 3. Possession 6. Church

Lesson 44

A godly mother is a gift from God.

Lesson 46



Lesson 47

Mystery Word = Jerusalem

- 1,2. Jews        5. Tarsus
- 3. Barnabas    6,7. Wall
- 4. Jesus        8. Comfort

Lesson 48

- 1. Vision       4. Respector
- 2. Joppa        5. Gentiles
- 3. Devout      6. Tongues

Lesson 49

Faith in God will open doors for us.

