

124. PRINCIPLES OF BIBLE INTERPRETATION

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

Aim: To identify the different principles of Bible Study which must be followed if one is to be a student of the Word of God. To know the Bible and know how to handle it correctly. What rules must be applied to a passage to discover its correct meaning?

Inspiration means:

- More than human genius, such as Shakespeare.
- More than illumination by the Holy Spirit.
- More than revelation.
- Not partial inspiration, but FULL inspiration.
- It is "**God breathed**" which means: The **breath of God expressing itself through a human personality**. "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." II Peter 1:21.

Proofs of Inspiration:

- Scripture itself - its pre-eminence in literature
 - its preservation
 - its transforming power
 - its unity
 - its scientific accuracy
- Proof from archaeology: over 5,000 Biblical locations have been found by archaeologists.
- Proof of fulfilled prophecy. For example, Psalm 22 prophesies many details about Jesus Christ.

What is gained by studying the Bible:

- Profound **knowledge**. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning." Romans 15:4.
- Personal **faith**. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Romans 10:17.
- Purification** of Life. 'Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you' John 15:3.
- Preparation for service**. "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." II Timothy 3:17.
- Power in ministry**.

What shall be done: a) Practice its truth. b) Proclaim its truth.
Principles for correctly interpreting the Bible are:

1. The DISPENSATION Principle (or Administration Principle).

A Dispensation is a period of time in which God deals with man in a certain way with respect to sin and man's responsibility. The word "dispensation" is first found in Ephesians 1:10, "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ."

The 7 dispensations are:

- Innocence** (Genesis 1:26-2:23). Period from Creation of man to the Fall of man.
- Conscience** (Genesis 3-7) means "with knowledge," from the Fall of man to the Flood: 1,656 years.
- Human Government** (Gen. 8:1-11:9). Period from the Flood to the Confusion of languages: 427yr.
- Promise** (Genesis 11:10-15:21). Period from the Call of Abraham to the Exodus: 430 years.
- Law** (Exodus 19:1-8). Period from the Exodus to the Cross: 1,491 years.
- Church** (Acts 2:47). Period from Pentecost to the Rapture.
- Kingdom** (Rev. 19-20). Period from the Return of Christ to the Great White Throne Judgment: 1,000yr

Rules:

- Truth must be divided in the same dispensation only.
- Don't take the truth of a past dispensation and bring it to the present, for example:
 - Romanism Catholicism brings paganism and Judaism forward into Christianity.
 - Seventh Day Adventism brings Jewish law into this Church dispensation.
- Don't take truth from a future dispensation and apply it to the present, for example,
 - Jehovahs Witnesses bring the 144,000 Jewish witnesses in Revelation 7 back from the Tribulation into the Church Dispensation.
 - Church belongs to this dispensation. Abel, Noah and Abraham do not belong to the Church Age.
- Don't put this present dispensation into the future, eg: The Church is not going into the Tribulation.
 - Each dispensation shows:
 - Man's responsibility.
 - Man's failure.
 - Judgment because of failure.
 - Low moral condition at the end.
 - Divine mercy shown at the end.

2. The COVENANT Principle.

Definition: An agreement or contract between two parties, such as God and man.

Two types: a) Conditional: depends on man. "If ye will obey." Exodus 19:5.
b) Unconditional: depends on God. "I will." Genesis 9:11.

Only four Covenants have signs: - Noahic: Rainbow. Genesis 9:11-17.
- Mosaic: Sabbath. Exodus 31:13,16,17.
- Abrahamic: Circumcision (unconditional).
- Davidic: Son. Luke 2:11,12.

The Covenants are:

- Edenic: Genesis 1:28-30; 2:15-17**. How life was governed in Eden.
- Adamic: Genesis 3:14-19**. This covenant was made after the fall and before the expulsion from Eden. It orders man's life outside Eden and up to the end of the Millennium. It consists of curses (3:14-18) and a promise (3:15).
- Noahic: Genesis 8:20-9:17**. It is unconditional, and the rainbow is its sign.
 - The contents of this covenant are:**
 - God will not curse the ground again.
 - God will not destroy all life by a flood again.
 - Four seasons shall prevail each year.

- Man is commanded to be fruitful and to replenish the earth.
- Man has dominion over animals.
- Man's diet is changed to include bloodless meat.
- Law of capital punishment is established and has never be revoked.

iv) Abrahamic: Genesis 12:1-3.

It was made with Abraham, the father of the Israelite nation. Its sign is male circumcision on the eighth day. The covenant was made in Genesis 15:8-15.

Five beasts and birds were laid on an altar. Each party was to walk between pieces of the animals. Abraham slept and only God walked through, showing it to be an unconditional covenant.

Slain beasts typify the death of Christ.

Birds of prey typify evil powers trying to take away the efficacy of Christ's death.

- This covenant promises:**
- I will make of thee a great nation.
 - I will bless thee.
 - I will make thy name great.
 - Thou shalt be a blessing.
 - I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee.

v) Mosaic: Deuteronomy 28:1-68; Leviticus 26:3-39.

Conditions (IF): Promise of blessing if Israel obeyed the law.
 Promise of punishment if Israel disobeyed the law.

The contents of the covenant are:

- Ten Commandments.
- Civil law, governing social life and camp life.
- Ceremonial law, priests made sacrifices for sins of people.
- Spiritual law, based on love to God and man.

Sign of the Mosaic Covenant is the Sabbath. It is only made between God and the Jews.

vi) Davidic: II Samuel 7:8-19; Psalms 89. Made with David, through Nathan. This covenant promises:

- A Davidic political house of an earthly kingdom through His Son.
- The sign of the Davidic Covenant was Jesus Christ, the Son of David. Luke 2:11,12.

vii) Palestinian: Deuteronomy 30:1-10.

This covenant was established because of the disobedience of the Jews and their dispersion.

- This covenant promises:
- Return of Lord.
 - Regathering of Jews.
 - Conversion of Jews.
 - Judgment on the nation of Israel.
 - Great blessing and prosperity for Israel.
 - Ends with the new heaven and the new earth.

viii) New Covenant: Jeremiah 31:31-34.

The blood of Christ is the blood of the New Covenant. Hebrews 7:27.
 It promises personal sanctification and heart knowledge of God.

3. The ETHNIC DIVISION Principle.

The Word of God is related to three classes of people: Jew, Gentile, Church.

"Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God."

I Cor. 10:32.

- Questions to ask:
- Who said this? (e.g. Job's friends).
 - To whom was it said?
 - Under what circumstances was it said?

4. The DISCRIMINATION Principle.

We must make a distinction or difference where God makes a difference.

Important distinctions (differences) to be identified are between:

- Creatures (mankind) and the children of God. (1 Cor. 2:14-3:3, Gal. 6:10). Failure to identify this difference results in the error that all men are brothers in salvation and that God is the Father of all men. (God is only the Father of believers-John 1:12). Men become children of God at salvation.
- Being accepted (Ephesians 1:6) and acceptable (approved) (2 Corinthians 5:9; 2 Timothy 2:15). All believers are accepted by God because of Christ, but all believers are not acceptable to God (well pleasing in our daily walk). It is possible to be saved, yet suffer loss (1 Corinthians 3:14,15). It is possible to be saved, yet become a castaway (disapproved) (1 Corinthians 9:27). It is possible to be saved, yet be chastened (Hebrews 12:5-17). It is possible to be saved, yet reap evil consequences of sinful living. (Galatians 6:7,8).
- Faith and works (Ephesians 2:8-10). We are saved by faith and not by works. We must show good works after salvation as evidence of sonship. (Titus 2:14; 3:5).
- Salvation and Rewards. Salvation is freely available in Christ to sinners. Rewards are earned to compensate believers for service and suffering. Rewards may be forfeited through carelessness, sin, faithlessness & compromise. (1 Cor. 3:12-15). Rewards are to inspire and encourage believers in service, suffering and persecution. Rewards are to wean believers from pursuing earthly riches and pleasures, and to keep us interested in the things of heaven.
- Believers' position and walk.
 - Our position in God's sight is acceptance in Christ (Ephesians 1:6), with Christ's righteousness imputed to us. (2 Corinthians 5:21). God sees us in Christ. We see God in Christ.
 - Our walk is the result of our spiritual state. If we are controlled by the flesh, we will be carnal.
- Possessor and Professor. Many true believers lack assurance of salvation because they fail to distinguish scriptures on true believers and false believers. Rule: Never let an unclear scripture contradict a clear scripture.
 - Hebrews 6:4-8 was written to Jewish believers, who because of persecution, were returning to Judaistic temple worship, which amounted to crucifying Christ afresh. It says nothing about loss of salvation.

- b) Philippiian 2:12 God works salvation in us, then we must work out the details of our salvation.
- c) If eternal life could be lost, then it would not be eternal.
- d) Don't judge the Word of God by human experience, but judge human experience by the Word of God. (A legal system).

7. Law and Grace.

Law is the Mosaic Covenant instituted by God at Mount Sinai. The Law was added that sin might become transgression.

Grace is God's unmerited favour (given without human merit). Grace means everything for nothing. It is the gift of God.

God's grace is rich grace (Ephesians 1:7,8), abounding grace (Romans 5:15), exceeding grace (2 Cor. 9:14), manifold grace (1 Peter 4:10), exceeding riches (Ephesians 2:7), unsearchable riches (Ephesians 3:8), and exceeding abundant (1 Timothy 1:14).

8. Kingdom of Heaven and Kingdom of God.

Kingdom of Heaven is from heaven on earth. God has one Kingdom, the KOG, but with different phases. (Kingdom of Israel (Acts 1:6), Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 13:24), Kingdom of the Son (Colossians 1:13)).

<u>Kingdom of Heaven</u>	<u>Kingdom of God</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Messiah</u> is its King • Political • Promised to <u>Israel in OT</u> with a king ruling on a literal throne. • Natural • Limited to <u>earth</u> • Limited to <u>1000 yr Millennium</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Trinity</u> is its Ruler • Spiritual • <u>All saved in any period.</u> <p>The seed of Abraham. The church. All saved in the Millennium. Christ gives the earthly KOG to the Father, so the Trinity reign forever. (1 Corinthians 15:24).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Universal</u> • Unlimited over the <u>whole universe.</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eternal, will <u>never end.</u>

5. The PREDICTIVE Principle

There is a difference between prophecy and prediction. Prophecy is speaking the Word of God. Predictive prophecy is speaking the Word of God about the future. This proves the Bible as from God.

i. Criteria to test a prophecy:

- a) Remoteness of time, so the prophet can't fulfil it himself.
- b) Minuteness of detail. The prophecy should have so many minute details that it couldn't be guesswork. For example, over 33 prophecies were fulfilled during Christ's crucifixion.
- c) Novelty. There must be something new, fresh, startling, original to prove divine intervention.
- d) Clearness of forecast. It should have no ambiguity or cloudiness of statement.

ii. Rules for the Interpretation of Prophecy:

a) Let the prophet give his own interpretation.

E.g. In Daniel 8:20,21 the Ram = Kings of Medo-Persia. The He Goat = King of Greece.

b) Historical Facts may give the interpretation.

E.g. The Daniel 2 image is explained as world history unfolds. City of Tyre (Ezekiel 26).

c) Other Scriptures may interpret the prophecy.

E.g. Psalm 41:9 is shown to be Judas by Acts 1:15-18.

Psalm 16:10 is shown to be Christ by Acts 3:14,15.

d) Proper recognition of figures of speech. E.g. similes, metaphors, hyperbole.

e) Proper identification of symbols and types in the text. Speculation is not interpretation. E.g. Revelation 17:18 (whore = Rome); Revelation 12:1,2 (Woman = Israel).

6. The APPLICATION Principle

An application of scripture may be made only after the correct interpretation has been learned. First seek the one correct interpretation. There may be many applications. The mystical and allegorical methods prevent correct interpretation.

(Mystical = only a priesthood can properly interpret scripture. (Roman Catholicism).

Allegorical = any symbolic or figurative representation of people or events.

Ecclesiastes is the book of the natural unsaved man depicting the emptiness of life apart from God. "Vanity of vanities" occurs 28 times.

7. The Human WILLINGNESS Principle

Knowledge of God's truth is guaranteed to people willing to DO the truth.

"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." (John 7:17). We must:

a. Be willing to obey the Bible.

If we live up to the light we have, God will give us more light. If we refuse to obey given light, we will have no more light.

b. Believe in the supreme authority of the Bible, without some human organisation (such as the Watchtower, or the Roman Catholic Church).

c. Have Intellectual Honesty. Be ready to submit your opinion to the Bible as God's Word. Unlearn unbiblical ideas from your past.

d. Be Guided by the Holy Spirit.

Sin has darkened and veiled our understanding. Sin brings blindness and seals the Bible.

"None of the wicked shall understand." Daniel 12:10.

8. The FIRST MENTION Principle

God indicates His mind on a subject where it is first mentioned. God indicates in the first mention of a subject, word or expression, the key to its subsequent meaning in Scripture.

Examples include:

i) Satan is shown to be subtle and deceptive. (Genesis 3:1); 2 Corinthians 11:3; Matthew 4:1-10.

ii) Christ's first words at age 12 characterised His work on earth. (Luke 2:49 "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business").

Christ's first ministry words were: "It is written" (Matthew 4:4,6,10) showing that His entire ministry was according to the Word Of God.

- iii) Faith is the way to be justified. Abraham and everyone finds righteousness with God by faith. Abraham “believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.” (Gen. 15:6, Heb. 11:6).
- iv) Babylon is always associated with rebellion against God, false religion and idolatry (Genesis 11, Revelation 17). Babylon means confusion.
- v) Jerusalem is first mentioned in Judges 1:7,8 “The men of Judah smote it with the edge of the sword and set it on fire.” Jerusalem was besieged 27 times and burned 3 times in history.
- vi) The Son of man will have all things put under His feet. (Psalm 8:4-6; I Corinthians 15:27).
- vii) War is justified in some cases. (Genesis 14).

9. The PROGRESSIVE MENTION Principle

God makes the revelation of any given truth increasingly clear as the Bible proceeds to its end. Details are added to truth as scripture progresses.

1. The Saviour would be:
 - i) Seed of the Woman (Genesis 3:15).
 - ii) Abraham’s seed (Genesis 12:3).
 - iii) Isaac, Jacob, Judah, and David’s descendant.
 - iv) Bethlehem (Micah 5:2) would be His place of birth.
 - v) Time of birth (Daniel 9:25)
 - vi) Ride into Jerusalem on a colt (Zechariah 9:9).
 - vii) John the Baptist would be His forerunner/messenger (Malachi 3:1, Isaiah 40:1-5).
 - viii) Sold for 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12).
 - ix) Crucified (Psalm 22:16,14,18).
 - x) No bones broken (Psalm 34:20).
 - xi) Resurrected (Psalm 16:10).
 - xii) All peoples’ sins laid on Him (Isaiah 53:6).
2. Prayer
 - i) In OT, David, Daniel and others prayed 3 times daily toward Jerusalem.
 - ii) In the Gospels, pray in our closet (Matthew 6:6).
 - iii) In the Epistles, pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17). Be in constant communion with Father.
3. Trinity is seen:
 - i) In the OT, Elohim (plural Noun) and “us and our” (Plural pronouns). (Genesis 1:1,26).
 - ii) In the NT, at Jesus’ baptism all 3 are present (Mark 1:9-11); Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20); Apostolic Benediction (2 Cor 13:14); 3 Heavenly Witnesses (1 John 5:7); Same throne, face, Name (Rev. 22:3,4).
4. Rewards
 - i) In the OT, rewards are material.
 - ii) In the NT, rewards are spiritual and eternal.
5. God’s Dwelling Places. i) Eden. ii) Tabernacle in the Wilderness. iii) Solomon’s Temple. iv) Christ’s Body on earth. v) Believer’s body (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19). vi) Christ on earth in Millennium vii) New Jerusalem (Revelation 21,22).
6. Satan. i) Liar (Genesis 3:4). ii) Murderer of mankind. iii) Accuser (Job 1:11). iv) Hinderer, Resister (Zech. 3:1,2). v) Tempter (Genesis 3, Matthew 4). vi) Betrayer through Judas. vii) Seduces saints (Acts 5:1-5). viii) Lawlessness (2 Thess. 2:3,4). ix) Rebellion (Rev. 19).
7. Lamb progresses from:
 - i) Abel’s Lamb sacrifice accepted (Genesis 4).

- ii) God will provide himself a lamb (Genesis 22:8).
- iii) Passover lamb was slain and its blood must be applied (Exodus 12).
- iv) Lamb is a person slain for the whole world (Isaiah 53).
- v) Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. (John 1:29).
- vi) Philip tells Eunuch that the Lamb prophesied by Isaiah is Jesus who died on Calvary. Acts 8.
- vii) Christ is the Lamb foreordained to be slain and resurrected. (1 Peter 1:18-21).
- viii) Christ the Lamb is the Lion of Judah. (Revelation 5:5-14).
- ix) Christ the Lamb equally owns God’s throne, has God’s face and has God’s Name. (Rev. 22:3,4).

8. Atonement (covering of sin) (Heb. Kaphar).

- i) Noah covered the Ark inside and outside with pitch.
- ii) On the Day of Atonement, God covered the sins of Israel (like sweeping dirt under the carpet) (Psalm 32:1; 85:2), looking forward to Christ’s blood to be shed on Calvary which would cleanse and wash away our sins. (1 John 1:7).

10. The FULL MENTION Principle

In a certain part of the Bible, God declares His mind on any subject vital to our spiritual life.

Examples:

- i) Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15).
- ii) The Tongue (James 3). Words manifest sin and ungodliness.
- iii) Spiritual Gifts (1 Corinthians 12,13,14).
- iv) Faith (Hebrews 11).
- v) God disciplining His Children (Hebrews 12).
- vi) Church as God sees it (Ephesians 1-3), and the church as man sees it (Ephesians 4-6).
- vii) Laws of Christ’s Millennial Kingdom (Matthew 5,6,7).
- viii) Israel’s past election, present rejection, future restoration (Romans 9,10,11).
- ix) Christ’s substitutionary sacrifice (Isaiah 53).
- x) Christ’s Return (Revelation 1-22).
- xi) Justification and righteousness by faith (Romans 3,4,5).
- xii) Christ’s natures as Son of God (Hebrews 1) and the Son of Man (Hebrews 2).
- xiii) Restoration of Israel: Romans 11.
- xiv) Law. Exodus 20.
- xv) Spiritual Armour. Ephesians 6
- xvi) Last things. Matthew 24.
- xvii) History of Gentile world empires. (Daniel 2).
- xviii) The New Birth. (John 3).

11. The CONTEXT Principle

God gives light on a subject through near or remote passages bearing on the same theme.

Every verse must be studied in the light of its context. Examples are:

- i. Valley of Valley of Dry Bones prophecy of Israel (Ezekiel 37). Mormons think that the two sticks are the Bible and the Book of Mormon. The context tells us that it is Judah and Israel becoming one nation in the land (Ezekiel 37:15,16).
- ii. Matthew 24:13 does not teach possible loss of salvation because the context is the Tribulation period where Tribulation believers are called upon to endure troubles for 7 years, where they will be rescued by Christ returning. It does not teach loss of salvation.

- iii. Psalm 2:8,9 has nothing to do with missions, but concerns Christ's ruling earth at His return.
- iv. **Near Context**:- The Ram and He-goat (Daniel 8:3-22) are Medo-Persia and Greece.
 - Jesus explains the Parables of the Sower and the Wheat and Tares in Matthew 13:1-43.
 - "Afterward" in Joel 2:28 dates this after the northern army is removed.
 - "These" in John 21:15 refers to the other disciples (v.20).
- v. **Remote Context**:- The woman with 12 stars (Rev.12:1,2) is Israel & the 12 tribes (Genesis 37:9,10).
 - The 42 months, or 1260 days of Revelation 11:1-3 and 12:6 is shown to be the last half of the Tribulation from Daniel 9:24-27.
 - Who tongues are intended for (1 Cor. 14:21,22) is seen to be Israel from Isaiah 28:11; Jer. 5:15.
 - The purpose of God according to election in Romans 9:11,12 is seen to be the national election of Israel to service from Genesis 25:23.

12. The AGREEMENT Principle

God will not set forth any passage in the Bible which contradicts any other passage. Take the clear passage rather than the unclear passage. Study the unclear passage more thoroughly to determine its correct meaning. There are no contradictions in Scripture.

Some apparent contradictions and their resolution are:

- i) Paul says we are justified by faith (Romans 5:1; 4:2-4).
James says Abraham was justified by works (James 2:21-24).
Answer: Paul says sinners are justified by faith in God's eyes as a doctrine. Faith is the Godward condition of salvation. James says works are the manward evidence of salvation.
- ii) Matthew 27:9 "spoken by Jeremy the prophet." These words are not in the book of Jeremiah, but are in the book of Zechariah. Jeremiah spoke it, but Zechariah wrote what Jeremiah spoke.
- iii) Acts 7:14 states Jacob and his kindred were 75 souls going into Egypt. Genesis 46:26 states that all coming with Jacob to Egypt, which came out of his loins (except his son's wives) were 66.
Answer: Souls that came to Egypt except wives (66); plus Jacob (1); plus Joseph (1); plus Joseph's 2 sons (2); plus wives of Jacob's sons (5) = 75.
- iv) 1 Corinthians 10:8 "fell in one day 23,000."
Numbers 25:9 "Those that died in the plague were 24,000."
Answer: 1,000 died the next day.
- v) 2 Samuel 24:24 says David paid 50 shekels of silver for Ornan's threshing floor (Heb:goren). In I Chronicles 21:22-25 David paid 600 shekels of gold for the threshing place (Heb:Magom), the larger area where the temple and its courts were later built.
- vi) Proverbs 26:4 "Answer not a fool according to his folly." Don't lower yourself to the level of a fool as if he were wise. Proverbs 26:5 "Answer a fool according to his folly" so as to expose his folly, so that he will not feel wise and superior.
- vii) Galatians 6:2 "Bear ye one another's burdens."
Galatians 6:5 "Every man shall bear his own burden."
Answer: These are two different kinds of burdens.
We can help bear others' burdens of sorrow, grief and poverty (burdens of sympathy).
We cannot bear others' burdens of duty and responsibility, which are not transferable.

- viii) Acts 9:7 "Hearing a voice, but seeing no man."

Acts 22:9 "They heard not the voice of him that spake with me."

Answer: The men heard the voice as a sound, (Gk: phone), but did not hear the voice as articulating the words "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me."

- ix) There are not 2 accounts of creation.

Genesis 1 gives the overall account of creation. Genesis 2 gives the detailed account of creation.

13. The DIRECT STATEMENT Principle

God says what He means, and means what He says. Therefore, do not spiritualise the Bible away.

Take it literally as the context states. This will make us premillennial, not amillennial.

Question: How do we interpret figures of speech in the Bible?

Rule: Words should be understood literally, unless the literal interpretation involves a contradiction or absurdity. For example, Hard heart, sins as scarlet (Isaiah 1:18), let the dead bury their dead (Matthew 8:22), destroy this temple (John 2:19).

Types of figures of speech:

1. **Metaphor**: One thing is said to be another thing which it resembles. It is figurative use of terms without indicating their figurative nature. (The word "is" in this context means "represents").
"All flesh is grass." (Isaiah 40:6).
"We are...the sheep of his pasture." (Psalm 100:3).
"The Lord is my rock, and my fortress." (Psalm 18:2).
"This is my body...this is my blood." (Matthew 26:26-28).
"I am the bread of life." (John 6:35).
2. **Simile**: One thing is "like" or "as" another thing.
"All we like sheep." (Isaiah 53:6).
"All flesh is as grass." (1 Peter 1:24).
"The kingdom of heaven is like..." (Matthew 13:24,31,33,44,45,47).
"I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock." (Matthew 7:24-27).
"As the rain cometh down, so shall my word be." (Isaiah 55:10,11).
"Is not my word like as a fire, and like a hammer." (Jeremiah 23:29).
3. **Hyperbole**: Overstatement or exaggeration used to emphasise or magnify an object beyond reality.
"Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears." (Jeremiah 9:1).
"Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea." (Genesis 41:49).
"The cities are great and walled up to heaven." (Deuteronomy 1:28).
"The Midianites and Amalekites...lay like grasshoppers." (Judges 7:12).
"Saul and Jonathan...were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions." (2 Samuel 1:23).
"But I am a worm." (Psalm 22:6).
"If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out...If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off." (Matthew 5:29,30).
4. **Personification**. An inanimate object is given attributes of life.
"The earth opened her mouth." (Numbers 16:32).
5. **Parable**. An earthly story with a heavenly meaning. (Matthew 13).

14. The TYPICAL Principle.

A type is a divinely appointed illustration of some Scriptural truth. A type must typify something future.

- A person: Adam, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Jonah.
- An event: deliverance from bondage.
- A thing: brass serpent, veil of the tabernacle.
- Ritual types: tabernacle, priesthood, Passover.

15. The GAP Principle

God may leap over centuries without comment, leaving a gap of time. Examples include:

1. Luke 4:16-21 "To preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (v.19).
Isaiah 61:1,2 adds "the day of vengeance of our God" which has not yet come. There is a 2000 year gap between these 2 clauses describing Christ's first and second comings.
2. 1 Peter 1:11 "testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow". The prophets did not see the 2000 year gap between Christ's first and second comings.
3. Revelation 12:5,6 "Her child was caught up unto God (33AD). And the woman (Israel) fled into the wilderness where they should feed her there 1260 days." Here is a gap from Christ's ascension to Israel being persecuted by the Antichrist in the middle of the 7 year Tribulation.
4. Isaiah 9:6 "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given (first coming); and the government shall be upon his shoulder (Jesus Christ's second coming)."
5. Daniel 9:26,27 "After 62 weeks shall Messiah be cut off (33AD); and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary (70AD). And he (*Antichrist*) shall confirm the covenant with many for one week (Tribulation)."
Here are 2 gaps. One of 37 years and another of about 2000 years.
6. Hosea 5:15-6:2 "I (*Jesus Christ*) will go and return to my place (*heaven in 33AD*), till they acknowledge their offence (*Jews offence of crucifying Christ*), and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early (*in the tribulation, over 2000 years later*)."

16. The THREE-FOLD Principle. God sets forth many truths in a three-fold way.

1. Three immediate benefits of salvation: "Hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." (John 5:24).
2. "And now abideth faith, hope and charity..." (1 Corinthians 13:13). Three qualities to live by.
3. Prophecy, tongues and knowledge to cease in the first century. (1 Corinthians 13:8).
4. Israel's past election, present rejection, and future restoration. (Romans 9,10,11).
5. "Your whole spirit, soul and body..." (1 Thessalonians 5:23).
6. "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God" 1 Cor 10:32
7. "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob." (Exodus 3:16,15).
8. "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Matthew 28:19
9. "Jesus taketh Peter, James and John." (Matthew 17:1). Three inner disciples.
10. Jesus raised 3 people from the dead. (Luke 7:12-15; 8:41,42; John 11:43,44)
11. Jesus' title was written in 3 languages on the cross. (John 19:20).
12. Jesus the good shepherd (John 10:11), great shepherd (Heb 13:20), chief shepherd (1 Peter 5:4).

13. Satanic counterfeit of the trinity of Satan, AntiChrist, and False Prophet (Revelation 20:10).
14. Jesus' 3 offices of a Prophet (Luke 24:19), Priest (Hebrews 2:17), and King (Matthew 2:2).
15. Baby Jesus given 3 gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh (Matthew 2:11).
16. 3 paths of temptation: "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." 1 John 2:16
17. 3 steps of destruction: lust, sin, death (James 1:15).
18. 3 degrees of prayer: ask, seek, knock (Matthew 7:7).
19. 3 tenses of time: "Jesus Christ, the same, yesterday, and today, and forever." (Hebrews 13:8).
20. 3 musts: "Ye must be born again." John 3:7), "Even so must the Son of Man be lifted up" (John 3:14), "He must increase" (John 3:30).
21. 3 degrees of fruit bearing: "Some hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty". (Matthew 13:23).
22. 3 kinds of work rewarded: "gold, silver, precious stones" (suffering for Christ, wisdom gained, souls won). (1 Corinthians 3:12).
23. Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8-11).
24. 3 Heavenly witnesses, 3 earthly witnesses (1 John 5:7,8).
25. 3 spiritual conditions of men: the natural man...carnal man...spiritual. (1 Cor 2:14,15; 3:1-4).
26. 3 blessings from God: "Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord." (1 Timothy 1:2).
27. 3 Downward steps (Psalm 1:1).
28. 3 Benefits of waiting on God ("mount up,...run,...walk...." Isaiah 40:31).
29. 3 sons of Noah to populate post flood earth: Shem, Ham, Japheth (Genesis 6:10).
30. 3 main OT characters: Noah, Daniel, Job (Ezekiel 14:14,20).
31. 3 Heavens (2 Corinthians 12:2).
32. 3 Heavenly visitors who met Abraham (Genesis 18:2).
33. 3 False friends of Job (Job 2:11).
34. 3 Friends of Daniel (Daniel 3:23,26).
35. 3 Mighty Men of David (2 Samuel 23:16-23).
36. 3 groups of 3 fruits of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22,23).
37. 3 kinds of judgments in Revelation: seals, trumpets, and bowls (Revelation 6,8,9,16).
38. 3 temptations of Jesus in the wilderness. (Matthew 4:1-11).
39. 3 keys to finding soul rest: Come unto me, take my yoke upon you, learn of me. (Matt.11:28-30).
40. 3 descriptions of Jesus Christ's mission: teaching, preaching, healing (Matthew 4:23).
41. 3 groups of 3 beatitudes. (Matthew 5:1-12).
42. 3 angel messages came to Joseph in dreams (Matthew 1:20; 2:13,19).
43. 3 descriptions of God: God is Spirit (John 4:24), God is light (1 John 1:5), God is love (1John4:8,16)
44. 3 commands to walk; walk in the spirit (Galatians 5:16), walk as children of light (Ephesians 5:8), walk in love (Ephesians 5:2).
45. 3 lost things: Lost sheep, lost coin, lost Son. (Luke 15:1-32).
46. 3 faculties to love God with: Heart, Soul, Mind (Matthew 22:37).
47. 3 parables against negligence: Faithful and unfaithful servants (Matthew 24:45-51), 10 Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13), The Talents (Matthew 25:14-30).

48. 3 denials of Peter (Matthew 26:69-75).
49. 3 men entrusted with talents (Matthew 25:15).
50. 3 signs attesting Christ as Messiah on the cross: the rent veil (27:51), the earthquake (27:51), the resurrection of OT saints (27:51).
51. 3 aspects of Christ's Great Commission: Make disciples, Baptize, Teach (Matthew 28:19,20).
52. 3 examples of apostasy (Jude 5-7): unbelieving Israelites, Fallen angels, Sodom and Gomorrah.
53. 3 examples of rebellion: (Jude 11): way of Cain, error of Balaam, gainsaying of Korah.
54. 3 last heralds of Christ's second coming: the Saviour- "I come quickly". (Revelation 22:20). the Spirit- "the Spirit and the bride say Come". (22:17) the Saint- "Even so, come, Lord Jesus". (22:20).
55. 3 stages of the First Resurrection: Firstfruits (1 Cor. 15:23); Harvest (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18); Gleanings (Revelation 20:4-6).
56. 3 keys to victory: Know, Reckon, Yield (Romans 6).
57. 3 elements of the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-4): Christ died, was buried, and rose again.
58. Jesus was 3 days and 3 nights in the heart of the earth (Matthew 12:40).
59. 3 ways to be blessed from Revelation: Read, Hear, Keep the words. (Revelation 1:3).
60. Jesus' 3 warnings against Hell (Mark 9:44,46,48).

17. The ELECTION Principle

God in working out His purposes sets aside all firsts and establishes all seconds.

For example, in Romans 9:10-12 God's purpose is that the elder shall serve the younger.

Question: Why does God do this? We were lost in our first condition. Believers are saved by Christ which becomes our second condition. Examples are:

- Cain was set aside for Abel (Genesis 4:1-5).
- Japheth was set aside for Shem. (Genesis 10:21).
- Ishmael was set aside for Isaac (Genesis 17:19,21).
- Esau was set aside for Jacob (Romans 9:10-13).
- Reuben was set aside for Judah (Genesis 49:3-10).
- Manasseh was set aside for Ephraim (Genesis 48:13-20).
- Saul was set aside for David (I Samuel 15:28; 13:13,14).
- Eliab (Jesse's firstborn) was set aside for David. (I Samuel 16:6,7).
- Adam was set aside for Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 15:45-49).
- Mosaic Covenant was set aside for the New Covenant of Christ. (Hebrews 7:6,7,13).
- First heaven and earth will be set aside for the New Heaven and Earth (Revelation 21:1,2).
- First birth set aside for New Birth (John 3:3-7; I Corinthians 15:50).
- Our first corruptible body will be set aside for our immortal resurrection body. (I Cor. 15:35).
- The Ten Commandments of Moses are set aside for the NT Law of Christ (Hebrews 8:13-9:4).
- The Sabbath (Mosaic day of worship) was set aside for Sunday (NT day of worship). I Cor. 16:2.
- OT offerings were set aside for Christ's perfect offering on the cross. (Hebrews 10:14).

18. The CHRIST-CENTRED Principle

1. The Mind of Deity is centred on Christ. Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.
 - "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 2:5).
 - "In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (Colossians 2:9).
 - "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Colossians 2:3).
 - "Who is the image of the invisible God." (Colossians 1:15).
2. All Angelic thought and ministry centre on Christ.
 - Seraphim worshipped Christ as Jehovah whom Isaiah saw. (Isaiah 6:5 and John 12:41).
 - Angels announced Christ's birth. (Luke 1:26-38; 2:8-20).
 - Angels ministered to Christ after Satan tempted Him 40 days in the wilderness. (Matthew 4:11).
 - Angels return with Christ to earth. (Matthew 25:31; 2 Thessalonians 1:7).
 - Angels are subject to Christ. (1 Peter 3:22).
 - All Angels of God worship Christ. (Hebrews 1:6).
3. All Satan's hatred and attacks are centred on Christ.
 - Satan tried to corrupt mankind and Christ's line before the flood (Genesis 6:1-5).
 - Satan used Pharaoh to try to destroy Israel & Christ's line in Egyptian bondage. (Exodus 1:7-22).
 - Satan used Athaliah to try to wipe out Christ's line. One baby Joash survived. (2 Kings 11).
 - Satan used Haman to try to destroy Christ's line. God used Esther to save Israel and Christ's line. (Esther 4:1,13-16).
 - Satan used King Herod to kill all male babies under age 2 in order to kill Christ. (Matthew 2).
4. All Human Hopes are centred on Christ of:
 - Having eternal life. (1 John 5:12-13).
 - Freeing Creation from the corruption of sin (Romans 8:18-23).
 - Having a resurrection body like Christ's (1 John 3:1-3).
5. All the material universe's preservation centres on Christ.
 - "Upholding all things by the Word of His Power." (Hebrews 1:3).
 - "By him were all things created, by him all things consist." (Colossians 1:16,17).
6. All the Written Word of God centres on Christ. Christ is the perfect example of the perfect man. The life of the Bible is Christ, as its central theme and character. Christ is in every book of the Bible as seen by:

Christ In Every Book of the Bible

Bible Reading: Luke 24:13-35.

Aim: To get fire in our hearts (Luke 24:32) as Christ expounds in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. (Luke 24:27). To understand Who Christ is in every book of the Bible.

Memory Verse: Luke 24:27.

Intro: The two disciple's response to Jesus expounding about Himself in the Bible was to say:

- a. Abide with us (v.29).
- b. They had a burning zeal in their heart for Christ (v.32).
- c. They preached Christ's resurrection to others (v.34).
- d. He opened their understanding of the scriptures.

Question: How is Jesus Christ portrayed in each Book of the Bible?

Genesis:

1. Creator (1:1). Colossians 1:16,17.
2. Seed of the Woman (3:15). Matthew 1:18-25.
3. Shiloh (49:10)-our peace. "in me ye might have peace." John 16:33.
4. Shepherd, the Stone of Israel (49:24). John 10:11.

Exodus:

1. Our Passover Lamb for sinners slain. (12:5), 1 Corinthians 5:7.
2. Manna (16:14-22). John 6:35.
3. Rock (17:1-7). 1 Corinthians 10:4.
4. Veil (26:31-35). Hebrews 10:19,20.
5. God of Israel ("I AM"). (3:14). John 8:58,24.
6. Law-Giver (24:9-18).

Leviticus:

1. Our Great High Priest (8). Hebrews 4:14.
2. The Scapegoat (16:7-10).

Numbers:

1. Star out of Jacob (24:17). Daystar arise in your hearts. 2 Peter 1:19; Rev. 22:16.
2. The Brazen Serpent (21:5-9). John 3:14,15.
3. The Sceptre (Ruler, King) (24:17). 1 Timothy 6:14-16.

Deuteronomy:

1. Prophet like Moses. (18:15-19). Acts 3:22,23; 7:37.

Joshua:

1. Captain of the Host of the Lord (5:13-15). Hebrews 2:10.

Judges:

1. Deliverer of Israel (3:9);
2. Judge of Judges;
3. Messenger of Jehovah (6:12,22,23, 13:1-28).

Ruth:

1. Our Kinsman-Redeemer (2:1).

1 Samuel:

1. The Despised and Rejected King (16-19, 8:1-7). John 1:11.

2 Samuel:

1. The Seed of David (7:12). Romans 1:3,4.
2. David's Lord (7:4-17). Psalm 110:1.

1 Kings:

1. King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
2. Greater than Solomon (Matthew 12:42).

2 Kings:

1. Greater miracle worker than Elisha (Life from the tomb. 13:20,21).

1,2 Chronicles:

1. Historian of Chronicles. Chief Ruler of Israel (1 Chron.5:2).

Ezra:

1. Builder of the Temple of Ezra.

Nehemiah:

1. Rebuilder of the Walls. (Proverbs 25:28).

Esther:

1. Our Mordecai (Esther 10:3).
2. The Deliverer of Israel.
3. Our Esther-our Advocate.

Job:

1. The friend that sticketh closer than a brother (Prov.18:24).
2. Our Hedge (Job 1:10; John 10:27-29).
3. Our Resurrected, Returning Redeemer (Job 19:25).

Psalms:

1. He is the Blessed Man (Psalm 1).
2. He is the Son of God (Psalm 2:12).
3. He is the Crucified One (Psalm 22:16,18).
4. He is My Shepherd (Psalm 23).
5. He is the coming King of Glory (Psalm 24:7-10).
6. He is the Millennial Ruler (Psalm 72).
7. He is the Head of the Corner (Psalm 118:22).
- 8.

Proverbs:

1. The Wisdom of God (Prov. 4:7; 1 Cor. 1:24).
2. He is mercy and truth (16:6).
3. A Friend (18:24).

Ecclesiastes:

1. The Forgotten Poor Wise Man. (9:14-16; 2 Corinthians 8:9).
2. The Creator (12:1. John 1:1-3).
3. The Preacher. (12:9-12).

Song of Solomon:

1. The Rose of Sharon (2:1).
2. The Lily of the Valley (2:1).
3. My Beloved (2:16).
4. The Heavenly Bridegroom (5:10).
5. The Altogether Lovely One (5:16).

Isaiah:

1. Our suffering Substitute (53).
2. Our Branch (11:1).
3. Immanuel (7:14).
4. Our Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace (9:6).

Jeremiah:

1. The Lord Our Righteousness (23:6).
2. The Weeping Prophet (9:1).

Lamentations:

1. The Man of Sorrows. (1:12-16).

Ezekiel:

1. The God of Israel as a man on the Throne (1:26; 10:20).

Daniel:

1. The Smiting Stone cut out without hands (2:34).
2. The Son of God (3:25).
3. The Ancient of Days (7:9).
4. The Prince of Princes (8:25).
5. Messiah the Prince (9:25).

(To Israel, a Stone of stumbling (Romans 9:31-33); To the Gentiles, the Smiting Stone (Daniel 2:35,45); To the Church, the Head of the Corner (1 Peter 2:6,7)).

Hosea:

1. The Son called out of Egypt (11:1),
2. Reviver of Israel (6:1,2),
3. A Young Lion (5:14).

Joel:

1. The Hope and Strength of Israel (3:16);
2. The Judge of all nations (3:12; Matthew 25:31,32).

Amos:

1. The Rebuilder of the Tabernacle of David (9:11-15).

Obadiah:

1. The Deliverer on Mt Zion (v.17). (Romans 11:26).

Jonah:

1. The Resurrected Saviour (Matthew 12:38-40).
2. The Giver of the Great Commission (1:2; 3:2).

Micah:

1. The Babe of Bethlehem,
2. The Eternal God (5:2);
3. The Smitten Judge of Israel. (5:1; Matt. 26:67).

Nahum:

1. Our Stronghold in the day of trouble (1:7).

Habakkuk:

1. The Justifier by faith (2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11).
2. The Everlasting Mighty God (1:12; Isaiah 9:6). My Holy One (1:12; Acts 3:14). (Luke 17:21)

Zephaniah:

1. The King of Israel (3:15; John 1:49; Isaiah 44:6).
2. The Lord God in the midst of thee (3:5,15,17).

Haggai:

1. The Desire of all nations (2:7);
2. The Builder of the Millennial Temple (2:7-9).

Zechariah:

1. The Branch (3:8; 6:12; Isaiah 4:2; John 15:1-5);
2. Builder of the Millennial Temple (6:12,13).
3. Israel's King coming on an ass' colt (9:9; Luke 19:29-38).
4. The betrayed Saviour (11:12; Exodus 21:32; Matthew 26:15; 27:1-10).
5. The Shepherd (13:7). Fountain for cleansing sin (13:1).
6. Priest and King - our Intercessor (6:13; Hebrews 7:25).
7. Crucified, Risen, Returning Saviour (13:6; 12:10; Psalm 22:16).
8. King over all the earth (14:9). The King, Jehovah of hosts (14:16).

Malachi:

1. The Lord Coming to His temple (3:1).
2. The Refiner's fire, fullers' soap (3:2),
3. Sun of righteousness (4:2).
4. The unchangeable One (3:6; Hebrews 13:8).

Matthew:

1. The King of the Jews (2:1,2);
2. The Sower (13:37);
3. The Christ, the Son of the Living God (16:16).
4. Fulfiller of the Law (5:17);
5. Son of man (8:20);
6. Physician (9:12);
7. Bridegroom (9:15);
8. Son of David (9:27);
9. Lord of Harvest (9:38);

10. Divider of men (10:35);
11. Carpenter's son (13:55);
12. My Beloved Son (17:5);
13. Teacher & Preacher (11:1);
14. Meek & Lowly One (11:29);
15. Christ, the Son of the living God (16:16);
16. Church builder (16:18);
17. Stone builders rejected (22:42);
18. David's Lord (22:44);
19. Master (23:8,10);
20. Lord of servants (25:19);
21. Shepherd (26:13).

Mark:

1. God's righteous servant (Isaiah 53:11);
2. Holy One (1:24);
3. Fisher of men (1:17);
4. Forgiver of sins (2:5).

Luke:

1. The Perfect Son of Man (19:10).

John:

1. The Son of God (5:25; 9:35; 10:36; 11:4);
2. Word (1:1,14),
3. Creator (1:3,10),
4. True Light (1:7-9),
6. Only begotten Son the Father (1:14),
7. Lamb of God (1:29,36),
8. Messiah (1:41; 4:25,26),
9. King of Israel (1:49; 12:13,15),
10. Son of Man (1:51; 3:14),
11. Saviour (4:42),
12. Bread of God (6:33),
13. Bread of Life (6:35,48),
14. Living Bread (6:51),
15. Son of the Living God (6:69),
16. Prophet like Moses (6:14; 7:40);
17. Light of the World (8:12; 9:5),
18. I AM (8:24,58),
19. The Door (10:7,9),
20. Good Shepherd (10:11,14),
21. Resurrection and Life (11:25),
22. True Vine (15:1,5),
23. Our Keeper (17:12),
24. King of the Jews (18:33-39; 19:19),
25. God (20:28).

Acts:

1. Risen, ascended Lord (1:8-10),
2. The Holy One,
3. The Just, Prince of Life (3:14,15),
4. Prophet like Moses (7:37),
5. Lord of all (10:36),

6. Judge of quick and dead (10:42),
7. Saviour (13:23),
8. Hope of Israel (28:20)

Romans:

1. Our righteousness (3:22),
2. Lord of the dead and living (14:9).

1 Corinthians:

1. The Power of God & the wisdom of God (1:24),
2. Our only Foundation (3:11),
3. Our Passover (5:7),
4. Reward-giver (9:24-27),
5. Spiritual Rock (10:4),
6. The Lord (12:3),
7. Perfect love (13:4-8),
8. Firstfruits from dead.15:20,23

2 Corinthians:

1. Our Co-worker (6:1),
2. Our Comforter (7:6),
3. Our Sufficiency (3:5; 12:9).

Galatians:

1. Seed of Abraham (3:16),
2. End of the Mosaic Law (3:24,25),
3. Our Liberator (5:1).

Ephesians:

1. Our Teacher (4:20),
2. Head of the church (5:23),
3. Armour of God (6:11-18) to put on. Rom 13:14

Philippians:

1. Our Strength (4:13),
2. Our Life (1:21) (Colossians 3:4).

Colossians:

1. The Pre-eminent One (1:18),
2. The image of the invisible God (1:15),
3. The Creator (1:16),
4. All the fullness of the Godhead (2:9),
5. Our Life (3:4).

1 Thessalonians:

1. Our Returning Lord (4:15-18).

2 Thessalonians:

1. Destroyer of Antichrist (2:8),
2. Lord of Peace (3:16).

1 Timothy:

1. God manifest in the flesh (3:16),
2. Our Mediator (2:5).
3. Ransom (2:6),
4. Saviour of all men.4:10

2 Timothy:

1. The Righteous Judge (4:8).
2. Deliverer from every evil work (4:18).
3. Preserver (4:18).

Titus:

1. Our Saviour (1:3,4; 3:6),
2. Our Great God and Saviour (2:13).

Philemon:

1. The Payer of our sin debt (18).

Hebrews:

1. Apostle and High Priest of our Profession (3:1),
2. Upholder of all things (1:3),
3. Captain of our Salvation (2:10),
4. Merciful and faithful high priest (2:17),
5. High Priest after Melchisedec order (6:20; 5:6; 7:17,21),
6. Mediator of a better Covenant (8:6; 9:15; 12:24),
7. Author and finisher of our faith (12:2),
8. The same (13:8),
9. My helper (13:6),
10. Great Shepherd of the sheep (13:20),
11. Express image of God (1:3),
12. Brightness of Father's glory (1:3),
13. Sin purger (1:3),
14. God (1:8),
15. Creator (1:2,10).

James:

1. Lord of glory (2:1),
2. Lord of Sabaoth (5:4).

1 Peter:

1. Theme of OT prophecy (1:10,11),
2. Lamb without blemish and without spot (1:19),
3. Living stone (2:4),
4. Chief cornerstone (2:6),
5. Stone the builders disallowed (2:7),
6. Stumbling stone, rock of offence (2:8),
7. Shepherd and Bishop of your souls (2:25),
8. Chief Shepherd (5:4).

2 Peter:

1. The Lord that bought them (2:1),
2. Longsuffering Saviour (3:9,15),
3. Daystar (1:19).

1 John:

1. The Word of Life (1:1),
2. Advocate with the Father (2:1),
3. Propitiation for our sins (2:2; 4:10),
4. The Holy One (2:20; Acts 3:14),
5. Only begotten Son (4:9),
6. The Saviour of the World (4:14),
7. The Son of God (4:15; 5:5,12,13,20),
8. The true God and eternal life (5:20).

2 John:

1. Truth and love (3),
2. Son of the Father (3).

3 John:

1. Our motive for service (7).

Jude:

1. The only wise God (25).

Revelation:

1. King of Kings & Lord of Lords (17:14; 19:16),
2. Alpha & Omega, First & Last (1:8,11; 22:13),
3. Faithful witness, firstbegotten of the dead, Prince of Kings of earth (1:5),
4. Son of God (2:18), Holy and true (3:7),
5. Lion of the tribe of Judah (5:5),
6. Root of David (5:5),
7. the Lamb (5:6,8,12),
8. man child (12:5),
9. the Word of God (19:13),
10. the root and offspring of David (22:16),
11. the bright and morning star (22:16).

Conclusion: Don't jump to a conclusion about what a difficult verse might mean. Study it carefully using these rules to know its precise meaning so that it does not contradict other clear verses.

125. HOW TO PREPARE SERMONS and MESSAGES

This chapter of sermons is intended to be a starting point to encourage more men to become preachers by giving some examples of different kinds of sermons that may be a blessing to their people.

I. Different kinds of sermons may include:

1. Topical – where a special need is addressed as a special medicine on a shelf treats an illness.
2. Biographical – where we learn lessons about God and service from some Bible character's life.
3. Expository – where a Bible passage or chapter is preached drawing lessons from each verse, eg Acts 20:17-38.
4. Textual – where a Bible verse or two are preached, eg: 'wolves' in Acts 20:29,30.
5. Comfort – where some passage is preached to comfort the hearers. (I Corinthians 14:3).
6. Praise – where some passage is preached to declare God's goodness, as in the Psalms.
7. Rebuke – where some passage is preached to rebuke personal sin or false doctrine, eg: Calvinism, New Evangelicalism, Modern Bible Versions, misapplied legalism.

II. Purpose of Preaching (at least 12 purposes).

'But he that prophesieth (preaches) speaketh unto men to **edification**, (build up, 3619) and **exhortation** (implore 3874) and **comfort**.' (I Corinthians 14:3)

'For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our **learning**, that we through **patience** and **comfort** of the Scriptures might have **hope**.' (Romans 15:4).

'Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; **reprove**, **rebuke**, **exhort**, with all long-suffering and **doctrine**.' (II Timothy 4:2).

'For the **perfecting** of the saints, for the **work** of the ministry, for the **edifying** of the body of Christ.' (Ephesians 4:12).

III. How to Prepare a Message

'For Ezra had **prepared** his heart to **seek** the law of the Lord, and to **do** it, and to **teach** in Israel statutes and judgments.' (Ezra 7:10).

'Study to shew thyself **approved unto God**, a **workman** that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing** the word of truth.' (II Timothy 2:15).

A preacher must:

1. Prepare his heart to seek God's law/God's Word. This means to
 - **pray** for the message God would have you to preach to meet the people's needs;
 - **study** God's word as a lifelong commitment;
 - study in detail the message to be preached.
2. 'To do it' means he must practice what he preaches.
3. 'To teach' means to communicate Bible truth in an easy-to-understand way so his hearers obey it.
4. 'Approved unto God' means he must preach to please God, not men.
5. 'A workman' means he must preach so as to train workmen who are able to serve God, win souls, teach the Bible, refute error and work well with fellow believers.
6. 'Rightly dividing the word of truth' means he must be able to interpret correctly the meaning of any Bible passage. He must rightly divide Scripture into time period (dispensation), racial division (ethnic division), context, and grammar.

These things are included in the following checklist:

1. **Pray to God** for the message He wants you to preach and which the people need. Pray something like: "Lord Jesus, please give me the message of Your choosing that will meet the needs of the people and will glorify You."
2. Choose a verse, passage or chapter as the **Bible reading**.
3. What is the **heading** or **title** of the message?
4. What is the **aim** of the message?
5. **Read the Bible passage several times**, looking for thoughts or outlines.
6. **Write on a piece of scrap paper any ideas or outlines**.
7. **Look up key words in *Strong's Concordance*** to find verses on the same subject.
8. **Read some good commentaries** to get extra ideas on these verses, passages or subjects.
9. **Buy a hardcover exercise book** to write your sermons in, as a permanent record of your study. You may use some of these messages again. Number each book.
10. **Write out your message** in your exercise book according to the outline you have written on scrap paper, as follows:
 - i) **Title** of message.
 - ii) **Bible reading**. Memory verse.
 - iii) **Aim** = what action you want the people to implement.
 - iv) **Introduction** = State a problem that you propose to solve.
 - v) **Development** = the body of your message where you fill in the details of your outline.
 - Interpret the passage correctly showing its true meaning.
 - Historical background may shed light on its meaning.
 - Illustrate the truth by stories or illustrations from life. Get a book of sermon illustrations.
 - Application shows real life situations where people applied this truth.
 - Ask questions about the passage to reveal deeper truths, eg: who, why, when, where, what.

- Cross references that shed further light on this passage.
- What lessons do we learn from each word or verse?

vi) Conclusion.

vii) Invitation. This is where you invite or challenge the hearer to action.

IV. Questions to ask about a Passage

1. Is there an example to follow?
2. Is there a sin to avoid?
3. Is there a promise to claim?
4. Is there a lesson to learn?
5. Is there a command to obey?
6. Is there a verse to memorise?
7. Is there a prayer to pray?
8. Is there a condition to fulfil?
9. Is there a warning to heed or error to notice?
10. Is the passage figurative or literal?
11. What is the context of this verse, chapter and book?
12. Are there things emphasised, repeated, related, alike, unlike?
13. Who is speaking, and who is it spoken to?
14. In what Dispensation does this passage take place?

V. Categories of Sermons

1. Soul winning
2. Jesus Christ
3. Second Coming
4. Church Issues
5. Character/Biographical
6. Psalms
7. Parables
8. Proverbs
9. Christian Living
10. Doctrinal, eg: repentance, justification
11. Apologetics, eg: proofs of the Bible, resurrection, deity of Christ, etc.
12. Refuting False Doctrines.
13. Word study.
14. Comfort.

VI. Other Helpful Hints

1. Write a list of future sermon topics.
2. Read commentaries and sermon books for sermon ideas.
3. Look for key words or questions to preach on.
4. Train young men to preach by asking them to preach a 2-minute or 5-minute message. If they do well, give them more opportunities to preach.
5. Preach through books of the Bible such as Jonah, Timothy, Titus, Acts, Ephesians, Thessalonians, Peter, Jude.
6. Take notes for ideas in an exercise book when you hear others preach.
7. Train your people to take notes in an exercise book of sermons.

Here are 145 Sermons or Sermon Outlines that may help as examples of preaching:

126. EARTH, HEAVEN & HELL

Bible Reading: Luke 14:16-24 (Earth); 15:7,10 (Heaven); 16:19-31 (Hell).

Aim: To not love this world but to look to heaven and to live for heaven.

Introduction: How many believers have wrong views of and priorities of Earth, Heaven and Hell? The average unbeliever lives only for earth, without any thought of heaven or hell. Let us put these in their right perspective:

I. Earth and its Madness. (Luke 14:16-24).

- i) The man who made the great supper is God.
- ii) The supper represents the marriage supper in heaven. (Revelation 19:7-10).
- iii) The invitation to mankind is 'come, for all things are now ready'. (John 7:37-39; Revelation 22:17; Matthew 11:28-30).
- iv) The excuses represent earth and its madness. (Definition of 'mad' = disordered mind, insane, wildly foolish.)

Question: What are some mad things in this world?

1. Mad contentious man. (Proverbs 26:18-26).
2. Laughter and mirth = entertainment, movies, etc. (Ecclesiastes 2:2).
3. Oppression makes a wise man mad (Ecclesiastes 7:7).
4. Every man that maketh himself a prophet. (Jeremiah 29:26) eg: charismatic false prophecies.
5. Idol worshippers (Jeremiah 50:38) eg: lucky charms, Roman Catholic statues.
6. Babylon false religion making the world mad (Jeremiah 51:7; Revelation 17:4).
7. Those who persecute Christians eg: Saul in Acts 26:11, wolves in churches (Acts 20:29,30).
8. Gibberish speakers in charismatic churches (I Corinthians 14:23).

II. Heaven and its Gladness. (Luke 15:7,10).

Jesus describes the joy in heaven over one sinner repenting. The lost sheep after being found caused gladness in heaven. God, angels and departed believers in heaven have a great interest in people on earth getting saved. (Hebrews 12:1). Let us work with them to win souls to Christ and disciple them.

III. Hell and its Sadness. (Luke 16:19-31).

The sadness in hell consists of:

- i) Hell's torments – mentioned 4 times in v.23,24,25,28. These include torments of flame, thirst, smell of sulphur, hearing weeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth, seeing what you missed of God's best.
- ii) Hell's memories. 'Son remember . . .' v 25. Memories of earth's luxuries lost and God's blessings taken for granted. Memories of rejecting Christ and Gospel preachers.
- iii) Hell's hopelessness. 'A great gulf fixed.' v 26. No hope of escape ever. No lessening of suffering ever, no escape from selfish, evil people ever.
- iv) Hell's dread for others. 'I have five brethren' v 28. Those in hell have a greater concern for their living relatives on earth than most believers have to reach them. People in hell desire their relatives to be saved.

Conclusion and Challenge:

1. Are you concerned to win your lost relatives and friends to Christ?
2. Are you learning and studying to be a better soul winner?
3. Do you regularly and weekly go soul winning with others in your church?
4. Are you training others in soul winning?
5. Have you studied *Answers* Soul-winning chapters 17,18,19,21,22,23?
6. Are you praying for God to lead you to someone today?

127. SIX RESPONSES TO THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Bible Reading: Judges 4:1-24 and 5:1-31.

Aim: To willingly and daringly offer ourselves to serve God in the spiritual war of soul-winning.

Introduction: Here we have God using a woman who was willing to serve God when men were unwilling. Deborah illustrates the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31:30. 'A woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.' When Deborah invited different tribes of Israel to war against Sisera, she found six different responses that people made to this spiritual and military battle. Which of these six categories describes your response to God calling you to participate in the spiritual battle for souls?

I. Tell the background story. (Judges 4).

- i) Deborah a prophetess is raised up in a day of oppression (4:1-5).
- ii) Deborah calls Barak to deliver Israel (4:6,7).
- iii) Barak refuses unless Deborah goes with him. (4:8,9).
- iv) Deborah agrees, but says that the honour shall go to a woman (4:9).
- v) Barak fights against Sisera and defeats him (4:10-17).
- vi) Sisera takes refuge with Jael, the wife of Heber. Jael then kills Sisera. (4:18-24).

II. Deborah's Song of Triumph. (Judges 5).

- i) Praise to God for victory (5:1-5).
- ii) The sad state of Israel, until Deborah arose and the people were delivered (5:6-8).
- iii) How various tribes responded to the call to arms (5:9-23):
 - a. The Governors offered themselves willingly. (5:9-15).
 - b. Reuben was divided, with great searchings of heart. They were uncertain about going to war, so they preferred to stay at home to keep their sheep and to make money. (5:15,16).
 - c. Gilead, Dan and Asher did not respond, but stayed in their own places, working on their ships.5:17
 - d. Zebulun and Naphtali hazarded their lives on the battlefield. (5:18).
 - e. Meroz is cursed bitterly for not coming to the help of the Lord. (5:23).
 - f. Jael is blessed for ridding Israel of the tyrant Sisera. (5:24).

III. Six Responses to the Spiritual War. (Application).

- i) **The willing.** The governors offered themselves willingly (v.9). Ephraim, Benjamin, Zebulun, Issachar are praised.
Question: Do you willingly offer yourself to serve God, help your pastor win the lost and teach God's Word?
- ii) **The uncertain:** Reuben was divided.
 - they had great thought and searchings of heart.
 - they stayed behind to do their own thing and to make money. (5:15,16).

Question: Are you uncertain or double minded about serving God?

Are you more concerned with making money for yourself than in doing God's will for your life?

Are you looking for excuses not to serve God? The devil will give you plenty of excuses.

- iii) **The slackers:** Gilead, Dan and Asher did not respond, but stayed at home. (5:17).

Question: Are you just a plain lazy Christian who won't serve God because you can't be bothered?

Do you think that by coming to church once on Sunday that is all that God has for you? What about going soul-winning at least once a week?

- iv) **The daring:** Zebulun and Naphtali hazarded their lives in the battlefield. (5:18).

Question: Do you get fully into the spiritual battle to win the lost, teach new converts & build churches?

- v) **The cursed:** Meroz is cursed bitterly for not coming to the help of the Lord. (5:23).

Question: Do you want to be in the same category as Meroz? This is what God thinks of those who do nothing to help the cause of Christ in today's evil hour when spiritual enemies are pouring in.

- vi) **The blessed:** Jael is blessed for ridding Israel of the tyrant Sisera. (5:24).

Question: Will you have a blessed memory for doing something for God with whatever you have when needed?

Question: As Jael had a tent peg, what do you have that you can use for God's work?

IV. Lessons from this Story

1. Israel's sin is punished by Jabin's oppression. God may discipline us by bringing suffering into our lives. Suffering is not always because of punishment.
2. When we cry unto the Lord, He delivers us. (Psalm 107:6,13,19,28).
3. Women can do a mighty work for God and be the instrument of mighty spiritual victories, as seen in Deborah and Jael.
4. Women may encourage their men for good or evil. Deborah inspired Barak to triumph. Eve led Adam to sin. Delilah led Samson to bondage and death. Jezebel stirred Ahab to evil.
5. Jael had courage to do what was needed at the time.
6. God uses songs to remind us of key lessons and victories. Song of Deborah, Song of Moses (Numbers 21:17; Exodus 15; Deuteronomy 31:19), Song of Solomon, Psalms.
7. Deborah allocates praise and blame in a day of need.

Conclusion: Life brings opportunities to serve God. The battle is real. What part do you play in the spiritual war for men's souls?

128. ERRORS OF THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT: T.R.A.S.H.

Bible Reading: I Corinthians 13:8-13 and 14:21-23.

Aim: To see 5 main errors of the Charismatic movement summarised by the word 'TRASH'.

Introduction: The Charismatic movement that has arisen since 1900 and has been endorsed by Billy Graham and others is clearly unbiblical and dangerous to believers walking by faith in God's Word. Many untaught Christians will ask: "What's wrong with the Charismatic movement? Many people are saved through it. It can't be so bad." How do we reply?

Answer:

- 1) God never calls us to judge things by results, but by whether it lines up with Scripture.
- 2) Results alone do not mean that something is the will of God. In Number 20, Moses angrily struck the rock to fetch water for Israel. This act brought great success, but he disobeyed God's clear command to speak to the rock, and for this he was refused entry to Canaan.

- 3) We must measure a movement by all the results, such as:
- Ecumenical Charismaticism obscures the line between truth and error.
 - Charismaticism turns people from determining truth by rightly interpreting Scripture to their experience being the authority.
 - It slows down multiplication of truth, and promotes multiplication of error.

Question: What are the 5 main errors of the Charismatic movement?

1. T = TONGUES. They think they are speaking in tongues, when in reality it is gibberish. I Corinthians 14:21,22,23 states that tongues are not for believers, but to warn unbelieving Israel to repent or God would judge them. This is what happened when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in 70AD. Tongues then ceased as I Corinthians 13:8,11 predicted. We must “prove all things” (I Thessalonians 5:18). Tongues cannot be proven as a genuine language.

2. R = NEW REVELATIONS. They think that prophecy and knowledge gifts are still for today, but I Cor. 8:8-13 show that they ceased when the ‘perfect’ complete Word of God was completed in 96AD. The completed New Testament since 96AD does what prophecy&knowledge gifts achieved imperfectly up to 96AD. James 1:22-25 compares the perfect law of liberty to a mirror, stating it is Gods word.

3. A = ANIMAL NOISES of the “Toronto blessing” where some Charismatics roll on the floor, making noises like donkeys, dogs, etc,. This is demonic and without any Bible support.

4. S = SLAYING IN THE SPIRIT. This is the practice where hands are placed on a person’s head and they fall backward unconscious to the ground. In Isaiah 28:13 this is associated with being broken, snared and taken as a judgment of God on people who “would not hear” God’s word. (Isaiah 28:12).

5. H = HEALING. They think they have the gifts of healing but ignore Scriptures stating that “they were healed everyone” (Acts 5:16), “they shall recover” (Mark 16:18), “others..came and were healed.” (Acts 28:9). New Testament healing was 100%. No one today can heal as the apostles did.

Conclusion: “Prove all things” before you believe them. Check them first with all relevant Scriptures.

129. FOUR CALLS FOR PERSONAL SOUL WINNING

Bible Reading: Luke 16:19-31.

Aim: To respond to these four calls for soul-winning by learning and doing soul-winning.

Introduction: Evangelistic churches are not as effective as they used to be because unsaved people don’t come to church so much in Australia. What we need is more soul-winning churches that know how to go out into the community to win people to Christ, to disciple new converts, and bring them to church on Sunday. We find that there are 4 calls for personal soul-winning in the Bible:

1. From Within.

“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” Acts 4:20.

“For the love of Christ constraineth us.” II Corinthians 5:14.

The Holy Spirit which indwells us leads us to speak to people about Christ.

“Then the Spirit said unto Philip, go near, and join thyself to this chariot.” Acts 8:29.

To disobey this call is to grieve the indwelling Holy Spirit.

2. From Without.

‘There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.’ Acts 16:9

“Lift up your eyes and look on the fields for they are white already to harvest.” John 4:34-36.

There are people needing to hear the gospel. There are many people wanting someone to start a church near them. Will you volunteer to go and tell them? Can you see the opportunities to preach the gospel and to lead multitudes to Christ all over the world?

3. From Above.

“There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” Luke 15:10. “Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight...” Hebrews 12:1.

4. From Below. Many people suffering in hell pray for someone to tell their family how to be saved.

“I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house; for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.” Luke 16:27,28.

Conclusion: Will you heed these 4 calls to win the lost and go today? Make soul winning a priority.

130. THINGS THE LORD KNOWS ABOUT US

Bible Reading: Psalm 37:1-18.

Aim: To comfort us by the Lord’s intimate knowledge of us and our needs.

Introduction: Often we may be tempted to think that the Lord doesn’t know or care about us or about our problems. The following Scriptures show that he does know and care about us.

The Lord knows:

1. Our Way “He knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness.” Deuteronomy 2:7.

“He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” Job 23:10.

“The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.” Psalm 1:6.

2. Our Secret Thoughts “He knoweth the secrets of the heart.” Psalm 44:21.

3. Our Frame “The proud he knoweth afar off.” Psalm 138:6.

“For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.” Psalm 103:13,14.

4. Them That Trust In Him “The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.” Nahum 1:7.

5. Our Needs “Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.” Matthew 6:8,32

6. Our Hearts “God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.” Luke 16:14,15.

7. Them That Are His “The Lord knoweth them that are his.” II Timothy 2:19.

8. When I Sit Down And Stand Up “Thou knoweth my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.” Psalm 139:2.

9. How To Deliver The Godly “The Lord knoweth how to deliver to godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.” II Peter 2:9.

131. THINGS TO DO IN YOUR YOUTH

Bible Reading: Ecclesiastes 11:9--12:2

Aim: To achieve God's appointed goals in your youth, so you'll have a big impact for Christ later.

Introduction: Many people wreck their life because they wreck their youth. Many of us have picked up wrong ideas in our youth that have caused problems for us later in life. We must find God's ways early in life, believe them and obey them always. The Bible is God's textbook on life. It tells us:

- a) How to get to heaven.
- b) How to avoid sin and the trouble sin brings in this life.

Question: What does the Bible say that we should achieve in our youth?

1. **Avoid bad peers.** 'My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.' Proverbs 1:10-19. 'Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly.' (Psalm 1:1-3).
2. **Take heed to God's Word.** (Ps 119:9,11). Delight and meditate in God's Word day and night. Ps.1:2,3.
3. **Seek wisdom, understanding and increase learning.** (Proverbs 1:2-6). 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' (Proverbs 9:10).
4. **Listen to and obey your parents' instructions.** (Proverbs 1:8,9).
5. **Be wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.** (II Timothy 3:15).
6. **Learn the Holy Scriptures from childhood.** (II Timothy 3:15).
7. **Remember now thy Creator** in the days of thy youth .(Ecclesiastes 12:1). 'Remember' means to:
 - a) Receive Jesus Christ as your Saviour (John 1:12);
 - b) Surrender all areas of your life to Jesus Christ as Lord (Romans12:1,2);
 - c) Study God's Word to prepare for God's plan for your life (II Timothy 2:15);
 - d) Seek His will for your life and fulfil it (Matthew 6:33);
 - e) Develop a close relationship with God (James 4:8; Psalm 73:28);
 - f) Realise God created you. All that we have comes from God. Reject evolution's lies.
8. **Flee youthful lusts.** (II Timothy 2:22; Proverbs 7:1-27).
9. **Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace** with fellow believers. (II Timothy 2:22).
10. **Let no man despise thy youth.** (I Timothy 4:12). Don't feel inferior because of your youth. If you know God's Word, you have more wisdom than ungodly teachers. (Psalm 119:99).
11. **Be an example** of what an ideal Christian should be in word, conversation, charity, spirit, faith and purity. (I Timothy 4:12).

12. **Treat older men** as fathers, **younger men** as brothers, **elder women** as mothers, **young women** as sisters with all purity. (Titus 2:4-8; I Corinthians 7:1,2; I Timothy 5:1,2).

13. **Be strong** in grace (II Timothy 2:1). Let the **word of God** abide (remain) in you by memorizing it. **Overcome the wicked one** (by resisting temptation). (I John 2:14).

14. It is **good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.** (Lamentations 3:24-27). God wants us to learn to wait patiently and to learn the yoke of self-discipline in our youth. Young people need to learn to control their sex, drug and alcohol urges. They need self-discipline to reject wrong friends and self-discipline to study and memorise God's Word. Learning Christ and His ways is the yoke Christ wants us to take on ourselves. (Matthew 11:29,30). Christ's yoke is much easier to bear than a yoke of sin.

15. **Rejoice with the wife of thy Youth.** (Proverbs 5:18,19). God's will is for people to marry in their youth, not to live together in fornication. Marry a godly partner who can help you serve God better. (I Timothy 5:14).

16. **Be about our Heavenly Father's business, as 12 year old Jesus was.** (Luke 2:49).

17. **Don't listen to foolish, ignorant or wicked advisors.** "Cease, my son , to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge." (Prov. 19:27). Identify and reject bad advice. (Hebrews 7:17).

18. **Seek your Pastors advice** and **do it.** 'Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves.'

Conclusion: Apply these truths in your life and you will please God and be a blessing to many people. If you reject these truths, then Ecclesiastes 11:9 will happen. If you 'walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.'

Question: Will you surrender today to live by God's ways all through your life?

132. WHEN TO KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT

Bible Reading: James 3:1-18.

Aim: To let God's Holy Spirit fill us and control what we say, so that people are blessed and not cursed by our words.

Introduction: People find it easier to speak before thinking, than to think before speaking. Because of this, so much damage has been done by careless words. Once hurtful words are spoken, they cannot be taken back.

Memory Verse: 'Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath. For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.' James 1:19,20.

Question: At what times do we need to be especially careful to keep our mouths shut? Don't open your mouth:

1. When you are **tempted to tell lies**. 'A false witness that speaketh lies.' (Proverbs 6:19; 13:5).
'For my mouth shall speak truth . . .' (Proverbs 8:7; Ephesians 4:25).
2. When you **don't have all the facts**. 'Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.' Psalm 19:13 'He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is a folly and shame unto him.' Proverbs 18:13.
3. When you **haven't verified the story by asking the accused**:
'The simple believeth every word.' (Proverbs 14:15).
'In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.' (II Corinthians 13:1).
4. When you are **tempted to tell a person's sin to another without speaking to the accused first**. 'Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.' (Matthew 18:15). 'Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another: lest he that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away.' (Proverbs 25:9,10).
5. When your **words would damage a friendship**. 'A froward (obstinate, stubbornly contrary and disobedient) man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.' (Proverbs 16:28).
6. When you are **tempted to joke about sin**. 'Fools make a mock at sin.' (Proverbs 14:9).
7. When you are tempted to **make a vow to God that you can't keep**. 'Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.' (Ecclesiastes 5:2,4-6,5).
8. When you are tempted to **interrupt a person speaking** or to **speak too long without hearing what he has to say**. 'Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.' James 1:19.
9. When the issue is **none of your business**. 'He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears.' Proverbs 26:17.
10. When you are tempted to **deceive & say something you don't mean or give a wrong impression**. 'As a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows and death, so is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, am not I in sport?' (Proverbs 26:18,19).
11. When you are tempted to **flatter a wicked person**. 'He that saith unto the wicked, thou art righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him.' (Proverbs 24:24).
'A flattering mouth worketh ruin.' (Proverbs 26:28).
12. When you **haven't thought carefully about the consequences of your words**. 'Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit of it.' (Proverbs 18:21; 13:3).
'Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God:.... therefore let thy words be few.' (Ecclesiastes 5:2).

13. When your words will **needlessly offend someone**. 'A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle.' (Proverbs 18:19; I Corinthians 8:13)
14. When you **feel like boasting**. 'Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth: a stranger and not thine own lips.' (Proverbs 27:1,2).
15. When you are **tempted to scream and show anger**. 'A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger'. (Proverbs 15:1). 'He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.' (Proverbs 25:28).
16. When you **feel like threatening or insulting people**.
'Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again: when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.' (I Peter 2:21-23).
If your words will be a poor reflection on Christ, your family or your friends, don't say it.
17. When you **can't speak courteously**. 'Be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing.' (I Peter 3:8,9).
18. If you would be **ashamed of your words later**. 'All the words of my mouth are in righteousness, there is nothing froward or perverse in them.' (Proverbs 8:8).
19. In the **heat of anger**. 'He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly.' (Proverbs 14:17).
'He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding.' (Proverbs 14:29).
20. When you are **about to enter a contract and haven't yet spoken to a multitude of counsellors**. 'Without counsel, purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.' (Proverbs 24:6; 11:14; 16:22).
21. When you are **tempted to tell others of things told to you confidentially**.
'A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth a matter.' (Prov. 11:13).
22. When you are tempted to **go guarantor for someone**. 'He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it: and he that hateth suretyship is sure.' (Proverbs 11:15).
23. When you **feel like damaging someone's reputation**. 'An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips there is as a burning fire.' (Proverbs 16:27).
24. When you **listen to slander with a view to pass it on to others**. 'A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips: and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.' (Proverbs 17:4).
25. If you have **already said it more than once**: 'The contentions of a wife are a continual dropping.' (Proverbs 19:13).
26. When you are **supposed to be working**. 'In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.' (Proverbs 14:23).
27. When it is **time to listen**: 'A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke.' (Proverbs 13:1).
28. When we are **feeling critical**. 'Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.' (James 3:10).
29. When you are tempted to slander those who've **helped you in the past**. "Whoso returneth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house." (Proverbs 17:13).
30. When you are tempted to **slander, or believe slander** about a **godly, soul-winning pastor**. "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses." (I Timothy 5:19).

Conclusion: Which of these are you guilty of? Confess them to God as sin and forsake them. Pray Psalm 19:14 'Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.'

133. SIX LITTLE WORDS

Bible Reading: I Corinthians 14:7-9.

Aim: To show the meaning and message in these often overlooked little words. Don't forget the little things in the Bible. Every word of God is important.

Illustration: *Lectures to Young Preachers*, George Henderson, pp 77-78. Preach simply and clearly.

a) "A simple preacher announced to his congregation the abilities of a visiting preacher by saying he was 'a man who knows the unknowable, who can solve the unsolvable, and unscrew the inscrutable.'"

Be sure you understand the meaning of every word that you use.

b) When Martin Luther was asked why his preaching was so effective, he replied, "First, when I enter the pulpit I say, 'Remember thou art a messenger of the Highest.' Second, because I hold firmly to the Bible only, and study it afresh every day. Third, I keep to the leading point of the discourse, other things I leave unsaid, though ever so many ideas occur to me. Fourth, I try to be simple, to be understood by the working classes and by children of twelve or thirteen."

c) Some speakers trying to impress may say: "Scintillate, Scintillate, globule vivific, Fain would I fathom thy nature specific, Loftily poised in the ether capacious, Strongly resembling a gem carbonaceous."

But that speaker would have been wiser to say: "Twinkle, twinkle, little star, How I wonder what you are, Up above the world so high, Like a diamond in the sky." Let us preach messages that will be easily understood.

d) Four Rules for preachers:

- 1) To be listened to, be interesting.
- 2) To be understood, be clear.
- 3) To be useful, be practical.
- 4) To be obeyed, speak as the oracles of God.

Introduction: There are 6 little words of only one syllable in the Bible, yet though seemingly unimportant, they convey some of the greatest truths in the universe. These 6 little words are SO, LO, HO, NO, GO, WOE. Let us make these little words a big part of our life:

1. **SO = to a SURPASSING DEGREE.** 'For God SO loved the world that he gave.' (John 3:16). 'SO' describes the greatness of God's love to all mankind.

i) God's part: loving and giving.

ii) Man's part: believing and receiving eternal life. 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God.' I John 3:1.

'We love him because he first loved us.' (I John 4:19). Even if we don't love God, He loves us.

2. **LO = to DRAW ATTENTION TO.** 'Then said I, LO, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God'. (Hebrews 10:7). These words "LO, I come", excite heaven, make demons tremble, and make believers rejoice because the Son of God has come.

If Christ had not come, there would be: no salvation, no hope, no forgiveness of sins, no peace,

no justification, and no heaven, just sin, darkness, judgment and hell.

* 'LO' gives hope to the sinner. We need to draw people's attention to the fact that Christ has come, died and rose again for the sins of the world, and eternal life is available.

* 'LO' tells of Christ's voluntary coming to earth. Christ came to fulfil Old Testament prophecies, and to be the sacrifice for our sins. Let us draw people's attention to Christ's sacrifice for their sins.

3. **HO = SURPRISE, TRIUMPH, INVITATION** to salvation:

'HO, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.' (Isaiah 55:1).

HO = a word of **invitation** to salvation full and free, 'without money and without price' (to us), yet 'with a price' (to Christ). 'For ye are bought with a price.' (I Corinthians 6:20).

Jesus paid the full price for our salvation. If we know that price, we dare not 'neglect so great salvation.'

4. **NO = ABSENCE OF.** 'There is therefore now NO CONDEMNATION to them which are in Christ Jesus.' (Romans 8:1) . NO CONDEMNATION is great news to a convicted sinner.

a) Where is there no condemnation? In Christ Jesus.

b) To whom is there no condemnation? To them which are in Christ Jesus.

c) When is there no condemnation? NOW.

d) Why is there no condemnation? Because the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53:6.

Romans 8 begins with 'no condemnation'(8:1) and ends with 'no separation' (8:35-39). John 5:24.

5. **GO = MOVEMENT FROM A PLACE.** "Go and preach the gospel to every creature."

Mark 16:15

"Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them....." (Matthew 28:19-20).

This is a command from Christ to His disciples to go and tell.

Let us respond to Christ's call by saying "Here am I, send me". (Isaiah 6:8).

6. **WOE = AFFLICTION, BITTER GRIEF, CALAMITY, CURSE ON.**

'Yea, Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel.' I Corinthians 9:26.

There are millions of people that are searching for the truth of God. They need someone to show them.

"If thou forbear (abstain from) to deliver them that are drawn unto death..' Proverbs 24:11,12.

If you are really saved, you'll want to see others saved.

If you really know the Lord Jesus, you'll want others to know Him, and live like Him.

If you really know something of heaven, you'll want others to go there.

If you really know the power of the Gospel, you'll say with Paul in Romans 1:14-16,

"I am a debtor, I am ready to preach the gospel, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."

Conclusion: Review SO, LO, HO, NO, GO, WOE's meaning.

Q: Is your life communicating the messages of these 6 simple words? Get saved now. Live for Christ.

134. STAGES IN PHYSICAL CREATION ILLUSTRATING STAGES IN SALVATION

Bible Reading: Genesis 1:1-31.

Aim: To show steps in a sinner coming to Christ.

Introduction: It is interesting to note that the stages in God creating life on earth correspond exactly with the stages God uses to bring a sinner to salvation and the growth that follows. This is greatly applicable to convince lost people of their need for Christ and to encourage and instruct Christians to grow as believers.

Question: What are the eleven stages in the salvation of a sinner to become a new creation?

1. Chaos = the unbeliever's life without Christ (Genesis 1:2). He lives for self, is a servant of Satan, cares little about God and others, and is heading to an eternal hell.

"The way of transgressors is hard." Proverbs 13:15.

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

Empty, darkness, without form and without order pictures the chaos of sin and rebellion in an unbeliever's life. He is described in Psalm 14:2,3 (filthy, none doing good); Isaiah 57:20; 53:6; (troubled, cannot rest, casting up mire and dirt); John 3:18-20 (men loved darkness); Romans 3:10-19 (unprofitable, deceitful, cursing, bitterness, destruction, misery, no peace, no fear of God, guilty).

2. Conviction = the Holy Spirit moves to convict a sinner of his sin and need for Christ. Genesis 1:2.

"the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Genesis 1:2.

When the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, the people's response was: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). Jesus promised that after He went to Heaven, He would send the Holy Spirit to be our Comforter and to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. (John 16:7-11).

The Holy Spirit is our partner in soul winning.

3. Waters = the water of the word of God is applied by the Holy Spirit to bring Salvation.

"The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Genesis 1:2.

"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." John 3:5.

"That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." Ephesian 5:26.

4. Light = the newly saved sinner receives the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. "And God said, let there be light: and there was light." Genesis 1:3. Light = Knowledge of Salvation, and "the light of the glorious gospel of Christ." I Corinthians 4:4.

"The entrance of thy words giveth light." Psalm 119:130.

"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light." Eph. 5:8

"Jesus said, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life." John 8:12. "him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." I Peter 2:9

5. Division and Separation: "God divided the light from the darkness." Genesis 1:4. When people get saved, as children of light, we must separate from darkness, sin & things of the old life.

Question: What separations describe the believer?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Christ and the world. | 6. Fundamental Christianity and Liberalism. |
| 2. Believers and unbelievers. | 7. Way of Life and Way of Death. |
| 3. Truth and error. | 8. Light and darkness. |
| 4. Heaven and hell. | 9. Soul winner and non soul-winning. |
| 5. Holy living and sinful living. | 10. Zealous spiritual Christian and lukewarm carnal Christian. |

"There was a division among the people because of him." John 7:43; 9:16; 10:19.

"Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." II Corinthians 6:14-18.

"Be holy, for I am holy,.. Make a difference between the unclean and clean." Leviticus 11:44-47.

6. Growth: "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind." Genesis 1:11.

When one is saved, he must grow by taking in God's Word daily, as trees take in nourishment.

"As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." 1 Peter 2:1,2.

"But grow in grace, and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both new and forever." II Peter 3:18.

"Speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things ..." Ephesians 4:15.

"Your faith groweth exceedingly, and all the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth." II Thessalonians 1:3.

7. Fruit-bearing: "grass, herbs, tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself." Genesis 1:12. After salvation, we must bear fruit of people won to Christ, and the fruit of the Spirit.

"every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. (v.2).

he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit (v.5). John 15:1-8.

"Ye have your fruit unto holiness." Romans 6:22; 1:13.

"I desire fruit that may abound to your account." Philippians 4:17.

"the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." Hebrews 13:15.

"that bringeth forth his fruit in his season." Psalm 1:1-3.

8. Dominion: "let them have dominion over the fish of the sea..." Genesis 1:26.

Believers must now let Christ have dominion and lordship over every aspect of our lives. "thou hast put all things under his feet." Psalms 8:3-8.

9. God's Image: "So God created man in his own image." Genesis 1:26,27.

As we study God's Word we are changed into the image of God, as II Corinthians 3:18 states:

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass (the Bible) the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image..."

(Colossians 3:10.

'And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him'

'For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.' Rom.8:29.

10. Blessing: “God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.” Genesis 1:28.

As we are conformed to Christ’s image, God blesses us and we become fruitful in winning souls to Christ, in multiplying disciples for Christ. They in turn win and train others for Christ. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ.” Ephesians 1:3; Psalm 32:1,2; II Timothy 2:2.

11. Rest in Genesis 2:2 pictures the Faith Rest Life.

“he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he made.”

Believers should aim to live a life of faith, resting in God’s promises in the Bible, so that when trouble comes to us, we do not panic and drop out. The wilderness generation failed to believe God’s promises, failed to live the faith-rest life, and therefore failed to enter Canaan. “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it”. Hebrews 4:1.

Conclusion: Come to Christ, cast our cares on Him, & we shall find rest for our souls. Matt. 11:28-30.

135. WHAT IS YOUR LIFE?

Bible Reading: Job 9:2-35.

Aim: To teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to the wisdom of soul winning, to teaching others God’s word, and living like Christ.

Introduction: The Bible compares our life to many things. Why? So that we may realise how short our life is, and how important it is for us to number our days (ie: to plan our life) so that we have the maximum impact on the world for Christ.

In order to show us how short our life is, God compares our life to several things:

1. A Vapour. “Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.” James 4:14. All our plans depend on our life continuing. But what a frail and uncertain thing our life is. Who can build any solid plans on the permanence of a vapour or a mist? A vapour is a mist that is dissipated by the rising sun.

“O remember that my life is wind....As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so is he that goeth down to the grave.” Job 7:7,9.

“For he remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.”Ps.78:39

Notice that:

- 1) As a vapour or wind passes away quickly, so does the life of man.
- 2) As we cannot stop a cloud or wind, so we cannot hinder the speedy motion of our days.
- 3) As a cloud comes to its height and then vanishes, so does our life and our full strength.

2. A Flower. “Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down.” Job 14:1,2.

“For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away. But the Word of the Lord endureth forever.” I Peter 1:24,25.

Man’s life is compared to a fading flower. Many things describe a flower such as having sweet smell, beauty, variety of colour, and softness to touch. Job discusses none of these, but only of its cutting down. Note the following truths about it’s cutting down:

a) A flower is often cut down or cropped in it’s budding. Many people are cut off in the flower of life by

- i) Natural death by sickness, or
 - ii) Accidental death by violence, murder, road accidents etc.
- b) A flower if not cut off, soon withers away and is gone. The “Queen of the Night” flower blooms in one night, gives a beautiful fragrance, and is dead and withered by morning.
- c) As the owner of flowers knows best when to crop then, so God knows the best time when to crop off or take away by death any of his choice flowers.

3. A Swift Post. “Now my days are swifter than a post: they flee away, they see no good.” Job 9:25.

a) As a postman rides swiftly, in a hurry, so man’s life passes away swiftly.

- b) A postman of years ago would
- ride on the swiftest of horses,
 - he would change horses at every stage to keep up the speed,
 - he would take a morsel of food at each stop, then speed on,
 - he would only go to bed at the end of his journey,
 - all people would give way to the post rider.

4. A Swift Ship. “They are passed away as the swift ships.” Job 9:25,26.

Watching a ship at sea, we notice how it passes very quickly, reminding us of our lives & opportunities.

5. An Eagle. “As the eagle that hasteth to the prey.” Job 9:26.

An eagle is a very swiftly flying bird, but when it hastens to catch its prey, it makes the greatest speed. The life of man is compared to an eagle hurrying to catch her prey when hunger adds swiftness to her wings. So it is with swiftness that our days pass away. What have you done for Christ with your life?

6. A Weaver’s Shuttle. “My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle.” Job 7:6.

- a) A weaver’s shuttle is an instrument of very swift motion.
- b) When the weaver has finished his web, he cuts off the thread. So it is that when a man has run the length of his days appointed by God, his life is cut off.

7. A Shadow. “He fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.” Job 14:2.

David said: “our days on the earth are as a shadow and there is none abiding.” I Chronicles 29:15.

Man’s life today is short compared to human lifespan before Noah’s flood.

Man’s life is much shorter compared to God’s eternity. This is a great motive for us to redeem our time.

Conclusion:

- a) Our days on earth are few.
- b) Our days on earth are uncertain.
- c) The shortness of our life shows the folly of living only for material things as did the rich man in Luke 12:16-21 who said “Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry.” (v.19). “The fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others. Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue forever...This their way is their folly.” Psalm 49:10,11,13.
- d) Our minds must be focused on eternity “knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and enduring substance.” Hebrews 10:34.
- e) The shortness of life motivates us to use all our labours to get people to heaven, to teach the Bible, to plant churches, to train preachers, be at peace among ourselves, and live holy lives pleasing to God.
- Let us be “redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” Ephesians 5:16.
- “Redeem the time” means “to buy it up, rescue it from loss, improve every opportunity.”

136. HOW CAN WE GLORIFY GOD

Bible Reading: I Corinthians 10:31-33

Memory Verse: “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” (I Corinthians 10:31)

Aim: To see how we can glorify God.

Introduction:

The Bible commands us to “do all to the glory of God.” This introduces the question: “How can we glorify God?” The Bible gives 12 main ways that we can glorify God. If we focus our efforts in these 12 areas, our lives will truly bring much glory to God.

Question: How well are you bringing glory to God by practicing these 12 things? We glorify God:

1. By **Preaching the Gospel**. “the light of the glorious gospel of Christ.” (II Corinthians 4:4).
The gospel is glorious because it makes known our glorious God’s nature and His simple plan of salvation. The gospel leads ignorant, weak, sinful, degraded men to a world of light.
It is glorious and enlightening because of its splendour, beauty, certainty of heaven, forgiveness, fellowship and love that it gives to men, compared with the dark, despairing and hopeless systems of philosophy and heathenism that man thinks up.
2. By **Offering Praise to God**. “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.” (Psalm 50:23).
Praise involves giving God our love, thanksgiving, worship and talents to serve Him. When a sinner receives Christ as his Saviour and confesses with his mouth the Lord Jesus, he is glorifying God. Do you praise God daily? “He (the Holy Spirit) shall glorify me.” (John 16:14). Do you glorify Christ?
3. By **Bearing much fruit**. “herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit.” (John 15:8).
4. By **Finishing the work** which God gives us to do. (John 17:4).
5. By **Keeping ourselves from evil in the world**. (John 17:10,15).
6. When **sinner get saved and become preachers**. For example, Paul. Galatians 1:23,24.
7. When we **fulfil God’s will for our life** (2 Thess. 1:11,12) the name of our Lord Jesus Christ is glorified (12). When we fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.
8. When the **Word of God has free course**. (2 Thessalonians 3:1).
9. When we **speak** as the **Oracles of God**, and **minister** (serve) to the best of our ability that God gives us. (I Peter 4:11).
10. When **we are reproached for the name of Christ**, and **respond cheerfully**. (I Peter 4:14).
11. When **God delivers us from evil**. (Psalm 50:15).
12. When **all nations come** and worship Christ in the Millennium at Jerusalem. (Psalm 86:9).
We glorify God now by studying and teaching about Jesus Christ’s second coming.

Conclusion: Are you glorifying God now in all that you do.

137. SYMBOLS OF GOD’S WORD

Bible Reading: Psalm 19:7-14; Psalm 119:1-18.

Aim: To love and appreciate God’s Word, so we will read, study, memorize and meditate on it daily.

Introduction: God likens His Word to many things, so that we can appreciate different aspects of how it can benefit us. Each symbol shows something different that it will accomplish in our lives.

God’s Word, the Bible is likened to:

- 1) **Fire:** ‘Is not my word like as a fire?’ (Jeremiah 23:29).
God’s Word burns, cleanses and purges all that is contrary to God’s holy standard; False prophets, dreams, visions and prophecies were like chaff or straw.
‘he will baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: . . . he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.’ (Matthew 3:11,12).
‘His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.’ (Jeremiah 20:9).
God’s Word in a preacher’s heart must be preached and can’t be held in. It is said of Christ’s omniscience: ‘His eyes were as a flame of fire.’ (Revelation 1:14).
- 2) **Hammer:** ‘and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces.’ (Jeremiah 23:29)
It smashes and destroys evil as Christ’s return smashes the kingdoms of this world (Daniel 2:34, 35,44). False prophets promised peace in sin, but God’s Word pronounces destruction on sinners.
- 3) **Lamp:** ‘thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.’ (Psalm 119:105).
God’s Word lights up our pathway in a world of darkness so we can see truth from error. Jesus said, ‘I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.’ (John 8:12).
- 4) **Mirror:** ‘If any man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass.’ (James 1:23). God’s Word reveals to us our true condition (James 1:23) and changes us to the same image of Christ. (II Corinthians 3:18).
- 5) **Milk:** ‘As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby’ I Peter 2:2 ‘every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe.’ (Heb. 5:13). The basic and simple truths of God’s Word nourish young Christians in their growth. (I Cor. 3:2).
- 6) **Seed:** ‘Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.’ (I Peter 1:23). ‘The seed is the Word of God.’ (Luke 8:11). God’s Word is like a seed which when planted in a person’s heart produces new life in those who receive Christ as Saviour. Psalm 126:5,6 describes the soul winner bearing precious seed. Galatians 3:16 describes Christ as the seed of Abraham: ‘And to thy seed, which is Christ.’ (See II Timothy 2:8).

- 7) **Sword:** 'Take . . . the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.' (Ephesians 6:17).
 '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, and of the joints and marrow (flesh) . . . and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.' (Hebrews 4:12).
 a) It separates things of the spirit and flesh;
 b) It discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart;
 c) It is the preached word (Greek: rhema) impacted into a person's heart.
 This is a believer's only offensive weapon to defeat Satan's lies, as Christ did in Matthew 4:1-11.
 d) Christ, at his return, kills the antichrist's armies with the sword coming out of his mouth. (Revelation 19:21).
- 8) **Water:** 'That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word' (Eph. 5:26) 'born of water (of the word).' (John 3:3).
 As water is life-giving, refreshing and cleansing, so is God's Word all these things to believers. 'Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.' (Psalm 119:9).
 God's Word cleanses us of sin by bringing us to confess it to God, and by preventing it in our lives. (1 John 1:9). The Bible will keep us from sin, or sin will keep us from the Bible.
 Jesus offers the living water of eternal life, so we need never thirst. John 4:10,14; Rev 21:6; 22:17.
- 9) **Gold:** 'The law of the Lord is . . . more to be desired than gold.' (Psalm 19:7,10).
 -God's Word is like gold because of its priceless value in showing us how to get eternal life, warning us of danger, rewarding us in heaven and on earth for keeping it. (Psalm 19:11).
 -God's Word is an endless goldmine to discover truths about God, wisdom, self, the world and eternity future.
 -Christ is described as having 'His head is as the most fine gold.' (Song 5:11).
 This speaks of Christ being God and King of Israel.
- 10) **Honey:** 'Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.' (Psalm 19:10; Revelation 10:10). As honey is sweet to taste, so is God's Word sweet to consider its precious promises. (See Proverbs 16:24). 'How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth.' (Psalm 119:103).
 Christ is described as 'His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely.' (Song 5:16).
- 11) **Bread:** 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' (Matthew 4:4; Deuteronomy 8:3).
 As bread nourishes and strengthens our bodies, so God's Word nourishes and strengthens our spirits to serve God acceptably.
 Jesus describes Himself as 'I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger' John 6:35. Once someone is in a right relationship with Jesus Christ, he finds everlasting satisfaction.
 'Bread of life' means 'bread which provides life.'

- 12) **Pearls:** 'neither cast ye your pearls before swine.' (Matthew 7:6).
 Pearls denote anything precious, such as Bible precepts, promises or warnings. We should not offer them to violent and abusive men, who have shown themselves to growl and curse you, or who would not appreciate their value.
- 13) **Anchor:** 'Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.' (Hebrews 6:19). The promises in God's Word anchor us safely to the security of eternal life, and give us hope and comfort to live now on earth.
- 14) **Meat:** 'strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.' (Hebrews 5:14). It is wrong to remain a baby in spiritual matters (1 Cor. 13:11). Strong meat Christians possess the maturity to make right moral choices, and have digested enough Scripture to discern good from evil.
- 15) **Ox-Goad:** 'The words of the wise (*preachers*) are as goads and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies (*preachers in churches*), which are given from one shepherd (*Jesus Christ*):' Eccles. 12:11. As an ox-goad prods oxen to fulfil their duty, so God's Word prods believers into obeying God.

Conclusion: Some of these Bible symbols are also symbols of Christ, the living Word. (3,6,11).

Are you living daily by studying God's Word?

Are you walking daily in sweet close fellowship with Christ?

Are you obeying each message contained in these symbols of God's Word?

Are you regularly sowing the seed of God's Word in people's lives?

138. WHAT SORT OF MIND HAVE YOU?

Bible Reading: Philippians 2:1-5.

Aim: To monitor our mental state, so that we have the right mind to:

- a) Stay in fellowship with God and each other; and b) Serve God effectively.

Introduction: Everything we do in our Christian life depends on our minds. The mind is the battle-ground where Satan seeks to gain control of our decision-making process for evil. Don't let Satan hijack your mind. One of the saddest things to see is Christians who were once on fire for God, who have let some foolish or false idea into their mind, which resulted in them being separated from other believers, and shipwrecking their faith. Our mind is like a computer. Garbage IN = garbage OUT.

Question: Will you let some false idea control your mind, so you break fellowship with God and others?

Question: What kinds of wrong minds and right minds are there?

I. **BAD MIND** to avoid:

- 1) Mind **hardened in pride**. (Daniel 5:20). When Nebuchadnezzar's heart was lifted up by his honoured position, his mind was hardened in pride, he was deposed from his throne and lost his glory by becoming insane for 7 years.
Q: Are you proud of something you have achieved? (Proverbs 16:18). Beware of pride.
- 2) Neither be ye of **doubtful mind**. (Luke 12:29).
Many of us worry and doubt if God will provide our needs. Jesus tells us:
 - a) Your Father knows you need these things. (v.30).
 - b) Seek first the Kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you. (v.31).
 - c) Provide treasure in heaven that fails not. (v.33).
 - d) Your heart will be where your treasure is. (v.34).
- 3) Mind **evil affected against the brethren**. (Acts 14:1,2). One of Satan's most successful devices is gossip and slander, which makes some Christian's minds evil affected against other Christians. They imagine evil or magnify others faults, so that they respond with anger, and are unwilling to work with other believers. They then quit church, God's work suffers, and people go to hell.
- 4) God gave them over to a **reprobate mind**. (Romans 1:28). Reprobate (Gk:'adokimos' (96) means disapproved, rejected, worthless, castaway. It means undiscerning, void of judgment, not seeing good from evil. Some people are so filled with moral sins and hatred of God's ways, that they cannot tell right from wrong, or good from evil. Examples include sodomites.
- 5) To be **carnally** (4561) **minded** is death, but to be **spiritually minded** is life and peace. Romans 8:6 Carnal mind = prone to sin, sinful appetites and desires. Many Christians backslide because they feed their **carnal, sinful side** by TV, gossip, slander, evil thinking, and not serving God. They do not feed their **spiritual side** by daily Bible study, filling of the Holy Spirit, and yielding to Christ. Carnal Christians often criticise spiritual Christians because they convict them of their sin.
- 6) Who **mind earthly things**. (Philippians 3:19).
Verses 18,19 describe enemies of the cross of Christ as people who mind earthly things. Why? Because they hinder the gospel outreach by their bad example of lukewarmness. They are attached to the things of earth instead of setting their affections on things above. (Colossians 3:2).
- 7) **Soon shaken in mind**. (II Thessalonians 2:2).
The Thessalonian Christians were soon shaken in mind by false teachers telling them that they had missed the rapture. This upset their spiritual balance and triggered their fears.
Key: We can be shaken in mind if we believe error without first checking it with Scripture.
- 8) **Double-minded** man is unstable in all his ways. (James 1:8; 4:8). He is a waverer, a two-minded, unstable person. Such a person suffers from divided loyalties. On one hand he wants to live as a Christian, and on the other hand he wants to live by the ways of the world and selfishness.
- 9) Becoming **wearied** (2577) and **faint** in your **minds**. (Hebrews 12:3).
To faint is to be exhausted or despondent. Two remedies are:
 - a) **Consider him (Christ)** who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. (Hebrews 12:3).
 - b) **Promise of reaping in due season** if we faint not. (Galatians 6:9).

II. **GOOD MIND** to aim for:

- Question:** How does God describe your mind? The following Scriptures describe how the Spirit-filled believer thinks. Which of these minds describe your thinking?
- 1) The people had a **mind to work**. (Nehemiah 4:6). Hence the wall of Jerusalem was rebuilt in spite of much opposition. If believers have a mind to work for God, the results will be unity, great accomplishments, many people saved, churches built and opposition overcome.
Question: Do you have a mind to study the Bible and to work for God?
 - 2) A mind that is **stayed on God**. 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.' (Isaiah 26:3). If our mind is stayed on God and His promises through all of life's trials, we will be kept in perfect peace.
 - 3) The **mind filled with hope**. (Lamentations 3:21-23).
If we recall these things to mind we will have hope:
 - a) The Lord's mercies are new every morning (v.23), great is thy faithfulness (v.23) therefore we are not consumed;
 - b) His compassions fail not (v.22).
 - c) Great is thy faithfulness (v.23).
 - d) The Lord is my portion (inheritance 2506). (v.24).
 - e) It is good to hope, quietly wait for deliverance, and bear the yoke in our youth (v.25-27).
 - f) To subvert a man in his cause, the Lord approveth not (v.36).
 - 4) **Pure minds, stirred up minds**. 'I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance.' (II Peter 3:1)
Question: How do we keep our mind pure?
Answer: a) By taking heed to God's Word;
b) By keeping rubbish out of our minds, lest it be defiled with sin. Avoid bad movies, bad literature, bad friends and bad places.
Question: How do we stir up our minds to do God's work?
Answer: Be active in a strong preaching, sin rebuking, soul-winning church. Do doorknocking.
 - 5) **Be all of one mind**. (I Peter 3:8; II Corinthians 13:11; Philippians 1:27; 2:2).
It is good for everyone in a church to believe true Bible doctrine and be loyally committed to helping each other spread the Gospel. If believers constantly disagree with each other, they should repent, or leave the church, so the church can carry on God's work in peace and unity.
 - a) 'That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God.' (Romans 15:6).
 - b) 'Now I beseech you, brethren, . . . 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**.' (I Corinthians 1:10).
 - c) 'Stand fast in **one spirit**, with **one mind striving together** for the faith of the Gospel.' Phil. 1:27
 - d) 'Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be **likeminded**, having the **same love**, being of **one accord**, of **one mind**.' (Philippians 2:2).
 - e) 'Be of the **same mind** one toward another.' (Romans 12:16).
 - 6) **Lowly, humble** mind.
 - a) Paul's ministry was 'serving the Lord with **all humility of mind**.' (Acts 20:19).
 - b) Paul commands us to 'in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.' (Philippians 2:3).

- 7) **The mind of Christ** described in Philippians 2:5-8 should be in us.
- a) 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who:
- made himself of no reputation,
 - took upon himself the form of a servant,
 - humbled himself,
 - became obedient unto death.' (Philippians 2:5-8).
- b) 'We have the mind of Christ.' (I Corinthians 2:16).
- 8) **A sound** (4995) mind. (II Timothy 1:7).
'God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.'
'Sound mind' means orthodox, well founded, self disciplined, clear judgment of issues.
- 9) **A ready** mind.
a) 'Feed the flock of God....willingly,....but of a ready mind.' (I Peter 5:2).
'Ready' (4289) means prompt, with preparations completed, quick, willing, able to fulfil duties.
b) 'declaration of your ready (4288) mind.' (II Corinthians 8:19).
Ready (4288) means eager, cheerful, readiness of mind.
- 10) **A renewed** mind. (Romans 12:2). 'Be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.'
We discover God's will for our life as we resist being conformed to this world, but let God's Word transform our thinking.
- 11) **A fervent** mind (2205).
a) Titus told Paul that the Corinthians had a fervent mind toward Paul.
'Your fervent mind toward me.' (II Corinthians 7:7).
b) Apollos was fervent in the spirit as shown by his preaching 'being fervent in the spirit' Acts 18:25 'Fervent' (Greek: *zelos* [2205]) means 'zealous, hot, intense, glowing, on fire for God, boiling hot.' **Note:** 'Zelos' may degenerate into a jealousy which makes war on the good it sees in another, thus troubling that good and diminishing it. Hence 'zelos' (2205) joined with 'eris' (2054) is contention (Romans 13:13; II Corinthians 12:20; Galatians 5:20).
- 12) **A subject** mind (Titus 3:1) 'Put them in **mind** to be **subject** to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but **gentle, showing meekness unto all men.**' (Titus 3:1,2).
'Subject' (Greek: *hupotasso* [5293]) means 'to place in submission, under authority, in an orderly fashion.'
Question: Do you submit to government, employers, spouse, your preacher and parents?

Conclusion: If we fulfil these 12 conditions, as well as those in Philippians 4:5-7 of: (1) gentleness to all men; (2) careful for nothing; (3) praying; (4) thanking God; and (5) requesting God for all our needs; then the peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. ('keep' in Greek means 'keep as with a military guard.') (5432)).

How is your mind? The heart (Greek 2588) is the seat and centre of desires, feelings, affections, passions, and impulses. The heart is the sphere of God's influence in our life. In our heart, faith springs up, dwells and works. Christ and the Holy Spirit live in our hearts. 'Mind' in Greek (3540) means our thoughts, understanding, devices and concepts.

139. WHAT IS LEGALISM?

Bible Reading: Acts 15:1-35.

Aim: To prove that **liberty** is found **inside** the walls of rules and standards, and that legalism has nothing to do with insisting on high standards.

Introduction: 'I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts.' (Psalm 119:45).

Question: What does 'walk at liberty' have to do with 'seeking thy precepts'?

Answer: Psalm 119:45 means those who keep the commandments are those who walk at liberty.

Question: What does 'seek thy precepts' mean?

Answer: It means 'keep thy commandments'.

Problem: Many think and say that 'I will walk at liberty **if I don't have** to keep God's commandments'.

In our fundamental churches we have some rules and standards. We are against smoking, rock music (Ephesians 5:19), immodest clothing, avoiding physical contact with the opposite sex till marriage (I Corinthians 7:1) and drinking alcohol (Proverbs 23:31). We are in favour of respect for authority, soul winning, and strong commitment to the local church. When we proclaim these standards, immediately the accusation begins to roll in 'LEGALISM, LEGALISM, LEGALISM.' People accuse us: 'They have standards, that's legalism. They have rules, that's legalism, legalism.' Our critics are very foolish when they associate rules and standards with legalism. Such statements are made by New Evangelical people, or by people who once were real fundamentalists, but have become **weary** of the battle, and they long to return to the onions, leaks and garlics of **acceptance** with the 'few standard crowd.' These people would have us forsake our standards of Godly behaviour, and cry 'legalism, legalism, legalism' as the excuse for having few standards. These critics show their ignorance of Bible truth, and ignorance of dictionary definitions.

I. Question: Where is the word 'legalism' mentioned in the Bible? It is NOT!

The Oxford Dictionary definition of 'legalism' is '**the doctrine of justification by works.**'

The idea of legalism came from the Jews of the circumcision who said, 'Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.' (Acts 15:1). They were adding a work to salvation

by faith in Christ, something that no true fundamentalist would ever do.

- Legalism has nothing to do with **believing** and **living right**.

Legalism is **ADDING SOMETHING ELSE** to **FAITH** for salvation.

Legalism is 'SALVATION BY FAITH plus works, or

SALVATION BY FAITH + Baptism, or

SALVATION BY FAITH + Keeping The Law, or

SALVATION BY FAITH + Sacraments, or

SALVATION BY FAITH + Confirmation, or

SALVATION BY FAITH + Confession To Priest.

The SDA doctrine of faith + Sabbath keeping for salvation is legalism.

The Mormon doctrine of faith + baptism for salvation is legalism.

The RC doctrine of faith + sacraments for salvation is legalism.

The JW doctrine of faith + service for salvation is legalism.

- Legalism is not the godly mother insisting that her daughter be home by 11pm and dress modestly.
- Legalism is not the pastor who insists his young people do not listen to rock music or go to discos.
- Legalism is not the dad who insists his son have a short haircut.
- Legalism is not the faithful preacher who preaches against sin.

Question 1: Was Paul a legalist when he told men not to have long hair in I Corinthians 11:14?

Question 2: Was Paul a legalist when he told ladies to dress modestly in I Timothy 2:9?

Question 3: Was Moses a legalist when he said 'Thou shalt not murder'?
Was Moses a legalist when he said 'Thou shalt not steal'?
Was Moses a legalist when he said 'Thou shalt not commit adultery'?

Question 4: Was Paul a legalist when he said in I Timothy 3 that deacons should not be double-tongued, and should be the husband of one wife, and should be honest and temperate?

Question 5: Was Paul a legalist when he said the pastor should be sober, the husband of one wife, not given to wine, not greedy of filthy lucre?

Question 6: Was Titus a legalist when he obeyed Paul (in Titus 2:2) in charging men to be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience?

Question 7: Was Titus a legalist when he charged aged women to be holy & not false accusers? Titus 2:3

Question 8: Was Titus a legalist when he charged young women to be sober, love their husbands, love their children, be discreet, chaste, keepers at home? (Titus 2:4,5)

Question 9: Was Titus a legalist when he charged young men to be sober & of sound speech? Titus 2:6-8

Notice that most of this Bible is about **rules** on how to live as Christians. You'll find standards in every book of the Bible. **Nehemiah** wasn't scared of being charged with legalism in his fight for purity in the people of God. 'Then I contended with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken?' (Nehemiah 13:11). 'And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair ..' (Nehemiah 13:25). If you don't believe in living by standards, rules and convictions, you'll have to neglect most of the Bible. Our critics quote II Corinthians 3:17 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty'.

Question: What does this verse mean? Liberty for whom?

Answer: This is **NOT TALKING** about where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty for the **child of God** to do anything he wants to do.'

Key: This **IS SAYING** that where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty for the **Holy Spirit** to work among His people.

II. Question: Why do we need to have standards and rules?

Answer: We could paraphrase Psalm 119:45 'I will walk at liberty **because I seek thy precepts** (keep thy commandments), to say: 'I will walk at liberty **within the walls of the city**'. Let's imagine we are inside the walls of a city with the enemy lurking outside the wall.

Question: Are you at liberty inside the walls of a city, with the enemy lurking outside the walls? (Yes).

Question: Where is the freedom? Inside the walls or outside the walls?

Answer: Freedom is inside the walls.

Notice Proverbs 6:20-24: 'For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life: To **keep thee** from the evil woman . . .' (v.23,24).

Key: The commandments of God **keep us walking** in a restricted area as outlined by the lamp and the light. Therefore the commandments of God are like **WALLS** built around us to give us a little area where we can walk in liberty and **not be enslaved** by the captor outside the walls.

This means that the enemy is outside the walls of God's commandments and he cannot reach you because of the walls.

You have a choice: Either:

- a) You can be **FREE INSIDE** the walls, or
- b) You can be **ENSLAVED OUTSIDE** the walls.

Illustration: Consider a tiny dog inside a fence trying to get outside the fence to get his freedom

near a ferocious bulldog.

Question: Where was the little dog's **freedom**? Inside or outside the fence? Inside.
Where was the little dog's **slavery**? **OUTSIDE** the fence.
If the little dog got **his** freedom, he'd get his slavery.

Note: I'm sick of this idea that **liberty** is a **licence to sin**.

Liberty is **INSIDE the laws of God, not outside** the laws of God.

Every commandment, and every standard and rule of God is for **one purpose**, and that is to **build walls around** our people, so we can be **free inside God's walls of protection** from things like booze, illicit sex, pornography, drugs, rock music and evil people.

Teens can be free inside the rules of God's protection.

I'm sick of preachers preaching liberty to do what you want.

Key: Liberty means freedom **FROM** cigarettes, booze, bad movies, illicit sex, not freedom **to do** all these wrong things.

Notice: If we are not careful, we are going to **lose everything** that is **dear** and **precious** to us.

Being a fundamentalist is believing more than salvation by grace through faith.

It is more than believing the virgin birth.

It is more than believing the verbal inspiration of the Bible.

It is more than believing the sinless life and vicarious death of Christ.

It also includes **having some rules** and **standards to live by**.

These **rules** are **stones** in a **mighty wall** that God has built, that we might have a place of freedom in this world of slavery.

Rules and standards **don't enslave us, they liberate us**.

Example: I've never smoked cigarettes or drunk beer due to God's rules, and as a result I'm liberated from alcohol and cigarette addiction.

Key: All that enslaves us has been placed outside the wall.

Cigarettes enslave, therefore we put cigarettes outside the wall.

Alcohol and marijuana enslave, therefore we put alcohol and marijuana outside the wall.

Question: Who is free? The alcoholic or the teetotaler?

How many people are slaves to drugs, booze or illicit sex?

Question: Why do we have freedom today?

Answer: Because in the past, walls have been built to protect people.

You don't find freedom in doing whatever you like.

You do find freedom when you find the will of God for your life and do it.

Love is not breaking down the walls. Love is building the walls.

Love is freedom **from the captor.**

Illustration: A fundamental Baptist preacher met Elvis Presley in an elevator and asked him, 'Do you know if you died whether you'd go to heaven?'

Elvis said, 'Yes I do!' The preacher asked, 'Do you mean you're born again?'

Elvis replied, 'Yes, years ago when I was a boy, I went to a revival meeting. I heard a preacher preach that Jesus Christ could save me and that He paid the penalty for my sin.'

Elvis told the preacher the plan of salvation as clear as you would.

The preacher said, 'Elvis, do you still go to that fundamentalist church?'

Elvis said, 'No Sir, the rules were too strict. I wanted my freedom.'

Lesson: Elvis got his freedom outside the walls of God's rules. Elvis thought he was free, but suddenly the captor of narcotics gripped him and killed him at age 42 of a drug overdose. He got outside the walls of God's rules, standards and regulations, only to discover the captivity of sin outside the wall.

Key: My precious young people, that youth leader who breaks down those rules LOVES YOU NOT. He loves your LOVE. He does NOT love you. The preacher who loves you says that there is a wall we are building around you to protect you from many enemies. Don't go outside that wall. There are drugs, evil people, enslavement, liquor, indecency, and illicit sex outside the wall. You stay inside the wall.

Illustration: In a 1944 prisoner of war camp, the sergeant said to a young soldier, 'You see that barbed wire fence over there? Beyond it are the meanest of the German POWs captured in World War II. You must not cross over into that barbed wire compound.'

Question: Where was my freedom? On my side of the fence or on their side?

The younger soldier could have said, 'No one's going to tell me what to do. I'm tired of these rules.'

I want to be free. Nobody is going to tell me what to do – that **legalism.**'

Note: They had a heap of legalism in the army.

My mother had a heap of legalism on me as a boy, and it did me a world of good.

'He that spareth his rod, hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.'

Proverbs 13:24.

'Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child;but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.' (22:15)

'Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.' (Proverbs 23:13,14).

- A child's freedom to do right, is because of the fence you put around him.
'I will walk at liberty because I seek thy precepts (or keep thy commandments)' not because I break them.

Key: God has built for me a wall where He can protect me, and I can be free **from** those enemies outside the wall that would enslave me.

Freedom is when we are captured by a **higher CAPTOR.**

Freedom is when we are rescued from a lower servitude to a higher servitude.

That's what Jesus meant when He said, 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest'. (Matthew 11:28).

- **True** liberty is when we are free to do that thing that God made us to do. That's why the Bible speaks of the **LAW OF LIBERTY** in James 1:25. God said through Jeremiah to Hananiah the false prophet, 'Thou hast broken the yokes of wood; but thou shalt make for them yokes of iron.' (Jeremiah 28:13).
- Some young people say, 'I am tired of God's rules in this church. Let me be free.' He breaks free from God's easy yoke, and soon the yoke of drugs or alcohol has him. Jesus said, 'Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden in light.' (Matthew 11:29,30).
Let us free our young people from the iron yokes of drugs, alcohol, illicit sex, wrong friends, etc. by building rules and standards around them so they will be safe within the walls from the captors outside the walls.
Look up in your Bible Romans 8:2 – 'For the **law of the Spirit of life** in Christ Jesus hath made me **FREE** from the **law of sin and death.**'
One law makes me free from another law.
- Freedom is when a good law liberates you from a bad law.
Example 1: David said, 'I'll be free to court Bathsheba.' He went outside the walls that he thought enslaved him, and found that slavery was outside the wall, and that he had been free inside the wall.
Example 2: Samson said, 'I want to be free to live in sin with Delilah. I can trust ungodly people to do right by me.' What Samson did not understand was that he was free on the inside of the walls. He did not think that when he went outside the walls, they would put out his eyes and hook him up to a mill to grind corn in circles day and night for months and years. Do you hear Samson saying at the grinder, 'I sure like this freedom. I'm blind, but I'm free.' No Samson, you're not free. You are a slave to your enemy.
I thank God for old-fashioned wall-building preachers.
I thank God for old-fashioned wall-building churches.
I thank God for old-fashioned wall-building parents who build a little place of freedom with rules, so our young people cannot be captured by the enemy.

Conclusion: Choose if you will the bondage of compromise, destroying the walls that fundamentalists have built up for the freedom and safety of our people. Choose if you will. But for me, give me liberty **INSIDE THOSE WALLS**. Give me liberty inside the walls or GIVE ME DEATH. If we do not build walls of rules, standards and regulations around our people, they will know the captivity of sin **OUTSIDE THE WALLS**. And so we have one choice to make:
Either we give our people **LIBERTY inside the walls** or we will give them **DEATH outside the walls**.

140. THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE LORD

Bible Reading: Luke 22:19,20; I Corinthians 11:17-34.

Aim: To show what we remember the Lord Jesus for.

Introduction: Three reasons or purposes for having the Lord's Table are:

- a) To remember the Lord. (I Corinthians 11:24).
- b) To show the Lord's death till He come. (I Corinthians 11:26).
This declares our belief in the promise of Christ's return.
- c) To promote self-examination before partaking. (I Corinthians 11:27-32).
At the Lord's Supper, we go primarily to **meet Him**, not just to **hear about Him**. We need personal encounters with the Lord as we pour out our heart's worship and affection to Him.

What Do We Need To Remember About Jesus Christ?

- 1) **Remember His NAME:** 'Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.' (Colossians 3:17). 'Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will remember the NAME of the LORD our God.' (Psalm 20:7).
One's name denotes one's character. 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.' (Matthew 1:21). The name 'Jesus' means 'Jehovah the Saviour'.
See Isaiah 9:6; Philippians 2:9-11; John 20:31; Romans 10:13.
We have salvation only in Jesus Christ's name. (Acts 4:10-12).
- 2) **Remember His WORKS:** 'Remember his marvellous works that he hath done.' (I Chron. 16:12).
We should think of Christ's work in:
 - a) **Creation:** 'For by him were all things created.' (Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:10).
 - b) **Healing:** 'When John had heard in prison the works of Christ, the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them.' (Matthew 11:2,5).
 - c) **Salvation:** 'He said, It is finished.' (John 19:30).
 - d) **Ministry:** 'I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.' (John 17:4).
'My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.' (John 4:34).
How thoroughly the Lord Jesus committed and devoted Himself to his Father's work.
- 3) **Remember His LOVE:** 'We will remember thy love more than wine.' (Song 1:4).
'To know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.' (Ephesians 3:19).
'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?' (Romans 8:35).
'Love one another as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' (John 15:12,13). As we think of His love for us, we will be thankful and respond in worship, love and obedience. John 3:16; I John 3:16; I John 3:1; I John 3:1; II Corinthians 5:14.
'Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.'
It was Christ's love for us, not nails, that kept Him on the Cross.
- 4) **Remember His AFFLICTION:** 'Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall.' (Lamentations 3:19). See Matthew 27:34.
During the Lord's Supper we must remember Jesus Christ's suffering & affliction for us such as:

- i) 'They pierced my hands and my feet.' (Psalm 22:16).
- ii) 'All my bones are out of joint.' (Psalm 22:14).
- iii) 'My tongue cleaveth to my jaws.' (Psalm 22:15).
- iv) 'He was oppressed, and he was afflicted.' (Isaiah 53:7).
- v) 'They platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head.' (Mark 15:17).
- vi) 'They smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him.' (Mark 15:19).
- vii) 'They mocked him.' (v.20); 'they crucified him.' (v.25). (Isaiah 50:6).

5) **Remember His RESURRECTION and EXALTATION:**

'Remember that Jesus Christ . . . was raised from the dead.' (II Timothy 2:8).
'That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection.' (Philippians 3:10).
In the Lord's Supper we not only remember Jesus Christ who suffered, bled and died, but also Jesus Christ as the One who rose from the dead and now lives in the power of an endless life. He is our Great High Priest who ever lives to make intercession for us.

- 6) **Remember His MERCIES:** 'I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever.' (Psalm 89:1). 'Remember (v.11) . . . ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.' (Ephesians 2:1-13). 'It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not . . .' (Lamentations 3:22,23).
Remember the black days of sin and of what we have been saved from.
Remember the kindness and love of Christ to us.
- 7) **Remember His WORDS:** 'Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.' (Acts 20:35).
We ought to be a giving people; giving of our time, prayers, love, money.
Let us memorise Christ's words: 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.' (Colossians 3:16). 'Thy **words** were found and I did **eat** them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart . . .' (Jeremiah 15:16).

Conclusion: As we come together to the Lord's Table, let our memories recall Jesus Christ's name, works, love, afflictions, resurrection, mercies and His words.

141. I STIR UP YOUR PURE MINDS BY REMEMBRANCE

Bible Reading: II Peter 3:1-18.

Aim: To be reminded of the important things of serving God.

Introduction: There are some things that we must remember if we are to be approved workmen for Jesus Christ. It is easy to forget the major things and to get sidetracked to unimportant things.

Question: What does God want us to remember about serving Him?

- 1) Remember the **PRICE** that was **paid for our redemption**. 'Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ.' (I Peter 1:18,19). See Ephesians 1:7. Our salvation, though free to us, was expensive to God, the price being the blood of God the Son. (Acts 20:28).

- 2) Remember the **PIT** that **He drew us out of**. Do you remember your condition before you were saved? (Psalm 40:1-3). Our unsaved days are described as a horrible pit and as stuck in miry clay.
Now that we are saved, we have a solid rock foundation of Jesus Christ and His Word to live by (Matthew 7:24,25). Also, He has established our direction in life.
- 3) Remember the **PUBLIC** that **are watching you**. ‘Ye shall be witnesses unto me.’ (Acts 1:8).
‘Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.’ (Matthew 5:16). Don’t disgrace God’s Name by the way you live.
- 4) Remember the **PERSON** that **we’ll have to give account to**. We’ll have to give account of our life and service to the Lord Jesus Christ at the Judgment Seat of Christ (II Corinthians 5:10).
He will reward us for faithful service, or we’ll lose rewards (II John 7,8) and be ashamed before Him at His coming. (I John 2:28).
‘So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.’ (Romans 14:12).
- 5) Remember the **PEOPLE** **all around us who are going to hell**. ‘Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.’ (Matthew 7:13,14).
The rich man in hell said, ‘Cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’ (Luke 16:24).
Ask yourself the question, ‘Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?’ (Isaiah 33:14). Let us (a) become soul-winners; and (b) train others to be soul-winners.
- 6) Remember the **PRESENT** **of salvation is for everyone**.
‘The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.’ (Romans 6:23).
‘If thou knewest the **gift** of God and **who** it is that sayeth to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have **asked** of him, and he would have **given** thee living water.’ (John 4:10).
‘By grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.’ (Eph. 2:8). ‘Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable **gift**.’ (II Corinthians 9:25).
Let us go and tell people about God’s free gift to them of eternal life through Jesus Christ.
This free gift refutes the cults false gospel of salvation by works.
Romans 10:13 states that you are a candidate for salvation.

Conclusion: If you are not sure of heaven, receive Christ as your Saviour and you’ll know that
‘as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.’ (Psalm 103:12).
‘I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins. . .’ (Isaiah 44:22).
‘The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.’ (I John 1:7).

Jesus Christ has cleansed many from their sin and He can do the same for you.
Will you receive Christ as your Saviour today?

142. LOVE NOT THE WORLD

Bible Reading: I John 2:15-17.

Aim: To not follow the temptations and traps of the world.

Memory Verse: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.” I John 2:15-17.

Definition: “World” is “Kosmos” (Gk), meaning, a) The physical planet (2 Peter 2:5; 3:6), b) The world of mankind organised into nation states (John 16:21; Matthew 4:8-10), c) The fallen world of humanity who are indifferent to or in rebellion against God and destined for judgment (ethical meaning). It is the domain of Satan (I Jn 5:19; 4:1-5; Jn 12:31; 14:30; 2 Cor. 4:4). It is the object of judgment and saving mercy (John 3:16-19; 4:42; 6:33,51); Holy Spirit reproves the world (John 16:8-11); By faith believers can overcome the world (worldly thinking, opposition of worldly men and Satan). Devotion to things of the world produces a “worldly” attitude of mind which has no concern for the things of God (John 1:10; I Cor. 1:20,21;3:19). It is material & passing.

Introduction:

- I. We are commanded to have certain **attitudes about the world system**. These are:
 1. Love not the world (I John 2:15-17). The world is in a state of dire moral corruption.
 2. Be not conformed to this world. (Romans 12:2). The world pressures believers to conform.
 3. Do not have friendship with the world. (James 4:4). The world seeks to contaminate believers.
 4. Keep yourself unspotted from the world. (James 1:27).
 5. Overcome the world by our faith. (I John 5:4,5).
 6. Share this world’s goods with needy believers. (I John 3:17).
 7. Shine as lights in the world. (Philippians 2:15). We are to dispel worldly darkness.
 8. Deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. (Titus 2:12).
 9. The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. (Galatians 6:14). Be unresponsive to it.
 10. Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. (Mark 16:15).
 11. We are not citizens of this world. (John 17:14).
- II. The Bible warns us about many **bad things** in the world to beware of and avoid, some being:
 - 1) **Tribulation**. ‘In the world ye shall have tribulation.’ (John 16:33).
 - 2)
 - 3) **Conforming pressure** of this world to follow evil. (Romans 12:1,2).
 - 4) **Spirit** of this world: the philosophy and thinking of the world. (I Corinthians 2:12).
 - 5) **Wisdom** of this world, that is, the vain, self-confident, false opinions on the subject of religion, eg: evolution, anti-God humanism. (I Corinthians 3:19; 1:20).
 - 6) **Spectacle** of the world. We are like gladiators fighting many foes in an amphitheatre of great height being watched by thousands of spectators, with an immense host of men and angels, watching this conflict with great interest, keenly awaiting the outcome of our spiritual warfare. (I Corinthians 4:9).
 - 7) **Filth** of the world. ‘We are made as the filth of the world.’ (I Corinthians 4:13). This word ‘filth’ is the strongest expression to show the contempt and scorn which

the apostles were everywhere regarded. Filth means that which is collected by sweeping a house, such as any vile, worthless, contemptible object. Among the Greeks the word 'filth' denoted men of ignoble, worthless, wicked character, who were kept to be offered to the gods in a time of pestilence, to appease their anger. They were regarded as the most vile and worthless men in the world. This is how the world views the apostles and God's choicest saints.

- 8) **Fornicators** of the world (I Corinthians 5:10). Most unbelievers were of this description. Avoid pubs, discos, etc where such people are found.
- 9) **Fashion** of this world passes away. (I Corinthians 7:31). 'Fashion' comes from the shifting scenes of a drama play, where each scene continues for a little time, then changes as we pass on to other unreal, illusive scenes. What an appropriate description of the changing, unstable, unreal play-acting of this world, which today is popular and tomorrow is gone, to be succeeded by new actors and new scenes. How little we should set our affections on this world, and how strongly we should be prepared for the real and unchanging scenes of the next world.
- 10) **Voices** in the world. (I Corinthians 14:10). As all languages in the world are for communicating ideas, and not for display, so it should be with those who speak in church. They should speak them only when and where they would be understood. This refutes tongues spoken in a church where nobody understands them.
- 11) **Worship idols** (Acts 19:27). This well describes unsaved men of this world who worship idols and the creature rather than the Creator. eg: sport, money, pleasure,
- 12) **Corruption** in the world through lust. (II Peter 1:4). The world is full of corrupting influences. God wants to rescue us from its dominion and to make us holy.
- 13) **Pollutions** of the world (II Peter 2:20). 'Pollutions' mean 'foulness, contamination, defiling and tainting' influence that the world seeks and has on those who mix with it.
- 14) **Wickedness**. 'The whole world lieth in wickedness.' (I John 5:19). The whole world is under the control of wickedness or the government of Satan. The word 'lieth' means to recline in a passive state under Satan's dominion, making no resistance, not struggling to be free, showing no effort to throw off his reign. The dominion is complete, lying as a beast that is subdued, a body that is dead, or anything that is wholly passive, quiet and inert, body and soul, individuals and nations that are entirely subject to Satan's will. There is no government against which sinners have so little inclination to rebel, as that of Satan. (II Timothy 2:26).
- 15) **Many deceivers** in the world (II John 7). These deny that Christ became incarnate. They deny that Christ took on human nature in permanent union with His Deity. (See I John 4:2,3 JWs). "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (I John 4:1).
- 16) **Cares** of this world (Matthew 13:22; Mark 4:19) choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. Three competing concerns are life's worries, deception of wealth and desires for other things choke the word, making it unfruitful.
Q: Do you choke God's Word by letting things of the world takeover your priorities?
- 17) **Prince** of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11) is Satan. Also called 'the god of this world' (II Corinthians 4:4); 'the prince of the power of the air' (Ephesians 2:2); 'the rulers of darkness of this world' (Ephesians 6:12) because of his influence over men of this world.
- 18) **Hates** Christ. 'The world cannot hate you (apostles); but me it hateth.' (John 7:7). Why? Because Christ preached that its works were evil, and that men were sinners, so they hated Him. 'All who live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.' All who preach against man's wickedness will be opposed.

- 19) **Hates godly Christians** but loves worldly Christians. (John 15:19; 17:14). 'The world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.' (John 17:14). 'If ye were of the world, the world would love his own, but because ye are not of the world . . . therefore the world hateth you.' (John 15:19). See I John 3:13.
- 20) **Disputers** of this world (I Corinthians 1:20). What is our answer to worldly disputers who want to argue? It is that God has chosen the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe (v.21), because the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16).
- 21) **Sorrow** of the world worketh death. (II Corinthians 7:10). This is sorrow arising from loss of property, friends or disappointment, as well as sorrow for sin when caught. It does not see itself as an offence against God. There is no looking to God for pardon and consolation. This sorrow produces distress, breaks the spirit, destroys the peace, and mars one's happiness, causing people to suicide, fret, murmur and complain against God.
- 22) **Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of life**, is not of the Father, but is of the world (I John 2:16). Lust of the flesh is indulging worldly appetites, as the purpose for living. Lust of the eyes is that which gratifies the sight, eg: jewels, clothing, houses, cars, as the chief purpose of life, without seeking Christ or His Kingdom. The pride of life is whatever tends to promote pride and boasting.

Conclusion: Which world are you living for? Which world are you setting your affections on? (Colossians 3:1,2). Get eternal values today. Lay up treasures in heaven. Live for Christ, souls, His Word and His Kingdom, not the passing things of this life.

143. DEBTOR TO THE PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

Bible Reading: Romans 1:13-16 and 15:26,27.

Aim: To fulfil our responsibility to tell others the gospel.

Introduction: Paul said, 'I am debtor both to the Greeks and the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.' (Romans 1:14). There are three 'I am's' in Romans 1:14-16.

- a) I am a debtor (v.14). The fact.
- b) I am ready (v.15). Paul's character.
- c) I am not ashamed (v.16). His Payment.

Paul bases each statement on the previous one. He says, Because I am a debtor, I am ready to preach the gospel. Because I am ready to preach the gospel, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

- a) The fact: I am a debtor.
- b) Paul's character: I am ready to preach the gospel.
- c) His payment: I owe every man the debt of not being ashamed of this wonderful message of Christ.

Question 1: What do I owe?

- a) My love. 'Owe no man anything, but to love one another.' (Romans 13:8). I owe every person in this world my love.
- b) To live in the Spirit. 'We are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.' (Romans 8:12,13). I owe it to people to live in the Spirit and not after the flesh.

Question 2: To whom do I owe this debt of love, this debt to be in the will of God all my life, this debt to serve God with all my heart?

(1) I Owe This Debt To The Past

I owe God's people in the past a debt. That debt is:

- to love people enough to give them the gospel;
- not to be ashamed of the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16);
- to do God's will.
- I owe a debt to:
 - every Christian who has ever lived;
 - every preacher who has ever preached the gospel;
 - every church that has ever stood for the Word of God;
 - every soul-winner who ever pointed someone to Jesus Christ;
 - the early Christians to pass on the gospel torch that they carried in the past.
- I see their bodies scarred with the wounds of persecution and I say, 'I owe them a debt. I must give everything that I have to God.'
- I see martyrs whose tombs are stained with their blood. They preserved this book for me.
 - The second man on a relay team owes the first man his best;
 - The third man on a relay team owes the first and second man his best;
 - The fourth man on a relay team owes the first, second and third man his best.

You and I owe a debt to every person who has preserved this message, that we likewise preserve this message for the generations to come. To those who handed us the baton of the gospel race, we owe it to them to run the race while we are here, so that when we hand the baton to others, we'll give them a good lead to run the race to win their generations.

- I see the martyrs eaten by lions in the Roman amphitheatre. I see the 100,000 French Huguenot Christians martyred on and after St Bartholomew's day by the Roman Catholic Catherine de Medici. People died so that you could be saved and be in this room today. People died so that you could have the Bible to read.
- Australia is languishing today because of the mediocrity of Christian people. It's time the people of God in Australia stood up and said, 'I owe a debt and I'll pay that debt. I owe God everything I have and I'll pay that debt.'
- God has not called us to:
 - **live** like the world;
 - **talk** like the world;
 - **dress** like the world;
 - **fashion ourselves** like the world.It's time we were willing and happy to be different from the world for Jesus Christ.
- The Christians who lived before me gave me this Bible. They suffered for my freedom, and I'll not squander it. I am a debtor to:
 - those who pastored me;
 - those who taught me in Sunday School;
 - my mother who prayed with me daily.
- You young people owe some debts as well. You owe a debt to:
 - God who saved you;
 - Your parents who raised you and paid for you;

- Those who taught you the Bible to pass it on. Don't go to the liquor lifestyle. Don't go to the rock music lifestyle.
- It's time God's people **lived** like God's people, **sang** like God's people, **acted** like God's people. Why? Because we owe a debt.
- Some people say, 'But, preacher, this is a Sunday morning worship service.'
Answer: Some of you don't need to worship this morning; you need to get right with God, confess and forsake your sins.
- I'm a debtor to those dear saints of God who heard me preach in years gone by, loved me, and overlooked my faults while I developed as a preacher.
- I owe a debt to those young people who have surrendered to preach in this church.

Everyone who has ever influenced you for God, or taught you in Sunday school class, or preached to you, or loved you, or tried to help you get right with God, you owe them a debt to live for God. We are truly debtors to the past.

(2) I Owe This Debt To The Present

I am a debtor to you people today.

- a) I am a debtor to the young people to give them all I've got.
- b) I owe you a debt to teach you decency, conviction, morals, and to live right for God.
- c) I owe a debt to those people who pray for me to be all that God wants me to be.
- d) I owe a debt to you people who have tithed and given money and energy to build this church, so we can continue sending the gospel to Australia, Africa, India, Philippines and all over the world.
- e) I owe you and your children a debt to continue preaching and serving you, God, and those who will be saved.
- f) We owe a debt to those who led us to Christ to continue faithfully serving God. Paul hesitated to remind Philemon 'how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.' (Philemon 19).
The Macedonian and Achaian Christians were debtors to the poor Jerusalem saints who gave them the gospel. (Romans 15:26,27).

(3) I Owe This Debt To The Future

I owe a debt to the coming generation.

I owe a debt to the young people, to the Sunday School children, to the children in the creche.

I owe a debt to cheer the discouraged, because people have encouraged me.

Everything good about us, somebody did it for us.

We are all in debt to God, to our parents, and to those who loved and taught us God's Word. As we have received the gospel and been entrusted with its soul-saving message, we owe to this generation and to the next generation the opportunity to hear its message.

Conclusion: We are debtors to:

- those who have gone before us;
- each other today;
- those who will grow up and be blessed by this church.

Question: Will you pay your debt to the past, present and future generations?

144. I AM READY

Bible Reading: Romans 1:1-17.

Aim: To be always ready to do what God wants us to do.

Introduction: One of the greatest hindrances to the cause of Christ is that most Christians are **NOT READY or NOT PREPARED** to do what God wants them to do. Most Christians know that God has a plan for their lives, but few are ready, trained and willing to fulfil it.

Question: What are many Christians ready to do?

I. **MANY CHRISTIANS ARE READY TO:**

- 1) make money, but not ready to give generously to God's work and ministry;
- 2) criticise those working hard for God, but not ready to help and support them;
- 3) find fault in others, but blind to their own faults;
- 4) get to work on time, but not ready to get to church on time;
- 5) go to sports and night clubs, but not ready to go soul winning or to Bible Study;
- 6) listen to rock music, but not ready to sing praises to God;
- 7) study a secular course, but not ready to study at Bible College;
- 8) ready to go on an overseas holiday, but not ready to go on an overseas mission trip;
- 9) memorise jokes, poetry and words of rock music, but not ready to memorise Scripture.

II. **WHAT WE SHOULD BE READY TO DO**

- 1) **Ready to preach the Gospel.** 'As much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also.' (Romans 1:15). This involves being trained in soul winning by going out with someone experienced who knows how to lead people to Christ, especially using the STOP tract, so you can use it to train other soul winners. We must be ready to follow up new Christians. This is what builds great churches for God. Let us pray for labourers who are eager to say 'I am ready to serve' in soul winning, visitation, teaching, etc. Learn to use the STOP tract by studying pages 93-97.
- 2) **Ready to Hear.** 'Be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools.' (Ecclesiastes 5:1).
'Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.' James 1:19.
Some people are so full of their own opinion, that they have no time to listen to others. Some people so dominate a conversation, that they won't let you speak. Some people don't think that they may have some faults that they are blind to. Some people are slow to learn, because they won't hear what God or others are saying to them.
'Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.' (Hebrews 4:7).
Q: Are you ready to hear what God is saying to you?
Q: Will you say, 'Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth' as Eli asked Samuel, and be greatly used by God?
- 3) **Ready to give an ANSWER to cults and sceptics.** 'But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.' (1 Peter 3:15).
Question: Do you have a good Bible answer to every objection a person may ask you? Would you be able to find it quickly?
Question: How do you get answers?
Answer: a) By talking to people and understanding their questions, problems & needs
b) By studying issues that you don't have an answer to;
c) By memorising the answer, or writing it some place you'll find it next time.

Question: Have you ever debated a JW, SDA, Muslim, etc. and not had an answer?

Answer: You should study the Bible and books like 'Answers' so you will be a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.

- 4) **Ready to Support Missions.** 'For as touching the ministering to the saints, . . . Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many.' (II Corinthians 9:1,2). Achaia was the part of Greece of which Corinth was the capital. 'Achaia was ready' means that the churches in this area had prepared themselves for this collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem. Paul stated that the collection was already made and waiting.
Question: How ready are you to help needy Christians elsewhere, so they can spread the gospel in their area? This involves planning and giving to buy tracts, Bibles, Bible Colleges, support pastors.
- 5) **Ready to Distribute.** (I Timothy 6:18). Ready to divide wealth with others, generously.
Question: Are you ready to tithe, and give to God's work, knowing that you are laying up treasures in heaven?
- 6) **Ready to Pray.** 'Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.' (Mark 14:38). If we have a prayer list of people and things to pray for, this shows we are ready to pray daily.
- 7) **Ready to every Good Work.** 'Put them in mind to be . . . ready to every good work.' (Titus 3:1). A Christian should be prepared and prompt to do all that is good. He should not need to be urged, coaxed, or persuaded, but should be so ready to do good that he will count it a privilege to do it. 'As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.' (Galatians 6:10). The opportunity to do good imposes on us the obligation to do it. We do good, not when it is convenient, but when we have opportunity. We should be thankful for the opportunity to do good. We should do good to all men, no matter how often the opportunity occurs, the more the better, no matter how much self-denial it may cost us and no matter how little fame we get by it. In our zeal for the world at large, we are not to forget or neglect our family and Christian friends.
- 8) **Ready to Write.** 'My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.' (Psalm 45:1). It is good to spread the gospel and Bible truths by writing pamphlets, newspaper articles, sermons, Bible outlines, as well as letters of encouragement to those in need. If God lays some matter on your heart to write, you should be ready to write it and publish it if necessary.
- 9) **Ready to Die.** 'For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.' (II Timothy 4:6,7).
Paul's soon death is a reason why Timothy should work diligently and faithfully in serving God. The world was about to be deprived of Paul's work and experience. Paul wanted those who succeeded him to carry on God's work with all their zeal, energy and might. For us to be ready to die means that we must have finished God's plan for our life, trained up people to carry on the work of soul winning and Bible teaching, and equipped them to train other faithful men so the network keeps multiplying after our death through fundamental churches.
- 10) **Ready for Jesus Christ's Second Coming.** 'Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.' (Matthew 24:44).
Being ready for Christ's return means living and serving God so that your life's work will be approved by Christ, and that you will not be ashamed before Him at His coming. (I John 2:28).
If Christ came today, would you be ready to meet Him? Would He say to you, 'Well done good and faithful servant' or would He say 'Thou wicked and lazy servant'?

145. THE WAY OF THE SOUL WINNER

Bible Reading: Acts 3:1-11.

Aim: To see the need to become soul winners.

Introduction: A missionary is just a soul winner and a Bible teacher. If you don't win souls to Christ here, you won't win souls to Christ overseas. Let us see what contributes to success in soul winning.

- 1) **The Praying Partners** (Acts 3:1). Peter and John went to the temple at the 9th hour (3 pm) to pray. To be a soul winner, you must pray. To be a soul winner you must walk with God. You cannot walk with the world and walk like the world, if you want to win souls for Christ.
- 2) **The Paralyzed Poor Beggar** (Acts 3:2). Australia is like the poor paralyzed beggar whom Peter and John met. Sydney is probably the most wicked city in the world. Sin is everywhere. Sydney and Australia are poor spiritually and paralyzed by wickedness.
- 3) **The Penniless Preacher** (Acts 3:3-6). The beggar expected to get some money, but Peter said, 'Silver and gold have I none.' (In Greek that means 'not a cracker', 'broke', 'nothing'.) God uses penniless preachers. 'Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom . . .' (James 2:5). There is something wonderful about having to trust God. God takes care of His preachers.
- 4) **The Physical Provision** (Acts 3:6,7). Peter 'lifted him up and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength'. (v 7). 'In the **name** of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.' Peter healed the man in the name of Jesus Christ, meaning by Jesus Christ's authority. This fulfilled Jesus Christ's promise in Mark 16:17,18 where He said, 'These signs shall follow them that believe; in **my name** shall they cast out devils . . . they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.' The apostles never attempted to perform a miracle by their own power, but only in the name of Jesus Christ. It was important for the beggar and for Israel to know that he was healed by the authority of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus was thus designated on the cross. He who had been crucified as an imposter had power to heal. Sometimes we may be required to provide food for hungry people or medicine for sick people, along with sharing the gospel with them.
- 5) **The Powerful Portrayal** (Acts 3:8). He walked, leaped and entered the temple praising God. New converts should come to church praising God for their salvation.
- 6) **The People were Pole-axed, perplexed and amazed** (Acts 3:9-11). The people had passed by this beggar for many years. They knew him well as an incurable, paralyzed beggar. This man's healing sent a convincing message to the friends of Jesus and to the enemies of Jesus who had crucified Him, that this lame beggar was a type of lame people who will be healed when Christ returns and that Jesus Christ is God. 'Your God will come with vengeance . . . then shall the lame man leap as an hart.' (Isaiah 35:4-6).

Application: Reaching Australia for Christ happens one by one. If preachers do not go soul winning, few others will. Be very thorough in leading people to Christ. Use the STOP tract. Many preachers are Baptist by name, but Calvinist by practice. Many preachers used to go door-to-door soul winning, but now they are too busy. Are they too busy to have a bath? Soul winning is the Spirit filled soul winner contacting God-conscious sinners whom God has touched.

Question: How do you know which sinner God has touched and prepared?

Answer: You don't. That is why you preach the gospel to every creature. The preachers and future preachers of Australia are here today. Take new converts soul winning. Soul-winning is both taught and caught. You can only reach people one by one. Our job is soul winning. Christ's job is to build His church. We need to do more follow-up.

Four reasons for soul winning are:

- 1) The torments of hell.
 - 2) The sacrifice of Jesus Christ for all.
 - 3) The only hope for Australia is the salvation of sinners.
 - 4) Our accountability at the Judgment Seat of Christ.
- 5) **Challenge:** I want you men and ladies to make a commitment to share the gospel thoroughly with one person every week. Will you make this commitment today?

146. BEHOLD I HAVE GRAVEN THEE UPON THE PALMS OF MY HAND

Bible Reading: Isaiah 49:13-16.

Aim: To show that in all situations of life, the Lord remembers us and loves us.

Introduction: A preacher was once driving along and he gave this fellow a lift. He shared the Gospel and the man received Christ as his Saviour. The man stayed for church next day, and decided that he wanted to live in the area and keep coming to that church. That week he came to the preacher with a bandage on his arm, with news that he had a surprise for his preacher. It turned out that he had tattooed the word 'Jesus' on his arm, because he wanted to tell people what Jesus had done for him. The Bible says that we ought not to get tattooed (Leviticus 19:28), but God uses this to illustrate His love for us. That is what Jesus has done for us. The people of Jerusalem said to God in Isaiah 49:14 'my Lord hath forgotten me'. The Lord replied, 'Can a woman forget her sucking child?' (v.15). Then in verse 16 God said, 'Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.'

Truth: God has engraved us on the palms of his hands. When some men tattoo the names of their girlfriends on their arms, it's their way of saying that they love them. The Lord Jesus is saying to us:

'I love you so much. I always think of you.'

- The Israelites said, 'Lord, have you forgotten us?' Have you ever felt that the Lord has forgotten you? You may think that the Lord could not know your problems. God says in verse 16, 'Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.'

Note: When the Lord uses the word '*Behold*', it is a great sign word, and He is pointing to something special. This word points to a **real treasure**. God says, 'You think I'm not

conscious of your problems? You don't think I understand your burdens? Look, watch this, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.'

- You may have a photo of your loved ones in your wallet or purse. God says, 'Look at my hands.
I have graven you on the palms of my hands. It's there forever. As long as my hands live, you are engraved there.'
- God does know:
 - your burdens today;
 - your heartaches today;
 - where you live, and your street address;
 - your problems;
 - everything about you;
 - your sorrows; - your needs;
 - your perplexities;
 - your questions;
 - your distresses.
 -

He said, 'Look, I've got you on the palms of my hands.' God reminds us that He knows all about us.

God is saying, 'O burdened soul, O wearied heart. Don't think I've forgotten you. If you are facing troubles, burdens and sorrows, and feel that the whole world is falling out from under you, look at my hands.' Your name is engraved on the hands of God the Father.

Question: Do you know how many burdens we have here today?

Answer: The same number of burdens present as we have people.

The Bible says that God has our names in 3 places:

- 1) Our names are written on His **heart**;
- 2) Our names are written on His **shoulders**;
- 3) Our names are written on the **palms** of His hands.

- (1) Our names are in the heart of God, so God never forgets to **love us**. Remember what the Jewish High Priest would wear? He wore the breastplate with the 12 Tribes of Israel engraved on the breastplate, each engraved on a precious stone. Read Exodus 28:15-21, **29**.
- (2) Our names are on God's shoulders, showing what? That God always gives us **security and supports** us. He is always holding us up. Read Exodus 28:6-**12**.
- (3) Our names are on His hands to show God's care for us. God says to us:
'I've got you in my **heart** to let you know that I always **love** you.'
'I've got you on my **shoulders** to let you know that you are always **secure**.'
'I've got you in the **palms** of my **hands** to let you know that I'll always care for your every need.'

Conclusion: You are engraved on the hands of God with the precious blood of His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. There are scars in His hands today. There are scars in His hands today where He shed His own precious blood to pay for your sins, so you could go to heaven, be saved forever and be a child of God. So with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, the engraving took place on the hands of God. Zech 13:6. **Question:** Is your name in God's hands? Have you received Jesus Christ as your Saviour? Do so today. Are you engraved in the palms of Christ?

147. GOD BRINGS PROSPERITY OUT OF ADVERSITY

Bible Reading: Genesis 28:10-22

Aim: To show that God often leads us through great trials in preparation for some greater service or blessings. Whenever bad things happen to a believer, God can bring good things out of them.

Introduction: Almost every person whom God used greatly, was first put through a wilderness experience in preparation and training for the best plan God had for them. God brings good out of evil for the person who loves God and seeks to do His will. John 12:23-26

In our sorrows, there are joys;
In our crosses, there are crowns;
In our miseries, there are mercies;
In our losses, there are gains;
In our disappointments, there are God's appointments;
In our contradictions, there are compensations.

Question: What can we learn from Bible characters who went through wilderness trials and testings? Consider these Bible characters to see how good came out of trials so as to encourage us in difficulties:

1. **JACOB.** After Jacob had fled from his home and his murderous brother Esau, he slept on a stony pillow (Genesis 28:11). In Jacob's stony pillow he saw the Lord on top of a ladder leading to heaven. He received 5 promises from God. He called it the *House of God, Bethel* (v.17) and the *Gate of Heaven*. He made a four-fold vow and promised to give one-tenth of all that God gave him to God.
2. **JOSEPH.** After spending about 10 years in jail, Joseph found that God was preparing him for the palace to do a mighty work of saving many people's lives. (Genesis 50:20; Psalm 105:17-22).
He became second-in-charge of Egypt. Pharaoh changed his name to Zaphnath-Paaneah (Genesis 41:45) meaning 'Revealer of secrets and Saviour of the world'. Joseph's sufferings and exaltation became a wonderful prophetic picture of Jesus Christ's future suffering and exaltation.
3. **MOSES** in the wilderness in Exodus 3:1-4:13.
Moses spent 40 years learning to be **great** in Pharaoh's palace;
Moses spent 40 years learning to be a **nobody** in the wilderness;
Moses spent 40 years serving God **doing a great work** of delivering Israel from Egypt, receiving the 10 Commandments, writing Scripture, seeing God, and learning God's Name 'I AM' (3:14,15).
4. **DAVID.** David turned the taunts of Goliath into a great triumph.
Goliath humiliated the Israelite army for 40 days.
God used a little boy, David, to humiliate the Philistine army and win a great victory for God and Israel. (I Samuel 17:43-50). David experienced great suffering in being chased by Saul for many years through the wilderness. One day, God turned David's suffering to great joy when he was crowned King of Israel.
Question: What giants such as Goliath and Saul do we need to conquer by faith?

5. **ELIJAH.** Elijah fled into the wilderness after being threatened with death by Jezebel. God encouraged Elijah by sending an angel to encourage him, giving him a new ministry and a new friend in Elisha to carry on his work, as well as a chariot ride to heaven without seeing death.

6. **PAUL.** Paul's two wilderness experiences led to great blessing:
 a) Paul spent three years in the Arabian desert, studying to get his doctrine clear (Galatians 1:17), which helped him in his preaching, his letters to the churches and his missionary journeys in the years to come.
Lesson: Years spent in studying God's Word and in learning to be a nobody are laying solid foundations for future service.
 b) Paul spent many years sacrificing, suffering and being persecuted on his missionary journeys and in jail (2 Corinthians 11:21-30), which led to:
 - many churches being started;
 - writing much of the New Testament which has blessed millions of Christians;
 - becoming a great example who inspired much soul winning, missionary activity, and was a model for future missionaries.

7. **JOHN.** While banished to the isle of Patmos, John was given a glorious revelation of heaven, of the end of the age, and of eternity future. (Revelation 1:9). God sent him away from people, to give him the visions of Revelation. What seemed like a bad thing (his exile on Patmos), led to a very good thing of the book of Revelation being written. This book has given blessing and hope to millions of Christians' lives. It has greatly informed believers on Christ's return. It shows us the ultimate defeat of Satan and victory for believers at Christ's coming.

8. **JESUS.** Jesus had two main wilderness experiences:
 a) In Luke 4:1 the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil for 40 days. The result of His victory over Satan here was fame, power, glory and teaching God's Word with power. (Luke 4:14,15,31,32).
 b) Jesus knew that the valley of suffering on the cross that He was to endure, would lead to the glory of His resurrection, ascension and final victory over sin and Satan.

Conclusion:

Question: What wilderness experiences or valleys are you going through?

Answer: These can be the precursors to great blessings. (Romans 8:28). The way to cure despair is to give yourself to prayer, for prayer is the great cure of every ill. Sufferings and wilderness experiences for God's best servants are part of our training for a bigger work for God.

Question: Will you see wilderness experiences as being for your learning and future blessing?

148. JOSEPH: A TYPE OF CHRIST

Notice the similarities between Joseph and Jesus Christ:

	Similarity	Joseph	Jesus
1	Beloved by their fathers	Genesis 37:3	Matthew 3:17
2	Regarded themselves as shepherds	Genesis 37:2	John 10:11-14
3	Sent by their fathers to their brethren	Genesis 37:13,14	Luke 20:13; John 3:17
4	Hated by their brethren without a cause	Genesis 37:4,5,8	John 1:11; 7:5; 15:25
5	Were plotted against by their brethren	Genesis 37:20	John 11:53
6	Were severely tempted	Genesis 39:7	Matthew 4:1
7	Were taken to Egypt	Genesis 37:36	Matthew 2:14,15
8	Were stripped of their robes	Genesis 37:23	John 19:23,24
9	Were sold for the price of a slave	Genesis 37:28	Matthew 26:15
10	Were bound	Genesis 39:20	Matthew 27:2
11	Remained silent offering no defence	Genesis 39:20	Isaiah 53:7
12	Were falsely accused	Genesis 39:16-18	Matthew 26:59,60
13	Were left in their hour of need	Genesis 40:14,23	Matthew 27:46
14	Experienced God's presence through all	Genesis 39:2,21,23	John 16:32
15	Were respected by their jailors	Genesis 39:21	Luke 23:47
16	Were numbered with 2 transgressors	Genesis 39:20	Matthew 27:38
17	One was later lost and the other saved	Genesis 40:2,3,21	Luke 23:32,39-43
18	Were age 30 when their ministry began	Genesis 41:46	Luke 3:23
19	Were highly exalted after their sufferings	Genesis 41:49	Philippians 2:9-11
20	Took Gentile brides	Genesis 41:45	Ephesians 3:6; 5:23-32
21	Were lost to their brothers for a while	Genesis 42:7,8	Romans 10:1-3; 11:7,8
22	Forgave and restored their repentant brothers	Genesis 45:1-15	Zechariah 12:10-12; Micah 7:18,19
23	Were visited and honoured by all nations	Genesis 41:57	Isaiah 2:2,3; 49:6
24	All commanded to bow the knee to them	Genesis 41:43	Philippians 2:9-11
25	Same names: Revealer of secrets, Saviour	Genesis 41:45	Matt.13:35; John 4:42
26	Provided bread to multitudes	Genesis 41:56	Matthew 14:13-21
27	Rule together with their bride	Genesis 41:45	Revelation 19:7-21

149. CHRIST, A PROPHET LIKE UNTO MOSES

Bible Reading: Deuteronomy 18:15-22; Acts 3:22-26; Luke 7:11-16; John 6:14 and 7:40.

Aim: To see how Moses so clearly prefigured Jesus Christ. To prove that Jesus Christ is the Messiah and prophet spoken of by Moses, and that 'the prophet' is not Mohammad as Muslims claim, but Christ.

Introduction: We learn much about Christ by noticing His similarities to Moses. At first there seems little in common, yet a closer examination reveals many similarities. Let this message be an answer to the Greeks who asked, 'Sirs, we would see Jesus.' Let us see Jesus in Moses' life as follows:

	Similarity	Moses	Jesus
1	Attempts to kill them in infancy	Exodus 1:22	Matthew 2:13-16
2	Chosen to deliver God's people	Exodus 3:10; Acts 7:35	Luke 4:18; II Cor. 1:10; I Thessalonians 1:10
3	Prophet	Deuteronomy 18:15	John 6:14,15; Luke 7:16
4	Priest	Psalms 99:6	Hebrews 7:23-27
5	King	Deuteronomy 18:15	John 6:14; John 1:49
6	Judge	Exodus 18:13	John 5:27; Acts 17:31
7	Shepherd	Exodus 3:1	John 10:11-14, 27
8	Mediator between God and man	Exodus 33:8,9	I Timothy 2:5
9	Intercessor	Numbers 21:7	Romans 8:34
10	Refused the glory of earthly kingdoms	Hebrews 11:24-27	Matthew 4:8-10
11	Rich yet became poor for sake of others	Hebrews 11:26	II Corinthians 8:9
12	Endured reproach because of future glory	Hebrews 11:26	Hebrews 12:2
13	Called out of Egypt	Hebrews 11:27	Matthew 2:15
14	Misunderstood, rejected by their brethren	Acts 7:25-28	John 1:10,11
15	Rejected by man, but exalted by God	Acts 7:35	Acts 2:36
16	Brought their people rest from burdens	Exodus 5:4,5	Matthew 11:28,29
17	Brought liberty to the captives	Exodus 12:31-33	Luke 4:18
18	Had their enemies bow the knee to them	Exodus 11:8	Philippians 2:9-11
19	Bring deliverance with a midnight cry	Exodus 14:21	Matthew 25:6
20	Exercised power over the sea	Exodus 14:21	Matthew 8:26,27
21	Gave water to the thirsty	Exodus 17:6	John 7:37; 4:14
22	Gave bread miraculously for their people to eat	Psalms 78:24,25 John 6:31,32	John 6:1-14, 33-35, 48-51, 57-58, 63, 68
23	Nearly stoned by their own people	Exodus 17:4	John 8:58,59
24	Advocates for their people	Numbers 27:5	Matthew 12:30
25	Demanded complete allegiance to God	Exodus 32:26	Matthew 12:30
26	Meek	Numbers 12:3	Matthew 11:29
27	Were envied	Psalms 106:16	Mark 15:10
28	Had glorious transfigured faces	Exodus 34:29,30	Matthew 17:1,2,3
29	People scoffed at their return	Exodus 32:1	II Peter 3:3,4
30	Sprinkled the people with covenant blood	Exodus 24:8	Luke 22:20; Heb.10:22

31	Suffered at the hand of God for others	Deuteronomy 1:37	Isaiah 53:4,5
32	Obtained pardon for others	Numbers 14:17-20	Ephesians 4:32
33	Pronounced a parting blessing	Deuteronomy 33:1	Luke 24:50,51
34	In rejection, turned to the Gentiles	Exodus 2:15	Acts 18:5,6
35	Receive a Gentile bride	Exodus 2:21	Ephesians 5:30-32
36	Delivered Israel with their Gentile bride	Exodus 4:19,20	Revelation 19:7-21
37	Brought up as sons of a virgin	Exodus 2:1-10 (v.5-10)	Matthew 1:22,23
38	Born when Israel was under Gentile rule	Exodus 1:8-10	Luke 2:1-3
39	Placed by their mothers in unusual beds	Ark in water: Ex. 2:3	Manger: Luke 2:7
40	Saved in infancy from a death decree by a ruling Gentile king	Exodus 1:22; 2:1-3	Matthew 2:13,16
41	Raised by daughters of a kingly line	Exodus 2:5-10	Luke 1:26,27-33
42	Fled their land of birth because of a king's wrath	Exodus 2:15	Matthew 2:13
43	Returned to birth land to do many miracles	Exodus 4:19-21	Matthew 2:19-20
44	Criticised by family members	Numbers 12:1-2	John 7:3-5; 12:37-44
45	Experienced a 40-day fast alone with God	Exodus 34:28; 24:18	Matthew 4:2
46	Spoken to audibly by God	Exodus 19:9-20; 34:5-6	John 12:23-28
47	Delivered people by shedding of blood	Exodus 12:3-23	Hebrews 9:11-15
48	Established memorial meals to help their people remember and give thanks for God's salvation	Passover: Exodus 12:3-14,25-27 Leviticus 23:5	Lord's Supper: Luke 22:19; I Corinthians 11:26
49	Spoke God's word with God's authority and in God's name	Exodus 4:12; 20:19	Matthew 7:28,29 Mark 1:21-22; Lk4:20,21
50	Willing to die instead of the people	Exodus 32:31-32	John 10:11, 17-18
51	Both reappeared after their death	Matthew 17:3	Luke 24:13-53; Acts 1:3-11
52	Accepted when they return to Israel	Exodus 4:29-31	Acts 15:14-17; Rom 11:26
53	Had an angel guarding their tomb	Matthew 28:2-6	Jude 9
54	Revealed God's Name to God's people	Exodus 3:13-14	John 17:6,11,12
55	Did many miracles, signs and wonders as nobody else has done	Deuteronomy 34:10-12	John 7:31; 11:47
56	Instituted a day of worship and remembrance	Sabbath: Exodus 16:23,26-30	Sunday: Acts 20:7 John 20:1, 19, 26
57	Sent 12 spies, and 12 disciples	Numbers 13	Mark 3:13-19
58	Sent 70 out to preach to the people	Ex 24:1,9; Num.11:25	Luke 10:1,17
59	Contended with masters of evil	Exodus 5:1,2; 17:11.	Matthew 4:1-11
60	Opened new Dispensation: Law; Grace	Exodus 20:1-17	John 1:17
61	Raised in houses of men not their fathers	Exodus 2:9,10	Acts 7:20,21; Matt. 1:18-25
62	Murmured against	Exodus 16:2; 17:3	John 6:41; 7:10-12
63	Instituted a Law and a moral code	Exodus 20:1-17	Romans 8:2; 7:6; Gal.6:2

150. HOW TO GET A CONCERN FOR WINNING LOST PEOPLE TO CHRIST John 1:35-51.

1. Realise that all people without Christ will go to hell forever. Mark 9:42-50; John 3:18,36; I Corinthians 5:11; Revelation 14:9-13. Psalm 126:5,6.
2. Joy that soul-winning brings to the soul-winner, convert, God, angels, and fellow believers.
3. Realise the value of a person.
Man is: a) an immortal being,
b) made in God's image.
c) Cost of redemption is Christ's blood,
d) struggle between God and Satan for man's possession,
e) God calls believers "Jewels." Malachi 3:16-18.
4. Realise our accountability to God. I Corinthians 9:16; II Corinthians 5:18,20; Ezekiel 33:1-11.
5. Look at life from an eternal viewpoint. Think of the:
a) Rewards for us at the Judgment seat of Christ. II Corinthians 5:10
b) Pain of hell for unbelievers forever. Revinthians 20:11-15
c) Joys of heaven for believers to enjoy. II Corinthians 1:10
6. Realise the shortness of time and the length of eternity. Ephesians 2:7.
Challenge: Getting people into heaven requires:
a) Decision: "Choose you this day" Joshua 24:16
b) an investment of time and energy: 'Present your bodies a living sacrifice.' Romans 12:1. "Son, go work today in my vineyard." Matthew 21:28.

151. FIVE QUESTIONABLE ISSUES

1. Head coverings for women (I Corinthians 11:4-16).

Some churches insist on women having their heads covered during worship services, because of their understanding of I Corinthians 11:5,6,13. They ignore I Corinthians 11:15, 'But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.'

Question: How should we correctly understand I Corinthians 11:5,6,13?

'But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head.' (v.5);

'but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered (2619).' (v.6).

'Judge ye in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?' (v.13).

Answer: The Greek word for 'covering' (2619) is 'kata kalupto' meaning 'to be covered with a veil or something which hangs down'. The covering here involves either the hair of a woman hanging down, or if that is not possible, to cover with a veil. Remember that women of loose morals, especially the prostitute priestesses of the temple of Aphrodite at Corinth, kept their hair very short to advertise themselves as temple prostitutes. Shaven heads on Christian women was strictly forbidden, so that nobody would mistake them as temple prostitutes or as being immoral.

Question: What happened when one of these temple prostitutes at Corinth was saved?

Answer: Since she could not grow her hair immediately, she used a veil to cover her head to show that she was no longer a temple prostitute.

For other women who already had long hair, they did not need to wear a veil, because 'her hair is given her for a covering'. (I Cor. 11:15) See *New Testament Word Study*, Spiros Zodhiates p.830 (word 2619).

Hence today, women with long hair do not need to wear a veil to church.

2. Television in the Home

Question: What are the consequences when parents allow their children to watch television at home?

Answer: 'I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.' (Psalm 101:2,3).

When parents let their sons and daughters watch wrong, wicked and unbiblical things on television, the following evil consequences enter your children:

- (i) It establishes the practice of tolerating evil to enjoy some good.
'A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.' (I Corinthians 5:6).
- (ii) It lowers their resistance to evil, by getting them to laugh at sins like lying, stealing, cheating, and rebellious. 'the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.' (Ecclesiastes 7:4).
- (iii) It provides continued access to the world and its wrong values.
'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.' (I John 2:15).
- (iv) It weakens and sears their consciences by exposing them to ever-increasing lows of immorality, 'that thou by them mightest war a good warfare: holding faith and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck.' (I Timothy 1:18,19).
'Even their mind and conscience is defiled.' (Titus 1:15).
- (v) It teaches them to look up to and relate to evil individuals whom you would never allow into your home. 'A companion of fools shall be destroyed.' (Proverbs 13:20).
- (vi) It wastes large amounts of time which could be spent in many other useful activities such as Bible study; soul winning; disciple-making; helping parents with housework, study or work. 'Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.' (Ephesians 5:16).
- (vii) It weakens their creativity by drowning out the warnings of Scripture and their conscience. 'Quench not the Spirit.' (I Thessalonians 5:19).
- (viii) It ultimately makes them the enemies of God.
'Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.' (James 4:4).

3. 'Christian' or Worldly Rock Music

Question: What are the consequences when parents allow their children to listen to rock music?

Answer: 'It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.' Eccles 7:5 'Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.' (Eph. 5:19). 'Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things.' (Isaiah 12:5). When parents let their children listen to rock music, these consequences will poison your children:

- (i) It will **tune them in** to the **spirit of this world**. 'Now we have received not the spirit of the world (worldly music), but the spirit which is of God (Godly ways and music); that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.' (I Corinthians 2:12).
- (ii) It will **dull the sensitivity of their conscience** as it opposes this worldly music. 'Quench not the spirit.' (I Thessalonians 5:19). 'For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.' (Galatians 5:17).
- (iii) They **admire ungodly** and **wicked, fornicating heroes**. The greatest form of admiration is **imitation**, as seen by teens wearing black T-shirts with their rock star heroes on them. 'But (God's people) were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works (eg rock music). And served their idols (rock star idols): which were a snare unto them....' (Psalm 106:35-36).
- (iv) They have accepted the '**do you own thing, satisfy yourself**' philosophy of false religion. 'For many walk, of whom I have told you often, & now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction...who mind earthly things' Phil 3:18-19
- (v) They are now **more vulnerable to worldly exploitation in other areas** (eg: rock music is closely associated with drugs, fornication, rebellion, witchcraft, alcohol, immoral crowd, etc).
- (vi) They have made rock music **more important than living for Christ**, especially by causing Christians who have left the rock music scene to stumble.

4. Alcohol

Question: What are the consequences on children when parents allow alcohol in their home?

Answer: Every alcoholic started off as a social drinker.

- (i) It **places your approval** on a product that brings **death, destruction** and **misery** to millions of people. 'Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the **wine**; they that go to seek **mixed wine**.' (Proverbs 23:29,30).
- (ii) It places people in **addiction and bondage**, so that many become alcoholics. 'When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.' (Proverbs 23:25). 'I will not be brought under the power of any.' (I Corinthians 6:12).
- (iii) It **disobeys God's command not to look at wine**. 'Look not thou upon the wine when it is red ..At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.' (Proverbs 23:31,32).
- (iv) It causes a **weaker brother to stumble & sin**. 'It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby they brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.' Romans 14:21
- (v) It is a **bad example to your children** that you (their role model) think it is OK to drink alcohol. They follow your example, go to the pub and meet wicked people who destroy their lives.
- (vi) Alcohol **lowers people's inhibitions** and **moral standards**. 'Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.' (Proverbs 23:33).

- (vii) Alcohol is the **devil's counterfeit substitute** for the filling of the Holy Spirit. 'And be not **drunk** with wine wherein is **excess**, but be filled with the Spirit.' (Ephesians 5:18).

5. Pornography and Sensual Literature

Question: What are the consequences when parents allow their children to look at pornography at home?

Answer:

- (i) It teaches the children that it is **OK to disobey God's warnings** against looking at **nakedness** of women. 'Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of a woman..it is wickedness.' Leviticus 18:17
- (ii) It **dulls our spiritual senses** and **grieves the Holy Spirit**. 'The flesh lusteth against the Spirit .. these are contrary the one to the other.' (Galatians 5:17).
- (iii) It promotes humanism that **man's pleasure** is the **main goal in life**. 'Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.' (II Timothy 3:4).
- (iv) It **teaches others to fornicate** by your example.
- (v) It **increases crime and wickedness in society**. 'A whore ... a strange woman ... increaseth the transgressors among men.' (Proverbs 23:27,28).
- (vi) It is **mental adultery** and weakens (dilutes) your marriage. 'Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.' (Matthew 5:28).
- (vii) It sends you into an **unreal world of fantasy** by bringing you to see all women as sex objects rather than people with other needs. 'Having eyes full of adultery.' (II Peter 2:14).
- (viii) Pornography is **addictive**. It **enslaves men** so they cannot break free from looking at it. 'Having eyes full of adultery, and that **cannot cease from sin**.' (II Peter 2:14).
- (ix) Pornography produces a **guilty conscience**. 'their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing.' (Romans 2:15).
- (x) Pornography **lowers moral standards** in the home and in society.
- (xi) Pornography **tempts men** to commit adultery and prostitution. 'Whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.' Proverbs 6:32.
- (xii) It **financially supports/encourages its producers to stay in business** & destroy others lives.

152. THINGS GOD HAS GIVEN US

Bible Reading: John 13:1-15.

Aim: To increase our love and service for Christ by remembering what Christ has given us.

1. Strength to resist temptation, finish your life's work, overcome every trial, serve God, raise Godly children, and live one day at a time. Psalm 29:11 The Lord will give strength unto his people.
2. Help from trouble. Psalm 60:11. 'Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man.'
3. Grace and glory. Psalm 84:11 'The Lord will give grace..; James 4:6 'he giveth grace unto the humble'
4. That which is good. Psalm 85:12. What is good for us? Psalm 119:71; 133:1; 147:1; Proverbs 15:23; 17:22; 18:22; 22:1; Lam 3:21; Micah 6:8; Luke 10:42; I Cor. 7:1; Galatians 4:18
5. Good doctrine. Proverbs 4:2 'I give you good doctrine'; I Timothy 4:13 'give attendance to,..doctrine'
6. Beauty for ashes. Isaiah 61:3. God turning around an ashes situation of suffering into a beautiful situation of joy and praise.
7. Pastors according to God's own heart. Jeremiah 3:15 'I will give you pastors according to mine heart.'
God's people need to help Pastors reach the world for Christ.
8. Rest in salvation from our labours and trials. Matthew 11:28 'Come unto me and I will give you rest'
9. A new commandment to love one another as Christ has loved us. (John 13:34). 'A new comm...'
10. An example to serve each other. John 13:2-15.
11. Another Comforter. John 14:16. 'I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter..'
12. My peace I give unto you. John 14:27. 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.'
13. Understanding in all things. 2 Timothy 2:7. 'the Lord give thee understanding in all things.'
14. A crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day. 2 Timothy 4:8
15. Assurance of salvation and resurrection. Acts 17:31.
16. Spirit of power, love and sound mind. 2 Timothy 1:7. 'God hath not given us a spirit of fear; but of.'
17. Wisdom. James 1:5. 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally..'

18. Richly all things to enjoy. I Timothy 6:17. 'the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;'
19. All things that pertain to life and godliness. 2 Peter 1:3. 'his divine power has given to us..'
20. Exceeding great and precious promises. 2 Peter 1:4. 'Whereby are given to us exceeding great...'
21. Eternal life. I John 5:11. 'This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life..'
22. The increase as we labour in God's work. I Corinthians 3:7. 'God that giveth the increase.'
23. The victory. I Corinthians 15:57. 'But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord.'
24. Power to the faint. Isaiah 40:29. He giveth power to the faint; & to them that have no might he increases.
25. Rain. Jeremiah 5:24
26. His Holy Spirit. I Thessalonians 4:8. 'God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.'
27. Everlasting consolation. 2 Thessalonians 2:16. 'our Father, hath loved us, & hath given us everlasting'
28. Sleep. Psalm 127:2. 'It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late,..for so he giveth his beloved sleep.'
29. Christ's body on the cross, which is given for you. Luke 22:19 This is my body which is given for you

153. HOW A PERSON IS LIKE A MULE (OR A ASS)

Bible Reading: Mark 11:1-10.

Aim: To discover soul-winning truths from how people are like mules.

Introduction: In Job 11:12, 'For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild asses colt.'

Question: How is a person like a mule? These truths are useful to know in soul winning. This shows that God can use the most unlikely people. 'And they went their way, and found the colt **tied by the door without** in a place **where two ways met**; and **they loose him**.' (Mark 11:4). The two disciples, sent by Jesus to fetch the colt, represent two soul-winners going out to seek sinners for Jesus Christ.

Notice the following similarities between the ass and a man.

1. Man is TIED (Mark 11:4). As the colt was tied, so is an unbeliever tied to his sins. 'His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.' (Prov. 5:22). See II Timothy 2:26. Only Jesus Christ can break people's cords of sin.
2. Man is BY THE DOOR (v.4). Jesus Christ said, 'I am the door.' 'If any man enter in, he shall be saved.' (John 10:9). Jesus Christ is near us: 'though he be not far from every one of us.' (Acts 17:27). 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock.' (Revelation 3:20).

154. THINGS TO LEARN

Lesson: There are many people who are very close to salvation. All they need is someone to show them the gospel, and lead them through the door of salvation. **Question:** Will you be that person?

3. **Man is WITHOUT** (v. 4). The unsaved person is 'without Christ and God.'

(Ephesians 2:12). He is:

- without understanding (Romans 1:31).
- without strength (Romans 5:6). "For when we were yet without strength, Christ died for the ungodly"
- without light (John 8:12)'he that follows me shall not walk in darkness,but shall have the light of life'
- without life (John 14:6). 'I am the way, the truth, and the life:no man cometh to the Father but by me.'
- without peace (Isaiah 57:20,21). 'There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.'
- without rest (Matthew 11:28)Come unto me,all ye that labour & are heavy laden,&I will give you rest
- without salvation (Acts 4:12).there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we...
- without hope (Ephesians 2:12). 'having no hope and without God in the world.'
- without heaven (John 14:1-6)In my Father's house are many mansions:I go to prepare a place for you

Lesson: When you lead a person to Christ, you become the tool of them receiving so many blessings that they never had before. **Question:** Will you be a blessing to them?

4. **Man is AT THE CROSSROADS**, 'in a place where two ways meet.' People are between the broad way and the narrow way. (Matthew 7:13,14). The unsaved person has to make a choice as to which way he will go. 'I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life.'Joshua 24:15

Question: Will you help lost people make the right choice for Jesus Christ and eternal life?

Song: 'I met Jesus at the crossroads, where the two ways meet.
Satan too was standing there and he said 'Come this way.
Lots and lots of pleasures I can give to you today.'
But I said, 'NO', there's Jesus here
Just see what He offers me.
Down here my sins forgiven,
Up there a home in heaven.
Praise God that's the way for me.'

5. **Man NEEDS TO BE LOOSED**. 'and they loose him.' (v.4).

Christ came to preach deliverance to the captives. (Luke 4:18).

Revelation 1:5 states that 'Jesus loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.'

6. **Man is NEEDED BY THE LORD**. 'the Lord hath need of him.' (v.3).

Christ needs us who are saved to tell others of Christ's saving Gospel.

Lesson: Let us see unsaved sinners as people that Christ needs for some important work to do for Him.

Question: Will you surrender yourself to serve Christ, and be a blessing to many people?

7. **Man Can be USED TO TAKE CHRIST TO THE MULTITUDES**. (v.7-9). (Matthew 9:36-38).

After a person is saved, Christ can use him as a witness 'unto the uttermost part of the earth.' (Acts 1:8;

Conclusion: Let's go mule-loosing and apply these truths in our soul winning.

Bible Reading: Deuteronomy 31:1-13.

Aim: To learn what God says we should learn in life.

Introduction: We are told to learn certain things about Christ in Scripture. What are they?

Question: How well are you learning the lessons God has called us to learn?

1) **The Sinner's Lesson:** **Salvation is not by self-righteous acts.**

'But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have **mercy** and **not sacrifice**: for I am not come to call the **righteous**, but **sinners** to repentance.' (Matthew 9:13). God is saying, 'I prefer mercy to sacrifice. I am more pleased with acts of **kindness** than with external religious ceremony.

a) **Mercy** means acts of kindness towards others;

b) **Sacrifice** meant external worship in general.

Christ is saying, 'You Pharisees are exceedingly committed to the external duties of religion, but God prefers mercy to those external duties'. It is proper that I should associate with sinners to do them good. The Pharisees always brought the proper sacrifices but they were totally lacking in compassion towards sinners.

c) 'I am **not come to call the righteous**.' No humans are by nature righteous (Romans 1:18-32; 3:10-18). The Pharisees pretended to be righteous. Christ means here that it was not the purpose of his coming to call the self-righteous to repentance, knowing that they would reject his efforts and He'd be wasting His time. The Pharisees did not think they were sinners (sick), so they would never seek out the Lord (physician) for salvation.

d) He said that **His proper business** was to call to **repentance** people who **knew they were sinners**, and would **be willing to repent**, such as those present.

2) **The Backslider's Lesson:** **Learn to do well**. '**Learn to do well**: seek judgment, **relieve the oppressed**, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.' (Isaiah 1:17).

The Lord offered complete forgiveness to the repentant, but promised judgment on rebels. Some people had the mistaken idea that they could live any way they pleased, so long as they made restitution in the sacrificial system. Many believers have forgotten to do well, and make no effort to relieve the oppressed, nor do they seek fairness, justice and judgment. No matter how religious they are, God considers them backsliders whom He will judge unless they repent. 'Judgment must begin at the house of God.' (I Peter 4:17).

3) **The Saints' Lesson:** **Learn of Christ**. 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me.'

(Matthew 11:29). Jesus' yoke here pictures the commandments of living by the law of Christ. (Gal. 6:2; Romans 8:2). Serving Jesus Christ is a much easier yoke than living under the **bondage** of:

a) **Sinful lusts**—drugs, cigarettes, pornography, gambling, violent crowd, alcoholism, divorce.

b) **Popish** requirements—priestly celibacy, fear of purgatory, confession to priests, 20 Hail Marys

c) **Heathen** requirements, eg: Islamic hand-cutting, female circumcision, going to holy war.

d) Laws of **fashion** and sensuality that are imposed on people.
 We who serve Jesus Christ are free. It is much easier to be a Christian than a sinner.
 'If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.' (John 8:36).
 Of all the yokes ever imposed on men, the yoke of Christ is the easiest and lightest. People should receive Christ because He is meek and not harsh, not overbearing, nor oppressive. Christ's laws are reasonable, tender and easy to obey.
 In receiving Christ, there is peace that passes understanding.
 In believing in Christ, there is joy unspeakable.
 In following Christ, there is a joy and comfort which the world cannot give.
 In bearing trials and persecutions for Christ, there is the hope of glory.
 In keeping Christ's commandments, there is great reward.

3) **The Woman's Lesson: Learn in silence.** 'Let your women keep silence in the churches.' I Cor. 14:34
 'Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.' (I Timothy 2:11).
 God wants Christian ladies to learn in silence in church, listening attentively to God's Word, without attempting to teach men in public, and with due subjection to those who are in authority.

4) **The Disciple's Lesson: Continue.**
 'But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned.' (II Timothy 3:14). Because of so many errors and false teachers, Paul charges Timothy to hold fast to sound doctrines taught to him, no matter who may oppose him, or whatever might be the consequence. Disciples must learn to continue in God's Word. 'Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my disciples indeed.' (John 8:31).

7) **The Children's Lesson: Show piety at home.**
 'But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to **show piety at home**, and to **requite their parents**: for that is good and acceptable before God.' (I Timothy 5:4). **Piety** (2151) means to **worship God** and to **respect** and **support** parents, providing for their wants in advanced age in a kind attitude. To **requite parents** means to repay them as far as possible for their kindness. The debt can never be wholly repaid, but a child should try to do as much as possible to repay it.

8) **The Servant's Lesson: Maintain good works.**
 'And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.' (Titus 3:14). 'Let ours' means 'our friends', those who are Christians, maintain good works
 (ie: profess honest trades), so they may have money to give to him that needeth. (Ephesians 4:28).
 'Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.' Christians should learn honest trades, and be distinguished for good works, acts of charity, honest toil, and an upright life.
 'For necessary uses' means requirements of duties to their families.

9) **Everybody's Lesson: Fear God.**
 'Gather the people together, men, women, children, and the stranger that is within thy gates, that they may **hear**,...**learn**, and **fear the Lord your God**, and observe to do all the words of this law.' Deut 31:12,13
 Peter says, 'Fear God.' (I Peter 2:17). An angel says, "Fear God." (Revelation 14:7).
 Paul says, 'Perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' (II Corinthians 7:1).

The fear of the Lord: - is to **hate evil** (Proverbs 8:13);
 - **prolongeth days** (Proverbs 10:27);
 - is strong confidence (Proverbs 14:26); - is a fountain of life (Proverbs (14:27);
 - By the fear of the Lord men **depart from evil.**' (Proverbs 16:6).

Question: What does it mean to **fear God**?

Answer: Morally, it means to reverence and honour God, to stand in awe of God (I Peter 2:17), expressing worship and adoration of God (Luke 1:50; Acts 10:22,35). Those who feared God (Acts 13:16,26) in the case of proselytes, adored and revered God, while expressing religious devotion to God. This is 'sebomai' (4576) in Greek meaning 'reverence'. Holy fear means respect for the majesty and holiness of God, a Godly reverence. (Genesis 20:11; Psalm 34:11; Acts 9:31). This fear enables man to respect God's authority, obey His Commandments, turn from evil (Psalm 2:11; Proverbs 8:13; 16:6) and to pursue holiness (II Corinthians 7:1; Philippians 2:12). Gentile converts to Judaism who believed in God were called God-fearers. (Acts 10:2,22; 13:26).

10) **Other Things to Learn:**
 i) Learn not the **way of the heathen**. (Jeremiah 10:2).
 ii) Learn a **parable of the fig tree** (Matthew 24:32) means to learn the significance of Israel's return to their land as the major sign of Christ's return being near.
 iii) Learn **not to think of men above** that which is written (I Corinthians 4:6).
 iv) Learn not the **ways of an angry man**. 'Make no friendship with an angry man; lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.' (Proverbs 22:24,25).
 v) Learn **God's statutes** through affliction (Psalm 119:71,73).
 vi) Learn **all the Bible** because it was 'written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.' (Romans 15:4).
 vii) Learn in whatsoever state I am, **to be content**. (Philippians 4:11).
 viii) Learn **obedience** through suffering. (Hebrews 5:8).
 ix) Learn **not to blaspheme**. (I Timothy 1:20).
 x) Learn the **knowledge of the truth**. (II Timothy 3:7).

Conclusion: Let us dedicate ourselves to learn God's ways so we can teach others also.

155. THE WAYS OF AN ANGRY MAN

Bible Reading: Proverbs 22:24,25.

Aim: To identify angry men and avoid their presence.

Introduction: Many people, even some Christians, are angry men. God gives us many warnings about anger. One very important warning is found in Proverbs 22:24,25, 'Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.'

Question: Why does God warn us about angry men? So we don't learn their ways.

Question: What are the ways of an angry man? How can we identify an angry man?

Consider these ways of angry men. Do not allow them into your life. Repent of these if you are guilty of them.

- 1) **Slander:** False report maliciously uttered to injure a person.
'He that uttereth slander is a fool.' (Proverbs 10:18).
'He that privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off.' (Psalm 101:5).
- 2) **Lying:** Speaking falsely and deceptively. "A righteous man hateth lying." (Proverbs 13:5).
'Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD.' (Proverbs 12:22).
'Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour.'
(Ephesians 4:23).
- 3) **Railing:** Using abusive language against someone. 'I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a...railer..' (I Corinthians 5:11).
I Timothy 6:4; I Peter 3:9.
- 4) **Self-Justification:** 'He said unto them, ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts.' (Luke 16:15).
- 5) **False Accusers:** II Timothy 3:3
- 6) **Threatening:** 'forbearing threatening.' (Ephesians 6:9; Acts 4:29).
- 7) **Overtalking:** Some people talk so much that you rarely have a chance to say something. When you attempt to say something they rebuke you by saying, 'Don't interrupt me.'
'Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.' (James 1:19).
- 8) **Faultfinding:** 'They send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words.' (Mark 12:13).
- 9) **Busybodies:** A person who pries into and meddles in the affairs of others.
'But let none of you suffer as a . . . busybody in other men's matters.' (I Peter 4;15)
'There are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.' (II Thess. 3:11). 'Not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.' I Tim. 5:13
Illustration: An angry church attender phoned the accountant of his preacher to look for

some bad things he could slander his pastor with. The accountant told him to mind his own business.

- 10) **Factionous:** 'Speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.' (Acts 20:30).
'Every one of you saith, I am of Paul, I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.' (I Cor. 1:12). Angry people are preoccupied with justifying themselves more than soul-winning, so they need to recruit people to their cause to gain credibility and support.
Avoid getting involved in factions.
Get on with soul-winning, rather than self-justification. Don't let angry people recruit you to their side. 'Every fool will be meddling.' (Proverbs 20:3; 17:14; 26:17).
- 11) **Seeking Pre-eminence:** 'Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not.' (II John 9). Beware of older non-soul winning Christians who want to become an elder or pastor in a church, but won't go soul-winning or follow up new Christians. Work is better than titles.
- 12) **Looking for Evil Motives in Others, Constant Fault-finding in others:**
'Charity . . . thinketh no evil.' (I Corinthians 13:5). Angry men think that others think like them.
- 13) **Critical Spirit:** 'Speak not evil one of another brethren.' (James 4:11).
'Speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men.' Titus 3:1
- 14) **Sins of Presumption:** 'Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me.' (Psalm 19:13). Don't jump to an evil conclusion about someone. Don't presume evil of others. First check it out with the person, because you don't want people believing evil false gossip about you. You would want them to check it with you first. (Matthew 18:15-18).

Conclusion: Don't let these qualities be found in you. If they are, repent of them. Avoid angry men. What other ways of an angry man can you think of?

156. PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH Working with God to bring people to Jesus

Bible Reading: Acts 8:1-8; 26-40.

Aim: To see the method, joy and results of soul-winning, so we become better soul winners. To arise, go and preach as Philip did.

Introduction: Our all-powerful God has chosen to limit Himself to the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. The key is that Christians must go and preach. If we don't preach the Gospel, nobody will get saved. For God's work to grow, we need labourers who are willing to lead people to Christ and follow them up. This is the main reason for the church's existence.

In Acts 8:1-8 we see: a) Saul persecuting the church of Jerusalem (8:1-3).

- b) Christians being scattered, going everywhere preaching the word v.4
- c) Philip preached Christ at Samaria (v.5).

- The results were:
- People gave heed with one accord to the Gospel. (Acts 28:28) (v.6).
 - Demons were cast out (v.7).
 - Many paralyzed and lame people were healed (v.7).
 - There was great joy in that city (v.8). Revival broke out.

The first 'Arise and go' came to Philip while he was experiencing great success in Samaria.

Lesson: God best uses those who are obeying Him where they are. Be a soul winner in your church before you go overseas as a missionary. The good of the Samaritan revival, followed the bad of Saul's persecution. The story of the Ethiopian eunuch getting saved shows us much about **HOW** to do soul winning. What 14 lessons does this teach us?

Fourteen wonderful steps are seen as follows:

- The Angel of the Lord told Philip, 'ARISE and GO.'** (v.26). Lessons are:
 - Angels **cannot preach** the Gospel to men, because God has chosen people to do it.
 - Angels are **on our side** to help us in soul winning.
 - The Angel told Philip **where** to go. He told him to go south to the Gaza desert. When God calls us, He always tells us where to go. 'Go toward the south . . . unto Gaza.' (v.26).
 - God's ways **do not always make sense initially**. It seemed strange for Philip to leave a successful revival in Samaria to go to the Gaza desert.
 - One man is important to God**. Is one person important to you? Let's win them one by one.
 - Many people are searching** for salvation and for God. We must go and find them.
 - The Angel said, '**ARISE**' because he wanted Philip to **go now without delay**. How often do you put off soul winning until sometime later, when you know you should go see someone now? When we hear 'GO', we think we'll go tomorrow. But God wants us to go now, today. God says to us: 'Son, go work today in my vineyard.' (Matthew 21:28-32). The hardest part is arising and conquering procrastination. Don't put off going soul winning. 'Arise' means stop what you are doing now and go soul winning.
 - Sometimes you have to go to **difficult places** to find hungry people for Christ, such as the desert, slums, central Africa, places of starvation and persecution. It's worth it.
- Philip OBEYED**. 'He arose and went'. (v.27). This means no waiting and no excuses. Philip made no excuses, nor did he wait till he felt like it. Immediate obedience is important.
If Philip had waited for 1 day or 1 week, the man would have gone. By procrastinating, we can lose good contacts. By obeying, we see God do exciting things.
- Philip MET a man**. (v.27). '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.' (v.27).
God wants us to meet people in our daily life. Do we recognise good contacts? Do we cultivate good contacts? This man was an interested, open, good contact.
Question: What do we learn about this man of Ethiopia?
Answer:
 - He was from **Ethiopia** (he represents God's love for the black races).
 - A **eunuch** (means 'officer' with no suggestion here of mutilation).

- Of **great authority** (Ethiopian tradition calls him the founder of Christianity in Ethiopia).
- Had the **charge of all her treasure** (he was responsible for her great wealth).
- He came to Jerusalem to **worship**. He was a Jew or Jewish proselyte who had attended the Passover feast in Jerusalem. He was aware of his need of God.
- He was **disappointed in not finding salvation** in Jerusalem. How many people are disappointed in not finding salvation in their religion? 'He was **returning**.' (v.28).
- He was a **reader**, educated, intelligent, searching for God, and aware of his need. He was 'sitting in his chariot **read** Esaias the prophet.' (v.28).
- He was **close in his search for God**. He was reading the clearest Old Testament passage about Christ's sacrifice for our sins, yet he still could not see salvation clearly.

We miss many soul winning opportunities because we don't **BEHOLD**. We don't notice people as candidates for salvation. Behold means 'see and understand the significance of.'

Philip saw a man in need of salvation. Let us **LOOK** for soul winning opportunities.

Question: How many days this week did you look for a chance to tell someone about Jesus Christ?

- Philip HEARD the Holy Spirit speak to him**. (v.29)
'Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.' (v.29).
Key: Let us listen to the Holy Spirit speak to us.
Question: Do you ever get hunches to ring or visit someone for the Gospel or to be followed up? Do it, because it is often God's voice. Hundreds of times I phone or visit someone when they need a message of encouragement or salvation. How about you? Eli told Samuel to say, 'Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth.' (I Samuel 3:9).
Question: Is God calling you to Bible College or to go soul winning today?
- God's message was: 'GO NEAR.'** (v.29). 'Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.' (v.29)
To win people to Christ, we must get near to them. If you are an introvert, then ask God to help you to become extrovert enough to go soul winning. You rarely lead people to Christ from a distance. It helps after they are saved, if you become their friend. Be the kind of person people like to confide in. Talking to people is essential to success in soul winning. When you get close to people who have sin, they can hurt you. But you get greater blessings when they grow in Christ.
- Philip RAN to him**. (v.30). 'Philip **ran** hither to him, and **heard** him read the prophet Esaias.' Let us be keen to go soul winning. Let us run to work for God. The Christian life is a race to be run.
 - Philip ran. This shows Philip's haste and desire to obey the Holy Spirit's leading. One thousand excuses might have entered Philip's mind if he had thought about it, such as, the Eunuch was a stranger, a man of rank, busy reading, but Philip obeyed without hesitation.
 - Strangers are often more willing to talk about eternal life than we may at first think, so test the water. If we approach them kindly, we'll find most people willing to talk about salvation.'Philip **heard** him read Esaias the prophet.' Do we listen to people to find out where they are at in their thinking about God? Take time to listen to people and ask questions.

7. **Philip ASKED QUESTIONS.** (v.30). 'Understandest thou what thou readest?' (v.30).
Let's ask people key questions to start a Gospel conversation, such as:
a) May I leave this (STOP tract) with you?
b) This explains how to know God, go to heaven & have eternal life. Have you thought about God before?
c) One question if I may: 'If you died tonight, do you know 100% for sure that you would go to heaven?'
d) Would you like to be sure? This tells you how. If you look on the inside, the first thing you need to know is that 'All have sinned . . .'
Jesus in John 4:7 asked the woman at the well a question: 'Give me to drink.'
8. **The Eunuch's NEED** (v.31). 'He said, How can I except some man should guide me?' (v.31).
The unsaved Ethiopian needed Philip to explain the Gospel to him. People need:
-- someone to lead or guide them to Christ.
-- someone to clearly explain the Gospel to them.
People are like the donkey's colt standing by the door (Mark 11:4), unable to enter in the door of their own ability and be saved. (John 10:9).
9. **Philip SAT with him** (v.31). 'He desired Philip that he would come up and **sit** with him.'
Aim to sit down with someone to lead them to Christ. Sit next to him as a friend, rather than in front of him as a teacher. Sit with them and go through the Gospel using the STOP tract. The eunuch was reading the clearest Old Testament passage on Christ's sacrificial death, yet he still could not understand it. Why? 'Because the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned' 1 Cor 2:14
i) It is good to **read the Bible on a journey**, or listen to the Bible in a car cassette tape
ii) The eunuch **did not understand** how to reconcile the Messiah being humiliated and condemned (v.33), yet he was a Prince and a Conqueror.
iii) He had just returned from Jerusalem where much **public opinion** was against the Sanhedrin putting Jesus to death. Christians surely would have used this passage (Isaiah 53) to prove that Jesus was the Messiah. Unbelieving Jews claimed that Isaiah 53 referred to Isaiah or Jeremiah, as they still do. The Ethiopian hence asks the question in v.34 'of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself, or of some other man?' (v.34). God then sends a messenger, (Job 33:23-30) to guide his thoughtful mind to salvation.
Question: Will you volunteer to be such a messenger?
iv) 'The **meek** will he guide in judgment: the meek will he teach his way.' (Psalm 25:9).
v) 'In his humiliation his judgment was taken away.' (v.33).
Christ's deep humiliation and friendless state was followed by an unjust and cruel condemnation where no-one would stand up to plead his cause.
vi) 'Who shall declare his generation? For his life is taken from the earth.' (v.33).
This is saying, 'Who can describe the enormously wicked character of the generation that would kill the innocent Messiah, a deed so enormously wicked that it defies all attempts at description, the killing of heaven's highest messenger. It is impossible to describe the wickedness of the generation that would do it. 'Declare' means to meditate, to think of, then to speak of and announce. ie: Who can think of, who can conceive the enormity of the crimes of that generation in killing the Messiah so as to fully publish or declare them?
10. **Philip PREACHED unto him Jesus** (v.32-35).
'Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.' Don't let a person sidetrack you from presenting the Gospel. Tell people about Jesus Christ's death, burial and resurrection as the payment for our sins. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).
Paul 'Straightaway preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.' (Acts 9:20).
'It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.' (1 Corinthians 1:21).
a) Christ was **led** - he went to the Cross willingly.
b) Christ was like a **sheep** - innocent and harmless.
c) Christ was taken to the **slaughter** - a bloody and violent death.
d) Christ was as a lamb dumb - without protest, showing self control.
e) Christ was humiliated.
f) Christ was judged for us.
g) Christ died - to pay for our sins.
Philip had a clear passage to explain Christ's atoning death.
11. **The Eunuch was SAVED** (v.36). The Eunuch received Jesus Christ as his Saviour, believing the Gospel, surrendering his heart, his will, his affections and his love to Jesus Christ who died, was buried and rose again to save him.
12. **The Eunuch was BAPTISED** (v.36-39).
He asked, 'See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptised?' (v.36).
He replied, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.' (v.37).
a) This **disproves infant sprinkling and baptism of unbelievers**, because it sets forth the condition of Bible baptism as belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. A baby or unbeliever could not state this. Hence, only believers baptism is Biblical.
b) Verses 38,39 prove the second condition of Bible baptism as being by **immersion** and not sprinkling: 'They went down **both into the water**, Philip and the Eunuch; and he baptised him. And when they were **come up out of the water.**' (v 38,39).
Being baptised shows our intention to be dedicated to Christ and His service.
All saved people should be baptised.
Historical Note: At the time of John and for some time previously, Jews administered baptism or washing to those who were proselytes from pagan religions. This came from Numbers 19:7 'he shall bathe his flesh in water'. This was done to signify that they renounced the errors and worship of the pagans. It signified their becoming pure by embracing the true religion, cleansing their sins, and purifying them for the service of Jehovah. John baptised, thus calling the Jews to a new dispensation, showing people's fitness for the new pure reign of the Messiah. John applied an old ordinance for a new purpose. It denoted a putting away of impurity and purposing to be pure in heart and life, eg: Naaman washing (2 Kings 8). See Luke 7:30 where 'the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God.....being not baptised of him'.
13. **The Eunuch REJOICED.** 'He went on his way rejoicing.' (v.39).
When people get saved they rejoice. When a sinner repents, there is great joy among:
a) The Angels in heaven;
b) The person himself;
c) Other believers.

The reason for soul winning is so that people will rejoice and have the happiness of a home in heaven, their sins forgiven, and freedom from the guilt and slavery of sin.

The Eunuch had joy because:

- His mind was enlightened on understanding a perplexing Scripture;
- He was clear and convinced that Jesus Christ was the Messiah;
- He was now reconciled to God;
- He was joyful because he promptly did his duty of being baptised.

If we wish to be happy and joyful, if we want to avoid gloom and depression, we must do our duty at once. If we delay till tomorrow what we should do today, we may expect to be troubled with melancholy thoughts and we will lose our peace with God.

To have peace with God, we must do promptly exactly what God requires.

Question: Will you obey Christ's command (Matthew 28:19) and be baptised today?

14. **Philip KEPT ON PREACHING** (v.40). 'Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.' (v.40).
When you lead someone to Christ, lead another and another. Don't stop. Seek to lead their friends to Christ, as a way of following up your disciples. Learn soul-winning. It is the reason why God put us here. Philip was found at Azotus, the Greek name for Ashdod, 30 miles north of Gaza. Ashdod was where the Ark of God was taken by the Philistines and where Dagon fell down before it. It was a sea port. 'He preached in all the cities.....' These were Joppa, Lydda, Ashkelon, and Arimathea lying along the coast, until he came to Caesarea. We should start more fundamental churches all over Sydney, New South Wales, Australia and the world.
Question: Will you surrender to go to Bible College to train to start a church?

Conclusion: From this account we learn that:

- God **prepares** people's minds and hearts to receive the truth.
- God does this with rich and poor, noble and ordinary people.
- We should study the Bible to become a better soul winner as Philip did.
- We should **be ready at all times to speak to sinners**.
- We should **not be afraid of speaking to the great, to rich, or to strangers**. Their hearts may be open. We will only discover this if we offer them a tract and start a conversation.
- We should **do our soul winning duty promptly**, as Philip did, without delay, hesitation or excuses. Pray for someone to lead to Christ this week.'

- Challenge:
- If you are not saved, receive Christ as Saviour now.
 - If you are saved, get baptised.
 - If you are saved, become a soul winner.
 - If you are backslidden, confess your sins to God and get out serving God.

157. FATHERS – TRAIN UP YOUR CHILDREN

Bible Reading: Proverbs 22:6; Genesis 18:17-19.

Aim: For fathers to see that it is their God given responsibility to train up their children in God's ways and not to abdicate this important role.

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

God has appointed the father as the spiritual guardian of the home. Often where you see delinquent, rebellious children, the problem can often be traced to fathers who failed to:

- Properly inspect their child's spiritual development, and
- Failed to correct their children's wrong behaviour, and
- Failed to train their children in right behaviour.

Excuses fathers sometimes give for not training their children in God's ways are:

- I'm too busy making money at work.
- I'll leave it up to my wife.
- They are too old now for me to tell them what to do. WRONG: While they are alive and especially living in your house, you must give them guidance. They need it most as teens.
- They won't listen to me. Answer: You should have trained them right when they were younger. This sounds like Lot's sons-in-law. Withhold privileges if they disobey you.
- I can't rebuke them for sins I did as a teen. Answer: Now that you know what is right, you should teach them from your mistakes, so they don't make the same mistakes.

Fathers, we must be determined to train, and mould our children's character to be the best example of godliness possible. We are not only training them, but we are training them in a pattern of behaviour that will set the standard for generations to come. We must not abdicate our God-given responsibility. If we do, we'll fail to raise up a Godly heritage. We must train them to be servants of God.

I. FATHERS IN THE BIBLE

Let us see some mistakes and sins of fathers in the Bible so we can do what God wants.

Question: What do we learn from God's statements about fathers in the Bible?

- ADAM.
 - Adam's first failure was to please his wife instead of pleasing God. By eating the fruit, he knew he was taking Eve's side and disobeying God.
 - Adam's second failure was that he was not involved in helping his sons resolve their spiritual dispute about the right sacrifice to please God. He failed to train his eldest son Cain in God's ways, so as a result he lost both of his sons: one in death, the other in exile to the land of Nod.
Satan wants your eldest child because they set the example & are looked up to by younger children.
What the eldest child gets away with, the younger children think they can get away with.
Children constantly push the boundaries, wanting to know what is acceptable to you. If you clearly set the boundaries and expect them to obey you, they feel secure and interpret this as love on your part, even when you think that you are being harsh.

- 2) **ABRAHAM.** Genesis 18:17-19. God said of Abraham:
i) Memory verse: “I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord...” (Genesis 18:19).
Question: Will you command your children to keep the way of the Lord, or will you let the world, flesh, devil and TV train your children in evil ways?
 If you don't train them in God's ways, then wrong values will fill the vacuum. No one can fulfil the role that a dad is supposed to. Preachers can't, schools can't, mothers can't.
 Children constantly look to their father as a role model as to how they should behave.
Question: What kind of role model are you for them?
Question: How are you preparing them to be godly parents and spouses in the future?
Question: What training goals have you written down and implemented with your children. **ii) Abraham sought a godly wife** for his son Isaac. (Genesis 24:1-4).
Question: Do you help your children to find a Godly spouse?

3) **LOT** was one of the worst fathers in the Bible. He was a disaster. His demise probably started when he separated his family from the Godly influence of Abraham. He thought that he didn't need Abraham and that he could get on quite well without his Godly influence. He ignored all the good things Abraham had done for him and allowed money to be the cause of a fight and a split. **Lesson:** Don't separate from sound, godly people. Notice what he did wrong:

- i) He sided with his fighting workers against Godly Abraham, rather than living together peacefully. (Genesis 13:5-13). **Note:** The devil will try to get you to have a fight with the preacher in order to get you and your family out of a good church. Don't fall for it. It's a preacher's job to warn you when you are going wrong. Don't shoot the messenger, he's just doing what God wants him to do.
- ii) He chose to put money ahead of loyalty to God and Abraham. He thought he could make more money in Sodom than by staying with Abraham.
Question: Do you as a father put money ahead of God?
- iii) He chose fellowship with wicked sinners in order to make this money. (v.13).
- iv) He offered his 2 virgin daughters to be abused by depraved homosexuals. (v.7)
- v) His daughters and sons-in-law despised him pleading with them to flee Sodom. (19:14).
- vi) He got drunk and committed incest with his daughters. (19:30-38).
- vii) He lost his wife and 2 other daughters in the destruction of Sodom.

4) **ISAAC** – Genesis 26:34,35.

Isaac made the following failures in fatherhood.

- i) He gave little or no guidance to his sons in choosing a wife. Esau married Judith and Bashemath (both Hittite women) which were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah.
- ii) Rebekah had to push Isaac to tell Jacob to find a Godly wife. Genesis 27:46 and 28:1,2.
 Parents, you must constantly tell your children to only marry a godly partner. Constantly pray with them about this. Take them to conferences where they are likely to meet godly young people. iii) Isaac placed more importance on food (savoury meat) than on the family blessing being done properly. (27:1-4). **Question:** Dads, do you love food more than your children's spiritual development?
- iv) Isaac did not seek to reconcile his conflicting sons. (27:41-43). Isaac abdicated, leaving Rebekah to fix the problem. She advised Jacob to leave home and flee to Haran. They never saw Jacob again.

- 5) **JACOB** failed to properly train his sons in God's ways.
- i) His sons conspired to murder Joseph. (37:18). Jacob didn't notice this, nor did he rebuke their envy and hatred of Joseph.
 - ii) They lied to Jacob that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal. (37:20,30-32).
 - iii) Judah fornicated with Hirah and fathered 3 sons out of wedlock (Er, Onan and Shelah). (38:1-5). Er was wicked so God killed him. Onan displeased God, so God killed him also.
- 6) **ELI** failed to train his sons in God's ways.
- i) His sons were gluttons. I Samuel 2:13,14.
 - ii) His sons were wicked unbelievers. I Samuel 2:12-17.
 - iii) His sons were fornicating with women who came to worship God at the Tabernacle. I Sam. 2:22-25.
 Eli failed to train them correctly or rebuke them. A man of God came and rebuked Eli for honouring his sons above God. (I Samuel 2:27-29,34).
Lesson: If we don't train and rebuke our children, we are honouring our sons above God.

7) **SAMUEL** failed to train his sons in God's ways.

- i) His sons took bribes. I Samuel 8:1-6.
- ii) His sons obtained money by unjust means.
- iii) His sons perverted judgment and lost the trust of the people.
 This led to Israel's elders asking Samuel for a King to rule them rather than Samuel's ungodly sons ruling them.
Lesson: Preachers must be especially careful to train their children in God's ways and not to neglect them for God's work. Do both. Many preachers have done well in the ministry, but lost their children to the devil.

8) **DAVID** – by sinning with Bathsheba and murdering Uriah, he taught his sons to rebel against him, just as he rebelled against God.

The following failures happened with David's sons who followed their father's example.

- i) **Amnon** committed incest with Tamar. (2 Samuel 13:1,2,14,15,21,22).
- ii) **Absalom** killed **Amnon**. (2 Samuel 13:23-29).
- iii) David failed to be reconciled to Absalom, leading to the rift growing worse. (2 Samuel 13:37-39; 14:21-24).
- iv) Absalom rebelled against David as David rebelled against God. (2 Samuel 15:7-12).
- v) Joab killed **Absalom**. (2 Samuel 18:14).
- vi) Solomon ordered Benaiah to kill his half-brother **Adonijah**. (I Kings 2:24).

9) **SOLOMON** failed to train **Rehoboam** to be a wise and godly King.

Rehoboam caused a rebellion by harshly threatening the people with whippings and increased taxes.

Solomon's sins of marrying many ungodly pagan wives introduced paganism and idolatry into Israel. This destroyed the nation. (I King 11:1-9).

10) **MOSES** failed to circumcise his son, so, on the way to Egypt God met him and sought to kill him. (Exodus 4:22-26).

11) **HEROD** gave his stepdaughter Herodias anything she wanted, so she asked for and got John the Baptist's head in a charger. (Matthew 14:1-11).
 John the Baptist turned the hearts of the fathers to their children. (Malachi 4:5,6).

III. REQUIREMENTS OF A FATHER

- 1) Teach their children to have a close relationship with God.
- 2) Dads must have a close relationship with God themselves.
- 3) To guide their children in these areas:
 - tell them when they are wrong and why
 - tell them daily that you love them
 - spend quality time with them
 - pray with them daily
 - pray for them daily
 - read and explain the Bible to them
 - warn them of dangers and sins of the world
 - train them to marry a godly partner
 - equip them to raise up the next godly generation
 - teach them not to make ungodly friends
 - teach them to memorise Scripture
 - teach them not to look at alcohol
 - teach them to stay pure sexually
 - teach them to flee rock music
 - Train them to seek out the most Godly friends
 - Train them to shun evil companions
 - Train them to be a soul-winner and a Bible teacher
 - Train them to be courteous, well mannered and respectful
 - Train them to study the Bible on their own
 - Train them in Godly dating standards
 - Train them not to look at bad TV programs
 - Don't abdicate and leave a child to his own devices
 - Set clear boundaries
 - Insist that they get home on time
 - As teens become older, make them agree that they will only go to places that would be pleasing to Christ and yourselves (get this in writing. Ask them to sign it).
 - Encourage your wife to Home school them using the A.C.E. curriculum.
 - Send them to the most fundamental Bible College, eg: Hyles-Anderson College, Indiana.

158. THREE KINDS OF CHRISTIANS (Gaius, Diotrophes, Demetrius)

Bible Reading: III John 1-14.

Aim: To preserve the unity and peace of God in a church by studying 3 kinds of believers.

Introduction: Today many churches are being destroyed from within by the sins of professing Christians. One person wants the pre-eminence, so he has to put others down.

This results in loss of:

a) **Love** to Christ, b) **Peace** of God, c) **Freedom** to serve God, d) **Joy** in service, d) **Soul Winning drive**

Each Christian is a good or bad witness. We are either helping or hindering the truth. Ask ourselves: 'Are we part of the problem or are we part of the solution?' III John was addressed to Gaius, a church leader. John discusses Diotrophes and Demetrius. Consider each man's ways:

1. GAIUS the Encourager. (v.1-8).

i) Gaius was **well beloved** (v.1) and beloved (v.5).

ii) Gaius was **Spiritually Healthy** (v.2).

John wished that Gaius would be as physically healthy as he was spiritually healthy.

Spiritual health results from:

a) **Nourishing** ourselves daily with God's Word.

b) **Exercising** oneself unto Godliness (I Timothy 4:6-7).

c) Keeping ourselves **clean** (II Corinthians 7:1) and avoiding contamination and pollution of world.

d) **Resting** in the Lord and renewing our strength by close personal fellowship with Him.

Matt 11:28-30

iii) Gaius was a **good testimony** (v.3-4). Why? Because God's truth was in him and he obeyed it. (v.3).

We must digest God's Word and make it part of us in order to have a good testimony. (Jeremiah 15:16).

iv) Gaius was a **soul-winner and a Disciple-maker.**

John here gives the key to joy in the Christian life (v.4). It is soul winning and disciple making.

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." (v.4).

It is a) Winning people for Christ, and

b) Teaching them to walk in God's truth. Nothing else gives greater joy.

Gaius may have been one of John's converts and disciples.

v) Gaius was a **faithful man**. (v.5). Gaius helped both the brethren and strangers.

Question: What motivates us to have a practical ministry to other believers?

a) Desire to **honour God** (v.6). "after a Godly sort" means "worthy of God, as it befits God."

Gaius showed hospitality to strangers who bore witness of Gaius' charity before the church.

Some of these strangers may have been travelling gospel preachers.

b) Desire to **help win the lost**. This is achieved as we help God's servants do this task. (v.7).

These travelling missionaries took no support from unsaved Gentiles, only from believers.

c) Desire to **obey God**. "We ought to receive such." (v.8). God wants us to help Gospel preachers who bring salvation to others. Let us open our hearts to those who teach God's truth.

2. **DIOTROPHES the Dictator**. (v.9-11).

Many churches have members who insist on being boss. A pastor or minister means 'servant'. Christ's disciples argued over who would be greatest in the kingdom. (Matthew 18:1-6). Jesus reminded them that their model for ministry was not government officials, but Christ who became a humble servant. What are we told about Diotrophes?

- He loved to have the pre-eminence**. (v.9). He wanted to be number one. His motive was pride.
- He would not receive John** (v.9). He could have learned so much from the Apostle John.
Why did he reject John? Because John challenged his right to be a dictator in the church. (v.10a). Diotrophes was **proud** and sought **self-glory**. Diotrophes **would not receive him**. (v.10a).
- He lied about John**: 'prating against us with malicious words,' (v.10) means bringing false charges against us. Do not believe all you are told about people. Some people twist the truth.
- Diotrophes rejected John's associates**. 'neither doth he himself receive the brethren.' (v.10).
- Diotrophes disciplined those that disagreed with him** by casting them out of the church. He was destroying his own local church through his pride, fear and insensitivity. He knew nothing of love.
Lesson: "Follow not that which is evil, but that which is good." (v.11).
Follow good and you'll follow God. A test of 'goodness' is: '**Is this beneficial to all**'?

3. **DEMETRIUS the Good Example** (v.12-14). Demetrius had a good report of:

- all men;
- the truth of the Bible;
- John himself.

Demetrius was 'an example, a model, an ideal Christian worthy to be imitated.'

Question: Is it right to follow men? Yes, only as they follow Christ. 'Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example.' Philipians 3:17.

'Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.' I Corinthians 11:1.

By our good example, we will 'consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.' Heb.10:24

Conclusion: John concludes that he would soon visit the church and speak face-to-face with the people. This thought of accountability is important.

John wishes them **peace**, something that is hard to enjoy when Diotrophes wanted to be a boss and expel people. In spite of trouble, we can still have the peace of God.

Greet the friends by name. John calls them friends. It's good to be a friend-maker as well as a soul winner. Diotrophes was so dictatorial that he had fewer and fewer friends.

159. GOOD THINGS WE SHOULD SEEK

Bible Reading: Nehemiah 2:1-20 (v.10).

Aim: To be like Nehemiah who came to seek after the welfare of God's people and God's work.

I. **What should we seek in life?**

- Seek the **Lord**, **His face** and **His strength** continually. I Chronicles 7:14; Ezra 8:22.
- Seek the **welfare** of God's people. Nehemiah 2:10.
- Ezra prepared his heart to seek the **law of the Lord**, to **do it**, and to **teach** in Israel. Ezra 7:10.
- Peace** "Depart from evil, do good, seek peace and pursue it." Psalm 34:12-14.
- Wisdom** "They that seek me (wisdom) early shall find me." Proverbs 8:17. Isaiah 1:17.
- Judgment** = justice, helping the less fortunate. "Learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed."
- King James Bible (Received Text) Preserved, Inerrant Bibles**. Amos 8:11,12. Amos prophesied that a time will come when people will not be able to find the Word of God in the North or East (Russia, Muslim countries). In the West and South it is available.
- Righteousness, meekness**. Zephaniah 2:3 'Seek ye the Lord,..seek righteousness, seek meekness.'
- Truth**. Jeremiah 5:1.
- Seek ye first the **Kingdom of God** and **His righteousness**. Matthew 6:33.
- "The Son of Man is come to seek and to **save that which was lost**." Luke 19:10.
We should seek the salvation of lost sinners here and all over the world.
- Honour from God** "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" John 5:44.
- Eternal glory, Honour, Immortality**. Romans 2:6,7.
- Others Welfare**. "Let no man seek his own, but another's wealth." I Corinthians 10:24.
- Edify the Church**. "Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church." I Corinthians 14:12.
- New Jerusalem City**. "For we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come." Hebrews 13:14.
- Salvation of others** "I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many that they may be saved." I Corinthians 10:33.
- Worshippers of God**. "the Father seeketh such to worship Him." John 4:23.
- Love**. "He that covereth a transgression seeketh love." Proverbs 17:9.
- Fruit**. "These three years I come seeking fruit on this tree." Luke 13:7.
- To Dwell** in the House of the Lord and to behold the beauty of the Lord." Psalm 27:4.

II. **Wrong things we should NOT seek after**

- Wizards. Leviticus 19:31
- A sign. Mark 8:12
- To save his life. Luke 17:33
- Not mine own glory. John 8:50
- All seek their own. Phil. 2:21
- Mixed wine. Proverbs 23:30,35
- Food, drink, clothing. Matt. 6:32
- "not my own will". John 5:30 (Num.15:39.)
- Do I seek to please man? Galatians 1:10
- Charity seeketh not her own. I Corinthians 13:5.
- Rebellion Prov.17:11
- Your heart & eyes.

Conclusion: What are you seeking after, the things of God and eternity, or the things of man and earth?

160. STEPHEN

Bible Reading: Acts 7:48-60.

Aim: To be filled with good things as Stephen was.

Introduction: What fills your mind? Things of God or things of the world? Stephen is a great example to each of us as to what we should be filled with.

Question: What are these things? He was a man:

1) **Full of Faith** (Acts 6:5,8). Faith binds us to God. Faith has three qualities:

- It is the act of the will in receiving Christ as Saviour. (John 1:12). Saving faith.
- It is living in obedience to God. (Acts 5:29,32). Walking by faith.
- It is the attitude of the heart in leaving things in God's hands. (II Cor.4:13,14-18). Faith rest.

To be full of faith means that there is no room for doubt, nor fear in the heart, just as there is no room for anything else in a full vessel.

2) **Full of the Holy Spirit** (Acts 6:5). How do we become filled with the Holy Spirit? (Eph.5:18).

- Sing (5:19).
- Give thanks (5:20).
- Submit yourselves to one another. (5:21)
- Children, obey your parents (6:1)
- Be strong in the Lord (6:10).
- Put on the whole armour of God (6:11).
- Pray always (6:18).
- Fill yourself with Scripture.

3) **Full of Power** (Acts 6:8). Power is the ability to do things.

God never asks us to do things without giving us the power to do them. With every command there is a promise. "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost.." Acts 1:8
We need power to **share the Gospel**, to have **compassion** on the needy, to **teach** God's Word, to **rebuke** error, and to **edify others**. We are filled with God's power as we are filled with God's Word and God's Spirit. 'Truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.' Micah 3:8.

4) **Full of Light** (Acts 6:15). The light within caused Stephen's face to shine as an angel's face.

Sin makes us ugly, but being filled with Christ makes us beautiful.
Matthew 5:16 'Let your light so shine before men that they may see your **good works**...'
II Corinthians 4:4 He had the light of the glorious **gospel** of Christ.
II Corinthians 4:6 He had the light of the **knowledge** of the glory of God in his life.

5) **Full of Scripture** (Acts 7:1-50). As we read Acts chapter 7, we realize that as Stephen related the history of Israel, he was filled with the knowledge of the Bible. If we fill our lives and minds with God's Word, we will be full of power and full of the Holy Spirit.

Question: Are you full of God's Word?

Question: Do you study, memorise and meditate on God's Word daily?

6) **Full of Courage** (Acts 7:51). The face of man and the fear of man did not affect Stephen.

He did not hesitate to charge those who were opposing God's work with being 'stiffnecked and uncircumcised,' of resisting the Holy Ghost, with not keeping God's law, and with murdering Jesus Christ. (v.51-53). His courage and conviction resulted later in the conversion of Saul.

Question: Are you full of courage for Christ?

7) **Full of Love** (Acts 7:60). The stones that the persecutors hurled at Stephen broke his head, but they could not break his heart of love for Israel. His lips were bloodied with the blood of persecution, but they could not stop the pouring forth of love's intercession. When the love of God fills our hearts and minds, it will enable the servant of God to do greater things for Christ.
'The love of Christ constrains us.' (2 Corinthians 5:14).

8) **Full of Wisdom** (Acts 6:3,10). Stephen was full of wisdom because he spent time with God in the Bible, in prayer, in preaching the gospel, and in humbly serving God's people.

Conclusion: As Christ is sufficient to carry Stephen through martyrdom, so Christ is sufficient to carry us through every situation of life. Let us seek to be full of these 8 qualities.

161. PRISCILLA AND AQUILLA - Model Christian Workers

Bible Reading: Acts 18:1-28, (v.1,2,18,26).

Aim: To become model Christian workers as were Priscilla and Aquilla.

Introduction: Not much is said about Priscilla and Aquilla, but what is revealed teaches us many important truths about soul-winning, disciple-making and church planting. What do we learn from their lives that will enable us to be better workers for Jesus Christ?

1. They were **persecuted and driven from Rome**. Acts 18:1.

Every Godly Christian will be persecuted at some time in their lives. They learned the truth of Hebrews 10:34. They "took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance."

2. They were **hospitable to Paul**. Acts 18:2,3.

Allowing people to stay at your home is a good way to show kindness to fellow believers. The widow built a prophet's chamber and allowed Elijah to stay there when on the Lord's work. A pastor should be given to hospitality. This is a way of showing love to fellow believers.

3. They **paid** Paul for the tent making work he did while he lodged there, as a means of supporting him.

They allowed Paul to help them in tent making. Acts 18:3.

"Wrought" (2038) = to toil as an occupation = to labour for = to work for.

Paul knew what it was like to be a preacher who sometimes had to work at a job to support himself.

They didn't allow money to cause a fight, but gave generously to help a worker for Christ.

4. They **helped** Paul in his work as **fellow Christian workers**. Romans 16:3,4.

Paul needed strong, loyal workers to support him in starting churches. **Lesson:** We should help those who go out to start churches. Church planters need loyal, committed fellow workers to get churches started. They were good 'number 2' workers.

5. They **laid down their own necks** for his life. Romans 16:3,4. They hazarded their lives and exposed themselves to imminent danger to save the life of Paul. How? They took Paul into their own house to protect him from Jews who persecuted him. The phrase "Lay down the neck" means to lay the head on the block to be cut off with the axe, as by an executioner. Would you do this for your Pastor?

6. Their **support of Paul** had helped Paul start many churches. Romans 16:4.

Many people were greatly blessed by their work. All the churches that Paul planted felt a debt of gratitude to Priscilla and Aquilla for saving the life of the one who led them to Christ.

7. They were **church planters** and **Bible teachers** because they allowed a church to meet in their house. Romans 16:5; I Corinthians 16:19. They knew what it was like to not have a church building of their own. They didn't mind the loss of privacy to provide a place for the new church to meet in.

8. They **supported missions** by accompanying Paul on a missionary journey to Ephesus to help him start the Ephesian Church. Acts 18:19. It is good if our church members can travel to the mission field to help our workers start churches there. This will give you a greater burden, interest and love for souls.

9. They were **responsible church leaders** so Paul could leave them in Ephesus to help start and build up the Ephesian church. "He came to Ephesus and left them there." (v.19). **Question:** Would you be able to properly lead a church if you had to replace a church planter?

10. They **recognised Apollos as having potential**. Acts 18:24-28. They disciplined him to become a faithful man and a greatly eloquent preacher so that he mightily convinced many others to be saved and to believe that Jesus Christ was the Messiah. Let us see people not as they are, but as what they can become if taught well. Why not attend a good fundamental, soul-winning, Independent Baptist Bible College? We need more labourers. (Matthew 9:36-38).

Question: Who are you discipling and training to become a soul-winner and Bible teacher?

Conclusion: Will you be like Priscilla and Aquilla in these 10 ways? Will you help or hinder your pastor? Will you support or criticise your pastor. Let us all be a blessing to each other as were Priscilla and Aquilla, and God's work will multiply abundantly worldwide to the glory of Jesus Christ.

162. SEVEN BIBLE VALLEYS

Bible reading: Psalm 23.

Aim: To show that Jesus Christ is with us in life's valleys. We can trust Him to bring us through them.

Introduction: All of us go through valley experiences and mountain top experiences. We need to stay close to God during:

- 1) The **good times**, lest **pride** of thinking we don't need God causes us to stumble.
- 2) The **tough times**, lest we **complain**, become **bitter** and stop trusting God.

Of all the Bible texts that have comforted the hearts of troubled souls, strengthened the backs of weary travellers and encouraged the spirits of broken hearts, Psalm 23 has done the most.

A little girl once said: "The Lord is my shepherd, and that's all I want."

Here is our text this morning: Psalm 23:4, "Yea, though I walk through the **valley** of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: **for thou art with me:**..." (v.4).

You young people look at us older people and say: "Boy, they're about to die."

Well, we get worried about you too. You go out in the car, and we think you are going to die. You worry about us dying, we worry about you dying. The great reason for the sweetness of life with Jesus Christ is the fact that when we walk through the valleys, Jesus Christ is there. There are 7 great valleys in the Bible. Let us look at these valleys. In each of these, God is with us. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of..." (Psalm 23:4).

1. **The Valley of Siddim = The Valley of Sin.** (Genesis 14:1-12,10).

This is the valley of the slime pits.

Question: Why is the valley of Siddim called the valley of the slimepits?

Answer: Because the Valley of Siddim is on the very spot where the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were located. God saw the wickedness, sensuality, sodomy, adultery and drunkenness of these wicked, vile cities. God rained fire and brimstone on these evil cities. This valley is a valley where **sin abounded**. This valley represents the **valley of sin** in our lives.

Question: Did you know that when you go to the wicked nightclubs, live it up and go to the depths of sin, that God is with you?

Did you know that when you have hit bottom, when nobody else cares, and when you've spent all, and then you come to your senses and say: "I will rise and go to my Father", that God is always there?

God is there this morning. If you are not saved, He is there knocking on the door of your heart.

He wants to save you. He wants to forgive your every sin. He wants to come into your life. He wants to take you to heaven when you die. He wants to make you a new creature.

He wants to send His Holy Spirit to indwell you. God gave His Son to die for sinners like you.

Jesus went to the cross for you. It doesn't matter how deep into sin you've gone. He is there. Are you in the Valley of Siddim? Are you in deep awful sin? Have you gone to the bottom? Is life empty? Are you without anybody who seems to care? Then God says "I am here." This morning He knocks on your door and says... "I will forgive every sin, I will make you my child, I will write your name in heaven."

Oh dear unsaved friend living in the Valley of Siddim, come to Christ this morning. He is here.

2. The Valley of Eschol = The Valley of Decision. (Deuteronomy 1:21-26).

Eschol is located just inside the Promised Land. Remember the large bundles of grapes carried on the spies shoulders from Eschol? When the Israelites came to the Promised Land at Kadesh-Barnea, they appointed 12 spies to search out the Promised Land. They returned reporting that the land flowed with milk and honey, and that it was a land of giants. The grapes they brought back were so big that it took 2 men to carry one bunch on a pole. These grapes were picked from the Valley of Eschol.

Question: What is the Valley of Eschol?

Answer: It was where the Hebrews faced a decision in their lives. It was Eschol where they had to decide whether to obey God and move into Canaan or go back to wander in the wilderness for 40 years.

In Eschol they decided whether to be their fullest and best for God, or to be less than what God wanted.

The Valley of Eschol is the valley of decision.

My young friends, now you are in the valley of decision. God wants to help you make the right choices.

Surrender your whole life to God. Ask God to lead you to do His will in the Valley of Decision.

3. The Valley of Kidron = The Valley of Suffering. (Mark 14:32-38).

It is the valley on the east outside the Golden Gate of Jerusalem. It is the valley between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. It is where Gethsemane is located, where Jesus prayed in anguish before His crucifixion. It is also called the Valley of Jehoshaphat. (Joel 3:12-16).

Question: What is the Valley of Kidron?

Answer: A cemetery is there. Samson is buried there. Samuel is buried there. James is buried there. Absalom is buried there. A Muslim cemetery is there, thinking that will prevent Christ returning there.

This is the valley of suffering. Many of you are in this valley this morning. Our Lord Jesus Christ is in the valley of suffering with you. Young people, to you, life is all a party, but it won't always be that way.

The day will come when you'll have problems, burdens, heartaches and valleys, many caused by you:

a) Mixing with the wrong crowd, b) Committing sins, c) Going your own way rather than God's way.

d) Marrying or living with an unbeliever. When the valleys come, the Lord Jesus Christ is there with you.

Question: Are you in the valley of sin this morning? He is there.

Question: Are you in the valley of decision? He is there.

Question: Are you in the valley of suffering, heartache, tears and brokenness? He is there.

4. The Valley of Elah = The Valley of Battle. (I Samuel 17:14).

David met Goliath in the Valley of Elah.

Israel and David faced and fought Goliath and the Philistines in the Valley of Elah.

David slung a stone at Goliath, hit him in the forehead and killed him in the valley of Elah.

Israel gained a great victory over the Philistines in the valley of Elah.

This is the valley of battle. As well as God being in the valley of sin, decision, and suffering, He is also with you in the valley of life's battles.

Question: Are you facing some battle this morning? Is there some temptation you feel you cannot resist? God is there. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man:" I Corinthians 10:13.

Question: Do people make fun of you for being a Christian?

It can be a battle everyday. Lean on God. He is there in the valley of battle. Pray, read your Bible, be at church, continue in the battle for souls, keep trusting God to bring you through.

5. The Valley of Achor = The Valley of Discipline, Chastening for Unbelievers.

(Joshua 7:24-26).

This is the valley where Achan was stoned to death for taking the accursed thing from Jericho.

God said to Israel; "Don't take anything in Jericho, it is accursed, it is dedicated to God." Achan took gold, silver and coats. Sin came into the camp. The battle of Ai was lost because Israel tolerated sin in the camp unknowingly. God wants us to repent of our sinful habits.

Joshua called the people together, and cast lots to see who had sinned. The lot fell on Achan.

Israel stoned Achan to death as God commanded.

Application: When we sin, God must discipline us to keep us from deeper sin and trouble. Even in the valley of discipline, God is with us. He disciplines us because He loves us. Hebrew 12:5-15.

The Lord Jesus Christ is with us in the valley of Siddim (sin), Eschol (decision), Kidron (suffering), Elah (battle), and in the valley of Achor (Chastening).

6. The Valley of Gehenna = The Valley of Death. (Jeremiah 19:5,6).

Gehenna is the burning garbage dump at the south end of Jerusalem just outside the wall. Fire burned the garbage continually. Jesus described hell as burning Gehenna forever.

For those of you who die without Christ, this is called the valley of death. Christ will not be there.

If you have rejected Christ all your life, you will have your way and you'll go to a Christless eternity in the lake of fire pictured by Gehenna's burning garbage.

If you have received Christ as your Saviour, you'll have no fear of death, because Jesus will be with you in death as He has been with you in life.

If you suffer, He is there. If you are tempted, He is there. If you are in battle, He is there.

If you are in a decision, He is there. If you are in death, He is there (if you are saved).

7. The Valley of Jezreel/ Megiddo = The Valley of Armageddon. (Zechariah 12:10,11).

The armies of the world will gather here for the great end time battle.

The Lord Jesus shall descend from heaven at this valley. Zechariah 14:1-5.

From the day of your salvation and throughout eternity, the Lord Jesus Christ will be with you.

163. THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD Psalm 23:1-6; John 10:1-18,26-30.

Aim: To see how Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, cares for us.

I. What is the relationship between a sheep and its Shepherd?

- Eastern shepherds give names to their sheep, so that each sheep recognises his own name and comes when called. (John 10:1-5).
- A sheep is the most helpless of animals. He needs someone to lead him. We can't defend ourselves from Satan without the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ.
- If a sheep continually runs away, the shepherd gently breaks its leg. The shepherd will then carry the sheep everywhere till its leg heals. After this the sheep always stays close to the shepherd. This is why God disciplines us.
- A sheep needs a fold (a local church) for shelter overnight in order to be safe from the attacks of wild beasts (Satan). (John 10:1,7). The shepherd sleeps across the only doorway of the fold to guard the sheep.

II. What Good Things Does Jesus Christ (our Good Shepherd) have for us?

- Ownership:** The Lord is my Shepherd. (v.1). Jesus Christ is our:
 - Good Shepherd, who gives His life for the sheep. (John 10:11).
 - Great Shepherd, who rose from the dead. (Hebrew 13:20).
 - Chief Shepherd, who is coming again to reward faithful shepherds with 'crowns of glory.' I Peter 5:4. A Shepherd watches his sheep at all times. We should watch and care for each other. Proverbs 27:23.
- Provision:** I shall not want. (v.1). God will supply things needful for us. Psalm 34:10; 84:11. What needs do you have? Take them to God in prayer. (Psalm 37:4).
- Rest:** He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. (v.2). It's great to have worry-free rest.
"Lie down" = rest in a peaceful life with God, free from sin and violence.
"in green pastures" = pleasant nourishing places.
- Refreshment:** He leadeth me beside still waters. (v.2). A saved persons life can be a life of peace, stillness, quietness and comfort if we obey God's Word. (Psalm 107:29).
- Restoration:** He restoreth my soul. (v.3). When your mind, emotions and willpower weaken, God restores us to peace, strength and blessings.
- Guidance:** He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. (v.3).
- Courage:** I will fear no evil (v.4). Why? Because of:
 - Comfort:** For thou art with me. (Psalm 139:5).
 - Protection:** Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. (v.4). The rod was a heavy club shepherds carried to protect their sheep. If a wild animal approached, the shepherd hit the beast with the club.

c) **Rescue** from trouble: The staff was used to lift the sheep out of a hole or from bushes.
Question: What problems and fears do you have?
God can rescue you from trouble and protect you in trouble. This extends to the worst trouble possible: "though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil..

- Preparation and Providence:** Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.v5. Table prepared = a feast of blessing and rejoicing, even though people around us may be against us. Other tables are: a) Lord's table, b) Table in the wilderness (Psalm 78:19), c) Marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven. (Psalm 78:72; Psalm 81:13-16)
- Honour:** Thou anointest my head with oil. (v.5).
Olive oil was used to anoint prophets, priests and Kings for service.
We are a "royal priesthood." (I Peter 2:9). David was anointed King three times.
- Abundant Blessing:** My cup runneth over. (v.5).
"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?" (Psalm 116:12).
Most of our countries blessings are due to our Christian past.
- Goodness and Mercy:** Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. (v.6). Psalm 27:13,14; 31:19; 34:8. Goodness takes care of my steps. Mercy takes care of my stumbles.
- Fellowship:** I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (v.6). This tells us of the importance of church involvement. We will fellowship now and forever in heaven with God and believers.

164. WHAT A SPIRITUAL MAN DOES

Bible Reading: I Corinthians 3:1-8 ; Romans 8:1-9.

Aim: To become spiritual people, constantly controlled by the Holy Spirit in all we say, think and do.

Introduction: 3 kinds of people are natural (unsaved), spiritual (Godly Christian), and carnal (disobedient Christian). (I Cor. 2:12-16). Which kind are you? What actions describe a spiritual man?

- Compares spiritual things with spiritual things.** I Corinthians 2:13.
He compare scripture in one part of the Bible with scriptures in other parts of the Bible to determine the context and the correct meaning of any passage.He does not take verses out of context as cults do.
- Discerns and judges all things.** I Corinthians 2:14,15.
"He that is spiritual judgeth all things." This verse teaches that we must judge all things as right or wrong. Tolerance of error is the doorway to all error. A common error today is that you can't judge anything or anyone's wrong behaviour. This comes from a misinterpretation of Matthew 7:1 which says: "Judge not that ye be not judged." The correct understanding of this verse is that you can't always correctly judge someone's motives. Don't judge based on human thinking, but on scripture.
"Do not ye judge them that are within (the church)." I Corinthians 5:12.

165. "SON, GO TO WORK TODAY IN MY VINEYARD"

Bible reading: Matthew 21:28-32.

Aim: For every believer to go work TODAY in building up God's local churches.

Introduction: Jesus here spoke of a man who had two sons, both of whom he asked to go work today in my vineyard. One said, "Yes", and didn't go. The other said "No", and later changed his mind and decided to obey his dad.

The challenge for us today is "which group do you belong to?" Jesus Christ's first Century application was to the Pharisees who said, "Yes, I'll go, but didn't go", as the first group, and to the Publicans and Harlots who said "No" but later obeyed as the second group. Let's look at four parts to this message as it applies to us today:

Question: Which group are you in today?

1. **WHO?** "**SON**" (Matthew 21:28).

a) **Question:** Who was supposed to work in his vineyard?

Answer: Son. It doesn't say Experienced son, go work in my vineyard
It doesn't say Trained son, go work in my vineyard
It doesn't say Preacher son, go work in my vineyard
It doesn't say Deacon son, go work in my vineyard
It doesn't say Talented son, go work in my vineyard
It doesn't say Healthy son, go work in my vineyard
It doesn't say Young son, go work in my vineyard
It just says "Son".

Question: Do you think that God is trying to tell us that all of His children are supposed to work in God's vineyard? The fact that He did not differentiate and did not describe a particular type of son.

He didn't say Extrovert son, go work in my vineyard
He didn't say Missionary son, go work in my vineyard
He didn't say Gifted son, go work in my vineyard.

He said SON, meaning everyone in this building who is a son of God, if you have received Christ as Saviour and have been born into God's family and your name is written in heaven, you are His son and you are supposed to go work in God's vineyard.

b) God said, "Son." This means that he was already His son before he worked.

God didn't say, "If you'll work in my vineyard, you'll become my son."

He said, "Son, go work in my vineyard." I guess that works do not make a person God's son.

In John 1:12 God says, Receive Christ as Saviour and you become God's son.

Ephesians 2:8,9 says, "for by grace are ye saved ... not of works..."

Working for God has nothing to do with whether you go to heaven or not. It may affect what street you live in when you get there, or what kind of house you live in there, and what rewards you get, but first you must become God's son.

Titus 3:5 says, "not by works of righteousness which we have done..."

You're not saved when you believe in what you do for salvation, but in what He (the Lord Jesus Christ) has already done for you on Calvary.

"Who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."
Hebrews 5:14.

3. Sows spiritual things. I Corinthians 9:11,12.

"If we have sown unto you spiritual things." These spiritual things Paul sowed were preaching the gospel, Bible preaching, planting churches, making disciples, etc.

4. Acknowledges that Paul's writing are the commandments of the Lord. I Corinthians 14:37.

We are under the New Covenant and the Laws of Christ, and not under the Old Mosaic Covenant.

5. Restores backsliders in a spirit of meekness. Galatians 6:1.

This is a hard thing for most Christians to do, due to fear of confrontation. A spiritual person bears one another's burdens.

6. Sings Psalms and Hymns and spiritual songs. Ephesians 5:19.

A spiritual man will sing spiritual songs. A worldly, carnal or natural man will sing worldly songs.

7. Wrestles against spiritual wickedness in high places. Ephesians 6:10-18.

He does this as he puts on the whole armour of God. He also prays in the spirit and watches (v.18).

8. Seeks wisdom and spiritual understanding. Colossians 1:9.

A spiritual man seeks to understand all things of life from a spiritual, Biblical point of view. He asks, 'Why do things happen?' He sees that things happen due to Bible truths being violated or obeyed.

9. Takes his place (as a brick) in a local church, pulling his weight as a brick supports a house wall.

(I Peter 2:5). This person works together with other believers, as a brick is locked in place with other bricks. He offers up spiritual sacrifices to God. Spiritual believers constantly sacrifice their time, effort, prayers and money to promote God's work.

10. He a) Bridles his tongue.

b) Visits the fatherless and widows.

c) Keeps himself unspotted from the world. James 1:26,27.

The Spiritual man has these blessings in Romans 8:

i) no condemnation (v.1).

ii) free from the law of sin and death. (v.2).

iii) fulfils the righteousness of the law. (v.4).

iv) minds the things of the Spirit. (v.5).

v) lives a life of victory and peace. (v.6,13).

vi) calls God "Father." (v.15).

vii) suffers with Christ now and will be glorified with Christ later. (v.17).

viii) reckons that this world's sufferings are not worthy to be compared with heaven's glory. (v.18).

ix) groans within himself at this world's wickedness, waiting eagerly for heaven. (v.22,23).

x) knows that all things work together for good to them that love God. (v.28).

Conclusion: "To be spiritually minded is life and peace." Romans 8:6. Are you spiritual, carnal or natural? Are you doing what a Spiritual man does?

2) WHAT? "GO WORK" (Matthew 21:28).

a) This is not a very popular subject. God's command to us is, "Son, Go Work". He did not say, "Son, go sit in my vineyard and hear the vine dresser speak three times a week."

He did not say, "Go relax in my lounge," He said, "Go Work."

He did not say, "Go dabble in my work," He said, "Go Work."

He did not say, "Go worship in my sanctuary," He said, "Go Work."

He did not say, "Go have wonderful feelings," He said, "Go Work."

He did not say, "Go serve on my committee," He said, "Go Work."

He did not say, "Go criticise my people," He said, "Go Work."

You are not a good Christian because you go to church, hear a fellow talk, and sing a few songs. This local church is only a fueling station, where you get energy, strength and courage to go out and work for God all week long. "Son, Go Work today in my vineyard."

□ Now, here is the secret:

The secret is not eloquence, its work.

The secret is not courage, its work.

The secret is not talent, its work. You'll fail and fall flat on your face unless you work.

The less this country works, the more miserable this country will be. You ought to enjoy working. You should like it and want to do it.

There's nothing so out of place in this world as a Christian who won't "go work" for God. Nothing. You know why? Because God made you to "GO and WORK".

Ephesians 2:10 "For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto GOOD WORKS which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

If you are not going and working for God, you are not fulfilling the purpose of your creation. You may as well be a fish that refuses to swim, or a bird that refuses to fly, or a soloist who won't sing, or a dog who won't bark, or a carpenter who won't work with wood.

Like a fire with no glow,

Like a winter with no snow,

Like a river with no flow,

Like a conviction without a "NO."

Like an oar without a row,

Like a wind without a blow,

Like a scale without a doe,

Like a pitcher without a throw,

Like a harvest without a sow,

Like a trip without a go,

Like a kneader without dough,

Like a Santa without a Ho,

Like excess without overflow,

Like a foot without a toe,

Like a gardener without a hoe,

Like a cock without a crow,

Like a con without a pro,

Like a high without a low,

Like a truth without a know,

Like a fast without a slow,

Like a buck without a doe,

Like an actor without a show,

Like above without below,

Like a to without a fro,

Like violins without a bow,

Is a Christian who will not go. God give us Christians who work!

The Lord Jesus Christ said, "Son, go work today in my vineyard."

Go work, what are you doing for God?

Some people will say: "Preacher, when are you going to quit preaching about work?"

Answer: "Oh, probably at the rapture."

Question: Do you know what's wrong with churches in Australia?

Answer: We are spectators instead of participants.

God has not given us one written excuse not to work. You are supposed to work, every man, every woman and every child, go work today in my vineyard.

b) Let's look at some verses on WORK:

John 4:34 Jesus said unto them "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

John 5:17 "but Jesus answered them, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work."

John 9:4 "I must work the work of him that sent me, while it is day, the night cometh when no man can

John 17:6 "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Will you be able to say this to God?

Acts 13:2 Holy Spirit said, 'Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them'.

Acts 14:26 "they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled."

Acts 15:38 Mark "departed from them from Pamphylia and went not with them to the work".

1 Corinthians 3:13 "Every man's work should be made manifest. ...the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss:" (v.13-15).

1 Corinthians 9:1 "Are not ye my work in the Lord?"

1 Corinthians 15:58 "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

1 Corinthians 16:10 "Timotheus worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do."

2 Corinthians 9:8 "that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work"

Galatians 6:4 "let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone,"

Ephesians 4:12 "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the..."

Philippians 2:30 "Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life..."

Colossians 1:10 "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work"

1 Thessalonians 1:3 "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love."

1 Timothy 3:1 "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work."

1 Timothy 5:10 "Well reported of for good works; if she... have diligently followed every good work".

2 Timothy 2:21 "If a man therefore purge himselfhe shall be prepared unto every good work".

2 Timothy 4:5 "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist"

Titus 3:1 "Put them in mind tobe ready to every good work".

Hebrews 6:10 "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love."

Hebrews 13:21 "Make you perfect in every good work to do his will."

James 1:25 "...a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

1 Peter 1:17 "Father,..judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear"

Rev 22:12 "I come quickly; & my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be"

2 Cor 6:1 "We, as workers together with him, beseech you that ye receive not the grace of God in vain."

3) WHEN? TODAY.

But you say 'I worked yesterday.' Good, but God says you are supposed to work again today.

'But I am training to work tomorrow,' God says, 'You're supposed to work today.'

Every Bible college student has to go Soul Winning every week and fill out a report on how many visits he made and how many souls God used him to received Christ as Saviour.

At our Bible college, every student must go Soul Winning every week, or they send him home.

God didn't say, 'Work tomorrow when you get your degree.' He said: "Go work today in my vineyard".

God didn't say, 'Son, when you grow up, work in my vineyard.' He said, 'Son'. That means any saved 6 year old, 10 year old, 13 year old, 30-130 year old is supposed to work for God.

I am sick and fed up with the philosophy that says that there is one kind of Christianity for adults and another kind for teenagers. Go work TODAY.

Not when you are grown up but today.

Not when you have graduated but today.

Not when you are trained but today.

Not when you are an adult but today.

Not when you are older but today.

Not when you are young but today.

The reason for this is that the work needs to be done TODAY.

What about those people who'll die while you're wondering. You only have today.

Question: Do you know why some people are sad?

It's because they have quit working for God and are looking at yesterday or tomorrow.

They say things like: 'I remember when...' or 'If only I could...'

This is the only sermon I know I'll ever preach. Today is alive. Live for today.

SON, GO WORK TODAY IN MY VINEYARD.

There are many people who think that because they are children, they don't have to work for God. There are many who think that because they are old, that they don't have to work for God.

Work when you are 16, 60, 80, 90 or even 100. I love to see old preachers who are 85 years old, still pounding the pulpit and preaching.

Illustration:

John Newton was so sinful that he sold the shoes of his own baby, took the money and bought liquor to drink for himself. Later he got saved and began to preach. (He is the author of Amazing Grace). When Newton got older he was too feeble to get up the pulpit stairs. He was helped up the stairs to the pulpit. Someone said to the aging Newton, "Don't you think you should give up preaching?" Newton replied: "What! Shall this old African blasphemer ever give up praising the grace of God? As long as there is breath in my body, never, never!" He worked until he died.

You say; 'I'm going to get a bus route as soon as I...' That is too late, go work today.

Question: **What Are You Doing Now For God?**

I would love to make every believer realize that you have to face God someday at the Judgment Seat and give an account to God for what you have done and haven't done.

Dear friend, I love you. You have to face God and give an account for your laziness, indifference and complacency. Yes, you do. What are you doing for God?

- disciple making seminars in your homes with your friends.
- scripture classes in schools.
- bus route and visitation.
- teen Bible study.
- Nursing Home visitations and Soul Winning.

4) WHERE? IN MY VINEYARD.

Son (that's me).

Go work (that's what).

Today (that's when).

In my vineyard (that's where).

Question: What is God's vineyard?

Answer: In a local Church, among God's people, bearing fruit and helping others bear fruit.

Get Involved In Building Up Local Churches. If we all keep busy working for God, and if we keep our hearts right with God, then the fruit-bearing will take care of itself.

Question: What does it mean, 'Go work in my vineyard?'

Answer: It means that I am not to criticise any of God's fruit bearing trees.

This means I am not to do anything that would hurt the testimony of the vineyard.

Question: What are you doing for this Church?

Illustration:

Can you imagine an employer who has a worker come to him for his weekly paycheck.

He asks him; "How many hours did you work?" He says; "None, but I didn't smoke." or

"I didn't work any hours but I didn't take a drink 40 hours this week."

Will the boss say; "Well, I'll pay you \$10 per hour for not drinking?"

Question: Did anybody here get paid for not drinking or not smoking?

Question: How many hours did you work this week?

"I didn't work any hours but I didn't beat my wife."

Answer: "OK, I'll pay you \$400 for not beating your wife."

Question: Do you think God is going to pay you for not beating your wife?

You get paid for what you do for God.

Question: What are you doing for God? You'll never find anything as sweet or as rewarding in your life as working in God's vineyard. Get something to do for God this year and do it with your might.

166. THE FEAR OF GOD

Bible Reading: Psalm 34:11; Jonah 1:9,10.

Aim: To fear God so that we will always make those decisions that please God.

Introduction: When God describes unbelievers in Romans chapter 3, one thing He says of their life of sin is that “there is no fear of God before their eyes.” Romans 3:18. Unbelievers don’t care about God or others, they mainly care about themselves. They have not yet discovered that God judges their sins in this life and will judge their sins in the next life. They don’t think that they’ll be cast into the lake of fire, nor do they appreciate the horrors of hell, nor the statement, “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

Question: Do you truly fear God?

Question: What does it mean to fear God?

Question: What will we do if we fear God?

Question: What benefits come to us by fearing God?

Question: Who are some Bible characters that feared God?

I. Kinds of Fear

Question: What does it mean to fear God? The Bible uses the word “Fear” in 7 ways:

1. **Holy Fear** = Love and respect for the majesty and holiness of God.

In Genesis 20:11, Abraham said, “because I thought, surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife’s sake.”

“Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, Galilee and Samaria, and were edified and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost were multiplied.” Acts 9:31.

“Come ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach the fear of the Lord.” Psalm 34:11.

David speaks of this fear as clean and pure. (Psalm 19:9).

The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. (Proverbs 1:7; Psalm 111:10).

The Fear of the Lord enables man to:

- respect God’s authority (Revelation 14:9),
- obey God’s commandments,
- turn from evil (Jonah 1:9), and
- pursue true holiness (2 Corinthians 7:1; Philippians 2:12).

The believer has this fear of God which is defined as ‘the proper reverence of a child of God for his Heavenly Father (2 Corinthians 6:17 – 7:1) so that we obey God because we:

- love Him for who He is,
- obey Him because He is good and His plans are best for us, and
- respect Him because of His power to correct and discipline us.

2. Fear of Unforgiven Sin.

Caused by the work of the law written on unbelievers hearts. This is fear of the guilt of sin.

“which show the work of the law written on their hearts.” (Romans 2:15). Examples include:

- Adam’s fear of unforgiven sin when he sinned. (Genesis 3:10).
- Felix’s fear of unforgiven sin as he heard Paul preach. (Acts 24:25).
- Men who reject the preaching of the Gospel: “A certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries.” (Hebrews 10:27-31).

3. Fear of Judgment at Christ’s Second Coming.

The wicked will have a fear and terror of God’s judgment at Christ’s Second Coming.

“After three and a half days the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.” Revelation 11:11.

“They shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.” Isaiah 2:19.

God places a fear of His people in their enemies to protect Israel:

- When God smote one million soldiers who attacked Israel during King Asa’s reign (951 BC), the fear of God came upon them. II Chronicles 14:14.
- When a large army from Ammon, Moab and Mt Seir (Jordan) invaded Israel during King Jehoshaphat’s reign (896BC), God smote the invaders, and “The fear of God was in all the kingdoms of those countries when they had heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel.”(2 Chron 20:29)
- ‘The land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt, every one that maketh mention thereof shall be afraid in himself.’ (Isaiah 9:17).

4. Fear of Man. Two kinds are:

- Proper respect for those in authority.
 - Fear to whom fear is due. He beareth not the sword in vain. Romans 13:4,7.
 - Servants (employees) be subject to your masters with all fear. 1 Peter 2:18.
- Senseless dread of man.
Israel was told not to fear the Canaanites, but to go and conquer the land. Numbers 14:9.

5. Cowardice and Timidness.

“God has not given us a spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” II Timothy 1:7.

“Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” John 14:27.

“The fearful, and unbelieving..” Revelation 21:8. This is people afraid of receiving Christ as Saviour.

Jesus said to the disciples in the storm on the Sea of Galilee: “Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?” Mark 4:40.

6. Fear of the Unknown.

“Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth.” Luke 21:26. Other examples are the fear of ghosts, or of scary things. (Job 4:14-16).

7. Fear for others and the danger in which they stand.

“I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.” 1 Corinthians 2:3.

“But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.” 2 Corinthians 11:3.

II. People Who Feared The Lord

- Godly women fear the Lord. Proverbs 31:30.
- Jonah said to the sailors: ‘I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea.’ Jonah 1:9.
- Joseph said to his brothers: “I fear God”. Genesis 42:18.
- Job was described by Satan to God as: “Doth Job fear God for naught?” Job 1:9.
- Repentant thief on the Cross said to the other thief, “Dost not thou fear God?” Luke 23:40.
- Obadiah said to Elijah: “I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth.” I Kings 18:3,12.

- 7) One of the priests taught the people of Bethel how they should fear the Lord. 2 King 17:28,41.
- 8) Abraham was told by the angel at Moriah: "Now I know that thou fearest God." Genesis 22:12.

III. What People Will Do Who Fear God

- 1) "Serve the Lord with fear." Psalm 2:11.
- 2) "Blessed is everyone that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways." Psalm 128:1.
- 3) "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name." Malachi 3:16.
- 4) "Ye that fear the Lord give audience." Acts 13:16. FTL = listen to preaching of God's Word.
- 5) "Perfecting holiness in the fear of God." FTL= grow in holiness and love for God. 2 Cor.7:1.
- 6) Husband and wife will submit themselves one to another in the fear of God. Ephesians 5:21.
- 7) Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12), because you'll have to give account of your service to God. This means to work out the details of how to live and serve God.

IV. Benefits and Blessings of Fearing God

- 1) Psalm 15:4 "He honours them that fear the Lord."
- 2) Psalm 25:12 "Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose."
- 3) Psalm 25:14 "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him."
- 4) Psalm 31:19 "How great is thy goodness laid up for them that fear thee."
- 5) Psalm 33:18 "The eye of the Lord is on them that fear him."
- 6) Psalm 34:7 "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth them."
- 7) Psalm 34:9 "There is no want to them that fear Him."
- 8) Psalm 34:11 "I will teach you the fear of the Lord."
- 9) Psalm 85:9 "His salvation is near them that fear him."
- 10) Psalm 103:11 "So great is His mercy toward them that fear Him."
- 11) Psalm 111:10 "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."
- 12) Psalm 112:1,2 "His seed shall be mighty upon earth."
- 13) Psalm 115:13 "He will bless them that fear the Lord."
- 14) Psalm 119:63 "I am a companion of all them that fear thee."
- 15) Psalm 119:74 "They that fear thee will be glad when they see me."
- 16) Psalm 147:11 "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him."
- 17) Proverbs 8:13 "The fear of the Lord to hate evil."
- 18) Proverbs 10:27 "The fear of the Lord prolongeth days."
- 19) Proverbs 14:2 "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence."
- 20) Proverbs 14:27 "The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death."
- 21) Proverbs 16:6 "By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil."
- 22) Proverbs 19:23 "The fear of the Lord tendeth to life."
- 23) Proverbs 22:4 "By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, honour and life."

Conclusion: "Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long." Proverbs 23:17.

167. WE OUGHT TO

Bible Reading: Acts 10:1-6.

Aim: To see what God says we ought to do. To tell people what they ought to do.

Memory Verse: "He shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." Acts 10:6.

Introduction: The angel who appeared to Cornelius told him that if he wanted further information as to the purpose of his call, he should send for Peter (v.5) who 'shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.'

Definition: "OUGHT" = our duty, the rightness of something, the advisability of some action, our moral obligation.

a) The problem with many people today is that they overlook their duty and moral obligation to God. Instead, they do whatever they feel like doing.

b) Another problem is that many parents when they see their children going astray are too afraid to do what Peter did and "tell them what they ought to do."

I. Notice Some Things about Peter telling Cornelius what he ought to do.

1) The angel could not tell Cornelius the gospel, so he directed Cornelius to a man who would clearly tell him what he ought to do.

Lesson: Angels know who the best soul winners are. They direct people to good soul winners.

2) Peter was willing to tell people what they needed to hear even if they didn't like it. Peter was not afraid of what they thought about him. He was more concerned about what God thought of him.

"We ought to obey God rather than men." Acts 5:29.

i) He told 3000 Jews on the Day of Pentecost what they ought to do in Acts 2:14-40.

ii) He told the crowd gathered at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple what they ought to do after the lame man was healed in Acts 3:12-26.

iii) He told Annas the High Priest & Caiaphas what they ought to do in Acts 4:5-12,19-20.

iv) He told Ananias and Sapphira what they ought to do in Acts 5:1-10.

v) He told the Sanhedrin what they ought to do in Acts 5:29-33.

Lesson: We need to get into the habit of telling people what they ought to do to please God. Don't be afraid, but speak the truth in love, especially parents must tell their children what they ought to do.

II. What Other Things Ought We To Do?

1) Men ought always to pray and not to faint. (Luke 18:1).

We must always maintain a spirit of prayer. We must always be in a proper frame of mind to pray to God for things needful. Though our prayers go long unanswered, we should persevere and not grow weary in praying to God.

2) "We ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29). We should not seek to please men but to please God. "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." Galatians 1:10.

The trouble is that this world is seeking to please the wrong crowd, such as the bad peer group, their own lustful pleasures, and their children, rather than pleasing God. Do your seek to please God or men?

3) "so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35).

We should go to work to earn money so we can provide for the needs of sick, feeble and suffering Christians, who are unable to work for themselves, such as Christians in Africa.

Lesson: Many Christians work only to accumulate a lot of wealth for themselves, but we ought to work to bless and help others who can't work (see Romans 15:1).

4) “Pray that I may **speak boldly**, as I ought to speak.” (Ephesians 6:20).
Boldly = openly, plainly, and without fear. Paul felt that the gospel ought always to be spoken plainly, without fear of men. Learn to speak the gospel boldly because it is our duty to speak it.

Come doorknocking and open air soul winning.

5) “as ye have received of us how ye ought to **walk** and to **please God**.” (I Thessalonians 4:1).

Ye should abstain from fornication. (v.3).

Ye study to be quiet and do your own business and work with your own hands. (v.11).

Ye may walk honestly toward them that are without.”

Ephesians 4,5,6 show us how we ought to walk worthy of Christ, and how we should live. Life is often represented as a journey. (Romans 6:4 “we should walk in newness of life”).

6) “For yourselves know how ye ought to **follow us**”. (2 Thessalonians 3:7). We should imitate the apostles example of love, self sacrifice, soul-winning, and hard work for Christ and others.

7) “We ought to **give the more earnest heed** to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.” (Hebrews 2:1).

More earnest heed = more strict attention.

To the things we’ve heard = from the apostles, or from Godly Bible preaching.

Lest at any time we should let them slip = never forget them, never be indifferent to them.

Cares of this world, dullness of mind or a cold heart may render us indifferent to them.

These key Bible truths which we used to hold dearly can pass out of our minds without concern. Paul says that this ought never to be done. These truths should always be important to us.

8) “For when for the time ye ought to be **teachers**.” (Hebrews 5:12).

Believers ought to be able to teach others the gospel, basic Christian truths, Christ’s Second Coming and to refute false doctrines. We should be able to teach children, friends, new converts and disciples.

9) Ye ought to **say, If the Lord will**, we shall live, and do this, or that. (James 4:15).

10) We ought to **lay down our lives for the brethren**. (I John 3:16).

11) We ought to **love one another**. (I John 4:11).

12) We must know how we ought to **behave ourselves in the house of God**. (I Timothy 3:15).

This means that we should: **a)** Come to church on or before time. Don’t be late.

b) Listen carefully to the preaching. Take notes in a notebook so you can teach it to others.

c) Sing heartily to the Lord. (Ephesians 5:19).

d) Don’t disturb others by talking, but behave properly in God’s house.

e) Give your tithes and offerings to further God’s work.

f) Don’t rush away afterwards, but stay for a while to encourage others (Hebrews 10:24,25).

g) Notice and befriend newcomers, sit next to them, introduce them to others who might become good friends with them, ask them if they are 100% sure of going to heaven and if not then lead them to Christ. Invite newcomers to lunch after church, become their friend, ask them if you can have a Bible Study with them that week, and invite them to come soul-winning with you Sunday afternoon. Pray before the service that God will bless the meeting and teach you something needful in the message. Pray that God will build the church and that He will use you to bless others. Be thankful to God and others, and not critical. “Enter His gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise.” Psalm 100:4.

13) “Ye **pay tithe**...and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone.” (Matthew 23:23).

168. MAKING RIGHT CHOICES

Bible Reading: Luke 10:38-42.

Aim: To make the right choices that God wants us to make. To see what God wants us to choose.

Introduction: Tell the story of Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38-42.

Every day of our life we are making choices, some are small and some are major. Some have little consequences and some have big consequences. If we choose to go soul winning or not go soul winning will have big consequences for those who get saved. We must get into the habit early in life of making choices that God wants us to make. Some Christians never think about what choices God wants them to make. They only choose what they feel like doing.

Question: What choices should you make in life? Are you making these choices?

1. **Choose Life.** Deuteronomy 30:15,19.

The first choice all people must make is to choose Jesus Christ to be their Saviour and hence to choose the gift of eternal life. “He that has the Son has life.” I John 5:12. God sets before each of us the choice between life and good on one hand, and death, evil and hell on the other hand.

Question: Have you chosen life and good, or death and evil? Choosing Jesus Christ is laying the only true foundation for life.

2. **Choose Today Whom You Will Serve.** Joshua 24:15.

After salvation, comes service. We are saved to serve God and others.

“If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.” John 12:26.

“Let ...he that is chief, (be) as he that doth serve.” Luke 22:26.

“His servants shall serve Him.” Revelation 22:3. Service here leads to service in heaven.

“Henceforth we should not serve sin.” Romans 6:6.

Question: How should we serve? **a)** “We should serve in newness of spirit.” Romans 7:6.

b) “Serve the Lord with gladness.” Psalm 100:2.

c) “Serve him (God) with a perfect heart and willing mind.” I Chronicles 28:9.

d) “By love serve one another.” Galatians 5:13.

Question: Have you chosen to serve God daily and faithfully?

Choose to serve God TODAY, not TOMORROW, and not when you feel like it.

3. **Choose to sit at Jesus’ feet, and to hear His Word.** Luke 10:38-42.

v.38 The certain village that Jesus entered was Bethany (John 11:1) on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. Martha received Jesus into her house with kindness and hospitality. Martha may have been a widow and her brother Lazarus and younger sister Mary lived with her. Martha may have owned the house. Having responsibility of the house shows why she was busy with household duties. (v.39).

Mary sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His Word. “Sitting at Jesus’ feet” was the ancient posture of disciples and learners. This meant that Mary was a disciple of Jesus, that she listened attentively to Him and was keen to learn His doctrines. ‘Sitting at the feet of Jesus’ meant to sit in a humble place to learn and study His Word. (Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel. Acts 22:3).

Question: Are you sitting at the feet of Jesus, learning all you can in order to best serve Him?

v.40 "Martha was cumbered about much serving." Martha was distracted with the cares of the family and with entertaining Jesus. The only fault she was charged with was too earnest a desire to entertain Jesus when she might have sat at Jesus' feet learning His Word. It was an insult to Jesus to value food preparation more than Jesus teaching. Martha wrongly reprovved Jesus, as if He encouraged Mary to neglect her household duties. Mary saw that she had higher duties at that time. Martha hinted to Jesus her need of Mary to assist, and requested Jesus to send Mary to help her.

v.41 "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things."
Martha was disturbed and distracted with secondary household duties when she should have chosen to hear the God of Heaven teach His Word with heavenly wisdom. What a wonderful opportunity to hear Jesus preach and teach. Why miss it for a few dishes and biscuits?

v.42 "But one thing is needful and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Bible teaching and attention to Christ is our chief need. Other things are less important. Understanding God's Word must be secured first, then all other things will follow.

Note: It is important to learn God's Word in our youth and how to use it to teach others. "That good part" = interest in Christ's doctrine. Mary had chosen to give up her time and affections to Christ to learn His ways. From this we learn that:

- i) The cares of life are dangerous and may easily distract us from learning Christ's Word, even when those cares seem most lawful and commendable.
No worldly thing could have been more proper than to provide for Jesus and to supply His wants. Yet because it too greatly occupied her mind, the Lord Jesus gently reprovved her. So a care for our families may be the means of neglecting our walk with Christ.
- ii) It is more important to learn Jesus' Word than to be engaged in the affairs of the world.
- iii) There are times when it is right to stop worldly employments and attend to the affairs of the soul. Eg. Sundays, to go to Bible College, the mission field, or to study God's Word.
- iv) If attention to Christ is omitted at the proper time, it will always be omitted at other times.
If Mary had neglected to hear Jesus then, she might never have heard Him.
She seized the opportunity to hear Jesus. Martha did not appreciate the opportunity.
- v) Godliness and learning God's Word, are the chief things. All earthly gain we must leave behind. Only God's Word and souls will last forever. There is a Judgment Seat. There is a Heaven.
There is a Hell. We must prepare for them. All that is needed to prepare us to die and make us happy forever is to be saved and to learn and obey God's Word.
- vi) Godliness is the chief ornament of a female. It sweetens every other virtue. It gives new loveliness to the mildness and grace of female character.
 - Nothing is more lovely than a lady sitting at the feet of Jesus, like Mary.
 - Nothing is more unlovely of a lady than her entire absorption in worldly affairs as Martha.

The most lovely female is she who is most like Jesus.

The least lovely female is she who neglects her soul, who is proud, thoughtless, envious, angry, worldly and unlike the meek and lowly Lord Jesus.

At Jesus' feet is peace, purity of life and joy. Everywhere else an alluring and wicked world steals our affections and makes us worldly, self absorbed and uncommitted to Christ.

4. **Choose a Good Name.**

"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." Proverbs 22:1.
Many people today choose great riches instead of a good name.

Question: How do we choose a good name?

Answer: "Let not mercy and truth forsake thee..."

so shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man." Proverbs 3:3,4.

If we show mercy and truth always, we will find favour with God and man.

Having a good name (ie: an honourable reputation) because of good character, is to be valued far

above having much wealth. Riches are bad if gaining them ruins one's character.

5. **Choose the Fear of the Lord.** "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

Proverbs 1:7.

"They hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord." Proverbs 1:29.

Fear of the Lord = awe and respect for the majesty and holiness of God.

Fear of the Lord enables man to:

- a) Respect God's authority. Revelation 14:9.
- b) Obey God's Commandments.
- c) Turn from evil (Jonah 1:9).
- d) Pursue true holiness (2 Corinthians 7:1).

We fear and obey God because we:

- a) Love Him for Who He is, our Creator and our Saviour.
- b) Obey Him because He is good and His plans are best for us.
- c) Respect Him because of His power to correct and discipline us.

Question: Do you choose to fear God? If we fear God we will: 1) Read our Bible daily, 2) Pray daily, 3) Be committed to building our Church, 4) Go Soul Winning, 5) Train others.

6. **Choose to Suffer Affliction** with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Hebrews 11:25. Moses saw that if he cast his lot with the Israelites, he must expect trials.

Moses chose to sacrifice the comforts and honour of Pharaoh's court to help deliver the people of God.

Question: Will you choose to support, help and bless God's people rather than seeking worldly honour?

- i) There is some pleasure in sin, but it is only for a season. Pleasure = excitement, amusement.
- ii) The eternal wealth and glory of serving Christ are more to be chosen than the temporary, passing pleasures of sin and the world. Which will you choose?

7. **Choose the Things that Pleased God.** Isaiah 56:4.

8. **Chose the Way of Truth.** Psalm 119:30.

9. **Choose God's Precepts.** Psalm 119:173.

10. **Choose the Good and Refuse the Evil.** Isaiah 7:15,16.

169. THE TWO RESURRECTIONS are like the Jewish harvest.

1. i) The Firstfruits = Christ and some OT Saints rose (33AD). (Matthew 27:50-53).
 ii) The Harvest = The Rapture at Christ's return. (I Thess. 4:16,17; I Cor. 15:51-54).
 iii) The Gleanings = Tribulation Saints resurrected at the end of the Tribulation. (Rev. 20:4,5,6).
 2. The **Tares** = Unbelievers raised at the end of Millennium. Matthew 13:24-30, 63-43.
 Notice 3 groups in I Corinthians 15:22-25,
 - i) Christ the firstfruits.
 - ii) They that are Christ's at His Coming.
 - iii) Then cometh the end (Revelation 20:11-13).
- I. **There are 2 classes of God's people at the rapture:**
1. **Corruptible** = those who are dead and their bodies are in the grave.
 2. **Mortal** = those who are living, but liable to death. I Corinthians 15:53. Paul quotes Isaiah 25:8 describing the glory of the Kingdom Age when "death is swallowed up in victory."
 At the Rapture:
 1. The **mortal** (living) will say to death: "Oh death, where is thy sting." I Corinthians 15:55.
 2. The **corruptible** as they rise from the grave will shout: "O grave, where is thy victory?"
- II. **Question:** With what body do they come? (I Corinthians 15:35).
Answer: Paul uses 3 illustrations to describe the nature of believers' resurrection body:
- i) From Botany – seedtime and harvest. (v.37,38). Our old body is like a seed that must first die, and then sprout in order to bear grain.
 - ii) From Biology – 4 different kinds of flesh are men, beasts, fishes and birds (v.39).
 God has fitted each to its own environment. So our new resurrection body will be perfectly fitted to our new everlasting environment.
 - iii) From Astronomy – there are different glories of earthly bodies (terrestrial, like our bodies now) and celestial bodies (heavenly bodies like the sun, moon, and stars) which will be like our resurrection bodies later in the resurrection. As one star differs from another star in glory, so will our future resurrection bodies differ in glory. (v.40-44). Encouragement (v. 58).
- III. **Mid Tribulation Objection:**
- Question:** Is the last trumpet of I Cor. 15:52 the same as the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11:15?
- Question:** What is meant by the "last trumpet"? Amillennialists try to use this to refute Premillennialism. This idea is wrong for these reasons:
- i) The trumpets of Revelation are sounded by **angels**.
 The trumpet at the Rapture is the trumpet of **God the Son**. (I Thessalonians 4:16).
 - ii) The trumpets of Revelation are all related to God's **judgment** on sin and unbelief.
 The trumpet of I Thess. 4:16 and I Cor. 15:52 is a **gracious call** to the saved to rise.
 - iii) The **7th trumpet** of Revelation 11:15 is **not the last trumpet of scripture**.
 In Matthew 24:31, the elect will be gathered at Christ's glorious return after Armageddon, "with a great sound of a trumpet" to establish His earthly Kingdom.
 The **last trump** of God for the **church** will be the **call to go to be with the Lord**. (I Cor. 15:52).

170. THREE TREES ISRAEL IS LIKE

Aim: Lost opportunity and lost blessing come through wrong thinking and unbelief. (Romans 11:1-36).

1. **VINE** represents **Israel's Past (Romans 9: Before Christ) = Israel Elected**.
 "The **vineyard** of the Lord of hosts is the **house of Israel**." Isaiah 5:7.
 - i) **Psalms 80:8-16**. "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. She sent out her boughs unto the sea (Mediterranean), and her branches unto the river (Euphrates)." God transplanted Israel from Egypt to Canaan, giving them all the land from the Nile to the Euphrates River (Deut. 11:24; Joshua 1:4). Israel didn't appreciate this great start.
 As a result they lost these privileges and experienced judgment (v.12-16).
 Key: We must appreciate our privileges or we may lose them.
 - ii) **Isaiah 5:1-7**. God was greatly disappointed when He looked for Israel to bring forth grapes proportionate to her privileges, but found them to be wild grapes.
 Lesson: God does all He can to help our Christian growth. Let us cooperate with God in getting a real hunger for Bible knowledge, Christian service and spiritual growth.
 - iii) **Jeremiah 2:21**. Blessings may be lost. We may start our Christian life being noble (as Israel did), but if we forsake the right way, we may become degenerate and become a castaway (I Cor. 9:27). God disciplined Israel for its sin by: a) taking away the hedge, b) breaking down the wall,
 c) laying it waste, d) hedging her way with thorns and briars, and e) withholding rain.
 - iv) **Ezekiel 15:1-8**. Vision of the burning vine.
 Israel has passed through the fires of persecution over the last 2600 years. As she is not bearing fruit, she is only fit for fuel. Only the stem is burnt. The root is still alive. The vine will spring up in the Millennium as Romans 11:1-5,25-29 and Hosea 3:4,5 state.
 - v) **Matthew 21:33-41**. The Parable of the Vineyard reveals why the keepers of the vineyard (the Jewish nation), have been cast out of the vineyard (Palestine). It was because they took the Heir (Jesus Christ) and crucified Him. They were cast out of the vineyard and it has been let to other husbandmen, the Church, to bring forth spiritual fruit.

 Lesson: If you drop out, God may raise up someone else to enjoy your blessings and future successful ministry. When people get angry and leave the church for no valid reason, God brings others in to take their place and do the work God had for them.
2. **FIG TREE** represents **Israel Present (Romans 10: from Christ to the Present) = Israel Rejected**.
 - vi) **Matthew 24:32-35**. Fig trees which have retained their leaves throughout winter usually have some of last years figs. Jesus seeing leaves on the tree, expected to

find some of last years fruit. When He found none, He cursed the tree for its deceptive character. Because of Israel's "leafy profession," Jesus expected to find spiritual fruit on the tree of their national life. When He found none He cursed them for their hypocrisy (Matthew 23:1-33).

Lesson: Let us show the fruit of being a Christian.

vii) Luke 13:6-9. Parable of the barren fig tree.

Jesus came to His vineyard and for 3 years of His ministry found no fruit. God the Father decided to cut down the tree, but Christ interceded for it and judgment was postponed for 40 years, until Titus, God's axeman in 70AD cut down the Fig tree of Israel, casting it out of the vineyard and into the field of the world. (Luke 3:7-9; Matthew 3:7-10). Before Christ's return the Fig tree will spring from the root. It will bear leaves before it bears fruit, meaning that Israel will be revived nationally before she is converted to Christ. Joel 1:6,7 calls Israel "my fig tree".

viii) In Matthew 24:3 Jesus' disciples asked Him two questions:

- a) **When** shall these things be? (Destruction of the Temple). This was answered in Luke 21:20-24.
- b) **What** shall be the sign of thy coming? Jesus gave 4 main signs in Matthew 24:4-33, which are:
 - Widespread Deception. "Take heed that no man deceive you." (v.4,11,24).
 - The Abomination of Desolation standing in the holy place of Israel's rebuilt temple (v.15).
 - The "Sign of the Son of Man" which is a cloud (v.30),like the cloud at His ascension.Acts 1:9
 - The "Fig Tree sign" (v.32,33), Israel's regathering to their ancient homeland.(Ezek 36:24,25)

Lesson: God uses the ungodly as instruments of judgment. God has a future for Israel.

3. OLIVE TREE represents Israel Future (Romans 11) = Israel Restored.

ix) Jeremiah 11:16,17. Israel is called a green olive tree, fair and of goodly fruit. God warns that because of its idolatry, its branches shall be broken off. This was fulfilled by Nebuchadnezzar destroying Jerusalem in 606 BC and 586 BC.

x) Romans 11:17-27. Parable of the two olive trees.

- a) The good olive tree represents Israel.
- b) The wild olive tree represents saved Gentiles in the Church.
- c) The root of the good olive tree represents Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, picturing God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. (The Trinity who established the nation of Israel).
- d) The Olive tree represents the light of the testimony of God in the world, because olive oil was used for lighting lamps.
 - The Church holds the light of Gospel testimony today.
 - The 144,000 Jews will hold the light of Gospel testimony in the Tribulation.
 - The Jewish nation will hold it during the Millennium.

The olive tree symbolises Israel's Bible-teaching privileges and divine testimony privileges. While Israel and the Church are compared to trees, their oppressors, the Gentile nations are compared to wild beasts (Daniel 7:1-28).

Conclusion: Will you stay in or out of the place of blessing? Will you stay faithful to God and be blessed, or will you backslide and become a castaway (disapproved)? (I Corinthians 9:27). Israel is called "God's peculiar treasure" in Exodus 19:5; Psalm 135:4 and Deuteronomy 14:2.

When Christ returns, His Kingdom will be manifested in the Millennium, and God's treasure Israel, buried in the field of the nations for 2000 years will then be on display. (Matthew 13:44).

- a) Treasure found = Israel at Christ's first coming.
- b) Treasure purchased = Israel's sins paid for at Christ's death.
- c) Treasure hidden again = Israel scattered in the world during the Church Age.
- d) Treasure uncovered = Israel revealed as the chief nation at Christ's return.

We may summarise: a) Vine = Israel Divinely electd. Deuteronomy 7:6.
b) Fig Tree = Israel Divinely rejected. Romans 11:7.
c) Olive Tree = Israel Divinely restored. Romans 11:1.

171. PURITY. I Timothy 5:22; Jude 18,19.

I. Three enemies of purity: World (I John 2:15-17), Flesh (Jeremiah 17:9), Devil (I Peter 5:8).
Satan seeks to wreck our lives by impurity.

II. Why Purity?

1. One must be pure to enter heaven. Matthew 5:8, Psalm 24:3,4; I Corinthians 6:9,10.
2. Purity enables us to avoid judgment. 2 Peter 2:6; Ecclesiastes 11:9.
3. Purity enables us to avoid defilement. I Corinthians 6:18.
4. Purity is the best way to enjoy life. Hebrews 13:4.

III. How to be pure? Yield yourselves to God. Watch your:

- a) Thoughts: Genesis 6:5; Proverbs 23:7;
- b) Eyes: Matthew 5:28;
- c) Ears: Mark 4:24 "Take heed what you hear."
- d) Tongue: Matthew 12:36,37; Psalm 34:13.

IV. Rewards of Purity. Philipians 4:8.

1. God's best blessings.
2. Trustworthy and dependable. Proverbs 31:10,11.
3. Clear conscience. Romans 14:22; Psalm 51.
4. Good understanding of people's character. Sin blinds and distorts values because people justify their sin. II Corinthians 4:4.
5. Provides more opportunity for leadership and service. 'A bishop must be blameless' I Timothy 3:2,3 .
6. Physical, mental and spiritual strength. Galatians 6:7,8.

Conclusion: Will you choose purity of mind, rather than corruption in the world through lust? 2 Peter 1:4

172. TAKE HEED or IGNORE? We are told to take heed to:

Introduction: One of our greatest faults is that we ignore many important things. The aim of this message is to alert us to key issues that we should be taking heed to. Are you taking heed to these?

- 1) My ways. "I will take heed to my ways that I sin not with my tongue." Psalm 34:1.
- 2) Deception. "Take heed that no man deceive you." Matthew 24:4.
- 3) False doctrine. "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees ..doctrine." Matthew 16:6-12
- 4) Temptation. "Take ye heed, watch and pray...., lest ye enter into temptation." Mark 18:33; 14:38.
- 5) Hear. "Take heed therefore how ye hear." Luke 8:18.
- 6) Light. "Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness." Luke 11:35.
- 7) Covetousness. "Take heed, and beware of covetousness...." Luke 12:15.
- 8) Cares of this life. "Take heed to yourselves lest at anytime your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting (overfeeding), drunkenness, and cares of this life,...so that day come upon you unawares." Luke 21:34.
- 9) Yourselves and to all the flock. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock to feed the church of God." Acts 20:28.
- 10) Build. "But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." I Cor inthians 3:10.
- 11) Liberty. "But take heed lest by any means this liberty of your's become a stumbling block to them that are weak." I Corinthians 8:9.
- 12) Fall. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." I Corinthians 10:12.
- 13) Consumed (destroyed 355). "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed (destroyed 355) one of another." Galatians 5:15.
- 14) Ministry. "And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it." Colossians 4:17.
- 15) Doctrine. "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine, continue in them." I Timothy 4:16.
- 16) Unbelief. "Take heed brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." Hebrews 3:12.
- 17) Bible. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed." 2 Peter 1:19.

173. TAKE OR NEGLECT?

We are told to take each of these important things.

- 1) Cross. "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, & follow me" Mark 8:34
- 2) No Thought for Your life. "Take no thought for your life... for the morrow." Matthew 6:25,34.
- 3) Christ's Yoke. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." Matthew 11:29.
- 4) Wrong. "Why do ye not rather take wrong." I Corinthians 6:7.
- 5) Lord's Supper Bread. "Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you." I Corinthians 11:24.
- 6) Ministry to the saints. "Take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints." II Cor 8:4.
- 7) Pleasure in suffering for Christ. "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distress for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong." 2 Corinthians 12:10.
- 8) Whole armour of God. "Take unto you the whole armour of God..." Ephesians 6:13.
- 9) Shield of faith. "Taking the shield of faith.." Ephesians 6:16.
- 10) Helmet of salvation. "Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit." Ephesians 6:17.
- 11) Trainee preachers. "Take Mark, and bring him with thee." 2 Timothy 4:11.
- 12) Prophets example. "Take my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience." James 5:10.
- 13) Suffering patiently. "When ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently." I Peter 2:20.
- 14) Oversight. "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof.." I Peter 5:2.
- 15) Water of life. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17.
- 16) Cup of salvation. "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord." Psalm 116:13

Conclusion: The act of taking these things is a deliberate choice that each of us needs to improve our useful service for Christ. We can only take these when we know what they are. Do you take these or neglect them? How well do you take these very important things?

174. THE TEN GATES OF JERUSALEM

Bible Reading: Nehemiah 3:1,3,6,13,14,15,26-32.

The gates in the wall of the old city of Jerusalem are a beautiful picture summary of the Christian life. Each gate needs to be open and functioning properly if we are to be all that God wants us to be. They are:

1. **The SHEEP GATE** (3:1) speaks of the **CROSS**.

The Christian life starts with “Behold the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” John 1:29. There can be no spiritual life without taking Christ as Saviour. Christ was the Lamb of God that was sacrificed to pay for everyone’s sin as our substitute. “I am the Good Shepherd that lays down his life for the sheep.” (John 10:11). “He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb.” (Isaiah 53:7).

2. **THE FISH GATE** (3:3) speaks of **SOUL WINNING**.

After we are saved, one of our first desires is to see others saved. Jesus promises us, “Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.”

Two conditions of soul-winning are that we must:

i) Really want to. ii) Follow Christ continually.

Question: Are you concerned about becoming a soul-winner?

3. **THE OLD GATE** (3:6) speaks of our **OLD NATURE**. (Romans 6:1-23).

When we receive Jesus Christ as our Saviour, our old nature is crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20). If you are saved, don’t continue in sin.

“Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid.” Romans 6:1.

“**Knowing** this, that **our old man** (old sin nature) is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” Romans 6:6.

“**Reckon** yourselves to be **dead indeed unto sin**, but alive unto God.” Romans 6:11.

“Don’t let sin reign in your mortal body.” Romans 6:12.

“Don’t yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin.

Yield yourselves unto **God**, as those that are alive from the dead, and **yield your members** as instruments of **righteousness** unto God.” Romans 6:13.

“Wherefore laying aside all malice, all guile, hypocrisies, envies, all evil speakings.” 1 Peter 2:1,2.

Question: Now that you are saved, have you rejected your old lifestyle?

“What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?

for the end of those things is death.” Romans 6:21.

4. **THE VALLEY GATE** (3:13) speaks of **SUFFERING** and **TESTING**. 2 Corinthians 1:3-5

We learn most in the valleys of suffering. “Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.” Psalm 23:4.

Just after we are saved, we all come across suffering or testing to refine our life and to bring sins to the surface so that we can confess it and get right with God. “Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls unto him in well-doing, as unto a faithful creator.” 1 Peter 4:19.

5. **THE DUNG GATE** (3:14) speaks of the **WORKS OF THE FLESH**. (Galatians 5:19-21).

“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for

whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but **dung**, that I may win Christ.” Philippians 3:7,8.

We must count the sins we loved as unbelievers as **dung**, something detestable to be thrown away.

6. **THE FOUNTAIN GATE** (3:15) speaks of the **HOLY SPIRIT** continuing to flow through us in blessing to others. “Be filled with the Spirit.” (Ephesians 5:18).

“He that believeth on me, ..., **out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water**. (But this spake he of the **Spirit**, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified.)” (John 7:37-39).

We must be continually filled with and led by the Holy Spirit if we are to enjoy the fruit of the Spirit of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Gal. 5:22,23.

7. **THE WATER GATE** (3:26) speaks of the **WORD OF GOD**.

“That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of **water** by the **word**.” (Ephesians 5:26).

Question: Are you daily allowing God’s Word to cleanse your mind of all sins and keep you close to Christ? We will never get victory over sin until we let God’s Word control our minds and lives.

Question: Do you read, study, memorise and meditate on God’s Word daily?

8. **THE HORSE GATE** (3:28) speaks of the believer’s **SPIRITUAL WARFARE** because horses were for war. Soon after salvation, we must realise that God has called us to be soldiers in a very intense spiritual battle for the souls of men. The prize is men’s souls for all eternity, the approval of Christ, and eternal rewards. This is worth fighting for. We are commanded in 2 Timothy 2:3,4 to, “Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.”

“I saw heaven opened, and behold a **white horse**; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and **make war**.” (Revelation 19:11).

9. **THE EAST GATE** (3:29) speaks of the **RETURN OF CHRIST**.

“The gate that looketh toward the east: And the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east.” (Ezekiel 43:1,4). Christ returns to earth, conquers Antichrist’s armies, lands on the Mount of Olives, and then enters Jerusalem by the now bricked up East Gate. This gate looks toward the Mount of Olives where Christ will land. (Ezekiel 44:1-2). **Question:** Are you looking for the Lord Jesus Christ’s return?

10. **THE MIPHKAD GATE** (3:31), the **JUDGMENT GATE** speaks of the Judgment Seat of Christ for believers in heaven, and the judgment of the sheep and goat nations when Christ returns to earth. “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” (Romans 14:12).

Question: Are you living now, knowing that you will have to give account of your actions in this life to God? Let us live for Christ every day and live for eternity.

175. TEN NAMES AND THEIR MEANINGS

Bible Reading: Genesis 5:1-32.

Aim: To see the spiritual history of the earth from a prophetic point of view in the names of the ten pre-flood patriarchs.

Introduction:

All the names in the Bible have a spiritual and practical meaning for us today. All changes of names in the Bible also have lessons for us now. For example, Abram (high father) was changed to Abraham (father of many nations); Jacob (supplanter) was changed to Israel (prince with God); Saul (big) was changed to Paul (little). The 10 names of Genesis 5 set forth at least 7000 years of sacred history.

1. ADAM = RED EARTH

Adam, or red earth, speaks to us of the natural man who is by nature away from God's righteousness and holiness. He is self-centred and does not make his decisions with reference to God but only on sight. Let us see as God sees, for "the Lord sees not as man sees, but the Lord looketh upon the heart."

"The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven." (I Corinthians 15:47). Let us not think like Adam, but like Christ. Adam made a wrong decision because he thought according to earthly wisdom of what he could see, rather than setting his affections on things above. (Colossians 3:2).

2. SETH = SUBSTITUTE

Cain murdered his brother Abel, and Seth was given instead of Abel. Thus, Seth speaks of Christ as the substitute for fallen man. Christ is our substitute. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah 53:6. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (II Corinthians 5:21). We must receive Christ as our substitute or Saviour to be saved.

3. ENOS = FRAILITY, MORTALITY, DYING

Enos speaks of Christ dying for us. Seth speaks of the Substitute, and Enos speaks of the Substitute dying, the just for the unjust, the innocent for the guilty. Therefore, Christ our **Substitute** (Seth) **died** (Enos) that we might have life and have it more abundantly.

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8).

4. CAINAN = TO PURCHASE, BUY BACK, ACQUIRE

When Christ died (Enos), He purchased us out of the slave market of sin, and through his atoning blood He brought back all and more than Adam lost in the Garden of Eden. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Galatians 3:13.

Christ also purchased the field, which is the **world**, and also the two **treasures** in the field:

- a) Israel (Matthew 13:44 and Exodus 19:5),
- b) Church (Matthew 13:45,46).

Christ, therefore, became our **Cainan**, buying back that which Adam lost in the Fall.

5. MAHALALEEL = SPLENDOR OF GOD

Christ, after dying, was resurrected from the dead by the power of God, which showed the "splendour of God" in resurrection power, and thus Christ became our Mahalaleel.

"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Romans 8:11).

Christ's resurrection is proof of our future resurrection. It means Praise or Strength of God.

Praise - The cause for us to praise God is Christ's resurrection.

Strength - Christ's resurrection shows His and our victory over sin, the grave and death..

6. JARED = DESCEND, COME DOWN, POUR OUT

Christ, after His resurrection, ascended on high, received the promise of the Father, and poured out the **gift of the Holy Spirit** on the waiting disciples on the day of Pentecost. Thus Christ became our Jared. This brings us to the present Church age we are now in, which is the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Before Jesus died, He promised the Comforter to His people and said that when the Comforter was come He would teach them all things. (John 14:26).

7. ENOCH = TEACH, INSTRUCT, TRAIN UP

We are now also living in the Enoch age. The Holy Spirit has been poured out to instruct, to teach and to lead us all into truth. Enoch was translated that he might not see death, and before his translation he walked with God, enjoyed the witness that he was righteous, and was raptured without passing through the valley of the shadow of death. (Genesis 5:22-24). Seven is the number of perfection and Enoch is the seventh name mentioned. He was raptured that he might not see death. Enoch was a foreshadow type of all those who are alive and will remain unto the coming of the Lord.

Note the following about Enoch:

- a) The times in which he lived were full of evil.
- b) He walked with God: in Harmony in Unity in Fellowship.
- c) He enjoyed the witness of the Holy Spirit.
"He had this testimony that he pleased God." (Hebrews 11:5).
- d) He was a living rebuke to sin. "He testified of judgment to come." (Jude 14).
- e) He was a preacher of righteousness. "Enoch prophesied saying..."
- f) He was translated. "God took him."

8. METHUSELAH = WHEN HE IS DEAD IT SHALL BE SENT

(or something will happen after a long extent of time).

Enoch walked with God and God revealed to him a secret. God told Enoch that He would judge the world for it's sin by a great flood. A son was born to Enoch and he was to be named Methuselah, meaning "When he is dead, it shall be sent." Methuselah lived to 969 years, and the very year that he died, the flood came on the earth. God lengthened his life to almost 1000 years because, at his death, mankind was to be destroyed. We see the marvellous long-suffering of God who is not willing that any should perish. After the Enoch's of this present age are resurrected and raptured, the Tribulation will burst upon the earth. The Old Testament flood was a foreshadow of the New Testament Tribulation.

9. LAMECH = CONQUEROR, KING

After the Tribulation, Christ will come to earth as it's conquering King and the millennial day of rest and peace will begin.

10. NOAH = REST, QUIET

The main quality of the millennium will be rest, peace and quiet, with Christ ruling on the earth in person. It will be like the Sabbath day for 1000 years. No wars, just peace, joy and prosperity.

Conclusion:

Christ our Substitute (Seth) died for us (Enos = mortality) and bought back all and more that was lost in the fall (Cainan). Christ rose again (Mahalaleel = splendour), ascended on high and poured out the Holy Ghost (Jared = poured out, descend) who has come to cleanse, fill and instruct us in the things of God during this dispensation (Enoch = teach). This dispensation will end with the Rapture. Then will begin the period called the Tribulation, ending with the Jesus Christ coming as the Conquering King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Lamech) and the starting of the millennial reign of Christ on earth (Noah = rest). Here are set forth in 10 names over 7000 years of sacred history.

Challenge:

Are you living from the viewpoint of eternity, and are you laying up treasure in heaven? Abraham "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Hebrews 11:10). Which world are you living for? Which world are you making your decisions for? Start living for Christ.

176. THE NATURE OF GOD: WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

Bible Reading: Psalm 139

Aim: To understand and know God better, resulting in us loving and obeying God.

Introduction: Man is born spiritually blind and out of fellowship with God.

How can man regain his spiritual sight and understanding of God?

By a) Being born again, and b) Understanding God's nature and character.

Question: What is God like?

I. NATURAL ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

1. Omniscience = infinite knowledge. God knows Himself and all other things whether actual or possible, whether past, present or future. He knows them perfectly and from eternity. He knows the best ways to attain His desired ends. "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names. His understanding is infinite." (Psalm 147:4,5); "The very hairs of your head are all numbered" Matt10:30

Effect on us:

- a) God knows completely and perfectly all our problems and needs before our birth.
- b) We can be confident of God's love, ability and desire to meet our needs.

2. Omnipotence = infinite power. God is able to do whatever He wills that is in harmony with His nature. God cannot a) lie (Hebrews 6:18); b) commit sins (James 1:13); c) look on sin (Habakkuk 1:13); d) deny Himself (II Timothy 2:13). "There is nothing too hard for thee." (Jeremiah 32:17).

Because God is Almighty, "With God all things are possible." (Matthew 19:26).

Three categories of God's will are His

- a) Perfect will,
- b) Permissive will, and
- c) Overruling will.

God limits Himself to some extent by the free will of man.

That is why -- God did not keep sin out of the universe.

(God permitted man to choose to sin).

-- God does not save anyone by force.

Effect on us is that God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us." (Ephesians 3:20).

3. Omnipresence = infinite in space. God is everywhere present and active. He possesses full knowledge of all that transpires in every place. "Where shall I flee from thy presence?" Psalm 139:7-12. "Even the Son of man which is in heaven?" John 3:13.

Effect on us:

- a) Comforts believers,
- b) warns, restrains, and subdues unbelievers who can't escape God.

4. Eternal = infinite in time. Eternal is used:

- a) figuratively = an existence which may have a beginning, but will have no end eg:angels, human soul.
- b) literally = an existence which has no beginning or end eg: God, "Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Micah 5:2. "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God."Psalm 90:2;Rev 1:8

Effect on us is to:

- a) Realise people will live forever in heaven or hell,
- b) Understand the greatness of Jesus Christ.
- c) Use our time most efficiently to win people to Christ.

5. Unchangeable = God never changes His nature or character.

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." Hebrews 13:8.

"The Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." James 1:17.

Effect on us: a) God is reliable and can be trusted to keep His word.

- b) We should be changeless by keeping our word & always be faithful to God.

6. Trinity = is composed of 3 united Persons without separate existence, so completely united as to form one God. The divine nature exists in 3 distinctions as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. While God is One, He exists as 3 equal persons, each having the same attributes, yet differing in certain properties. The Father sends the Son, and the Son sends the Holy Spirit. (Doctrine of Procession). The Trinity is not one God manifesting Himself in 3 ways or modes of existence, nor are they 3 separate gods.

The Trinity is seen in:

- a) The Baptismal formula. (Matthew 28:18-20),
- b) The Apostolic Benediction (2 Corinthians 13:14).
- c) The 3 Heavenly Witnesses (I John 5:7,8),
- d) Each has the same Attributes of God,
- e) Each raises Jesus, creates the world, and saves man.

II. MORAL ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

7. **Truth** = God's knowledge and declarations always conform to reality. God's faithfulness leads Him to fulfil all His promises. We can trust God to keep His Word. He is the 'Lord God of Truth.' Psalm 31:5

8. **Holiness** = God is absolutely pure and free from all defilement, evil and sin.

i) **Bible Proofs**: "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts." Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8; "the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy." Isaiah 57:15. "Holy Father." John 17:11. "Be ye holy; for I am holy." I Peter 1:15,16; Habakkuk 1:13.

ii) **Manifestations** of God's holiness are:

- The Tabernacle's Most Holy Place where the High Priest entered once a year.
 - The 10 Commandments and Mosaic laws of impurity (Leviticus 11-15).
 - The bounds set on Mt Sinai when God came down to give the 10 Commandments.
 - The Old Testament offerings required to approach God.
 - Israelites being isolated in their land, and commanded not to adopt pagan practices.
 - "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." Isaiah 59:2.
- The cross shows how much God loves holiness. Christ died not merely for our sins, but to provide us with righteousness and holiness of life, which God loves.

iii) **Effect** on us:

- a) We should approach God with "reverence and godly fear." (Hebrews 12:28), not as the men of Bethshemesh (I Samuel 5,6);
- b) We will have **right views of sin**, when we have **right views of God's Holiness**. Eg: Isaiah, the holiest man in Israel, was cast down on seeing his sin, after seeing God's Holiness (Isaiah 6:5-7);
- c) The approach to the Holy God must be through the merits of Christ's righteousness.

9. **Righteousness and Justice** = virtuous, upright.

"For the Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth." Daniel 9:14.
Righteous = God has instituted a moral government in the world, and imposed just laws & penalties.

Justice = God executes His laws, rewards the righteous, and punishes the wicked. God is entirely correct and just in all His dealings with humanity. His justice acts in accordance with His law.

God's righteousness and justice are seen in His:

- a) Punishing the wicked,
- b) Rewarding the righteous (Psalms 58:11),
- c) Forgiving sins of the repentant,
- d) Keeping His promises to Christians (Nehemiah 9:7,8),
- e) Rescuing His people from their enemies (Esther 9:24,25),
- f) Believers preaching righteousness (Psalm 40:9,10).

10. **Goodness** = all the qualities an ideal person would have, including love, benevolence, mercy, grace. "O taste and see that the Lord is good..." Psalm 34:8.

a) **Love** of God = fondness, a constant interest and warm affection towards the spiritual and physical welfare of His creatures, leading God to make sacrifices beyond human comprehension to reveal that love to mankind. God reveals His love by:

- Linking His name with love. "God is love." I John 4:8,16. Heathen gods hate and are angry.
- Making an infinite sacrifice for the salvation of men. I John 4:9,10.
- Remembering us in all circumstances of life. Isaiah 63:9; 49:15,16.
- Giving us richly all things to enjoy. I Timothy 6:17; Psalm 145:9,15,16; Matthew 5:45.

b) **Benevolence** of God = the affection God feels and shows to mankind.

c) **Mercy** of God = God's goodness shown to those in **guilt, misery, distress**. James 5:11; Eph. 2:4. God is merciful to Israel (Psalm 102:13), to the Gentiles (Romans 11:30-32), to all that fear Him (Luke 1:50), and to all that seek His salvation (Isaiah 55:7). He seeks our temporal and eternal needs.

d) **Lovingkindness** of God = God's bestowment on His obedient children His continual and best blessings. "He that spared not..." Romans 8:32. The mercy and lovingkindness of God is seen in the father's loving welcome to his prodigal (wasteful) son. Luke 15:11-32; Psalm 63:3.

e) **Grace** of God = God's goodness to the ill deserving. God's grace is shown in delaying punishment for sin, providing salvation, comfort of the Bible, Christian influence, the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, saving and uplifting sinners from a sinful life, etc..

Conclusion: Let us love (Deut. 6:5), obey (I Sam.15:22), serve (John 12:26), know (Phil. 3:10), praise (Psalm 107:8), study (2 Tim. 2:15) and worship (John 4:23) God according to His attributes.

177. THE LORD'S PRAYER

Bible Reading: Matthew 6:1-15. Matthew 6:1-15 is an outline of true prayer, with two aspects:

- a) **God's Glory** (v.9-10). Petitions on behalf of God's Name, kingdom and will.
- b) **Man's Need** (v.11-15). Petitions for daily bread, forgiveness, and protection from temptation.

Prayer should contain 9 elements: Adoration, praise, thanksgiving, awe at God's holiness, desire to obey God's commands, confession of sin, concern for others, humility, and perseverance.

1. God's Paternity -- "Our Father which art in heaven." (v.9).

Question: What does it mean to come to God as our Heavenly Father?

Answer: It settles the issues of fear, uncertainty of acceptance, loneliness, selfishness, lack of resources, and obedience. God is the Father of believers as our Creator, Saviour, Preserver, Teacher and Friend.

2. God's Priority - "Hallowed be thy name" (v.9). God's Name represents His character, plan and will. Each Old Testament title of God shows a different aspect of His character and will. He is called:

- i) Elohim -- the Creator God. (Genesis 1;1,26).
- ii) El - Elyon -- the Possessor of heaven and earth.
- iii) Jehovah Jireh -- the Lord will provide, will see to it. (Genesis 22:14).
- iv) Jehovah Shalom -- the Lord our peace (Judges 6:24).
- v) Jehovah Tsidkenu -- the Lord our righteousness. (Jeremiah 23:6).
- vi) Jehovah Rohi -- The Lord is my shepherd (Psalm 23:1).
 - The Good Shepherd died giving his life for the sheep.
 - The Great Shepherd rose again.
 - The Chief Shepherd coming again.
- vii) Jehovah Tsebahoth -- the Lord of hosts. He guides, we follow. (I Samuel 1:3).
- viii) Jehovah Rapha -- the Lord that healeth thee (Exodus 15:26).
 - He heals our backslidings and forgives us.
- ix) Jehovah Shammah -- the Lord is there (Ezekiel 48:35).
 - He is with us to comfort, sustain, bless and keep us.
- x) Jehovah Nissi -- the Lord my banner. (Exodus 17:15). He never loses a battle.
- xi) Jehovah Mekaddeshem -- the Lord who sanctifies us. (Exodus 31:13).
- xii) Jehovah Heleyon -- the Lord Most High. (Psalm 7:17).

Question: How do we hallow God's Name?

- Answer:
- a) In our hearts by giving answers to those who question our faith. (I Peter 3:15).
 - b) In our lives by acknowledging His presence (Proverb 3:5,6; Psalm 16:8; Hebrews 11:6).
 - c) In our minds by learning His truth and knowing Him better.
 - d) By living according to His will. (I Corinthians 10:31).
 - e) By our commitment, service and words. (Matthew 5:16; Psalm 34:3).

3. God's Program -- "Thy Kingdom come." (v.10a); Luke 4:43.
'Kingdom' here means 'reign'.

We should desire to see -- Christ ruling as King in His 1000 year Kingdom on earth.
-- new souls being brought into His Kingdom by conversion. (Matthew 18:1-4).
-- Christians becoming more committed, allowing Christ greater rule in their lives.

4. God's Plan -- "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." (v.10).
God's will is not inevitably done on earth. Sin and evil consequences on earth are not God's will, but:

- a) Show His patience in allowing men more opportunities to turn to Him for salvation.
- b) Teach Christians lessons about helping others and obeying God's ways.

The advancement of God's glory, kingdom, and will everywhere are more important than our wants.

5. God's Provision -- "Give us this day our daily bread." (v.11).

- i) The Substance -- Bread symbolises all our physical needs. (James 1:17).
- ii) The Source -- God gives us life, breath, health, possessions, talents, happiness and opportunities.
God provided for man's needs in the 5 days before man was created. (Deut. 8:11-20).

iii) Supplication -- 'Give' seeks my needs today and in the future, while thanking God for past provision.

iv) The Seekers -- Give US = believers only. God commits Himself to meet the basic needs of His own. God's main way of provision is through WORK. God cares for those who cannot work through the generosity of those who can work. The main cause of famine is spiritual due to a nation's false religions, and not to overpopulation. For example, Hindu sacred cows eat 20% of the food, and sacred rats and mice eat 15% of the food supply. These are not permitted to be killed because Hindus think that they may be a god or someone's relative.

Biblical Christianity with its human rights, orphanages, care for the poor, hospitals, slave emancipation, public education and freedoms is a blessing to the West and to the world.

v) The Schedule -- Daily. This prayer commands daily father-led family prayer.

6. God's Pardon -- "And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." (v.12). The Greek word for 'debt' is 'opeilema' (3738) = debt, an offence, a trespass which requires reparation, that which is owed. Only God can forgive sins, as a creditor can forgive a debtor. Debts can mean sins or offences against God. The measure by which God forgives us is that by which we forgive others. No man has a right to oppress when a debt cannot be repaid, or when it would greatly distress a wife and children, a widow or orphan, or when calamity has put it out of the power of an honest man to repay the debt. The spirit of Christianity requires that the debt should be forgiven. Notice these different Greek words for "sin" are:

i) Hamartia (264) = missing the mark of God's standard of righteousness is the most common word. (Romans 2:12; 3:23; 5:12).

ii) Paraptoma (3900) = not a heinous sin, not intentional disobedience, but a fault, lapse, wrongdoing, error, mistake, faults of weakness, the sin of slipping or falling due to carelessness. It is used in Paul's writings where pardon is discussed. (Galatians 6:1; James 5:16; Matt. 6:14,15; 18:35; Mark 11:25,26).

iii) Parabasis (3847) = wilful transgression of a known rule or law. It always involves guilt. (Romans 5:14,15; Hebrews 9:15; 2:2; James 2:9,11). It is a stronger word than the Greek word 3900. It is a more conscious and intentional stepping across the line, a transgression.

iv) Anomos (459) = without law, lawlessness (I Timothy 1:9). Not having the law, not knowing the law, not acknowledging the law (I Corinthians 9:21), lawless in the sense of transgressing the law, a transgressor (Mark 15:28; Luke 22:37; Acts 2:23; 2 Thess. 2:8; 2 Peter 2:8; Ezekiel 33:8,12). Open intentional, flagrant rebellion against God and His ways. In Romans 2:12 it refers to those who have sinned, not being subject to the Law of Moses. These will still be condemned, not by the Mosaic Law, but by the Moral law. (Romans 2:14,15)

v) Opheilema (3783) = a debt which is owed and is strictly due (Romans 4:4). An offence, a trespass which requires reparation (Matt.6:12), an obligation (Matthew 18:30,32; Romans 1:14; 4:4; 8:12; 15:27)

vi) Parapipto (3895) = a deliberate act of falling away in apostasy, an abandonment. (Hebrews 6:6).

vii) **Planao** (4105) = to lead astray, to go astray, to wander. It is used of persons (Heb. 11:38; 2 Peter 2:15) or of flocks (Matthew 18:12,13; 1 Peter 2:25). It means to deceive, cause to err from a wrong judgment (Matthew 24:4,5,11,24; I John 1:8; 3:7; Rev 13:14), to be deceived or mislead (Matthew 22:29; Mark 12:24,27; Luke 21:8; John 7:47, I Cor. 6:9; 15:33; Gal.6:7; Hebrews 3:10; James 1:16). To seduce people into rebellion from the truth (John 7:12; Rev. 20:8,10; 2 Timothy 3:13; 1 John 2:26) or seduce to idolatry (Rev. 2:20; 12:9; 18:23; 19:20; 20:3).

viii) **Agnoeo** (50) = to be ignorant of, not to recognise, know or understand, to have no discernment (Romans 1:13; 10:3; 11:25; Ephesians 4:18). To commit faults due to a lack of knowledge, discernment or insight (Hebrews 5:2; 2 Peter 2:12). It is culpable ignorance.

ix) **Enochos** (1777) = guilty of sin, deserving of and subject to punishment or death (James 2:10; Matthew 26:66; 1 Corinthians 11:27).

x) **Adikia** (94) = unjust, unrighteous, falling short of the righteousness required by God's laws (1 Peter 3:18; 1 Cor. 6:9) fraudulent, false, deceitful (Luke 16:10,11); unjust towards others (Luke 18:11; Romans 3:5; Hebrews 6:10). It is unrighteous conduct.

xi) **Hypocrites** (5273) or Hupokrisis (5272) = to pretend (Matthew 23:28, Galatians 2:13; I Timothy 4:2; I Peter 2:1) or evil deception. Saying the thing that pleased, and not the thing that was true. All false prophesy was hypocrisy.

Question: What do we know about hypocrisy?

- a) Isaiah, Malachi and Jesus strongly rebuked the religious hypocrisy of their day.
- b) All false prophecy was hypocrisy – saying what pleased people rather than saying what was true.
- c) The person most deceived was the hypocrite himself (Isaiah 33:14; Job 27:8; 15:34).
- d) Christ equates it with lying and falsehood. (John 8:44).
- e) It corrupts the conscience and destroys holiness of life. (“destroyeth his neighbour.” Prov. 11:9).
- f) Christ presents it as a hidden evil that will be exposed. It is a sin which glories in misleading others by smooth flatteries (Matthew 22:16; Isaiah 30:10; Job 15:34).
- g) The religious hypocrites of Jesus' day sought to be revered by public greetings and honourable titles. They cloaked greed with long prayers (Mark 12:38-40). (Luke 11:42).
- h) It substitutes religious rule, ceremonial & formal, for love, the personal & practical (Matthew 15:6).
- i) It cannot receive the truth, because its eye is on impressing man and not on pleasing God. John 5:44
- j) It makes enquiries not in order to hear the truth, but in order to refute it. (John 9:27,28).
- k) Direct rebuke is the only way to counter hypocrisy. (Luke 6:42; 13:15).
- l) Hypocrisy being an enemy of truth and not being able to live with truth, can only defend itself through persecuting those holding truth (John 8:37).
- m) It takes away the key of knowledge (Luke 11:52). It opposes faith, debasing the whole man.
- n) It sees splinters in its brother's eye while ignoring beams in its own eye Matthew 7:3-5
- o) Hypocrites look like sheep, but inwardly they are ravens (Matthew 7:15-20).

p) The ultimate hypocrite in Scripture is the Antichrist, who stands in the place of Christ, coming in Christ's Name saying “I am he” (Mark 13:6) and will deceive many.

Because man's greatest problem is sin, his greatest need is forgiveness.

To confess sin means to agree with God that our sins are wicked, evil and defiling. Unconfessed sins cannot be forgiven. We see God's forgiveness as a means of spiritual growth, not as a license to sin. A Puritan once prayed: “Grant me never to lose sight of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the exceeding righteousness of salvation, the exceeding glory of Christ, the exceeding beauty of holiness, and the exceeding wonder of grace.”

7. The Prerequisite of receiving forgiveness is as we forgive our debtors. (v.12).

Principle: If we forgive others, God forgives us.

If we don't forgive others, God won't forgive us.

Question: Why should we forgive others?

- i) Forgiveness is the character of righteousness and of a godly life.
- ii) Christians are blessed and receive mercy if they are merciful (Matthew 5:7).
- iii) Christians love and forgive our enemies because we have God's loving nature within us.
Matthew 5:44,45,48.
- iv) Forgiveness is the mark of a truly regenerate heart. We forgive others, because God has greatly forgiven us.
- v) Christians forgive others, because of Christ's example. Ephesians 4:32.
- vi) Forgiving or passing over a transgression glorifies us. Proverbs 19:11.
- vii) Forgiving others frees the conscience of guilt. Unforgiveness is a barrier to God's forgiveness. It interferes with our peace of mind, satisfaction, and proper bodily functions.
- viii) Forgiving others benefits all in a church. Unforgiveness and unresolved conflicts stops the power of a church. “If I regard iniquity in my heart” Psalm 66:18; Matthew 5:23,24.
- ix) Forgiving others delivers us from God's discipline.
God chastens those with an unforgiving spirit.
- x) Forgiving others brings God's forgiveness to us. (Matthew 6:12).
- xi) Forgiving others brings a free and joyful life.

In forgiveness, God deals with us as we deal with others. (“saying I repent: thou shalt forgive him.” Luke 17:4)

“There is none so tender to others as they which have received mercy themselves, for they know how gently God has dealt with them.”

8. God's Protection. “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” (v.13).

Temptation [Greek Peirasmos (3986)] = to tempt, to try, test, to prove in a good or bad sense.

Four kinds of temptation are:

i) Tempt in a good sense, to ascertain the character, views or feelings of someone. (Matthew 22:35; Rev 2:2; I King 10:1; Psalm 17:3). When God is the agent of temptation (or testing), it is for the purpose of proving someone, never for the purpose of causing him to fall. When God brings His people through trials, affliction, and adversity, it is to prove their faith and confidence in Him. (Matthew 6:13; 26:41).

ii) Tempt in a **bad sense** is to try one's virtue, to tempt, **to solicit to sin**, especially by Satan. The devil tempts us to cause us to fall. (Galatians 6:1; James 1:13,14; Mark 8:11; 10:2; 12:15; Luke 11:16; 20:23; John 8:6; Matthew 4:1-3; I Corinthians 7:5; I Thessalonians 3:5).

iii) **Men tempt or prove God** by doubting and **distrusting God's power and help** (Acts 5:9; 15:10;

I Corinthians 10:9; Hebrews 3:9), by distrusting Him and complaining to Him. (Hebrews 3:8).

iv) **God tempts, tests or proves men** by adversity, to test our faith and confidence in Him (I Cor 10:13; Hebrews 2:18; 11:17-37; Rev. 3:10), to show what a person's strengths or weaknesses are to the person being tempted. A person who has been rescued from sin, so greatly despises and fears sin, that he wants to escape all prospects of falling into sin. He prefers to **avoid**, rather than have to defeat temptation.

The Lord's Prayer here asks God to **protect us from sin** by controlling our eyes, ears, mouth, **feet** and **hands**. What men and Satan mean for evil, God will turn to our good. (Genesis 50:20).

We are not certain that we will be completely submissive to God in our trials. This says: "Lord, don't lead us into a trial that will present such a temptation that we will not be able to resist it."

It is laying claim to the promises of I Corinthians 10:13; Psalm 119:11; James 4:7; "Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

9. God's Pre-eminence. (v.13). "For **thine is the kingdom**, the **power** and the **glory**, forever, Amen."

This says to God: "Thine is the Kingdom", (Thou God has control, dominion, and reign over all these requests, and can order them so as to grant our petitions). "Thine is the power," (Thou has power to accomplish what we ask. We are weak. We cannot do it; but thou art Almighty, and all things are possible with thee). "Thine is the glory," (Thine is the honour and praise, not our honour, but thy glory and thy goodness will be displayed in providing our wants; thy power will be shown in defending us; and thy praise in spreading thy kingdom throughout the earth).

God's glory is the first, main and final thing we must seek when we approach Him.

This declares the greatness of God's eternal kingdom, power and glory. I Chronicles 20:11 (v.10-18).

"Amen" is a Hebrew word meaning "strong agreement, certainly, so be it".

Jews in a synagogue said "Amen" to show their agreement with the minister's prayer just uttered.

178. DAILY DOZEN. I Timothy 6:6.

Daily Dozen used to refer to physical exercises, but God has some spiritual exercises for us to do daily.

Question: Do we know what they are? Are we doing them?

1. **Praise God** daily. Psalm 72:15; 113:3.

2. **Pray** daily. Pray for labourers and fellow Christians. Psalm 86:3; 88:9; I Thess.5:17

3. **Search the Scriptures** daily. Acts 17:11; Psalm 1:2; Joshua 1:8.

4. **Watch** daily. Proverbs 8:34. Watch for: a) the Lord's return (Matthew 25:13); b) lest you enter into temptation (Matthew 26:41); c) Pastors watch for people's souls (Heb 18:17); d) Prayer (I Peter 4:7).

5. **Fellowship** daily with Christ and Christians (Acts 2:42,46,47). Have a family altar daily.

6. **Win Souls to Christ** daily. Acts 5:42. Is Soul Winning a daily thing for you? This speaks of: Daily evangelism (daily), church centred (in the temple), house to house (doorknocking to every house), they (every Christian), ceased not (continuously), teaching (to teach), preaching (and preach), Jesus Christ (Christ centred).

7. **Reason** daily. Acts 17:2,17; 18:4,19; 19:9; 24:25.

Do you reason with sinners to overcome their objections to salvation?

8. **Exhort** daily. Heb. 3:13. Barnabus = "Son of Consolation." Do you encourage those who are down?

9. **Take up your cross** daily. Luke 9:23. Do you die daily to self and your ways, letting Christ have his way in your life?

10. **Die** daily. (I Corinthians 15:30,31; Romans 8:36,37).

11. **Care for the Churches** daily. II Cor 11:28. Paul was concerned daily for all the churches. I Cor 12:25

12. **Perform Vows** daily. Psalm 61:8; 116:14.

Conclusion: Do you exercise yourself to godliness as you daily do these 12 important activities? I Tim 4:7

179. THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST

Bible Reading: Hebrews 9:6-28.

Aim: To show the value of the blood of Christ by **what it does for us** in the sight of God.

Introduction: Read I Peter 1:18. To Peter, the blood of Christ grew more precious as the years passed by. In the Bible, there are 290 references to the love of God, but 1300 references to the atoning blood.

Illustration 1: House of a Thousand Terrors.

In the market place of Rotterdam, Holland, stood for many years an old corner house known as "The House of a Thousand Terrors." The story is as follows:

During the 16th Century the Dutch people rose in revolt against the cruel King Philip II of Spain. Philip sent a great army under the Duke of Alva to suppress the rebellion. Rotterdam held out for a time but finally capitulated. From house to house the victors went, searching out citizens and then killing them in their houses. A group of men, women, and children were hiding in a corner house when they heard soldiers approaching. A thousand terrors gripped their hearts. Then a young man had an idea. He took a goat in the house, killed it, and with a broom swept the blood under the doorway out to the street.

The soldiers reached the house and began to batter down the door. Noticing the blood coming out from under the door, one soldier said: "Come away, the work is already done here. Look at the blood beneath the door." And the people inside the house escaped.

Why is the blood of Christ precious?

1. **It Redeems** us from the devil and from the curse of the law. The law condemns me, but Christ has satisfied the claims of the law. (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; Revelation 5:9). We are now under a different law, the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2; I Cor 9:21; Romans 8:2). Redemption means buying back. Christ has redeemed us, paying the full price for our sin, and has bought us back to God.

Illustration 2: A friend in Ireland once met a little Irish boy who had caught a sparrow. The poor little bird was trembling in his hand, and seemed very anxious to escape. The gentleman begged the boy to let it go, as the bird could not do him any good; but the boy said he would not, for he had chased it for three hours before he could catch it. He tried to reason it out with the boy, but in vain. At last he offered to buy the bird. The boy agreed to the price, and it was paid. Then the gentleman took the poor little thing, and held it out on his hand. The boy had been holding it tight. The boy was stronger than the bird, just as Satan is stronger than we. There it sat for a time scarcely able to realise the fact that it had got liberty; but in a little time it flew away chirping, as if to say to the gentleman: "Thank you! Thank you! You have redeemed me." This is what redemption is – buying back and setting free. Christ came to break the fetters of sin, to open the prison doors and set the sinner free.

Conclusion: Have you applied the blood of Christ to yourself? Have you received Christ's blood sacrifice as the full payment for your sins? Have you called on Christ to save you? Do so today.

2. It Blots Out Our Sin (Revelation 1:5; Isaiah 43:25; Acts 3:19).

Christ's blood is precious because it blots out sin. A teacher asked a class: "Is there anything God cannot do?" A pupil replied: "Yes, He cannot see my sins through the blood of Christ."

The blood of Christ blots out the sins of those who receive Christ. Just as a cloud disappears, and the chalk is erased from a blackboard forever, so Christ's blood removes our sins.

3. It Brings Us Near (Ephesians 2:13).

The blood of Christ not only brings us near to God, but it brings us near to one another. I can go to any Bible loving, Christ loving fundamental Baptist Church and get better acquainted with these people in 24 hours, than I could if I spoke about science and philosophy at a university in 24 years. We realise that we are blood relations.

4. It Makes Peace (Colossians 1:20). You will never find peace in this world until you come to the cross of Christ. When Christ died, He made out His will. You are mentioned in it:

- i) He willed His Spirit back to His Father.
- ii) He willed His Body to Joseph of Arimathea (temporarily).
- iii) He willed His Mother to John.
- iv) He willed His Peace to His Disciples. "My peace I give unto you." (John 14:27).

Do you want peace? Is your soul tossed by trouble, sorrow, persecution? If so, call on Christ to save you.

Illustration 3: During the last days of the Civil War, when many men were deserting from the South, Secretary Stanton sent out a notice from the War Department that no more refugees be taken into the Union army. A Southern soldier hadn't seen that, and he came into the Union lines and they read the order to him. He didn't know what to do. If he went back into the Southern army he would be shot as a deserter, and the Northern army wouldn't have him. So he went into the woods between the armies and stayed there until he got starved out. He saw an officer going by, and he rushed out of the woods and told this officer that if he didn't help him he would have to take his life. The officer asked what was the trouble. He told him. The officer said: "Haven't you heard the news?" "No, what news?" "Why, the war is over. Lee has surrendered. Peace is declared. Go to the first town, and get all the food you want." The man waved his hat and went to the town as quickly as he could. I want to say that peace is declared, and the war is over. Be ye, reconciled to God, and the whole thing will be settled. The blood is on the mercy seat. As long as it is there the vilest sinner can enter and be saved for time and eternity.

5. It Justifies (Romans 5:9).

Illustration 4: The Devil and Martin Luther.

There is a legend of Martin Luther that during a serious illness, the Evil One entered his sick room and looking at him with a triumphant smile, unrolled a big scroll which he carried in his arms. As the fiend threw one end of it on the floor, it unwound by itself. Luther's eyes read the long fearful record of his own sins, one by one. That stout heart quailed before the ghastly roll. Suddenly it flashed into Luther's mind that there was one thing not written there. He cried aloud: "One thing you have forgotten. The rest is all true, but one thing you have forgotten: 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'" And as he said this, the Accuser of the brethren and his heavy roll disappeared.

The blood of Christ is precious because it justifies you and me.

Justified means "There isn't a charge against you." It is better than a pardon. Your sins are completely wiped out. They are not to be remembered or mentioned. God puts them out of His memory.

"As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103:12.

6. It Cleanses (1 John 1:7).

The blood of Christ is precious because it cleanses us from all sin, not some sin, but ALL sin. Believers ought to be the happiest people in the world.

Question: How can blood cleanse sin?

Illustration 5: A preacher was speaking from the text: "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Suddenly he was interrupted by an atheist who asked: "How can blood cleanse sin?"

For a moment the preacher was silent, but then he replied, "How can water quench thirst?" "I do not know," replied the infidel, "but I know that it does." "Neither do I know how the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses sin," answered the preacher, "but I know that it does."

7. It Gives Boldness (Hebrews 10:19).

Illustration 6: There is a story of a man who was going to be tried for his life, and if found guilty there was no hope for him unless the king would intercede. They went to the king, and he finally consented to give him a pardon, but the king said: "Let it be secret, and if the man isn't condemned, do not say anything about it; if he is condemned, he can use the pardon." The man went to court with the pardon in his pocket, and he was quite cheerful about his trial. The verdict went against him. When the judge pronounced the sentence upon him, he took pains to say that he and the whole court were shocked to think that a man could be on trial for his life and be so unconcerned. When the judge got through, the man stepped up and laid the king's pardon on the judge's desk, and walked out bold as a lion.

Conclusion: You have a charge against me. What do I care? God has justified me. He comes and says, "Keith, you are a saved man." Yes, saved by grace, saved for time and for eternity.

The blood of Christ is precious because it gives me boldness in the day of judgment. Isn't that good?

I pity people who live all their life under fear of death. Because I am freed from death by the blood of Christ, judgment is passed already. I will not be judged at the Great White Throne Judgment. Because Christ has been judged for my sins on the cross as my Saviour, I will have boldness in the day of judgment. Will you receive Christ as your Saviour now, trusting His blood sacrifice to cleanse your sin?

180. TEMPTATION

Bible Reading: I Corinthians 10:1-13.

1. Source of Temptations.

- i) The World (I John 2:15-17),
- ii) The Flesh (James 1:14),
- iii) The Devil (Matthew 4:1-11),
- iv) Evil Associates (Proverbs 1:10),
- v) Christian Friends (Matthew 16:22,23).

2. Methods of Temptation.

- i) Discouragement (Psalm 42:11).
- ii) Worldly glory (Matthew 4:8-10; Numbers 22:17).
- iii) Anger at other peoples actions eg:David and Nabal (I Sam 25:21-32).
- iv) Poverty (Proverbs 30:8,9).
- v) Satisfy our needs unrighteously (Matthew 4:3,4).
- vi) Prosperity (Proverbs 30:9).
- vii) Advice of others eg. Job's wife (Job 2:9 "Curse God and die), and friends bad advice.

3. Types of Temptation.

- i) To disbelieve God's Word. Satan asked Eve, "Yea, hath God said?" (Genesis 3:1).
- ii) To presumption – that God would rescue us.
In Matthew 4:6, Satan tempted Jesus to presume that the angels would rescue Him.
- iii) To worship the god of this world. (Matthew 4:9).
- iv) To pride. eg. Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:30); Satan (Isaiah 14:12-16).
- v) To pleasure. eg. Moses (Hebrews 11:25).
- vi) To quit serving God. eg. Demas (II Timothy 4:10).
- vii) To power and popularity. eg. Simon Magus (Acts 8:19).
- viii) To possessions. eg. Achan. (Joshua 7:1-24).
- ix) To money. eg. Judas (Matthew 26:14-16); Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11).
- x) To sex. eg. David (II Samuel 11:2-4); Solomon (Nehemiah 13:26).

4. How to get victory over temptation.

- i) By hiding God's Word in our heart (Psalm 119:9). By using God's Word as a sword (Eph. 6:17).
- ii) By personal prayer of yourself (Matthew 26:41) and of others. (I Samuel 12:33).
- iii) By Christ's intercession for us (Luke 22:31,32) & the Holy Spirit's intercession for us (Rom.8:26,27)
- iv) By God's faithfulness to us (I Cor. 10:13).
- v) By fleeing (II Timothy 2:22; I Cor. 6:18; I Timothy 6:11; Proverbs 4:14,15).
- vi) By resisting the devil (James 4:7).
- vii) By looking for and accepting the way of escape (I Cor. 10:13).
- viii) By getting busy serving God, rather than being idle (II Samuel 11:1).
- ix) By drawing near to God (James 4:8).
- x) By keeping our bodies in subjection (I Cor. 9:27).
- xi) By knowing, reckoning, and yielding our members as instruments of righteousness (Romans6:6-19)
- xii) By having close godly friends (Proverbs 27:17), as we attend all our church services (Heb.10:24,25)

5. Load Limit of Temptations "But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" ICor10:13

- i) God sets the time limit of our temptations.
- ii) God sets the time of arrival of the temptation to come when we are mature enough to handle it.
- iii) God guides the stress or pressure during the temptation.

6. Reasons for temptation.

- i) Test our faith. James 1:2,3.
- ii) Test our obedience. Genesis 22:1.

God tests men to know the depth of our love for Christ, & the sincerity of our obedience to God's Word.

7. Results of Temptation.

- i) If yielded to, temptation becomes sin. (I Timothy 6:9).
- ii) If resisted, the Lord is glorified, and we grow stronger to resist other temptations.
- iii) Patience, perfect and entire wanting nothing. (James 1:2-4).
- iv) We receive a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory in heaven if resisted. II Cor. 4:17.

8. Bible Characters who were tempted. Name a few. What do you learn from each?

Conclusion: Temptations are common to all men, so let's expect them. Beware of yielding to sin. To fall is easy, to get forgiveness from God by confession of sin is easy, but scars often remain. Be aware of the importance of immediate restoration of fellowship with God by confession and repentance.

181. WHAT SIN DOES TO US. Psalm 51

Bible Reading: Psalm 51 and II Samuel 12:1-25.

Aim: To show the dangers of sin, the need to avoid sin, and the need to seek forgiveness of sins.

Introduction: Sin is very destructive. Its consequences are worse than first thought. We sin in our:

- a) Thoughts -- by what we allow to enter our mind through our eyes and ears.
- b) Words -- by what we say that we shouldn't say eg. betraying confidences, slander, lies.
- c) Deeds -- as David committed adultery and murder.

Psalm 51 records David's confession, where we see the effects of sin on David and on ourselves.

Let these effects of sin in Psalm 51 warn us against tolerating sins in our lives. Sin:

1. Is Breaking God's Law. (v.1). "Blot out my 'Transgressions' = revolt against God's law. Iniquity = perverseness in our nature. Sin = missing the mark, falling short. (Romans 3:23).

2. Makes us feel Guilty and Dirty. (v.2). "Wash me from my iniquity". He looked at himself and saw,

- a) a Diary – that contained a record of his deeds so foul that he pleaded with God to blot it out. “My sin is ever before me”(v.3)We cant undo the past,but God can blot out the damning record.
- b) a Dress – his dress had been trampled in the dirt and needed to be washed. No light soaking or rinsing would cleanse the ingrained dirt. “Wash me thoroughly...” (v.2).
- c) a Disease – he needed to be cleansed from. “Cleanse me” (v.2).

- 3. Dwells in our memory**, (v.3) as a ghost that haunts us. He saw the hurt eyes of Bathsheba, the crying eyes of his sick baby, the cynical eyes of Joab, the dead eyes of Uriah, and the disrespectful eyes of his sons. The way we hurt others comes back to accuse us and to occupy our minds.“ever before me”
- 4. Offends God** (v.4), as well as Bathsheba, her parents, the baby. It places us under God’s judgment.
- 5. Sin robs us of Truth and Wisdom** (v.6) if not confessed. Why? Because through fear we tell lies to cover up our sins. We lose wisdom because we accuse sin in others, but we excuse sin in ourselves.
- 6. Sin takes our JOY and WISDOM**. (v.8,12). Anything that does this should be dealt with seriously.
- 7. Sin causes us to FEEL REJECTED**. (v.9). “Hide thy face from my sins.” When sin accuses us we feel distant from God and from others.
- 8. Sin makes us FEEL DIRTY**. (v.10). ‘Create in me a clean heart’. We all hate feeling dirty.
- 9. Sin DEFILES our spirit**. (v.10). “Renew a right spirit within me.” Sin wounds and hurts us in our spiritual life. It stops us serving God. We then feel guilty before God & envious of victorious Christians.
- 10. Sin makes God seem DISTANT** (v.11). “Cast me not away from thy presence.”
- 11. Sin stops us from soul winning, Bible Teaching and from disciplining others**. (v.13). Our mind is so occupied with our own sin, guilt and trying to fix the consequences of our sin, that we stop doing the really important things that we are meant to do, like preaching the gospel and teaching God’s Word. Sin sidetracks us from doing God’s will. We are then prone to accusing and attacking good Christians, to pull them down to our level, so we don’t feel so guilty.
- 12. Sin stops us from SINGING, and PRAISING God**. (v.14,15), but confession of sin to God restores fellowship and brings singing and praise.

Lessons David learned:

1. The sin question was to be dealt with on spiritual, not ceremonial grounds. (v.16,17). After Nathan’s parable, David flung himself in repentance and remorse at God’s feet. Nathan looked at the sobbing King and said: “God hath put away thy sin.” No ox, no lambs, no burnt offerings would suffice, just the Word of God. What God really wanted from the sinner was a broken and contrite heart. (v.17). That was the true sacrifice God required. This was a big advance on the theology of the day.
2. David looked forward to a restored, built up Millennial city of Jerusalem. (v.18,19). “build thou the walls of Jerusalem.” (v.18). David leaps from his repentance to the repentance of Israel at the end of the age. Millennial sacrifices (v.19) will be memorial.
3. “Be sure your sin will find you out.” (Numbers 32:23). God will discipline believers for sin. David’s murder of Uriah reaped the results of 4 of his sons untimely death: the baby (II Sam.12), Amnon (II Sam.13), Absalom (II Sam.18), and Adonijah (I Kings 2:25). (Exodus 22:1; II Sam. 12:6; Luke19:8).

Conclusion: What sins does God want you to repent of ? Turn from them today. Sin’s consequences are too expensive for us and for those we love.

182. SATAN: TH ACCUSER OF THE BRETHREN.

The devil accuses us in 4 ways:

1) The Devil accuses US before God. Revelation 12:10; Job 1:6.

The Devil’s lie was that Job served God only because God gave him health and wealth. For many Christians, the devil can go to God, and not have to lie in accusing us. This means that what the devil says is true. One little problem comes along, and many of us give up. We need to understand what the devil is doing in our life. He is accusing us. Even if we are guilty, God knows it. Live well enough so that when the devil accuses us, he has to make up a lie to God.

2) The Devil will accuse GOD to us.

The Devil tells us that God is trying to stop us having fun. When the devil accuses God to us, does he get anywhere? The Christian leaders that you are blaming are trying to preserve your fun. The devil comes when we are tired, depressed, stressed or hurt and says, “I told you it would get hard.” In the Bible, everything God did was good. I’m amazed that the devil can accuse a guilty sinner to a Holy God and get nowhere, and yet accuse a Holy God to a guilty sinner and get somewhere.

Question: Are you listening to the devil’s lies about God? If the devil uses the words “if” (Matthew 4) or “Why?” to us, we are close to having a wrong conversation with him. Blame the devil, he started sin.

3) The Devil accuses US to EACH OTHER, then we begin to hate and criticise each other. Is there some believer you avoid, who you won’t greet, or who you have an unresolved grievance with? These sins cause splits in a church, as others feel compelled to take sides to try to fix the problem.

Question: Why are you accusing each other? I thought we were on the same team. Aren’t we all fighting the same enemy? When Christians stop soul winning and stop fighting the devil, they then start fighting each other. It’s time to build God’s work, not to pull it down by fighting each other for petty reasons. ‘A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips.’ Proverbs 17:4. God hates false witnesses. (Prov.6:16).

4) The Devil accuses US to OURSELVES.

Every time you sin, the devil will magnify it, and say something like: “God can’t use you, look at your sin.” When the devil brings up your past, you bring up his future (in the lake of fire). Us dwelling on our past sins that we have confessed, is like a little boy’s cat that died. He buried it with its tail sticking out of the ground. Each day he kept pulling it out of the ground to see if it was still dead. Each day it looked a little worse, and smelled a little worse. You may have a bad past, but you have a bright future.

Question: God has given us eternal life. What are we doing for God to show our thanks to Him?

Conclusion:

- 1) Reinforce your love for each other.
- 2) Forget the past, and look to the future.
- 3) Reject the devil’s accusations about you, God and others.

Jesus Christ was accused of 6 main things:

i) **Breaking the Sabbath.** The disciples gathered & ate grain on the Sabbath. Matt. 12:1-8 His defence was

a) David entered the house of God and ate the showbread with his hungry soldiers (I Samuel 21:6).

b) Priests on the Sabbath day profane the Sabbath by working, and are blameless (Numbers 28:9-10,24)

c) Christ is greater than the Temple and He has authority over it. (Matthew 12:6).

d) God is seeking mercy and compassion from us above ritual sacrifice. (Matthew 12:7).

e) Christ has authority over the Sabbath itself. (Matthew 12:8).

ii) **Healing on the Sabbath.** His defence was that: a) It was right to heal on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:11)

b) Man is worth much more than a sheep or ass that they would rescue on the Sabbath. Matthew 12:12.

iii) **Fellowshipping** with publicans and sinners. A publican was a tax collector (Matthew 9:11; Luke 7:34). His defence was that he came not to call the righteous, but to bring sinners to repentance.

iv) **Forbidding** men to pay tribute to Caesar (Luke 23:2). This was false because Christ paid tribute. (Matt. 17:24-27). He said it was right to pay to Caesar and to God what was due to each. (Matt. 22:17-21)

v) **Claiming to be God** by forgiving sins (Luke 5:20-24). This was true of Christ.

vi) **Planning to destroy the temple** and to rebuild it in 3 days (John 2:19-21). He spoke of the Temple of His body which was to be raised from the dead after 3 days.

vii) **Claiming to be Christ, the Son of God** (Matthew 26:63,34). True. Satan accuses the Christian daily before the throne of God (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-8; Rev. 12:9-10), but we rejoice that Christ stands there as our Advocate to plead His shed blood and to defend us (I John 2:1-2). Christians are falsely accused, but ought not be rightly accused of evil. (I Peter 3:17; 4:12-19; Matt 5:11-12.

183. WHAT PLEASES GOD

Bible Reading: John 8:19-32.

Aim: To please God in all that we do.

Introduction: One of the greatest secrets of the successful Christian life is to please God instead of pleasing ourselves or other people such as the ungodly crowd. Jesus Christ's autobiography can be summarised by John 8:29 "I do always those thing that please him."

I. Some other Biographies of Jesus Christ are:

i) "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19:10.

ii) The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us ... full of grace and truth." John 1:14.

iii) Peter at Cornelius' house said of Jesus that He "went about doing good." Acts 10:38.

iv) In eternity past the Son is saying to the Father, regarding His incarnation, life on earth, death for our sins and resurrection, "I delight to do thy will, O God." Psalm 40:8.

v) As a boy He said, "I must be about my Father's business." Luke 2:49.

vi) At Jesus baptism, the Father said, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Mark 1:11

vii) Peter said of Jesus that He was a "man approved of God." Acts 2:22.

viii) Jesus pleased His Father in life, "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." Isaiah 53:10 ix) Jesus pleased God in death, "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him." Isaiah 53:10.

x) "For even Christ pleased not himself." Romans 15:3.

The one consuming passion in Christ's life was to please the Father. Nothing else mattered.

Lesson: The most miserable and wretched life is one that constantly tries to please itself. Away with the selfish life. "Get all I can and can all I get" doesn't make anyone happy. If we want to please God, we must find out what pleases Him. If you young man are courting a young lady, you find out what she likes and do it. Just like you husbands, find out what your wife wants and do it. Give her what she likes.

II. The Bible tells us what pleases God. It pleases the Father when:

1) We exalt His Son. "And he is the head of the body, the church:...that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell." Colossians 1:18,19.

This means that we should exalt the Lord Jesus Christ who contains all the fullness of God.

It pleases the Father when we talk about Jesus Christ. Good songs to sing are:

"What a friend we have in Jesus", "All hail the power of Jesus' name", "No one ever cared for me like Jesus", "Let's talk about Jesus, the King of Kings is He, the Lord of Lords supreme, through all eternity. The great I am the way, the Truth, the Life, the Door. Let's talk about Jesus more and more."

2) We Do Good. Hebrews 13:15,16.

"But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

By doing good, we please God, such as when we help others, or buy things for those in need. Some people for \$AU 1000 could buy a church building in Africa. Don't hoard your money all to yourself. Use it to help others, and get the gospel out, so you can still enjoy the effects of your money when you are 150 years old, 200, 1000, 1 million years old. It pleases God when we do something for others to help them know Jesus Christ. This is why we emphasise soul winning, missions and literature.

3) We **Love One Another**.

"We then that are strong ought... not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself..." Romans 15:1-3.

If you love others you'll exhort them to get busy serving God. Some day you'll have to face Jesus Christ and tell Him why you wasted so much time in laziness on earth. I want you to enjoy heaven more and not to be ashamed at Christ's coming. God wants us to love one another.

Question: Do you hate anybody today?

Question: Did you criticise anyone lately? That doesn't please the Father.

Question: Have you stood in the way of sinners, or sat in the seat of the scornful? or criticised some good Bible preacher? That doesn't please God. God is pleased when brethren dwell together in unity. (Psalm 133:1,2,3). To God, it smells like ointment. God says, "When my people love each other, it smells like sweet perfume. If they fight each other, it stinks."

4) We are **Fruitful**.

"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." Colossians 1:10.

When you bear fruit by leading someone to Christ, there is much pleasure in heaven (Luke 15:7,10).

Question: Are you bearing fruit for Jesus Christ?

5) We **Praise Him**.

"I will praise the name of God, with a song and will magnify him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the Lord." Psalm 69:30,31.

God would rather have heartfelt praise than temple sacrifices or good intentions. It pleases the Father:

- a) When you lead someone to Christ & they tell someone: 'I have received Jesus Christ as my Saviour'
- b) When someone gets baptised, and praises Christ for saving him.
- c) When we go soul-winning, and tell sinners how good God is.
- d) When we praise God in hard times.
- e) When we come to church and praise God in song.
- f) When we disciple people so they get back into fellowship with God & praise Him. That pleases God

6) We **pray for a wise and understanding heart** to serve others, as Solomon prayed. I Kings 3:9,10. Question: Do you study God's Word to become wise to serve God and people better?

7) We **preach the gospel to lost sinners**. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." I Corinthians 1:21. Many Christians fear soul-winning because they may look foolish before men. God is pleased when we are prepared to look foolish for Him so sinners can get saved.

8) We **seek to please God rather than men**.

"If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." Galatians 1:10. It pleases God when we are prepared to take a stand against the ungodly crowd and the ways of the world.

9) We **walk with God** in sweet fellowship, as Enoch did. "Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." Genesis 5:21-24; and "he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Hebrews 11:5. Enoch pleased God by walking with God in the midst of an evil world. Do you walk daily with God?

10) We **do things by Faith** and **Obedience**. "But without faith it is impossible to please God." Hebrews 11:6. It pleases God when we obey and trust Him in hard situations.

11) When **we give God's Word out to people**. "So shall my word be that goeth forth...it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please." Isaiah 55:11.

12) When **we choose the things that please God**. "Choose the things that please me." Isaiah 56:4,5. These include such things as giving Sunday and our lives wholly to serving God.

13) When **we are filled with the Holy Spirit**, and not led by the flesh. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." Romans 8:8.

14) When we **don't entangle ourselves in the affairs of this life**, but seek to please Christ who has chosen us to be a soldier. II Timothy 2:4. We are soldiers for Jesus Christ.

15) We **bless Israel**. "When Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel." Numbers 24:1.

"I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee." (Genesis 12:3).

16) When **we abstain from fornication**. 'please God, that ye should abstain from fornication' (I Thess. 4:1-8). God avenges (v.6) those who fornicate and defraud (take advantage of) others.

III. **Things That Displease God**

- 1) When people kill and persecute Christians. I Thess. 2:15,16 "Who killed the Lord....they please not God"
- 2) When people commit adultery. eg David. II Samuel 11:27 "the thing David had done displeased the Lord"
- 3) When people rejoice when their enemy falls. Proverbs 24:17,18.
- 4) When people complain. Numbers 11:1; I Cor 10:5,9,10 "When the people complained, it displeased the Lord"
- 5) When people are proud of their achievements. I Chron 21:1-7,8 "Satan ..provoked David to number Israel"
- 6) When justice and judgment on sin is not done. Isaiah 59:14,15 "it displeased him that there was no judgment"
- 7) When people turn little children away from Jesus. Mark 10:13-16 when Jesus saw it he was much displeased

Conclusion: Do you please God or displease God? Do you please yourself? Do you seek to please the ungodly crowd? What are you doing that is displeasing to God? Get right with God today.

184. "THE SNARE OF THE FOWLER"

Bible Reading: Psalm 124:1-8. v.7

"Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken." Psalm 124:7a

Aim: To recognise the devil's snares and to avoid them.

Introduction: In Psalm 124, the **bird** represents people. The **Fowler** (one who would trap that bird) represents Satan. The **snare** represents the traps that Satan lays for us.

- a) I Timothy 2:25,26 reminds all Christians that the devil lays snares to trap us to be ineffective.
- b) I Timothy 3:7 warns preachers about the snares and traps the devil has for them.
- c) I Timothy 6:9 warns the rich about the snare of riches.

Satan is after your soul. If you are not saved, he will do all he can to stop you coming to Jesus Christ. Consider this:

- 1) If the devil can't get your soul, he wants your life
- 2) If the devil can't get your life, he wants your testimony
- 3) If the devil can't get your testimony, he wants your joy
- 4) If the devil can't get your joy, he wants your fruitfulness
- 5) If the devil can't get your fruitfulness, he wants your time
- 6) If the devil can't get your time, he wants your talent
- 7) If the devil can't get your talent, he wants your zeal
- 8) If the devil can't get your zeal, he wants to rob you of your rewards.

The devil has set a trap for everyone of us. Somewhere in life you are going to face that trap. He's trying to trap you in a snare. The fowler doesn't care about the age of the birds he traps.

I. Notice these things about the bird:

1) The bird is a **sparrow**. (Matthew 10:29,31 "ye are of more value than many sparrows.") A sparrow is a small bird, not very strong, not very attractive, not very intelligent. The little sparrow comes to the trap not knowing that there's something inside that will make him a slave or captive.

He begins to nibble on the nice bait that smells and looks so good. That food is not for his good but for his capture and enslavement.

The only hope for the trapped sparrow is someone on the outside setting him free.

There's nothing that he or some bird can do to help him get free. He's trapped.

Lesson: There's nothing a man can do to save his own soul or deliver himself from his own sin. It takes someone from the outside. "**He** shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler." (Psalm 91:3).

Only God can deliver you from the snare of sin. An alcoholic can't be delivered by AA. They are just a bunch of birds trying to help each other get out. If you're bound by booze, the only answer is the gospel and power of Jesus Christ.

2) The sparrow in **so insignificant**. In Matthew 10:29,31 we find that 2 sparrows were sold for 1 farthing (¼ cent). This is ½ cent each. In Luke 12:6,7, "Are not five sparrows sold for 2 farthings", (½ cent) ie: 1 sparrow was thrown in for free. God didn't make us feel very

important when He compared us to a sparrow. You'd like to be a parrot or a budgie or an eagle. Yet "one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father." (Matt.10:29). This means that if you fall, your heavenly Father has permitted it. Our heavenly Father takes note of that little sparrow. God knows and cares today if your heart is broken, if you're sad, lonely or broken.

3) The sparrow is an **ignorant bird**. When God wanted something to represent the soul of man he chose an ignorant bird. The sparrow thinks he knows what's best, but he doesn't. He looks at the food, is hungry and gets closer. He then enters the trap, is trapped and cannot escape.

Lesson: You'd think people who had seen so many alcohol and cigarette related deaths would not drink alcohol or smoke cigarettes, but they do and they still get caught. Teens are inexcusable to smoke.

Lesson: If you hang around a trap, you will get caught in the trap. Many of the "only one drink" crowd are now alcoholics. Many of the "only one-wrong-school" crowd are now atheists.

II. What Types Of Snares Exists?

A snare is a baited trap to catch birds, or animals. Some had loops of wire or rope to tighten around a victim's neck. Some had 2 jaws which trapped an animal's foot. The snare might be a camouflaged net over a pit into which the victim fell. They were triggered automatically or operated from a distance. The elements of concealment, surprise, or attractive bait that led to the animal's capture, well applies to traps people face that are set by the devil.

Some traps include:

- 1) False gods which were snares to Israel ("their gods shall be a snare unto you." Judges 2:3).
- 2) The harlot was a snare to the one who follows her (Proverbs 7:23 'as a bird hasteth to the snare').
- 3) Riches are a snare to the man who seeks wealth ('they that will be rich fall into a snare.' I Tim 6:9).
- 4) Bad crowd. ('the way of the ungodly shall perish.' Psalm 1:6).
- 5) Alcohol, cigarettes, drugs.
- 6) False religions eg: JW, Roman Catholicism, Mormonism.
- 7) Love of money (I Timothy 6:9-11).
- 8) Wrong education – "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge." Proverbs 19:27.
- 9) Wrong dating and wrong marriage.
- 10) Modern Bible versions.
- 11) Wrong Bible/Theological Colleges.
- 12) Para church organisations not under the authority of any church.
- 13) Bad movies, books or pornography. These are very addictive.
- 14) Rock music, clubs, discos.
- 15) New Evangelical churches that don't preach against sin.

Notice the following snares or dirty tricks that people may try to trap you with:

1) The **Rich man's trap**: A rich man in a church who claims to be a Christian, offers you (the pastor) some money to help you. You think, "What a wonderfully kind man." So you take it. Later on, he wants you to do something, such as give him a position in the church, or implement an idea of his.

If you refuse to let him have his way, he often turns on you in anger, asks for the large sum of money back immediately and slanders you to others in the church. At this point he decides to leave the church. Because he is angry at the pastor, he decides to “punish” the pastor by recruiting some undiscerning, simple church members to his cause, slandering the pastor to them to get them to leave the church. If they are backslidden or non soul winners, or convicted by the pastor’s preaching against some sin of theirs, or already resenting the pastor over some minor issue, they will readily listen to such lying slander and join the rebellion (like Korah, Dathan and Abiram- Numbers 16; Deut. 11:6) and leave the church in anger against the pastor. This is how God purges backsliders out of a sound church to keep a good church on the right path. These backsliders often go to a lukewarm church that rarely doorknocks or wins souls, but tells them what they want to hear and lets them stay lukewarm. This is an important time for all godly church members to remember all the good the pastor has done and have the courage to strongly and vocally support him 100% in his time of need. If he quits, you will suffer and no other pastor may want to take his place if this is how you treat pastors. This is how a church becomes ruled by non soul-winning deacons or by a committee. It’s times like this that your love to the pastor is tested.

2) The Modern Bible Version translator’s trap/trick: Because such translators need to make a profit, they need to persuade people to buy their “bibles”. They do this by telling the unsuspecting Christian public that due to modern manuscript discoveries and greater modern scholarship that their new version is so much “easier to understand” than the KJV or previous modern versions. What they don’t tell the public is that this new version (such as the NIV) has removed about 2% of the New Testament. This is because of its translation from the corrupt Codex Vaticanus. At \$20 a copy as well as copyright royalties, they make a lot of money. Next year they bring out a newer version and tell the public how much better it is than last year’s modern version. At another \$20 a copy they make even more money.

3) The Fornicators trap/trick: A young man who has attended a humanistic “self authority” school becomes friendly with a nice young lady. He wants to have sex with her without being committed to her in marriage. He tells her lies such as:

a) I can’t make up my mind to marry you, so let’s live together to see if we are compatible, or

b) We can’t afford to get married now, so let’s live together until we can afford it.

If the young lady foolishly agrees to live with him, it is likely that they won’t marry but split up around age 30. She then discovers that many eligible men that she might have married have married someone else. She feels left on the shelf and has to start looking again for Mr. Right.

4) The Cheap Quote Builders trap/trick: If you need to contract with a builder to build a house or church, cross off the cheapest quote, especially if it is from a small builder. These small builders often desperately need to sign you up in order to use the money you pay them to pay their tradesmen from a previous job. During the course of the project he will increase the price by submitting to you numerous claims for variations due to extra costs that were “not expected”. If you refuse to pay him he may threaten to stop the job and do no further work until you pay him everything he wants. He then has you completely over a barrel. At the end of the job you are paying the greatest amount of money in interest to your bank (maybe over \$5000 per month interest). He may also sue you in the court for his money. Now you must hire a solicitor and barrister to defend yourself from possible loss and bankruptcy. In addition, no other builder is willing to take over the job in case you sue him for the first builder’s defects. Your fixed price contract means nothing because you must be

willing to spend 5 years in court to enforce it. Often he will have no money in his company, so even if you win the case you still get no money out of him to recover your losses or costs. If you can’t pay your solicitor, he may sue you or threaten to not release the file and do no further work until you pay his fees. If you have no more money he will demand that you sign a mortgage over your home and/or the building project to give him the right to take his fees out of your home or the project. If you refuse, you lose the case against the builder who is suing you and you may go bankrupt.

5) The Dishonest Lawyer’s trap/trick: When the builder sues you, a lawyer must be hired to defend you. You ask a lawyer for his estimate of fees to finish the job. He deliberately underquotes to get the job. He might say \$5000. After 3 weeks his fees pass \$5000 and you begin to wonder how high they will climb. Three years later his fees exceed \$250,000 and the builder gets wound up by another of his creditors, or you lose on a technicality, or you both have to agree to walk away and pay your own costs. The lawyer wins and you lose.

6) The Business Partner’s trap/trick: If you enter a business venture with a partner he will expect an equal share in any profits. If you start making losses most partners will decide to stop paying their share of the losses and walk away to leave you to pay all the losses yourself. If he is a Christian you can’t sue him because of I Cor. 6:1-8. You end up losing everything and he may lose very little. Don’t enter into business with any partner, be they Christian or unbeliever.

7) The Para Church Organization Trap/Trick: a) This appears as Para Church Organizations (PCO) wanting to preach in your church about their ministries, so you will support them financially. They want your money, but have no intention of submitting to your authority if you want them to do things God’s way. They are under the authority of the PCO, not your church. They will all believe in the Universal Church, but they come to local churches for their support. They will not believe in separation or rebuking error (Romans 16:17), but will go to many churches who hold false doctrines to get support. b) A variation of this is that a PCO may visit your church trying to recruit students for their theological college. They will try to persuade your most promising young people to go study at their college so they can turn them away from you and your church and recruit them to their PCO. Their idea is, You win them to Christ, train them to be fruitful soul winners, and the PCO “pinch” them to spread the many errors of the PCO (eg: Modern versions, Universal church, non separation, Calvinism, etc). It is better to tell the PCO person at the start where his PCO is wrong, tell him to leave it, or leave your church. Otherwise he’ll rob you of your best people who may have become great preachers.

Conclusion: The only person who ever set foot on this earth who is not a bird or in our sinful condition is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the only one who can rescue you from sin.

Illustration: A lion got loose from the zoo and they couldn’t catch him. They put a lamb in a cage. The lion became hungry, entered the cage, ate the lamb, then found himself trapped. There’s another lion loose today (the devil - I Peter 5:8). He’s after you. I know how he can be caught. A lamb was placed in a cage. The lamb that taketh away the sin of the world. The Lord Jesus Christ went to the cross. The devil attacked Jesus. The Lamb of God died. Satan thought he had him, but when Satan tried to exit the cage, he found he was trapped. Your safety depends on you taking the Lamb of God as your Saviour.

1) The snare is concealed.

2) The snare is attractive.

3) The snare is counterfeit. **Beware of the snare!!!!!!**

185. FOUR LITTLE WISE PREACHERS tell us four facts about salvation. Proverbs 30:24-28.

1. **ANT** teaches us WHEN to be saved. (v.25).

Question: What wise thing is the ant doing?

Answer: Storing food for winter, and preparing for his future. Ants tells us that we should get saved in the summer time of the youth of our life, not in the winter of old age.

2. **CONY** teaches us WHERE to be saved. (v.26).

When a fox chases a cony (like a rabbit), the cony can't fight back, so the cony runs for protection to a big rock. Satan is chasing every sinner, but the wise person runs to Jesus Christ, the Rock of Ages for protection. Many people try to hide behind their good works or religion instead of Christ. Where is your faith and trust? In Christ or in something else?

3. **LOCUST** teaches us the JOY of being saved. (v.27).

Locusts have no visible King, yet something invisible holds them together. Christians have no visible King, yet the Holy Spirit draws us together around Christ as we joyfully go out together to serve God. Locusts sing in the night. Can you joyfully sing of God's salvation in the night of this wicked world?

4. **SPIDER** teaches us HOW to be saved. (v.28.)

The spider is in King's palaces, not one palace, but many palaces. Jesus told us about not one mansion, but many mansions. ("In my Father's house are many mansions." John 14:2).

What a place for a spider to be – in Kings palaces; but more amazing is we, redeemed sinners, will be in God's palaces (mansions) in heaven. A spider in a house tells us that bad people can get into good places by faith in Christ as their Saviour. A spider trusts herself to a thin thread and can go anywhere; just like FAITH in Christ (Eph. 2:8,9). We must trust all our weight on God's promises in His Word. We are not saved by the size of our faith, but by the direction of our faith (in Christ).

Question: Will you trust Jesus Christ as your Saviour, and receive the gift of eternal life? God will then give you something to rejoice about here on earth and later in heaven.

186. SIMPLE THINGS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Bible Reading: Psalm 37:1-40.

Aim: To ensure that we continue in these basic simple things in our Christian lives.

Introduction: Believers fail in their Christian lives and drop out of serving God because they stop doing the basic things. If these basic things are practised in our lives, we will have a great impact for Jesus Christ in the lives of others.

Question: Are these simple basic things in your life?

1. David **LOVED** the Lord. His heart was right with God. (Psalm 18:1,2; 31:23; 37:4).
2. **TRUST** in the Lord's promises. Have faith in the Bible. (Psalm 31:19; 37:3).
3. **WAIT** upon the Lord. Be patient for God to bring His plans to pass. Serve God while waiting. (Isaiah 40:31; Psalm 37:34). Rest in the Lord. Don't worry. (Psalm 37:7).
4. **WORK.** "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day:" (John 9:4). Don't be idle.
5. **SIT** at the feet of Jesus, hearing His Word (Luke 10:38-42), studying God's Word and praying.
6. **LOOKING** for that blessed hope (Titus 2:13). Expect Christ's return. Be ready for it.
7. **CONSIDER** one another to provoke unto love and good works. (Hebrews 10:24,25). Be committed to serving God in your local, soul-winning church.
8. **SPEAK** words of encouragement often one to another about the Lord. (Malachi 3:16,17).
9. **GO** and preach the gospel to every creature. (Mark 16:15). **FIND** people for Jesus. 'Andrew findeth Simon.' (John 1:40,41) 'Philip findeth Nathanael.' (John 1:45). Go soul winning weekly and this will help keep your heart right with God.
10. They **CONTINUED STEADFASTLY** in the apostles' doctrine, in fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. (Acts 2:42). Don't just start well, but continue well, and finish well. Faithfulness is needed, so that we can finish our race.

Conclusion: Are you focused on getting the simple things right? If you do, then you will have a big impact for God in the lives of others.

187. ARE YOU A COMFORTER?

Bible Reading: 2 Corinthians 1:1-24.

Memory Verse: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Gal. 6:2.

Aim: For us to be determined to comfort and edify each other, (rather than to pull others down).

Introduction: One of the greatest needs is people who are comforters. The world has so much:

- 1) wickedness and depressing things
- 2) harsh and critical people
- 3) difficult situations and
- 4) disappointments and discouragements, that life's burden can be great and difficult to bear.

A wonderful thing about coming to God's house is that we can be among people:

- who love God and love each other.
- who will build each other up,
- who will comfort each other so we can better carry on under the trials of life.
- who will lift us up and cheer us, who will give us hope and joy to carry on, people
- who are with us when we are down, people
- who we can trust will not treat us badly, people
- who will be a blessing to us and to our children.

The main lesson we want to consider today is how we can:

- a) be comforted ourselves, and
- b) be a comforter of others.

Example: One job of a pastor is to comfort those who need comforting. Anything that hinders his ability to comfort others is an attack on those needing comforting. Let's build an atmosphere of comfort, love and encouragement where we can all grow to our maximum spiritual potential.

Question: What Brings Comfort to us?

1. The **Holy Spirit** comforts us compared to the enemy who accuses us. John 14:16-18. When Saul's attacks on the churches ceased at his conversion, we see these events in Acts 9:31.

- a) the churches had **rest** – what a relief, what peace.
- b) the churches were **edified** – they had a chance to develop, grow and build.
- c) the people walked in the **fear of God** and in the **comfort** of the Holy Ghost.
- d) the churches **multiplied**.

The Holy Spirit seeks to comfort believers and churches. As we are filled with and led by the Holy Spirit, showing the fruit of the Spirit, we are comforted.

2. The **Scriptures** give us patience, comfort and hope. Romans 15:4,5.

As we read the life stories of Bible characters, we see how;

- i) They endured trials and God brought them through;
- ii) They sacrificed and brought blessings to many peoples lives;
- iii) Good came out of bad situations. This gives us patience to endure trials, comfort that God is working out His plans, and hope that we will be kept safe. This is one reason why we read the Bible and why it is so popular. The Bible gives us patience, comfort and hope.

3. **Preaching** is a comfort to us. "But he that prophesieth (or preaches) speaketh unto men to edification (strengthen), and exhortation (encourage), and comfort." I Corinthians 14:3. Preaching is meant to edify (strengthen), exhort (encourage) and comfort (console) believers.

4. **Return of a faithful Christian friend**. Four men who comforted others are:

- i) **Titus** coming in II Corinthians 7:4-6. "God...comforted us by the coming of Titus." (v.6). Paul tells how in Macedonia, he and his workers had no rest, but were troubled on every side. Outside were fightings. Inside were fears. Paul said in v.6 that comfort came from 2 sources.
 - a) God comforts those who are cast down, and
 - b) God comforted us by the coming of Titus.Titus coming to Paul was a great comfort because Titus was committed to helping build people up. He was a blessing and a joy to be with. Is your coming a comfort and a blessing to others or a curse?
- ii) **Tychichus'** arrival comforted the Ephesian's hearts. Ephesians 6:21,22.
- iii) **Timothy** comforted Paul by giving a good report of the Christians at Philippi. Philippians 2:19. Timothy came to Thessalonica to comfort and establish them in the faith. I Thess. 3:2.
- iv) **Justus**, Paul's fellow worker, comforted Paul. Colossians 4:11.

5. The **Return Of Christ** comforts us. I Thess. 4:13-18. "Comfort one another with these words." What words?

- i) Don't sorrow hopelessly at the death of our loved ones. v.13.
- ii) The dead in Christ are with Christ in heaven. v.14.
- iii) The dead in Christ will rise first. v.14-16.
- iv) We will be caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air.
- v) We will ever be with the Lord. v.17.

6. Other believers **Faith** and **Commitment** to God, their local church and the work of God is a great comfort to all believers who are watching.

"We were comforted ...in all our affliction and distress by your faith." I Thessalonians 3:7,8. Your faith, faithfulness and commitment to God's work and to each other is a great comfort to other church members. On the other hand, disloyalty is a discomfort to others. If we stand fast and hold the traditions we've been taught by the Apostles in the NT, we will comfort others and be established in every good word and work. II Thessalonians 2:15-17.

7. Thoughts of **going to Heaven** is a comfort. Luke 16:25.

"Now he is comforted and thou art tormented." No matter how bad things get, we have the comfort of looking forward to joy and happiness forever in Heaven. This is especially true for those who finish the work that God has given them to do. They can look forward to receiving a crown of righteousness for faithfully serving Christ to the end. I Timothy 4:6-8.

8. **Speaking Good Words** to people comforts them. Rehoboam should have done this. I Kings 12:1-7.

Conclusion:

- i) Comfort the feeble-minded (3642 = little spirited, fainthearted, fretful, worried). I Thess. 5:14.
 - ii) Comfort those in trouble, by the comfort that we are comforted of God. II Cor. 1:3-4
 - iii) Comfort yourselves and edify one another even as ye do. I Thessalonians 5:11.
 - iv) Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace. II Corinthians 13:11.
- If you do these 8 things, you will be a true comforter.

188. BEHOLD MY HANDS. Luke 24:39; John 20:27.

Jesus said this twice after His resurrection:

- a) To His disciples. Luke 24:39.
- b) To doubting Thomas. John 20:27.

The fact that Jesus said this twice indicates the importance of this to us, especially at the time of His crucifixion and resurrection.

I. We learn the following about Jesus' hands:

1. Crucified, wounded hands - prove His Messiahship to Israel at His return. Zechariah 13:6.
2. Welcoming hands, stretched out to save sinners. Romans 10:21; Isaiah 65:2.
3. Healing hands. Mark 6:2,5.
4. Creating hands. Hebrew 1:10.
5. Guiding hands. Hebrews 8:9; Psalm 78:72.
6. Judging hands. Hebrews 10:31.

Note: Wicked hands killed Jesus Christ. Acts 2:23.

II. What kind of hands do you have? Do you have:

1. Working hands for others. I Thess. 4:11; I Cor. 4:12; Ephesians 4:28.
2. Praying hands. I Timothy 2:8.
3. Blood-guilty, non soul winning hands. Ezekiel 3:18; 33:8; Acts 20:26.
4. Warring hands, in the spiritual warfare. Psalm 18:34; 144:1.
5. Clean/washed hands. Psalm 24:4; James 4:8.
6. Right hand of fellowship extended to believers and strangers. Galatians 2:9.
7. Weary hands lifted up. Hebrews 12:2.
8. Handling the word of God deceitfully. I Corinthians 4:2.

189. Ask Now the Beasts and They Shall Teach Thee. Job 12:7.

Bible Reading: Leviticus 11:1-31 and 44-47.

Aim: To show character qualities that we need to develop and to avoid from the animal kingdom.

Introduction: Why did God forbid the Israelites from eating some animals, and permit them to eat others? Maybe because God wants to teach us about the importance of holiness to God and separation from the evil of the world. The Bible teaches us much about how animals represent spiritual character traits that we should develop. Let us ask the beasts and see what spiritual values they teach us.

1. Lion. "The righteous are bold as a lion." Proverbs 28:1. The lion represents:
 - a) A righteous believer serving Christ and winning souls is like a bold fearless lion.
 - b) Christ returning to conquer the world is called the 'Lion of the tribe of Judah.' Revelation 5:5.
 - c) Satan seeking to tempt us to sin and destruction is like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. I Peter 5:8.

2. Sheep or Lamb represents:

- a) Believers who follow Christ are like sheep. John 10:27.
- b) Foolish sinners are like sheep who've gone astray. Isaiah 53:6.
- c) Christ is called the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29), because of His sacrifice on the cross. (I Peter 1:19). He is sinless as represented by a spotless lamb.

3. Pig or Swine. "Neither cast ye your pearls before swine." Matthew 7:6.

A pig represents a person who does not value spiritual things, and who is willing to attack faithful Christians. As pigs seek to wallow in the mud, so do sinners who seek and enjoy sin. Question: Are you like a lamb who hates sin, or like a pig who loves sin?

4. Goats. Matthew 25:31-33.

Jesus Christ at His Second Coming separates the sheep from the goats. Sheep represent truly saved people who help persecuted Jews in the Tribulation. Goats represent unsaved people who don't help these persecuted Jews. Question: Are you like a sheep or a goat? Are you saved or lost? Do you help, hinder or attack God's people?

5. Fox. "Go ye and tell that fox (Herod)." Luke 13:31,32.

As a fox is cruel, deceitful, callous, wily and murderous, so Jesus compared Herod to a fox, because he showed these qualities. Let us not be deceitful, or handle God's word deceitfully.

6. Sloth. "The slothful shall be under tribute." Proverbs 12:24.

As a sloth is very slow in its movements, so this animal well describes the lazy, disorganised, slow moving, procrastinating lifestyle of some people. Question: Are you lazy like a sloth?

7. Ant. "Go to the ant thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer." (Proverbs 6:6-11).

Ants having no overseer work diligently, cooperatively and willingly to provide food for the future.

Question: Do we work hard and efficiently to lay up treasures in heaven? Do we work with other believers in our church to win people to Christ and train them to serve God?

8. Wolves. "Grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock." Acts 20:29,30.

Wolves are fierce killers that prey on weak, vulnerable lambs. Wolves describe false teachers who spread false doctrines which deceive, hurt and scatter Christians.

9. Snakes represent the devil (Genesis 3:1; II Cor. 11:13; Rev. 12:9), and alcohol (Proverbs 23:32).

10. Birds represent demons who snatch away the Word sown in a person's heart. Matt.13:4,19; Rev 18:2.

11. Eagles. As an eagle flies away towards heaven (Proverbs 23:5) so an eagle represents the believer who "sets his affection on things above, on heaven, on eternal things." (Colossians 3:2).

It pictures those that wait upon God in trust. (Isaiah 40:31; Job 39:26-30).

190. GOD IS ABLE TO...

12. Dear or Hart. “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.” (Psalm 42:1). A dear represents believers who seek a closer relationship with God. Do you?

13. Ostrich. As an ostrich leaves her eggs and young ones in the earth, so it well describes parents who leave their young ones in the world or in Godless schools without close supervision. (Job 39:13-18).

Question: How can you supervise what your children pick up at a state school?
The ostrich represents Christians who don't try to follow up new converts but leave them to the world.

14. Horse. As a horse is keen and strong to go to battle, so believers should be keen to enter the spiritual battle. (Job 39:19-25).

15. Fly. As flies in the ointment cause it to stink, so does a little foolishness damage one's good reputation. (Ecclesiastes 10:1).

16. Worm represents the loathsomeness and repulsiveness of sinful man in God's sight. (Job 25:6).

17. Sparrow. As God cares for sparrows, this shows God's care, love, watchfulness and protection over believers. (Matthew 10:29,31 and Luke 12:6,7).

18. Horseleach. “The horseleach hath two daughters, crying, give, give.” (Proverbs 30:15). The bloodsucking leach describes greedy people who try to get as much out of people as possible without showing mercy. This refutes much greed in today's business world.

19. Leopard cannot change its spots (Jeremiah 13:23). So a sinner cannot reform his sin nature or save himself from sin by his good works.

20. Dogs. “Beware of dogs, evil workers.” (Phil.3:2). “dog is turned to his own vomit again.” (2 Pet2:22).
Dogs represent unsaved false teachers who knew the truth and turned away from it.

Conclusion: When you see these animals, recall the lessons they teach. Which animals describe you?

Bible Reading: Ephesians 6.

Aim: To encourage and comfort us in what God is able to do for us.

Introduction: What is God able to do for us? What is the Bible able to do for us? What does God expect that believers should be able to do if we apply God's resources? Are you doing these things?

I. God Is Able To

1. Save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him. Hebrews 7:25.
2. Keep us from falling. Jude 24.
3. Deliver us - from difficult and dangerous situations. Daniel 3:17.
4. Those that walk in pride He is able to abase. Daniel 4:37.
5. Fear him which is able to destroy body and soul in hell. Matthew 10:38.
6. To graft Israel in. This shows that God will restore Israel as a nation. Romans 11:23.
7. God is able to make him (another man's servant) stand. Romans 14:4.
8. To make all grace abound. 2 Corinthians 9:8.
9. To do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. Ephesians 3:20.
10. To subdue all things unto himself. Philippians 3:21.
11. To keep that which I have committed unto him (my souls salvation). 2 Timothy 1:12.
12. To succour (comfort) them that are tempted. Hebrews 2:18.
13. What he promised he was able also to perform. Romans 4:21.

II. The Scriptures are able to:

1. Able to make thee wise unto salvation. 2 Timothy 3:15.
2. Able to build you up and give you an inheritance among them which are sanctified. Acts 20:32

III. Believers should be:

1. Able to stand against the wiles of the devil, if we put on the whole armour of God. Eph. 6:11.
2. Able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Ephesians 6:13.
3. Able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, by taking the shield of faith. Ephesians 6:16.
4. Able to teach others also. 2 Timothy 2:2.
5. Able by sound doctrine to exhort and convince the gainsayers. Titus 1:9.
6. Able to admonish one another. Romans 15:14 (Admonish = urge, warn, advise one another).
7. Able to remember Peter's writings after his decease. 2 Peter 1:5.

IV. What man is not able to do:

1. Who is able to stand before envy? Proverbs 27:4.
2. No man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. John 10:29.
3. Not able to bear a yoke of works for salvation. Acts 15:10,11.
4. Not able to save himself from sin by his good works. Ephesians 2:8,9; Titus 3:5.

191. HOW WILL GOD SUMMARISE YOUR LIFE?

Bible Reading: Colossians 4.

Aim: To contribute something of value to the cause of Christ so we will be remembered for good.

Introduction: When you die what will people remember you for, good, evil or nothing of value?

What one phrase summarizes your life? On Pastor Jack Hyles' tomb are the words "a soul winner," along with his life verse, Daniel 12:3. What is your life verse? What is your greatest achievement or contribution for the Kingdom of God? God makes a point in Scripture of briefly summarizing many peoples lives by some statement. In heaven we will be given a new name. Christ "will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." Rev.2:17

What will your new name tell about your life's character and work? Consider what God said about these:

1. Moses – my servant. Deuteronomy 34:5,10.
2. Abraham – the friend of God. James 2:23.
3. Daniel – a man greatly beloved. Daniel 9:23.
4. David – a man after mine own heart. Acts 13:22.
5. Job – perfect and upright, feared God, and eschewed (avoided) evil. Job 1:1,8.
6. Centurion – I have not found so great faith. Matthew 8:10.
7. Cornelius – devout, feared God with all his house, gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always (v.2). A just man, good report among the Jews. Acts 10:1,2,22.
8. Timothy – he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do. 1 Cor. 16:10.
9. Stephanus household – have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints. I Cor. 16:15.
10. Tychicus – a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord. Ephesians 6:22.
11. Onesimus – a faithful and beloved brother. Colossians 4:9.
12. Justus – a fellow worker and a comfort unto me. Colossians 4:11.
13. Epaphras – a servant of Christ, always labouring fervently for you in prayers.
– He has a great zeal for you. Colossians 4:12,13.
14. Mark – he is profitable to me for the ministry. II Timothy 4:11.
15. Luke – only Luke is with me. II Timothy 4:11.
16. Onesiphorus – he oft refreshed me, he was not ashamed of my chain, he sought me out very diligently (in Rome) and found me. II Timothy 1:16-18.
17. Paul – he is a chosen vessel. Acts 9:15.
18. Lord Jesus Christ – "I do always those things that please Him." John 8:29;
– "who went about doing good." Acts 10:38.
19. Enoch – walked with God. Genesis 5:24.
20. Esau – a fornicator, and a profane person. Hebrews 12:16,17.
21. Children of Ephraim – being armed and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle. Psalm 78:9.
22. Demas – has forsaken me having loved this present world. II Timothy 4:10.
23. Archippus – fulfil your ministry. Colossians 4:17.
24. Thou wicked and slothful servant. Matthew 25:26.

Challenge: How will God summarise your life? How will God and man remember your life? Start doing something unselfish to help others so that you will be remembered for good in years to come.

192. PEOPLE CHRIST COMMENDED

Aim: Will Christ commend you? Jesus Christ commended people for doing certain things. These were:

1. The unjust steward for planning and providing for the future. Luke 16:8.
2. The poor widow for generously giving to God's house. Luke 21:3.
3. The persistent widow for her continual pleading. Luke 18:3-7.
4. The Samaritan leper for his thankfulness for healing and salvation. Luke 17:18.
5. The Good Samaritan, for his unselfish kindness. Luke 10:36.
6. Mary of Bethany, for sitting at Jesus' feet, making learning God's Word a priority. Luke 10:42.
7. The Syrophenician woman, for her great faith. Matthew 15:28.
8. Peter for his confession of faith as to who Jesus is. Who do you say that Jesus Christ is? Matt. 16:17.

193. THINGS THAT DECEIVE PEOPLE

Bible Reading: Matthew 24:1-26 especially v. 4,11,24.

Aim: To avoid being deceived by things that easily deceive people.

Introduction: One of the main signs that Jesus gave in answer to when His return would be was "Take heed that no man deceive you." Matthew 24:3-5.

The devil's main work is to deceive people (Revelation 12:9,10; 13:14; 19:20; 20:10). Knowledge of and obedience to God's ways in the Bible are our best defence against Satan's deception. John warns us that many deceivers are entered into the world. II John 7.

Question: What tools does Satan use to deceive people?

- 1) Strong alcoholic drink deceives people. (Proverbs 20:1). It promises happiness but gives sorrow, fights, hangover and depression. (Proverbs 23:29-35).
- 2) Deceitfulness of riches choke the word and he becomes unfruitful. Riches deceive unbelievers into a false security that they don't need God. Some rich Christians are deceived into thinking that they are too important to go soul winning. (Matthew 13:22).
- 3) Worldly philosophy, vain deceit, and traditions of men. Colossians 2:8.
Examples are evolution, humanism, materialism, false religions etc.
- 4) The heart (feelings) is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (Jeremiah 17:9). Don't trust your feelings. Trust God's Word instead.
- 5) False prophets who tell people what they want to hear. "Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits." Isaiah 30:10. Eg: Charismatic "prophets" who prophesy smooth things, & Mormons claiming you'll become a god, etc
- 6) Sin promises much, but accomplishes nothing. Beware being "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Hebrews 3:13.
- 7) Pride of thine heart and thy terribleness hath deceived thee (Jeremiah 49:16 and Obadiah 3). God judged Edom for her pride.

- 8) Thinking that you can sin and not reap the consequences. ("Be not deceived,.."
Galatians 6:7).
- 9) Thinking that its okay to hear God's Word and not do it. James 1:22.
- 10) Thinking that fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers or extortioners will go to heaven. I Corinthians 6:9,10.
- 11) Thinking or saying that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. I John 1:8.
- 12) The Roman Catholic Church: "by thy sorceries were all nations deceived." Revelation 18:23.
- 13) Men: 'by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive' Eph4:14
- 14) Lusts of the flesh "put off the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." Ephesians 4:22.

194. TWELVE THINGS A PASTOR MUST DO. Acts 20:17-38.

Paul reminds the Ephesian pastors of 12 things before He left them. These are to:

1. Serve God with all humility of mind. 20:19.
2. Teach profitable things publicly (in church) and house to house (individually). 20:20.
3. Preach the gospel of repentance from dead works (Hebrews 6:1) and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. 20:21.
4. Expect opposition to God's work. Be courageous. 20:22,23.
5. Seek to finish your course with joy. 20:24,25. (II Timothy 4:6-8).
6. Seek to be pure from the blood of all men, by telling them the gospel. 20:26. Ezekiel 33:1-9.
7. Teach all the Counsel of God (all the Bible). 20:27.
8. Take heed to yourselves and to the flock. 20:28. Beware of wolves and false teachers. 20:29,30.
9. Watch and remember to warn people night and day. 20:31.
10. Point people to God and the Bible to build them up. 20:32.
11. Don't covet people's money, but work to supply your needs and to help others. 20:33,34.
12. Support the weak and give to those in need. 20:35.

Conclusion: Do you practise these 12 qualities. Who are you discipling this year?

195. HOW WE SHOULD TREAT GOD'S WORD (Our Duty to God's Word)

Bible Reading: Psalm 119:1-18.

Aim: To know how to treat God's Word for greatest benefit.

Introduction: Many Christians don't understand how to learn the Bible. If we apply these rules for digesting God's Word, we will understand it better, obey it more, and receive greater benefit from it.

1. We should tremble at it in respect and obedience. Isaiah 66:2.
2. Love it: "O how I love thy law." Psalm 119:97.
3. Meditate in it: "It is my meditation all the day." Psalm 119:97.
4. Delight in it: "His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate"
Psalm 1:2.
5. Take heed to it: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word." Psalm 119:9.
6. Hide it in your heart: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee." Ps119:11.
7. Declare it: "With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth." Psalm 119:13. (Prov30:5)
8. Without error: "Thy word is true from the beginning." Psalm 119:160. "Every word of God is pure"
9. Don't despise it. "Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed." Proverbs 13:13.
10. Joy and rejoicing. "Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jeremiah 15:16.
11. Continue in it. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." John 8:31.
12. Hear it and Keep it. "Blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it." Luke 11:28.
13. Study it and rightly divide it. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15.
14. Preach it. "Preach the Word." 2 Timothy 4:2; "they went everywhere preaching the word." Acts 8:4
15. Hold fast to it. "Holding fast the faithful word." Titus 1:9. Hebrews 4:2.
16. Mix it with faith. 'The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it'

17. Become skilful in the word. "For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of.." Heb.5:13.
18. Teach it. "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers." Hebrews 5:12; Acts 18:11.
19. Receive it with meekness. "Receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls." James 1:21; 'let your ear receive the word of his mouth.' Jeremiah 9:20; Matt13:23;Acts17:11
20. Be doers of it. Be ye doers of the word,and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" James 1:22
21. Desire it. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby." I Peter 2:2. Desire to hear it. "Sergius Paulus ...desired to hear the word of God." Acts 13:7,44.
22. Don't add to it or subtract from it. Revelation 22:18,19.
23. Write out what you learn from the Bible in a note book, as Israelite kings had to do. Deut.17:18.
24. Publish it. The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it. Psalm 68:11; Acts13:49
25. Remember it. "Then Peter remembered the word of Jesus," Matthew 26:75; John 15:20; Acts11:16
26. Sow it in people's minds: "The sower soweth the word." Mark 4:14.
27. Believe it. "they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said." John 2:22; 4:50.
28. Speak it boldly. "they spoke the word of God with boldness." Acts 4:31; 16:32; Philippians 1:14.
29. Multiply it. "But the word of God grew and multiplied." Acts 12:24.
30. Let it dwell in you richly. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.." Col. 3:16. Let it abide in us. "young men....the word of God abideth in you." I John 2:14; John 15:7.

196. REASONS FOR READING GOD'S WORD

- 1) It increases our faith. Romans 10:17.
- 2) It produces the new birth. I Peter 1:23; James1:18.
- 3) It gives us truth. Acts 17:11; John 17:17 "Thy word is truth."
- 4) It gives us victory over sin. Psalm 119:9,11.
- 5) It gives us joy. Jeremiah 15:16.
- 6) It will build us up in spiritual growth. Acts 20:32; Luke 4:4; I Peter 2:2.
- 7) It gives us assurance of salvation. I John 5:13.
- 8) It cleanses us from sin. John 15:3 "Ye are clean through the word."
- 9) It gives us patience, comfort and hope. Romans 15:4; I Thess. 4:18.
- 10) It will make us disciples of Jesus Christ. "If ye continue in my word,..." John 8:31.

197. SATAN'S PRIORITY FOR THE CHRISTIAN IS TO DESTROY HIM

Bible Reading: Job 1.

Aim: To understand different areas of our lives that Satan may attack. To be prepared when it happens. Satan is trying to wreck churches, Christians and marriages. Don't let him wreck yours.

Question: What would it take to get you to quit on God? Satan attacked these six areas in Job's life:

1. His **Finances were destroyed**. Job 1:13. He lost his ability to make a living. Financial pressure has broken many preachers and marriages.
2. His **Family was destroyed**. Job 1:18,19. "Thy sons and daughters are dead." If you get serious about serving God, the devil will get serious about attacking you, especially if you write quality Christian literature. Job's wife told Job to "curse God and die." (Job 2:9).
- Question:** How many wives and husbands have gotten each other to quit on God?
3. His **Flesh was destroyed**. Job 2:4-6. The devil tried to destroy Job through his flesh. Satan uses sickness to knock many Christians out from serving God.
4. His **Friends were destroyed**. Job 2:11. If all your friends turned against you would you quit on God? They sat and looked at him for 7 days. Their comfort soon turned to criticism. Satan tried to use his friends to turn Job away from God. Proverbs 18:24.
5. His **Faith** the **Devil tried to destroy**. Job 13:15. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him." You've been telling others to have faith and trust God for 20 years and now you've got to practice it, prove it and pass it. Will you continue serving God in tough times, as you did when all was well?
6. His **Future** the **Devil tried to destroy**. Job 42:10. God turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his critical friends.

Conclusion: Will you pass these six tests Satan may throw at you?

Because Job passed these tests, God gave him twice as much as he had before. Job saw 4 generations. Your children, grandchildren and great grandchildren (4 generations) are counting on you not to quit. His future was at stake. So is your future ministry. When the devil brings up my past I bring up his future. A missionary wrote in his Bible "No retreats, no regrets."

Question: Will your grandchildren rise up and call you blessed?

198. 20 OBJECTIVES TO RAISE GODLY CHILDREN

1. Show each child how to be sure of their salvation. Romans 10:13; I John 5:11-13; John 1:12.
2. Encourage each child to dedicate their life to do God's will. Romans 12:1,2.
3. Help each child to accept themselves as God made them. Ephesians 1:6.
4. Guide each child to get under the protection of God's authority. Ephesians 6:1-4.
5. Work with each child to gain a clear conscience. I Timothy 1:19.
6. Show each child how to have a forgiving spirit. Ephesians 4:32.
7. Show each child how to respond to irritations. I Peter 2:23; 3:16.
8. Show each child how to conquer moral impurity. Psalm 119:11.
9. Show each child how to meditate on God's Word. Psalm 1:2,3; Joshua 1:8.
10. Show each child how to share the gospel with their friends. Romans 3:23; 6:23; 5:8; 10:13.
11. Show each child how to have a daily Bible reading program. Acts 17:11.
12. Get each child to read challenging biographies of great Christians. Jeremiah 5:5.
13. Show each child how to have God's standard for dating. I Corinthians 7:1.
14. Show each child how to tithe and apply God's principles of finances. Malachi 3:8-12.
15. Show each child how to establish an effective prayer life. Matthew 6:5-15.
16. Show each child how to make right friends and avoid wrong friends. Psalm 1:1; Proverbs 1:10.
17. Show each child how to stand alone against evil. Daniel 1.
18. Show each child how to discover and develop their spiritual gifts. 2 Timothy 2:15.
19. Show each child how to become an active and loyal church member. Hebrews 10:24,25.
20. Show each child how to see their spiritual purpose in life. Esther 4:14.

Conclusion: Lead your children in Bible study on these 20 goals tonight.

199. 4 THINGS WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT HELL

1. Hell is a place of conscious physical punishment. Matthew 10:28; 13:42; Luke 16:19-31;
 - i) A furnace of fire,
 - ii) weeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth.
2. Hell is a place where the past is never forgotten. (Mark 9:42-48). 98% of suicides are caused by guilt.
3. Hell is a place where people are begging us to tell their loved ones of Christ. (Luke 16:19-31).
4. Hell is a place of NO HOPE. We sorrow not as others that have no hope. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

In heaven we'll never be separated from our saved loved ones.

Who is the Judge at the Great White Throne Judgment? (Rev. 20:11-15). Jesus Christ is the Judge. Since we will be with Him forever, we will be spectators at this judgment. (Reve 21:1-4). God will wipe away all tears from their eyes. '

Question: Whose eyes?

Answer: Believers eyes, because unbelievers have already been cast into the Lake of Fire.

200. WHAT KIND OF HANDS DO YOU HAVE?

1. Warring hands, in the spiritual warfare for souls. Psalm 144:1.
2. Folded hands of laziness. Proverbs 6:10.
3. Weak hands of fearfulness. Isaiah 35:3,4.
4. Bloody hands of not soul-winning. Ezekiel 3:17,18; Acts 20:26.
5. Working hands of diligence. I Thessalonians 4:11.
6. Lifting up holy hands of prayerfulness. I Timothy 2:8.
7. Lift up the hands which hang down of faintheartedness. Hebrews 12:12.
8. Heavy hands of Moses labouring in prayer. Exodus 17:12.
9. Cleansed hands of restored fellowship. James 4:8.
10. Right hand of fellowship of brotherly love. Galatians 2:9.
11. Slack hands. "Let not thy hands be slack." Zephaniah 3:16.
12. Willing, working, women's hands. Proverbs 31:13.
13. Skilful hands of God, guiding us through life. Psalm 78:72.
14. Wounded hands of Christ, securing and offering salvation. Zechariah 13:6.
15. Fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God, of judgment. Hebrews 10:31.
16. Blessed hands. "Bless thee in all the works of thy hands." Deuteronomy 24:19.

201. "LET US" IN HEBREWS

Bible Reading: Hebrews 4:1-16.

Aim: To exhort each other to do 14 things.

1. Let us Fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest any of us come short of it. Heb 4:1.
2. Let us Labour to enter God's rest. 4:11.
2. Let us Hold fast our profession. 4:14.
3. Let us Come boldly to the throne of grace in prayer. 4:16.
4. Let us Go on unto perfection. 6:1.
5. Let us Draw near with a true heart. 10:22.
6. Let us Consider one another to provoke to love and good works. 10:24.
7. Let us Lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us. 12:1.
8. Let us Run with Patience the race that is set before us. 12:1.
9. Let us Have Grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 12:28.
10. Let Brotherly Love continue. 13:1.
11. Let your conversation be without covetousness. 13:5.
12. Let us go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. 13:13.
13. Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually. 13:15.

202. HOW TO BECOME A MATURE PERSON. James 1-5

Bible Reading: James 1-2 and 3-5. What makes a mature man? James tells 10 things to become mature:

1. **Suffering** makes a mature man. (James 1:1-15 esp. v.2).
 - a) God's purpose is to purify us, strengthen us and make us better. (v.2-12).
 - b) Satan's purpose is to make us bitter by blaming God and giving in to lust. (v.13). Our response to suffering is to praise God for it (v.2), pray while in it (v.5), persevere through it (v.12).
2. **Scripture study** makes a mature man. (James 1:16-25. v. 25).
 - a) Its Author – the Father. (1:17).
 - b) Its Accomplishments – gives eternal life. (1:18).
 - c) Its Admonitions – our talk and walk are to be pure. (1:19,22).
 - d) Its Analogy – a mirror to examine ourselves. (1:23,24).
 - e) Its Assurance – if we look into it, continue in it, not forget it, do it, we shall be blessed in our deeds²⁵
3. **Sincerity** (straight, genuine, not simulated) makes a mature man. (James 2:1-13).
 - a) Commands against partiality.
 - earthly example (2:2-4) of favouring a rich man over a poor man.
 - heavenly example (2:5) of God compensating the poor by making them rich in faith.
 - b) Consequences of partiality. (2:9-13) -- you are guilty as a transgressor of the law.
 - you shall be judged by the law of liberty (v.12).
4. **Christian Service** makes a mature man. (James 2:14-26). "Faith without works is dead." (v.26).
 - a) The Problem – some imagine a contradiction between Paul (Ephesians 2:8,9) and James (2:14,24).
 - b) The Solution – Paul discusses vertical justification before God. James discusses horizontal justification by works as seen by man, as proof of true faith in God.
 - c) The Pattern – 2 examples of head faith only: destitute (its no use to see someone lacking and not help them, 2:15,16), devils (devils believe the facts without responding to it, 2:19 -- 2 examples of head and heart faith: Abraham (His works proved his faith was real by sacrificing Isaac in 2:21-23), Rahab (Her works proved her faith was real by siding with God's people. 2:25).
 - d) The Principle stated: " faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." 2:17.
5. **Sound Speech** makes a mature man. 3:1-18; 1:26,27; "If any man offend not in word...perfect." 3:2.
 - a) Importance of the tongue: leaders are judged by what they say. (3:1,2).
 - b) Illustration of the tongue.
 - how it can control great things for good eg: bridle on a horse (3:3), rudder on a ship (3:4).
 - how it can consume great things for evil eg: forest fire.(15) Careless, thoughtless words destroy much good.
 - c) Iniquity of the tongue.
 - it can destroy our witness for God, showing our witness to be lies (1:26).
 - it can defile our walk with God, ruining our work for God (3:5,6).
 - d) Incurability of the tongue – all animals have been tamed, yet not the tongue's poison hurts (3:7,8).
 - e) Inconsistency of the tongue (3:9-12). We bless God and curse man. Three questions about a fountain, fig and vine (3:9,10). It is against the nature of the tongue to be controlled, except by God.

- f) Instructions for the tongue:
 - seek and speak God's wisdom, which is pure, (3:13,17,18). Peacemakers have the fruit of righteousness.
 - refuse Satan's slander (3:14-16). A bad heart produces a bad tongue, which produces bitterness, envy, strife and lies, which results in confusion (not knowing what is truth) and every evil work.
6. **Submission to God** makes a mature man. (James 4:1-17, esp. v.7).
 - a) What we escape when we submit:
 - i) The flesh (4:1-3,11,12,16,17), ii) The world (4:4,5), iii) The Devil (4:7).
7 fold formula for defeating the world, the flesh, and the devil is to:
Submit to God, Resist the devil, Draw near to God, Cleanse, Purify, Humble, Stop speaking evil.
 - b) What we enjoy when we submit to God:
 - God's grace (4:6),
 - God's guarantee of His close Presence (4:8), and His Promotion (4:10).
 - God's guidance in making decisions: i) Ask (v.15), ii) Consider the shortness of life (4:13-15).
7. **Self-Sacrifice** makes a mature man. (James 5:1-6).
 - a) The Consternation of the selfish rich (5:1).
 - b) The Corruption of the selfish rich (5:2,5): riches corrupted, garments moth-eaten, Gold cankered.
 - c) The Cruelty of the selfish rich (5:4,6): unpaid workers cries of misery.
 - d) The Condemnation of the selfish rich (5:3): "shall eat your flesh as fire" = many rich end up in hell.
8. **Steadfastness** makes a mature man. (James 5:7-11). (Steadfastness = not giving up). (I Cor. 15:58).
 - a) A past example (5:10,11): The Prophets and Job suffered affliction patiently and are happy now.
 - b) A present example (5:7): A farmer patiently cultivates his crops. So also we must patiently work for God now, without much apparent reward, until Christ returns to reward us richly. Be like a farmer.
 - c) A future example (5:8,9): Christ would like to return today but must wait until the right time. Our attitude in view of Christ's return: Be patient, stablish your hearts, don't complain, we'll face the Judge.
9. **Supplication** makes a mature man. (James 5:12-18, esp. 5:16).
 - a) Seasons of prayer. When should we pray?
 - In times of trouble (5:13,14) eg: affliction or sickness.
 - In times of triumph (5:13). "Is any merry, let him sing Psalms."
 - b) Reasons for prayer: Why should we pray?
 - Prayer can heal the sick. 5:14,15
 - Prayer can restore the carnal. 5:16
 - Prayer can accomplish the impossible. 5:17,18. Elijah's prayer stopped rain and started rain.
10. **Soul-Winning** makes a mature man. (James 5:19,20).
 - a) Notice erring Christians and lost people. Go after them.
 - b) One convert him – seek to change their direction, from error and death.
 - c) He will save him from error, trouble and death.
 - d) Soul winning will hide a multitude of sins. How? You will stop his life from going into sin. You will stop him from teaching others to sin. You will rescue his future generations from sin.

203. ARE YOU INCREASING?

Bible Reading: II Corinthians 9:1-15.

Aim: To increase in each of these areas.

Introduction: We either increase in our Christian life or decrease and backslide. Which are you doing?

Question: What does God say that we must increase in?

- 1) Learning. "A wise man will hear, and will increase learning." Proverbs 1:5.
- 2) Generosity. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth..." Proverbs 11:24.
- 3) Lifespan. "for by me (wisdom)... the years of thy life shall be increased." Proverbs 9:10,11. If we grow in wisdom, fear of the Lord and knowledge of the Lord, our lifespan will be increased.
- 4) Joy. "The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord." Isaiah 29:19.
- 5) Faith. "Lord, increase our faith." Luke 17:5; Romans 10:17; II Cor 10:15. (I Thess 3:12.
- 6) Love. "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men"
- 6) Strength. "Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus." Acts 9:22; Isaiah 40:29.
- 8) Knowledge. "Increasing in the knowledge of God." Colossians 1:10.
- 9) Fruits of righteousness. "increase the fruits of your righteousness." II Corinthians 9:10.
- 10) Christ. "He must increase, but I must decrease." John 3:30.

Bad things that increase are:

- i) Harlots increase transgressors among men (Proverbs 23:28), and
- ii) Profane and vain babblings increase unto more ungodliness. (2 Timothy 2:16).

204. 4 GREAT MISTAKES IN THE BOOK OF JOB

1. Satan's – in thinking that Job served God for what he could get. 1:9,10.
2. Job's wife – in thinking that with the loss of the visible and human, all was lost. 2:9,10.
3. Job's friends – in thinking that Job's sufferings were the result of sin. 22:5.
4. Job's – in thinking that God was unkind. 27:2.

Lesson: Don't make these mistakes in judging other's situations.

205. MOTIVES FOR SERVING CHRIST

Bible Reading: II Corinthians 5:1-21.

1. We will go to heaven at death. v.1.
2. We will get a new resurrection body. v.2.
3. We have the Holy Spirit in us to comfort and lead us. v.5.
4. We labour to be accepted of Him. v.9.
5. We must all appear before the Judgment seat of Christ to give account of our service. v.10.
6. We know the terror of the Lord, so we persuade men. v.11.
7. Our consciences tell us to serve God. v.11.
8. The Love of Christ constrains us. v.14.
9. We should not henceforth live for ourselves but unto Christ. v.15.
10. We don't evaluate people on their externals, but as creatures of eternal value. v.16.
11. People at salvation become new creatures. v.17.
12. All things we have come from God. v.18.
13. God has given us the ministry of reconciliation. v.18.
14. We are ambassadors for Christ. v.20.
15. So people get Christ's righteousness. v.21.

Conclusion: Remember these motives for serving Christ when you feel tempted to slow down.

206. THE GLORY OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Aim: To strive for eternal glory. To see the glory in being a Christian.

Introduction: Heaven is referred to as "glory" in Psalm 73:24; Hebrew 2:10; I Corinthians 15:43.

"Glory" = exalted renown, honourable fame, adoring praise, thanksgiving, beauty, resplendent majesty, magnificence, state of exaltation, things that bring renown. Certain things are said to bring glory to us in heaven.

Question: What things are glorious on earth that will bring glory in heaven?

- 1) Suffering and light affliction. Romans 8:18; 5:3; 2 Corinthians 4:17; I Peter 1:7.
- 2) Souls saved. "Ye are our glory and joy." I Thessalonians 2:20.
- 3) Messengers of the Churches. ie: Key workers. 2 Corinthians 8:23.
Preachers trained and sent out from churches. Titus was Paul's:
a) Partner, b) Fellow helper, c) Messenger of the Churches, and d) The Glory of Christ.
- 4) Churches started. 2 Thessalonians 1:4.
We ourselves glory in you (the Thessalonian Church) in the churches of God.
- 5) Faithful Pastors who will receive a crown of glory. I Peter 5:4.
- 6) Our infirmities and weaknesses. 2 Corinthians 12:9,5; 11:30.
- 7) Long hair on women. I Corinthians 11:15.
- 8) The Heavens declare the glory of God. Psalm 19:1.
- 9) One star differeth from another star in glory. I Corinthians 15:41,42.
So also is the resurrection of the dead. Daniel 12:3.

Conclusion: I Peter 2:24; Revelation 14:7; 16:9.

207. THINGS JESUS CHRIST WILL GIVE TO OVERCOMING BELIEVERS

1. Eat of the tree of life. Revelation 2:7.
2. A crown of life, if we are faithful to death. Rev. 2:10.
3. I will give to eat of the hidden manna. I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, that only the recipient will know. Rev. 2:17.
4. I will give unto every one of you according to your works. Rev. 2:23.
5. I will give power over the nations. Rev 2:26.
6. I will give him the morning star. Rev. 2:28.
7. I will give reward to my servants the prophets, to the saints, and to them that fear thy name. Rev 11:18
8. My reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. Rev. 22:12.

208. HOW TO ENCOURAGE YOURSELF (I Samuel 30:6).

- 1) Past blessings (Psalm 119:76).
- 2) Heavenly rewards (Romans 8:18).
- 3) Present friends (Romans 16:1-17; II Corinthians 7:6) and people looking up to us.
- 4) Future people who will be saved and blessed if I continue.
- 5) Go and fellowship with some people of God (Psalm 69:20; I Samuel 18:3).
- 6) Get a decent paying job (II Chronicles 31:4).
- 7) Encourage your Pastor so he can encourage you (Deuteronomy 1:38; 3:28).
- 8) Go soul-winning to forget your troubles (John 4:32).
- 9) Hearing God's Word preached gives comfort & hope (Romans 15:4; I Cor 14:3; Psalm 119:49-52)
- 10) Speak good and comfortable words (Zechariah 1:13; II Chron. 10:7; II Cor. 1:4; 7:6).
- 11) Rapture and Christ's Second Coming (I Thessalonians 4:18).
- 12) Be filled with the Holy Spirit (John 14:16,26; Acts 9:31). He abides with us for ever.

209. THOSE WHO WRONGLY SEPARATED FELLOWSHIP

- 1) Demas forsook Paul, having loved this present world. (II Timothy 4:10,11).
- 2) Disciples left Jesus, because they wouldn't understand Jesus' teaching. (John 6:63-69)
- 3) Ahithophel left David, due to disloyalty. (Psalm 55:12-14; 2 Samuel 15:31-34).
- 4) John Mark left Paul (Acts 13:5; 15:36-39).
- 5) All men forsook Paul, but the Lord stood with him. (II Timothy 4:16,17).
- 6) People left the church John was pastoring. (I John 2:19).
- 7) Children of Ephraim being armed fled from the battle. (Psalm 78:8-10).

What are we not to forsake?

- i) The assembling of ourselves together. (Hebrews 10:24,25; Nehemiah 10:39).
 - ii) Thy friend and thy father's friend forsake not. (Proverb 27:10).
 - iii) Let not mercy and truth forsake thee. (Proverbs 3:3).
 - iv) I forsake not thy precepts. (Psalm 119:87).
- What should we forsake? i) "Cease from anger and forsake wrath." Psalm 37:8.
ii) "Forsake the foolish person and live." Proverbs 9:6.

210. 10 VISIONS OF CHRIST

1. Isaiah's vision. Result: "Here am I; send me." (Isaiah 6:1-9).
2. Ezekiel's vision. (Ezekiel 1; 10:8-22 v.20).
3. Moses' vision. Result: Delivering Israel from Egypt. (Exodus 3:1-15).
4. Joshua's vision. Result: Worshipping Jesus as Captain. (Joshua 5:13-15).
5. Manoah's vision. Result: Samson born. Judges 13:1-25.
6. Daniel's vision. Result Daniel 10:4-6.
7. Stephen's vision. Result: Martyrdom, Saul saved, many churches started. Acts 7:54-60.
8. Paul's vision: Result: Saul saved. Acts 9:1-7.
9. John's vision. Result: Book of Revelation given as Scripture. Revelation 1:4-18.
10. Job's vision. Result: Book of Job written, and double blessings. Job 42:1-17.

211. WHERE THERE IS NO VISION, THE PEOPLE PERISH Proverbs 29:18.

What kind of vision, should we have?

1. A vision of ourselves (Acts 26:15-19) as the key to winning large numbers of people to Christ and starting many churches.
2. A vision of lost souls praying for salvation. Acts 16:9; Matthew 9:36-39.
3. A vision of the Judgment Seat of Christ. II Corinthians 5:9,10; Romans 14:10,12.
4. A vision of the Horrors of Hell. Psalm 9:17; Prov.15:11; Luke 16:23-28; Matt 25:41; Mark 9:43-48
5. A vision of the importance of Church. Mark 16:15; Hebrews 10:24,25.
6. A vision of Jesus Christ Himself. Revelation 1:9-18.

212. BAPTISM (To be preached at a Baptism Service)

Bible Reading: Acts 8:26-40.

Aim: To show that those sprinkled as babies are not Biblically baptised.

1. Seven Bible accounts of Baptism

- i) 3000 Israelites saved and baptised at Pentecost. Acts 2:37-41.
- ii) Ethiopian eunuch was saved first and baptised later. Acts 8:35-39. v.37.
Believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Saviour is a condition of Baptism.
- iii) Paul was saved on the Damascus Road and baptised by Ananias. Acts 9:17,18.
- iv) Cornelius was baptised after salvation. Acts 10:47,48.
- v) Lydia was saved first and baptised later. Acts 16:14,15.
- vi) Philippian jailer was saved and baptised later. Acts 16:30-34.
- vii) John the Baptist's disciples believed on Christ and were baptised later. Acts 19:1-7.

2. **Notice:** i) In every instance those baptised were believers – of knowledgeable age.
ii) In no instance is there any indication that they were infants. They were all believers.
To believe differently is to read into the Scriptures what is not there.
Anglican and Presbyterians appeal to other areas.

- iii) These believers were baptised to obey the command of Christ. Matthew 28:18-20.
- iv) They followed Christ's example of baptism in Matthew 3:13-17.
If Christ came up out of the water, so should we. Can I do anything less than Christ?
- v) What does baptism publicly declare? - their faith in Christ
- their death to their old man/old lifestyle, burial of the old man and rising to walk in newness of life. Romans 6:1-6.
- vi) **Four requirements of baptism:**
 - a) Right method – immersion : Mark 1:9-11; Matthew 3:16 ; Acts 8:38,39. Baptise means to dip or immerse. Sprinkle (Greek: rantizo 4472) is never associated with baptism.
 - b) Right motive – obedience to Christ.
 - c) Right candidate – a saved person who has received Christ as Saviour.
 - d) Right authority – local church.

Conclusion:

- 1) All believers were baptised immediately after they were saved.
- 2) If you were baptised before salvation, you just went in a dry sinner and came out a wet sinner.
- 3) If you have been saved and not yet baptised, you are not obedient to Christ.

213. WHO IS ABLE TO STAND BEFORE ENVY? Prov. 27:4; Acts 7:9.

Definition of “Envy” = Resentful, admiring contemplation of a more fortunate person's advantage.

Memory Verse: “Let not thine heart envy sinners.” Proverbs 23:17.

Aim: To be aware of and to resist the sin of envy.

Question: Who in the Bible committed the sin of envy?

- 1. Pharisees: “He knew that for envy they had delivered him.” Matthew 27:18.
- 2. Patriarchs moved with envy sold Joseph into Egypt, but God was with him. Acts 7:9; Genesis 37:11.
- 3. Jews: When the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things . . . which were spoken by Paul. (Acts 17:3).
- 4. Philistines envied Abraham's flocks, herds, servants. Genesis 26:14.
- 5. Rachel: When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister Leah. Gen. 30:1.
- 6. Wilderness generation envied Moses in the camp and Aaron the servant of God. Psalm 106:16.
- 7. One of Joshua's servants envied Eldad and Medad prophesying in the camp. Numbers 1:28,29.
- 8. Saul envied David who had killed his ten thousands. I Samuel 18:7-12.

Conclusion: i) Most envy is against the spiritual success of others.
ii) Envy leads people to hatred, violence and murder .
iii) Envy is a sin that religious unbelievers or carnal believers are most likely to fall into.

Question: What else do you notice about envy?

214. INVITATIONS OF CHRISY

- 1. Salvation “Come unto me, all ye that labour & are heavy laden & I will give you rest” Matt11:28-30
- 2. Prayer. “Come boldly to the throne of grace.” Hebrews 4:16.
- 3. Separation from false doctrine and false churches. Revelation 18:4
- 4. Repentance. “That all should come to repentance.” 2 Peter 3:9
- 5. Indwelling. “If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him.” Rev.3:20
- 6. Take the water of life freely. Rev. 22:17
- 7. Birds to eat Antichrist armies. Rev. 19:17-21
- 8. Rapture of the church. “Come up hither.” Rev. 4:1,2
- 9. Rest of fellowship with Christ. Mark 6:31

215. REVIVAL FORMULA UNDER KING HEZEKIAH II Chronicles 29-31.

- 1. Mothers must train their children to obey God's ways. (29:1).
- 2. Honour God's house. (29:3).
3. Train priests and Levites (29:4-9). Train soul winners and Bible teaching Pastors to teach others.
- 4. Make a covenant to turn away God's wrath and serve Him (29:10,11).
- 5. Worship of God was restored (29:20-36).
- 6. Visitation was restored (30:1-21).
- 7. Bible teaching by Levites was restored. (30:22).
- 8. People destroyed their idols (31:1).
- 9. Payment of full tithes and salaries to priests and Levites was restored. (31:4-10).

216. HOW TO DESTROY YOUR LIFE (Proverbs 13:13-23; Matthew 7:24-29)

- I. How to prevent our lives and our children's lives from being destroyed.
 - 1) Receive Christ as Saviour and Foundation of our life. (II Corinthians 3:11).
 - 2) Hear and obey Jesus Christ's words. (Matthew 7:24-27).
 - 3) Avoid things that God says will destroy our lives. (Psalm 1:1).
- II. What sins will destroy our lives?
 - 1) Whoso despiseth the word (Proverbs 13:13).
 - 2) A companion of fools (Proverbs 13:20).
 - 3) Ignorance, want of judgment (Proverbs 13:23; 14:7).
 - 4) Refusing reproof (Proverbs 29:1).
 - 5) Pride (Proverbs 15:25).

- 6) Adultery (Proverbs 6:32).
- 7) Prosperity of fools (Proverbs 1:32).
- 8) Bad pastors who do not teach God's Word (Jeremiah 12:10).
- 9) Tempting Christ (I Corinthians 10:9).
- 10) Murmuring and complaining (I Corinthians 10:10).
- 11) Rebels, transgressors (Psalm 37:38; Proverbs 11:3).
- 12) Those defiling the Temple of God – alcohol, cigarettes, drugs (I Corinthians 3:16,17).
- 13) Twisting Scripture (II Peter 3:16).
- 14) Not purging ourselves (Romans 9:22; II Timothy 2:20,21).
- 15) Lack of Bible knowledge (Hosea 4:6).
- 16) Rejecting Christ and following unbelievers (Matthew 7:13).

217. ANDREW – THE INTRODUCER

Bible Reading: John 1:35-42; 6:1-11; 12:20-33

Aim: To bring people to Jesus Christ.

1. His conversion. John 1:35-40.
2. He brought his brother Peter to Jesus. John 1:41,42.
3. He brought a boy. John 6:1-11.
4. He brought Greeks. John 12:20-33.

Conclusion: Who are you bringing to Jesus?

218. WHAT ARE THE MARKS OF A GOOD CHRISTIAN?

He should:

- 1) Soul Winner (Matthew 4:19).
- 2) Follow up and Teach new Converts (II Timothy 2:2; Hebrews 5:11-14).
- 3) Trust God, Live by Faith (Hebrews 11:6).
- 4) Bridle his tongue from slander (James 1:26).
- 5) Visit needy people (James 1:27).
- 6) Keep himself unspotted from the world (James 1:27).
- 7) Commit to help build local churches (Matthew 16:18; 28:18-20).
- 8) Has a burning desire to see the world won to Christ (Romans 10:1).
Trains soul winners.
- 9) Rule his children and house well. (Genesis 18:19; I Timothy 3:4,5).
- 10) Filled with the Holy Spirit continually (Ephesians 5:18) and fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22,23).
- 11) Patient under afflictions (I Peter 2:18-20).
- 12) Hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matthew 5:6).

219. BIBLE CHARACTERS WHO DID NOT APPRECIATE THEIR PRIVILEGES

- 1) Adam and Eve - did not appreciate a sinless, beautiful environment.
 - 2) Noah's generation - did not appreciate long lifespan.
 - 3) Wilderness generation - did not appreciate God's miracles in Egypt, Shekinah glory of God
 - 4) 12 Judges generations - did not appreciate Canaan's privileges.
 - 5) David - when God established His Kingdom, defeated his enemies, and gave him wives, he committed adultery with Bathsheba and murdered Uriah II Sam.12:1-14
 - 6) Solomon – after God gave him wisdom, wealth, power & majesty, he married pagan women (I Kings 3:3; 4:29,30; 9:1-9; 10:24; 11:1-14).
 - 7) Rehoboam (I Kings 12:12-15) inherited a great kingdom & power, but lost it by foolishness.
 - 8) Samson (Judges 15-16) had great strength, but lost it by fornication and breaking his vows.
 - 9) Judas heard Jesus preaching for 3 yrs but betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.
 - 10) Demas journeyed with Paul but forsook him due to love of the world. (II Tim. 4:10).
- What will we do if we appreciate our privileges: Not complain; build on our parents' work for God; be faithful to Church; learn God's Word; grow in grace; serve Christ, resist the devil.

220. WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?

- I. What God looks for: Job 33:27 (repentance); Isaiah 66:2 (contrite); Ezekiel 22:30 (a man).
- II. What we should look at:
 - 1) Our goings (Proverbs 14:15). Make right decisions.
 - 2) Ways of a wife's household (Proverbs 31:27).
 - 3) State of thy flocks (Proverbs 27:23). Look after your disciples.
 - 4) Christ for salvation (Isaiah 45:22).
 - 5) Jesus, as our role model. (Hebrews 12:2).
 - 6) Return of the Saviour (Philippians 3:20; Titus 2:13).
 - 7) Israel look on Christ's nail-print hands. (Zechariah 12:10).
 - 8) The fields that are white unto harvest. (John 4:35).
 - 9) Men of honest report. (Acts 6:3).
 - 10) New Heaven and New Earth (II Peter 3:13). New Jerusalem city (Hebrews 11:10).
 - 11) Failing of the grace of God (Hebrews 12:15).
 - 12) Perfect law of liberty (James 1:25).
 - 13) Yourselfes that we lose not the things we have wrought. (II John 8).
 - 14) Things that are eternal. (II Corinthians 4:18).
- III. What we should NOT look at:
 - 1) Countenance, or judge superficially. (I Samuel 16:7).
 - 2) Red wine (Proverbs 23:31).
 - 3) Women lustfully (Matthew 5:28).
 - 4) Things which are seen (II Corinthians 4:18).
 - 5) On his own things (Philippians 2:4).

221. WHAT SHALL BE THE END OF THESE THINGS?

(Daniel 12:8; Ecclesiastes 7:8)

Aim: To see that what we start can have a greater end than we think. How did these finish?

- 1) Those turning from the truth – their end is worse than their beginning. (II Peter 2:20).
- 2) Those keeping Christ's words to the end – get power over the nations (Rev. 2:26).
- 3) Immoral women – their end is bitter as wormwood (Proverbs 5:3-5).
- 4) Immoral men – hell (Proverbs 7:21-27).
- 5) You – going to Bible College, starting a church, training many preachers, winning millions.
- 6) John Wesley –brought revival to England and America. England became a great power.
- 7) John Wycliffe – inspired many others to translate and print Bibles.
- 8) John Huss – inspired Luther to preach against Roman Catholic errors.
- 9) Martin Luther – started the Reformation worldwide.
- 10) William Carey – inspired the Christian world to support and send missionaries.
- 11) Learner (Proverbs 19:20).
- 12) Fighters, disputers (Proverbs 25:8).
- 13) Selfish man (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25).
- 14) Writing a quality Christian book – blesses many.
- 15) Discipling by multiplication (II Timothy 2:2) – millions saved.

222. WHAT PROFIT IS IT THAT WE HAVE KEPT HIS ORDINANCE? (Malachi 3:14)

- I. Profit in serving and obeying God is to:
 - 1) Us (Psalm 19:11) – by enjoying the fruit of the Spirit; a like-minded spouse; freedom from trouble and evil; freedom from evil people avoided; fellowship with God and each other; fulness of joy (I John 3:3,4); wisdom to know right from wrong.
 - 2) Our Children – blessings passed on to many generations; loving obedient children; good communication by praying together; children will call you blessed (Proverbs 31:28).
 - 3) Others – Saved and taught true doctrine through our obedience.
 - a) We make friends we otherwise never would have made. (Psalm 119:63).
 - b) Preachers trained.
 - c) Churches started.
 - d) Country blessed by righteousness.
 - e) Evil held back from taking over a country.
 - 4) Treasures in Heaven:
 - a) A permanent record of our deeds (Malachi 3:16).
 - b) Shine as precious jewels to God forever (v 17) and Daniel 12:3.
 - c) You'll see the difference in heaven (v 18).

II. What Profitable Things may we do?

- 1) Seek the salvation of sinners (I Corinthians 10:33).
- 2) Preaching (Acts 20:20).
- 3) Mix God's word preached with faith (Hebrews 4:2).
- 4) Enduring chastening (Hebrews 12:10).
- 5) Good works helping others (James 2:14,16).
- 6) Godliness (I Timothy 4:8).
- 7) Giving yourself wholly to reading, exhortation, doctrine, meditation. I Tim. 4:15

223. ARE YOU WARRING A GOOD WARFARE?

- 1) Scriptures teaching spiritual warfare are I Peter 2:1; I Timothy 1:18; II Corinthians 10:3,4; I Chronicles 12:32-33; Psalm 18:34; 144:1; Exodus 15:3; Prov. 20:18; Psalm 78:9; Rev 12:7,17.
- 2) Levels of Training: Win the lost, Train young Christians; Train Soul winners; Refute error; befriend new Christians; Equip Third World pastors in soul winning and Bible Teaching.
- 3) Hindrances: Christians unwilling to: Go soul winning; follow-up new Christians; study the Bible; come to two Sunday services and mid-week Bible Study; and give sacrificially.
- 4) Challenges in spiritual warfare: lazy Christians, False doctrines in Christendom (Calvinism, SDA, Charismatic, Ecumenism); Islam; Christians unskilled in soul winning/ discipling.

224. THE TRUE PROPHET MICAIAH

(I Kings 22:1-28; II Chronicles 18:1-27)

Question: What do we learn about Micaiah as an ideal man of God that applies to us?

- 1) He was hated by evil people, such as Ahab (I Kings 22:8).
- 2) He prophesied evil on evil people. He did not prophesy smooth things or men-pleasing words
- 3) He went against the crowd of popular false prophets. (I Kings 22:12).
- 4) He was pressured to conform to preach as the false prophets (22:13).
- 5) He said he would only speak what God told him to speak (22:14).
- 6) He used sarcasm (22:15,16).
- 7) He revealed heavenly truths (22:19).
- 8) He revealed lying prophets' involvement.
- 9) He rebuked the false prophets for having lying spirits.
- 10) He was persecuted, smitten (22:24), and imprisoned (22:27).
- 11) His prophecy came true (22:29).
- 12) He was lied against (22:8; II Chronicles 18:7; Matthew 5:11,12).

225. SEVEN GIANTS DAVID CONQUERED (I Samuel 17)

- 1) First giant David had to slay was Rebellion against authority, by going as an errand boy to the camp. (17:17,18).
- 2) Second giant David had to slay was Discipline over his own body, by getting up early (17:20). People are undisciplined in body and mind. We must work to see our church grow.
- 3) Third giant David had to conquer was Indifference. Thank God that someone who cared walked into the camp (17:26,29).
- 4) Fourth giant David had to conquer was Bitterness and Rejection by someone he loved, cared for, and respected: (Eliab his eldest brother, 17:28). How many Christians quit because the Pastor or some Christian hurt them? Quit licking your wounds and keep on serving God.
- 5) Fifth giant David had to conquer was Fear (v 33). Soul winning is safer than car driving. You accepted the Gospel, so will others (v33-37). Past victories give confidence for future battles.
- 6) Sixth giant David had to conquer was Ridicule by the enemy (17:43,44). We are an ambassador of the King. It's not **your** work, it's **God's** work.
- 7) Seventh giant David had to conquer was Goliath (17:45-58).

226. GREAT THINGS IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

- 1) Greatness of service (Matthew 20:26).
- 2) Great work (Nehemiah 6:3).
- 3) Great goodness of God (Psalm 31:19).
- 4) Great harvest (Luke 10:2).
- 5) Great reward in heaven (Matthew 5:12).
- 6) Great door and effectual is opened. (I Corinthians 16:9).
- 7) Great plainness of speech (II Corinthians 3:12).
- 8) Great love of Christ (Ephesians 2:4).
- 9) Great zeal of Epaphros (Colossians 4:13).
- 10) Great boldness of faith of deacons (I Timothy 3:8).
- 11) Great gain of Godliness and contentment (I Timothy 6:9).
- 12) Great fight of affliction (Hebrews 10:32).
- 13) Great recompense of reward (Hebrews 10:35).
- 14) Great cloud of witnesses (Hebrews 12:1).
- 15) Great matter a little fire kindles (James 3:5).
- 16) Great and precious promises (II Peter 1:4).
- 17) Great peace have they that love thy law (Psalm 119:165).
- 18) Great men of Christian service (Jeremiah 5:5).

227. FINISH YOUR LIFES WORK

- 1) Archippus (Colossians 4:17).
- 2) Paul (II Timothy 4:7; Acts 20:24)
- 3) Us (Psalm 90:12).
- 4) Jesus (John 4:34)

228. THINGS JESUS TAUGHT IN FORTY DAYS

from His Resurrection to Ascension (Luke 24:1-53)

- 1) Don't be slow to believe the Bible (Luke 24:25-27).
- 2) Christ's Suffering, Resurrection and Ascension were necessary (24:26,46).
- 3) Christ is the central theme of Scripture (24:27,44).
- 4) Reality of His resurrection body (24:36-43).
- 5) Worldwide Gospel preaching/Great Commission(v47, Matt 28:19-20; 24:14; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8
- 6) Holy Spirit power to preach the Gospel is available to all believers (24:49).
- 7) Jesus' rightful authority (24:49; Matthew 28:18).
- 8) Water Baptism commanded (Matthew 28:19).
- 9) Observe every command of Christ (Matthew 28:20).
- 10) Jesus' presence till the end of the world (Matthew 28:20).
- 11) Apostles have miracle power to confirm the word with signs following Mk 16:17-30
- 12) Manner of Christ's return will be like His departure (Acts 1:8-11).

229. FALSE THINGS (II Corinthians 11:13-31)

- 1) False Christs (Matthew 24:24) – JW, Mormon, RC, Calvinist.
- 2) False Apostles (II Corinthians 11:13; Revelation 2:2) – Mormons, Charismatic apostles.
- 3) False Prophets (Matthew 7:15; 24:11,24; I John 4:1).
- 4) False Teachers (II Peter 2:1) – Roman Catholicism.
- 5) False Brethren (II Corinthians 11:26; Galatians 2:4).
- 6) False Ways (Psalm 119:104,128,163; Proverbs 13:5) – Wrong thinking, school system.
- 7) False Science (I Timothy 6:20) eg: 'Evolution'.
- 8) False Gift (Proverbs 25:14) eg: Tongues, Healing.
- 9) False Balances (Proverbs 11:1; 20:23; Amos 8:5) eg: Selling things that are not as claimed.
- 10) False Vision (Jeremiah 14:14). False Dreams (Jeremiah 23:32; Zechariah 10:2).
- 11) False Gospel (Galatians 1:6-9) of works for salvation.
- 12) False Accusation (Luke 19:8; II Timothy 3:3). False Witness (Exodus 20:16; Proverbs 6:19).
- 13) False Report (Exodus 23:1). False Tongue (Psalm 120:3).
- 14) Lying Spirits (I Kings 22:21,22,23).

230. TRUTH FOR LABOURERS IN GODS WORK

God has created Christians to work for Him (Ephesians 2:8-10). Not working leads us to mischief.

- 1) 2 aspects of labouring are: build (trowel) & defend what has been built (sword)- (Neh 4:15-21)
- 2) Pray for Lord to send forth labourers (Matthew 9:35-39). This was Jesus main prayer request.
- 3) Finish the work God has for you (John 4:34-38). Fields are white already to harvest (v.35). Reapers receive wages and gather fruit (v.36). Sowing and reaping are necessary (v.36,37). We build on other men's labours (v.38).
- 4) Support the weak. It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).
- 5) We will be rewarded according to our labours (I Corinthians 3:8). We are labourers together with God (I Corinthians 3:9). Our labour is not in vain in the Lord. (I Corinthians 15:58).
- 6) We labour to be accepted (approved, well-pleasing) of God. (II Corinthians 5:9).
- 7) We labour to give to the needy. (Ephesians 4:28).
- 8) We should appreciate and work with our companions in labour. (Philippians 2:25).
- 9) Labour consists of preaching, warning, teaching, striving, presenting. Col. 1:28,29
- 10) Labour in prayers. (Colossians 4:12).
- 11) Labour of love, faith, hope. (I Thessalonians 1:3).
- 12) Labour and travail night and day. (I Thessalonians 2:9).
- 13) Pastors should labour in the Word and Doctrine. (I Thessalonians 5:12,13; I Timothy 5:17).
- 14) Be willing to suffer reproach. (I Timothy 4:10).
- 15) Christ knows and won't forget our labour of love. (Hebrews 6:10; Revelation 2:2).
- 16) Rest from our labourers in heaven. (Revelation 14:13,15).

231. WHAT WILL YE DO IN THE DAY OF VISITATION? (Isaiah 10:3; I Peter 2:12)

Definition: The act of God (or Satan permitted by God) visiting people for any purpose such as: Inspecting our conduct (Sodom); Inflicting punishment (Ezekiel 38:8), or conferring favours.

Most NT visitation by God was to confer favours rather than to inflict punishment. It describes God coming to men to bless them, revive people's spiritual lives, and pour His Holy Spirit upon them. We must recognise visitations from God as an opportunity for blessing, if we obey and take them, otherwise we may miss our life's purpose and blessing.

- I. People Satan visited and the Purpose: Recognise how Satan visits us, when he visits us, and through whom he visits us, so we resist him successfully and overcome his purposes for us. Examples of people Satan visited are:
 - 1) Jesus (Matthew 4:1-11).
 - 2) Peter (Luke 22:31-34).
 - 3) Judas (John 13:27) - to tempt with monetary gain.
 - 4) Job (Job 1,2) - loss of wealth and health to prove Job loved God for personal gain.

- 5) David – through Bathsheba (II Samuel 11); to number Israel (I Chronicles 21).
- 6) Solomon (I Kings 11:1-14) in loving many strange women and introducing idolatry.
- 7) Paul (II Corinthians 12:7) lest he should be exalted above measure.
- II. People God Visited
 - 1) Zacharias at the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:68).
 - 2) Israel when Christ raised the widow of Nain's son from dead (Luke 7:11-18).
 - 3) Israel visited by the Messiah for blessing, but knew it not. (Luke 19:44).
 - 4) Russia and Muslim nations visited for judgment (Ezekiel 38:8).
 - 5) Sarah visited, by God giving her a son, Isaac. (Genesis 21:1-4).
 - 6) Israel visited by God to rescue them from Egypt (Exodus 3:8-18).
 - 7) Joshua visited by God to instruct & encourage him before conquering Canaan (Josh5:13-15)
 - 8) Job visited by God to preserve, instruct, encourage and bless (Job 10:12; 38:1-42:6).
 - 9) Israel visited by God in giving them bread (Ruth 1:6).

Lessons:

- 1) Recognise the times when Satan or God visit us. To react by resisting Satan & obeying God.
- 2) Pray to God for wisdom and strength to react correctly.
- 3) Realise that how we react to each visitation has far-reaching consequences for good or evil.

232. WHAT DO YOU LACK? (II Peter 3:1-10)

- 1) Knowledge (Hosea 4:6).
- 2) Service (Philippians 2:30).
- 3) Opportunity (Philippians 4:10). Prepare yourselves to take opportunities.
- 4) Moisture (Luke 8:6)—nourishing spiritual environment of a good, soul winning, Bible teaching church.
- 5) Wisdom (James 1:5).
- 6) Eight qualities (II Peter 3:1-10).
- 7) Understanding (Proverbs 6:32-35; 7:7).
- 8) Missionaries support (II Corinthians 11:9).
- 9) Faith or Doctrine (I Thessalonians 3:10).
- 10) Nothing (I Thessalonians 4:12).

233. RESPONSES OF BELIEVERS TOWARDS SATAN

- 1) Put on the whole armour of God (Ephesians 6:11-18).
- 2) Know Satan's devices (II Corinthians 2:11).
- 3) Resist the devil (James 4:7; I Peter 5:8,9).
- 4) Be sober, be vigilant lest he devour us (I Peter 5:8,9).
- 5) Give him no place (beach head). (Ephesians 4:7).
- 6) Quote Scripture to refute his lies (Matthew 4:1-11; I John 2:14).
- 7) Overcome him by the blood of Christ and a good testimony (Revelation 12:11).
- 8) Be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18) & yielded to the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:1-13; 3:13)

234. HOW TO TREAT YOURSELF (I Corinthians 9:19-27)

Aim: To treat ourself so we will have a lasting impact on the world for Christ.

Introduction: One of people's biggest problems is that they don't know how to treat themselves so as to keep their minds, emotions, spirits and bodies functioning efficiently. We all have difficulties and disappointments, but it is how we react to these that determines our level of well-being.

Question: How do you react to challenging situations?

In I Corinthians 9:24-27 Paul discusses how to treat our bodies in the Christian race. We must:

- 1) Run to obtain the prize. (v.24).
- 2) Strive to master the Bible and our laziness. (v.25).
- 3) Be temperate (controlled) in all things. (v.25).
- 4) Run and fight to achieve our life's goals. (v.26).
- 5) Keep our body under subjection. (v.27).
- 6) Fear becoming a castaway (disapproved). (v.27).

Q: How are we to treat ourselves to win the race God has given us, as seen by uses of 'ourself'?

- 1) Encourage yourself in the Lord (I Samuel 30:6). When things get bad, go to the Lord to get encouragement by Bible reading, prayer, soul winning, good Christian Conferences, God's past blessings, good Christian friends, past victories of God.
- 2) Behave yourself wisely (I Samuel 18:5,14,15,30). When Saul twice attempted to kill David, David's response was to behave himself wisely, wisely in all his ways, very wisely, and more wisely. Seek to cultivate wisdom in all areas of our life. How? By walking with wise men, studying and applying Proverbs, and avoiding fools.
- 3) Commit yourself and your ways to God. (Psalm 10:4; 37:5). Hand your life to God's control.
- 4) Water yourself by watering others. (Proverbs 11:25).
Question: How do we water others? By helping them in time of need, giving them a good word (Proverbs 12:25), giving to the needy. (Proverbs 19:17).
- 5) Separate yourself (Proverbs 18:1) from false doctrines, bad friends, time wasting, useless activities, so you can study God's Word to achieve God's will for your life. (Romans 16:17).
- 6) Show yourself friendly (Proverbs 18:24). Make friends for Jesus, have a cheerful spirit, be loving, kind, caring and helpful.
- 7) Hide yourself from evil that is foreseeable. (Proverbs 22:3).
- 8) Deny yourself so as to spread the Gospel. (Matthew 16:24).
- 9) Humble yourself. (Matthew 23:12).
- 10) Prepare yourself to battle. (I Corinthians 14:8; Luke 12:47).
- 11) Love yourself by loving your wife. (Ephesians 5:28,33).
- 12) Purge yourself of past sins and wrong attitudes. (II Timothy 2:21; I John 3:3).
- 13) Behold yourself (James 1:24), Examine yourself (I Corinthians 11:28).
- 14) Keep yourself unspotted from the world. (James 1:27).
- 15) Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself. (Proverbs 25:9).
- 16) Give account of yourself to God. (Romans 14:12). Remember your accountability to God.

235. WHY JESUS CAME INTO THE WORLD. He came to:

- 1) Save sinners (I Timothy 1:15); Call sinners to repentance. (Luke 5:32).
- 2) Minister to serve people and give His life a ransom for many. (Matthew 20:28).
- 3) Get baptised and thus show us how to be baptised. (Mark 1:9).
- 4) Preach the Gospel of Peace (Mark 1:38,39), & give us access to the Father (Eph 2:17, 14-18)
- 5) Heal the broken hearted (Luke 4:18).
- 6) Inspect and evaluate people's condition: Israel's (Matthew 21:9); Disciples (Matthew 26:43); Church. (Matthew 24:42,44).
- 7) Do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work. (John 4:34; 6:38).
- 8) Bless us and turn us away from our iniquities. (Acts 3:26).
- 9) Destroy the works of the devil (I John 3:8)—all his wicked plans & control over mens' hearts.
- 10) Give eternal life, be the propitiation for our sins, be the Saviour of the world. (I John 4:9,10,14)

236. PROFITABLE THINGS (Acts 20:20)

- 1) Godliness (I Timothy 4:8).
- 2) All Scripture (II Timothy 3:16).
- 3) Repentant Failures can be profitable for the ministry (II Timothy 4:11).
- 4) Good Works (Titus 3:8).
- 5) Meditate, give thyself wholly to them, take heed, continue in them. (I Timothy 4:15).
- 6) Serve God and keep God's Ordinances (Malachi 3:14-18).
- 7) People getting saved (I Corinthians 10:33; Mark 8:36).
- 8) Wisdom (Ecclesiastes 10:10).
- 9) God's Discipline (Hebrews 12:5-11).
- 10) Submitting to God's leading (Isaiah 48:17).
- 11) Labour (Proverbs 14:23). Work, plan our work, and finish our work.

Unprofitable Things

- 1) Gaining the whole world and losing your own soul (Mark 8:36).
- 2) Lying words (Jeremiah 7:8).
- 3) Riches in the day of wrath (Proverbs 11:4).
- 4) Astrologers, Stargazers, horoscopes (Isaiah 47:12-14).
- 5) Flesh – This means carnal views and desires, ungodly sinful lifestyles. (John 6:63).
- 6) Word preached that is not mixed with faith in the hearers (Hebrews 4:2).
- 7) Christ's death on the cross will be of no value (no profit) to you if you trust your works to save you. (Galatians 5:1-4,2).

237. SOUND THINGS. WHAT MUST WE BE SOUND IN?

Definition: "Sound" means: Healthy, well, wholesome, uncorrupt. (OT 8454; NT 5198).

- 1) Sound heart (Psalm 119:80; Proverbs 14:30).
- 2) Sound doctrine (I Timothy 1:10; II Timothy 4:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1).
- 3) Sound wisdom (Proverbs 2:7; 3:21; 8:14).
- 4) Sound mind (II Timothy 1:7).
- 5) Sound words (II Timothy 1:13; Titus 2:8), sound speech.
- 6) Sound in faith, charity, patience (Titus 2:2).
- 7) Sound in the faith (Titus 1:13).

238. WHAT TREASURES ARE YOU SEEKING?

- 1) Knowledge of God's Word (Matthew 13:52).
- 2) Heavenly rewards (Matthew 19:21; Luke 12:33; 18:22).
- 3) Gospel (II Corinthians 4:7).
- 4) Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge (Proverbs 2:4).
- 5) Jewels of people saved (Malachi 3:16-18).
- 6) Fear of the Lord (Isaiah 33:6).
- 7) Israel being saved (Exodus 19:5; Psalm 135:4; Matthew 13:44).
- 8) Good things in your heart (Matthew 12:35; Luke 6:45).
- 9) Beauty in creation and snow crystals (Job 38:22).
- 10) Christ (Colossians 2:3).
- 11) Earthly treasure for yourself (Luke 12:21).
- 12) Wrath on yourself by hardening your heart against God's goodness. (Romans 2:5).

239. HOW BELIEVERS MAY LOSE THEIR SIGHT (Revelation 3:14-22)

- 1) When we take our eyes off Jesus (Hebrews 12:1).
- 2) When we look back – to our unsaved habits, or to past blessings (Luke 9:57-62).
- 3) When we start looking around at others (John 21:15-19, II Corinthians 10:12).
Don't worry about others business, but follow Jesus.
- 4) When we stop looking forward to the spiritual, eternal and heavenly (II Corinthians 4:16).
- 5) When we stop looking outward for souls (Matthew 9:36-38).

240. THE WORK OF GOD IS GREAT IN A LOCAL CHURCH BECAUSE: (Nehemiah 6:3; I Chron. 29:1)

- 1) It is the training ground of future preachers, pastors, missionaries and churches.
- 2) Our children's spiritual development depends on the inspiration & training they get in church.
- 3) It is the pillar and ground of all truth. (I Timothy 3:15). It establishes truth in a country and refutes error. Our Constitution, our Government, our Justice Systems,

our Police, our Economic System are based on Bible truths as taught by Bible-based churches.

- 4) It prevents or holds back evil in our society. As we lead people to Christ, we cover a multitude of sins. (James 5:19,20).
- 5) It belongs to Jesus Christ. (Colossians 3:23-25). Therefore:
 - a) I will not quit, because I'll miss all future ministry blessings.
 - b) I will not let personal preferences hinder the progress of the church (Psalm 133:1).
The work is greater than your petty differences, preferences, likes or dislikes. These are tiny compared to people's salvation, baptism, sending out missionaries & pastors. Don't mess with the Spirit of Unity of a New Testament Church. (You don't destroy a nice marriage over a petty issue).

241. HOW SHOULD WE LIVE?

- 1) 'By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' (Matthew 4:4).
- 2) 'The just shall live by faith.' (Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38).
- 3) 'As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.' (Romans 12:18).
- 4) 'All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.' (II Timothy 3:12).
- 5) 'For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.' (I Thessalonians 3:8).
- 6) 'I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.' (Acts 23:1).
- 7) 'Live in subjection to the Father of Spirits and live.' (Hebrews 12:9).
- 8) 'In all things willing to live honestly.' (Hebrews 13:18).
- 9) 'We being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness.' (Romans 6:11).
- 10) 'Live to do the will of God.' (I Peter 4:2).
- 11) 'Live not to ourselves.' (II Corinthians 5:15).
- 12) 'To me to live is Christ.' (Philippians 1:21).
- 13) 'Live soberly, righteously, godly in this present world.' (Titus 2:12).

242. FIRE IN THE BIBLE. "Our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. 12:29; Deut. 4:24; 9:3).

- 1) Judging Fire (Exodus 9:22,23; Revelation 8:7).
- 2) Protecting Fire (Exodus 14:19-24; Zechariah 2:5).
- 3) Second Coming Fire to judge unbelievers. (II Thessalonians 1:7,8,9).
- 4) Judgment Seat of Christ Fire judging and testing the quality of believers' works (I Cor 3:13-15)
- 5) Israel's judgment on Edom/Esau/PLO. (Obadiah 15-18).
- 6) Adultery and Fornication Fire. (Proverbs 6:27-35).
- 7) Tongue Fire. (Proverbs 16:27; James 3:5,6).
- 8) Preaching Fire. (Jeremiah 5:14; 20:9).
- 9) Word of God as Fire, burning up sin. (Jeremiah 23:29).
- 10) Persecution Fire. (I Peter 1:7).
- 11) Omniscience of Christ's eyes of fire. (Revelation 1:14; 2:18; Daniel 10:6; Hebrews 12:29).
- 12) Lake of Fire. (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:14,15).

243. SIX RICH MEN (Luke 16:1-31)

Aim: To see the perils of riches, and to use riches for God's work.

Introduction: Question: What mistakes did they make?

What lessons do we learn from each?

- 1) Rich Fool (Luke 12:16-34).
- 2) Rich Man with an unjust steward (Luke 16:1-13).
- 3) Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31).
- 4) Rich Young Ruler (Luke 18:18).
- 5) Rich Tax Collector – Zaccheus (Luke 19:1-10).
- 6) Rich Men and a poor widow (Luke 21:1-4).

244. WHAT DO WE NEED TO BE TAUGHT?

- 1) 'I will teach you the good and right way.' (I Samuel 12:23; Psalm 25:4).
- 2) 'I will teach you the fear of the Lord.' (Psalm 34:11-16).
- 3) 'Teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.' (Psalm 90:12).
- 4) 'Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God.' (Psalm 143:10).
- 5) 'They shall teach my people the difference between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.' (Ezekiel 44:23).
Unclean = unchaste, impure. Profane = unholy, blasphemous, irreverent, polluted, outraging sacred things, things said that are in manifest or implied contempt for sacred things.
- 6) 'Teach us to pray.' (Luke 11:1).
- 7) 'Ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God.' (Hebrews 5:12; 6:1,2).
- 8) 'He teacheth my hands to war.' (Psalm 18:34; 144:1; II Samuel 22:35).
- 9) 'Teaching us that denying ungodliness.' (Titus 2:12; Psalm 1:1).
- 10) 'Teaching those things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ.' (Acts 28:31).

245. WHAT ARE GOD'S TEACHERS?

Aim: To see different ways we can learn about God and His Ways.

- 1) Parents. (Deuteronomy 6:7; 11:19).
- 2) Previous generations, as learnt by reading good Christian books. (Job 8:8-10).
- 3) Beasts. How? See Chapter 189 (Job 12:7).

- 4) Earth (Job 12:8,9). How does earth teach us?
 - a) Folding (of rock strata) = Flood evidence.
 - b) Coal and Oil = Death of plants and animals in Noah's Flood.
 - c) Fossils = Animals dying in the Flood.
 - d) Minerals = God's Provision for man's industrial needs.
 - f) Dinosaur and human footprints = Man and dinosaur lived together pre-flood.
 - g) Sowing seed leads to reaping an identical harvest = Sin leads to trouble.
- 5) Multitude of years should teach wisdom (Job 32:7). Examples are Bible, experienced people.
- 6) Soul winners (Psalm 51:13). When we go soul winning, we teach God's salvation.
- 7) Fingers (Proverbs 6:12-15) How? By writing good or bad books, eg: Bunyan, Darwin, Marx.
- 8) Jesus ("Thou art a teacher come from God." John 3:2).
- 9) Holy Spirit ("He shall teach you all things." John 14:26).
- 10) Nature (I Corinthians 11:14). Nature = the natural sense of fitness among men worldwide that the sexes should look different. Jews & Greeks regarded long hair on men as disgraceful.
- 11) Pastors ("apt to teach." I Timothy 3:2; II Timothy 2:24).
- 12) Disciple makers ("able to teach others also." II Timothy 2:2).
- 13) Older women should teach younger women (Titus 2:4).
- 14) The Heavens (Psalm 19:1-4). The Gospel in the Stars declares the glory of God.

246. DIFFERENT PEOPLE'S RESPONSES TO CHRIST'S FIRST COMING (Christmas)

Aim: To have the right responses to Christ's first and second comings.

Question: What do we learn from seven characters response to Christ's birth?

1. Elizabeth: Joy (Luke 1:42-45). John leaped for joy when he heard of Christ coming to see him.
2. Mary: Remember God's Works (Luke 1:46-56). Mary magnified the Lord because of His works which are: regarding Mary's low estate, etc.
3. Shepherds: Made Known Abroad (Luke 2:8-20).
4. Simeon: Hope Fulfilled (Luke 2:25-35).
5. Anna: Served, prayed, thanked, spake of Christ to all. (Luke 2:36-38).
6. Wise Men: Sought Christ, worshipped Christ, were joyful, gave gifts. (Matthew 2:1-12).
7. Herod: Troubled, angry, murdered children. (Matthew 2:16-18).

Conclusion: How do we respond to Christ's coming? Are we for or against Christ? Are we like Elizabeth who showed joy?

247. THE POWER OF EXAMPLE

Aim: To be best examples for Christ so others will be drawn to Christ by my example and words.

Introduction: People are watching you. Whatever you do, someone will follow your example.

- 1) If you set a **wrong** example, some will follow you to destruction and God will hold you accountable for stumbling them. (Romans 14:13,21).
 - 2) If you set a **good** example, many will follow you to be blessed, and God will reward and honour you for many people getting saved and living right for God.
- I. **Who Can Influence Others by Example?**
- 1) Whatever **Parents** allow, children will become, because they follow your example.
 - 2) Whatever a **Pastor** permits and does, his people will become as they follow his example. A pastor determines what his church will be like.
 - 3) Whatever a **school peer group** endorse, many students follow, such as speech; hair style; rock music; fashion; alcohol, cigarettes. Many young people decide by asking, 'Is it cool?', when they should be asking, 'Does it please God?'
 - 4) Whatever a **Bible College Principal** or **Lecturer** teaches, many students believe and teach in their churches for the next 40 years.
 - 5) Whatever a **Judge** hands down as a court case judgment, is a precedent for future cases.
 - 6) Whatever **laws Governments pass**, soon become accepted behaviour in a community, eg: abortion, prostitution, pornography, sodomite 'marriages', etc.
- II. **Bible Characters Showing the Power of Example**
- 1) Peter said, 'I go a fishing'. Four other disciples said, 'We also go with thee.' (John 21:1-3).
 - 2) Peter separated himself from Gentile Christians, fearing the circumcision, so that Barnabus followed his example. (Galatians 2:11-14). Paul rebuked Peter for this.
 - 3) Angry men: 'Make no friendship with an angry man – lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.' (Proverbs 22:24,25).
 - 4) Peer Pressure: 'Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.' (Exodus 23:2).
 - 5) Israel was commanded not to follow Egypt's or Canaan's example. (Leviticus 18:3).
 - 6) Scribes and Pharisees: 'do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.' (Matt 23:1,2)
 - 7) Sodom and Gomorrha: 'giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.' (Jude 7).
 - 8) Wilderness Generation Israelites: 'Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.' (I Corinthians 10:6).
 - 9) Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.' I Peter 2:21
 - 10) Paul: 'Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.' (I Corinthians 11:1).
 - 11) Wise men: 'He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.' (Proverbs 13:20).

- 12) Ungodly, Sinners, Scornful: 'Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners.' (Psalm 1:1-6; Ephesians 4:17).

248. HOW ARE WE TO GROW?

- 1) Jesus grew (a) strong in spirit; (b) filled with wisdom (c) in the grace of God (Luke 2:40), (d) in wisdom and stature; (e) in favour with God and man. (Luke 2:52).
- 2) Christlikeness: 'grow up into him in all things.' (Ephesians 4:15).
- 3) Grace: 'But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' (II Peter 3:18). This means to grow in graciousness and in Christlike character.
- 4) Knowledge of Jesus Christ (II Peter 3:18). Study Christ's work, person, life, character & deity.
- 5) Faith: 'Your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity ...' (II Thessalonians 1:3).
- 6) As a Church: 'maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.' Eph.4:15; 2:21,22
- 7) In all areas of our Christian life by studying God's Word. (I Peter 2:2).
- 8) Number and Quality of Churches: 'they doubted of them whereunto this would grow' (Acts 5:24). 'The Word of God grew and multiplied.' (Acts 12:24; 19:20).
- 9) Grow in spite of Opposition from False Believers: 'let both grow together until harvest' Matt.13:30

249. GOD OF THE SECOND CHANCE People Who Came Back from Failure. (Proverbs 24:16)

Aim: Failure is not final. God is willing to give those who fail a second chance to serve Him.

Introduction: Many of God's best servants experienced some failure in their lives. Those who came back to God were given another great work to do.

Question: Who came back from personal failure?

- 1) Moses (Exodus 2:11-15; 3:11).
- 2) Job (Job 42:1-10).
- 3) Samson (Judges 16:19-30).
- 4) David:
 - a) Saul chasing David to kill him, so he fled to the Philistines. (I Samuel 27).
 - b) Amalekites' destruction of Ziklag, not protecting and losing their families (I Samuel 30).
 - c) Adultery with Bathsheba and murdering Uriah. (II Samuel 11,12).
 - d) Absalom's rebellion, war, takeover of Jerusalem. (II Samuel 15).
 - e) David's sin of numbering the people. (II Samuel 24).
 - f) Adonijah's plot to seize the kingdom in David's old age. (I Kings 1).
- 5) Elijah (I Kings 19:1-4).
- 6) Manasseh (II Chronicles 33:1-16).
- 7) Peter (John 18:15-27).
- 8) Mark (Acts 15:36-41).

250. THINGS WE MUST PROVE (Deuteronomy 18:1-22; II Chronicles 9:1-31)

A major problem today is that people rarely prove things, but just presume or trust things to be true. What must we prove?

- Jesus proved or tested his disciples: 'This he said to prove them.' (John 6:6).
- The Queen of Sheba proved Solomon with hard questions. (II Chronicles 9:1).

We should prove or test people with hard questions, such as:

- To unbelievers: 'If you died tonight, do you know 100% for sure you would go to heaven?'
- To modern version users: 'Would you read Matthew 17:21 and 18:11 in the NIV please?'
- To Calvinists: 'Does God want all people to be saved or only some?' 'Does the devil want all to be saved?' (No) 'Do you?' (Yes) 'Are you more merciful than God?'
- To 'loss of salvation' believers: 'In John 10:28 what does "never perish" mean?'
- To infant sprinklers: 'Show me one baby in the Bible who was sprinkled?'

Question: What must we prove?

- Those claiming to be prophets of God (Deut. 18:18-22). eg: Mohammed by telling the future.
- Those claiming to be apostles of God (Revelation 2:2) by asking them to do a miracle as first Century apostles could (II Corinthians 12:12).
- God's promises to give to us by us tithing. (Malachi 3:10; Luke 6:38).
- What must we prove about the will of God in Romans 12:1,2? What 3 things must we do?
- The sincerity of our love for missions by giving to missionaries. (II Corinthians 8:8).
- Diligent and reliable in many things as Titus did. (II Corinthians 8:22).
- Quality of our own work for Christ by people we win to Christ going on to win and train others. (Galatians 6:4).
- Prove all things, don't just trust people or presume they are right. Check the Bible. I Thess.5:21
- Deacons must prove to be loyal and trustworthy to the Pastor, to God and to the Bible. (I Timothy 3:10).

251. WHAT DO WE REJOICE IN THE LORD ABOUT? **Philippians 3**

- That we can be certain of salvation, not by our works, but by faith in Christ as our Saviour. v.1-9
- That we know Christ personally. v. 10-12.
- That we have a life goal of glorifying God and doing the Great Commission (v. 13,14).
- That we have mental unity with believers of same goals, love, service. (v. 15,16). Psalm 133:1-3
- That we have good examples to follow. (v. 17-19).
- That we can look forward to Christ's return when we get a new resurrection body. (v.20,21).

252. HOW THE CHRISTIAN RACE IS LIKE THE OLYMPIC GAMES. I Corinthians 9:24-27

The Olympic Games remind us of Christians striving for the eternal prize of Christ's approval and heavenly rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Question: What similarities exist between the spiritual race of life and the Olympic race for gold?

- Much hard training is required (I Corinthians 9:24-27). We must train to:
 - Understand the Bible better.
 - Win more people to Christ.
 - Teach others the Bible better.
- Much discipline is needed to reject temptations that hinder our performance. Be 'temperate in all things' (I Corinthians 9:25). 'Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.' (Hebrews 12:1).
- A great cloud of witnesses watches our race & cheers us on, (as in the olympic grandstands and telecast), of departed believers, angels, Jesus Christ and living believers. (Hebrews 12:1).
- Athletes get a few days of glory if they win. We race for an eternal weight of glory. 2 Cor 4:17. 'Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible (crown).' (I Cor 9:25).
- We must keep focused on the prize to be won in heaven: 'Set your affection on things above, not on things of the earth.' (Colossians 3:2).
- People may slander athletes as a drug cheat even if they are innocent. People may slander believers falsely in order to dishearten us and sidetrack us: 'Therefore we both labour and suffer reproach ... let no man despise thy youth.' (I Timothy 4:10,12).
- As athletes will be disqualified for breaking the rules, so believers will be disqualified for striving unlawfully: 'If a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.' (II Timothy 2:5). 'But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway (disapproved, loss of reward).' (I Corinthians 9:27). Don't use unlawful methods to do God's work.
- The race has a start and a finish. Start = salvation. Finish = death. Prizegiving = Judgment Seat of Christ. 'But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy.' (Acts 20:24). 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness ...' (II Timothy 4:7,8).
- Many Christians stumble and fall down in the race: 'Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?' (Galatians 5:7). 'Them which stumble at the word, being disobedient.' (I Peter 2:3).
- As in the relay race, so we are in a relay where we are to run as hard as we can to pass the gospel baton and Bible teaching baton to the next generation. As there are 4 men in a relay, so there are 4 generations in spiritual multiplication of disciples: Paul; Timothy; Faithful men; and Others. (II Timothy 2:2).
- As in team sports, winning is a team effort. A church is like a team of athletes working together. Don't backslide and let the team down. Don't attack or discourage your captain or team members. Paul worked with a team of people. (Romans 16; II Timothy 4).

- 12) As in **wrestling**, you lose if your opponent pins you to the ground, so 'we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.' (Eph. 6:12). Evil forces seek to pin believers to the ground so that we have no resources or good name to do anything for God.
- 13) As **boxers** seek to land a knockout punch and endure being hit, so Christians must seek to knockout the enemy: 'So fight I, not as one that beateth the air' (I Corinthians 9:26), and endure being hit (buffeting): 'Even to this present hour we.....are buffeted' (I Cor. 4:11).
- 14) As talent scouts look for **athletes of great ability** and promise, so we should send our best young people to the best Bible Colleges to get the best training: 'Commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.' (II Timothy 2:2).
- 15) Have a **good coach**. Be in a church with a pastor who can train you how to win souls, who does door-knocking, who can train you in sound doctrine. Do what he says.
- 16) As athletes **use the right equipment**, such as spikes, so we must use the best tools and equipment, such as KJBibles, STOP tracts, *Answers* books, etc. to communicate God's Word.
- 17) As some athletes are **great heroes now**, so will some Christians be great heroes in the spiritual warfare and Christian race, such as Paul, and maybe you.
- 18) Some Christians are **spectators**, doing nothing for God, when they should be in the race.
- 19) Successful athletes receive the **best training**, from the youngest age. Children should be trained in the Bible from the earliest age with the best doctrine and mentors. Time in training is never time wasted.
- 20) As athletes have a **rule book** and **training manual**, so Christians must run by Bible rules.
- 21) As successful athletes **receive much glory** in winning a gold medal, so Christians will receive much glory in heaven for finishing their race lawfully. (Daniel 12:3).

253. THINGS TO DO FIRST

Many people's priorities in life are wrong. What must we seek to do first?

- 1) 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness ...' Matthew 6:33.
- 2) 'First be reconciled to thy brother, then come and offer thy gift.' Matthew 5:24.
- 3) 'First cast the beam out of thine own eye ...' Matthew 7:5.
- 4) 'Love the Lord thy God with all thine heart ...the first and great commandment.' Matthew 22:35-40
- 5) 'Sit down first, and count the cost.' Luke 14:28-33.
- 6) 'Andrew first findeth his own brother Simon ...' John 1:41.
- 7) 'First gave their own selves to the Lord.' II Corinthians 8:5.
- 8) 'If there be first a willing mind ...' II Corinthians 8:12.
- 9) 'Children ... let them learn first to show piety at home.' I Timothy 5:4.
- 10) 'Wisdom that is from above is first pure ...' James 3:17.
- 11) 'Learn the first principles of the oracles of God.' Hebrews 5:12.
- 12) 'Thou has left thy first love.' We must keep our first love for Jesus Christ. Revelation 2:4.

254. VAIN THINGS (Ecclesiastes 7:1-29)

Aim: To avoid things that are vain and useless.

- 1) 'I have not sat with vain persons.' (Psalm 26:4; Proverbs 12:11; 28:19).
 - 2) 'I hate vain thoughts, but thy law do I love.' (Psalm 119:113; Jeremiah 4:14).
 - 3) 'Give us help from trouble, for vain is the help of man.' (Psalm 60:11).
 - 4) 'Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord.' (Proverbs 31:30).
 - 5) 'The customs of the people are vain.' (Jeremiah 10:3). eg idols, incense.
 - 6) 'When ye pray, use not vain repetitions.' (Matthew 6:7). Eg: Saying 150 Hail Marys.
 - 7) 'In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.' (Matthew 15:9)
 - 8) 'Became vain in their imaginings' (Romans 1:21). Eg: movies, vain philosophies. (Col. 2:8).
 - 9) 'Bridleth not his tongue ... this man's religion is vain.' (James 1:26).
 - 10) 'Vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers.' (I Peter 5:18).-Religious traditions.
 - 11) 'Philosophy and vain deceit.' (Colossians 2:8). eg: Many university courses.
 - 12) 'Walk in the vanity of their mind.' (Ephesians 4:17; I Corinthians 3:20).
- Conclusion: Forsake vain things. Commit your life to doing things that are of "first" importance.

255. HOW THE SPIRITUAL WAR IS LIKE A MILITARY WAR

Aim: To use our resources and tactics to win the spiritual war. (Ephesians 6:10-18).

Introduction: Ephesians 6:10-18 states that we are in a spiritual war with the forces of Satan over the souls of men. This is what life is all about. Warring a good warfare (I Timothy 1:18) is the purpose of life (II Corinthians 5:10). This results in eternal rewards and Christ's approval at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Many Christians don't even know that we are in a spiritual war. We will make so many better decisions if we see that we are in a spiritual war, fighting over the eternal souls of men.

Our goals should be:

- 1) Learning to win souls to Christ.
- 2) Learning to follow them up.
- 3) Understanding the value of being loyal to building our soul winning church.
- 4) Understanding Satan's devices so we don't give him an advantage over us.
- 5) Seeing the value of using gospel tracts.
- 6) Encouraging fellow workers on the same side.
- 7) Training more preachers.
- 8) Studying the Bible to learn more about the spiritual war.

- I. **How the Spiritual War is like a Military War** (Our resources).
- 1) Our Enemy = Satan, demons, false doctrines.
 - 2) Our Commander in Chief = Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 3) Fellow soldiers = Fellow believers and soul winners in church.
 - 4) Regiment = Local Church.
 - 5) Boot Camp = Training new converts and a good Bible College.
 - 6) Battlefield = World of opportunities to win souls to Christ.
 - 7) Sergeant = Pastor of a local church.
 - 8) Equipment = Bible, STOP tracts, *Answers* book.
 - 9) Communication = Prayer.
 - 10) Casualties = Backsliders, and those believing false doctrines.
 - 11) Deserters/AWOL = Quitters.
 - 12) Traitors = Wolves speaking perverse things (Acts 20:29,30).
 - 13) Intelligence = Skilled understanding of enemy's tactics and our tactics (2 Cor. 2:11).
 - 14) Armour =
 - a) Loins girt about with truth. (Ephesians 6:13-18).
 - b) Breastplate of righteousness. (v 14).
 - c) Feet shod with preparation of the gospel of peace. (v 15).
 - d) Shield of faith. (v 16).
 - e) Helmet of salvation. (v 17).
 - f) Sword of the Spirit.
 - g) Praying always. (v 18).
 - h) Watching for all saints. (v 18).
- II. **Our Tactics** (II Timothy 2).
- 1) Be strong in grace that is in Christ Jesus. (v 1).
 - 2) Multiply disciples by teaching faithful men. (v 2).
 - 3) Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. (v 3).
 - 4) Don't get entangled with the affairs of this life. (v 4).
 - 5) Strive lawfully. (v 5).
 - 6) Pay the soul winning preacher first. (v 6).
 - 7) Seek to understand all things in the spiritual war. (v 7).
 - 8) Remember Jesus Christ's resurrection. (v 8).
 - 9) Expect people to persecute you as an evil doer. (v 9).
 - 10) Get God's Word out to the multitudes: 'The Word of God is not bound.' (v 9).
 - 11) Endure all things so people will get saved. (v 10).
 - 12) If we suffer with Christ, we shall reign with Christ. (v 12).
 - 13) Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (v 15).
 - 14) Depart from iniquity, purge ourself from sins, flee youthful lusts. (v 19,21,22).
 - 15) Be gentle to all men. (v 24).
 - 16) Meekly instruct those that oppose themselves so they repent. (v 25).

In an army, there shall be one mind, one heart, one purpose – that of the commander. The whole army shall be as obedient to the commander as members of the human body are to the head. So believers are to be as subordinate to the will of Christ, as an army is to the will of its Commander. Our will must be absorbed (or lost) in the will of Jesus Christ, and our purpose is accomplished if we are approved by Christ. "Well done, good and faithful servant." (Matthew 25:23).

256. OUR HEAVENLY FATHER AS THE IDEAL FATHER

In what ways is God as our Heavenly Father the Ideal Father?

- 1) As a father begat his children, so God gave us spiritual life: 'Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.' (James 1:18). As there are two agents of physical birth (male and female), so God uses two agents of spiritual birth (Word of God & Spirit of God). John 3:5, 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.'
- 2) As a father provides for the nursing, nourishing and raising of His children, so God nourishes and raises His children by His Word: 'As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.' (I Peter 2:2).
- 3) As a father clothes his children, so God clothes us with:
 - i) The garments of salvation: 'He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation' Isa. 61:10
 - ii) Robe of righteousness, 'he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.' (Isaiah 61:10)
 - iii) Humility: 'Yea, all of you ... be clothed with humility.' (I Peter 5:5).
 - iv) Whole Armour of God: 'Put on the whole armour of God.' (Ephesians 6:11-18).
 - v) Glorified, Resurrection body: 'we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.' (2 Corinthians 5:1,2).
 - vi) 'Put on ... mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another, forgiving one another ... put on charity.' (Colossians 3:10-14).
- 4) As a father greatly pities his children who are sick, suffering or in trouble, so God 'like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.' (Psalm 103:13).
- 5) As a father protects his children from harm, and defends their innocency against accusers, so God defends us from sin, Satan and spiritual wickedness in high places: 'he suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reproveth kings for their sakes, saying, touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.' (Psalm 105:13-15).
- 6) As a father provides food and physical needs for his children, so God provides food and other needs for us: 'there is no want to them that fear him, I will abundantly bless her provision, I will satisfy her poor with bread.' (Psalm 132:15); 'they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.' (Psalm 34:10).
- 7) As a father delights to hear his children learning to speak and expressing their minds, so God delights to hear His little children (his babes in Christ) learn to pray, and express their wants to Him: 'the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.' (Romans 8:26).
- 8) As a father shows himself as an example of good to his children and urges them to imitate him, so Christ shows His Father as an example of holiness to believers:

- i) 'Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' (Matthew 5:48)
 - ii) 'Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father is merciful.' (Luke 6:36).
 - iii) 'Be ye holy; for I am holy.' (I Peter 1:16).
 - iv) 'Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.' (Ephesians 5:1).
 - v) 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?' (II Corinthians 6:14,15-18).
 - vi) 'Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.' (Ephesians 5:10).
 - vii) 'Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves' (James 1:22)
 - viii) 'Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts ...' (James 5:8).
 - ix) 'Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.' (Ephesians 4:32).
 - x) 'Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another ...' (I Peter 3:8).
 - xi) 'Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer ...' (I Peter 4:7).
- 9) As a father educates his children, teaching them good behaviour, so God teaches, trains, and instructs his children in right ways: 'I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye' (Ps. 32:8). 'The meek will he teach his way' Ps 25:9
- 10) As a father is ready to hear his children's requests, so the ears of the Lord are open to his children's requests:
- i) 'Ask and ye shall receive.' (John 16:24).
 - ii) 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.' (Matthew 21:22).
- 11) As a father refuses his children's requests that would harm them, so God only refuses our requests that would harm us: 'Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss.' (James 4:3).
- 12) As a father takes away from his children those things that would wound or kill them, so God puts a hedge of thorns around us to keep us from evil: (Hosea 2:6.
- i) 'I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths'
 - ii) 'I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth.' (Hosea 2:17).
- 13) As a father forgives his children's sins and weaknesses, so God forgives our sins when we confess them to Him. (I John 1:9).
- 14) As a father is grieved if his children prove wicked and rebellious (eg Eli), gently seeking their restoration, so God is grieved by rebellious Christians:
- i) 'I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me' (Isa. 1:2).
 - ii) How gently and patiently He calls them to repentance: 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, ... how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.' (Matthew 23:37). Romans 10:21.
 - iii) All day long have I stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.'
- 15) If mild fatherly entreaties fail, a loving father chastises His continually wayward children (Proverbs 22:15; 23:13). So God chastens, disciplines or scourges His rebellious children (Hebrews 12:5-12) in love: 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent.' (Revelation 3:19).
- 16) As a father feels pain in disciplining his children, so God feels pain when He disciplines us: 'In all their affliction he was afflicted.' (Isaiah 63:9).
- 17) As a father lays up for his children's future mainenance, so God not only gives His children good things now, but lays up treasures for us in heaven: 'O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee.' (Psalm 31:19). 'Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.' (II Timothy 4:8).
- 18) As a father has mercy on his children's weaknesses, struggles and learning process, so God shows mercy and comfort to us: 'Blessed be God ... the father of mercies, and the God of comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation ...' (II Corinthians 1:3,4; Luke 6:36).
- 19) As a father spends time with his children doing things together, enjoying each other's company, talking & having fun together, so God the Father and God the Son have fellowship with us: 'truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.' (I John 1:3).
- 20) As a father encourages, comforts and charges his children, so God exhorts, comforts and charges us to walk worthy of God: 'Ye know how we exhorted, comforted & charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God.' (I Thess 2:11,12)
- 21) As fathers work and like to see their children work, so God the Father works and is pleased when we work for Him: 'Jesus answered them, My father worketh hitherto, & I work.' John 5:17
- 22) As a father loves his children, so God loves us: 'For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me.' (John 16:27). 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.' (I John 3:1).
- 23) As a father likes giving gifts to his children, so God enjoys giving gifts to us: 'Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh from the Father of lights.' (James 1:17).
- 24) As a good father doesn't want his children to mix with bad company, so God doesn't want us to mix with evil unbelievers: 'Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers ... and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters.' (II Corinthians 6:11-18). 'Love not the world ...' (I John 2:14,15).

257. WHAT ARE YOU FULL OF?

Christians are compared to vessels in 2 Timothy 2:20,21, the purpose of which is to be filled with good and useful things. The trouble is that we pick up many wrong ideas, attitudes, behaviour and thinking that need to be purged for the Master to use us for every good work.

Question: Are you prepared for every good work? What are you filled with? What does God say that we should be filled with to be a blessing to God and to others?

- 1) **Righteousness:** 'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after **righteousness**...for they shall be filled'. (Matthew 5:6). Lack of food and water are distressing, so we should have a strong desire for righteousness. Those seeing themselves as perishing lost sinners and strongly desiring to be holy, shall be filled. Christ's Gospel satisfies all who desire to be holy.
- 2) **Wisdom:** 'The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with **wisdom**.' (Luke 2:40).
Jesus grew in mind, intellect, understanding, strength and character. He showed extraordinary understanding and was wise to flee from every evil influence and temptation. He was wise, pure and a great example for all children, being subject to his parents, and increasing in favour with God and man.
- 3) Be filled with a desire to fill God's house. (Luke 14:23) 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come so that **my house** may be filled'. Compel= Urge them to overcome their excuses. Do we strongly desire God's house to be filled and do all we can to fill it?
- 4) **Holy Ghost** 'Were all filled with the **Holy Ghost**' (Acts 2:4), means to be entirely under His sacred influence and power. See the command in Ephesians 5:18. Acts 3:10; 5:17; 13:45,52.
- 5) 'Ye have filled **Jerusalem** with your doctrine' (Acts 5:28). This was an honourable tribute to the zeal and faithfulness of the apostles. Do this by door-to-door soul winning, follow-up and disciple making. If we are not full of sound doctrine, we won't fill our society with doctrine.
- 6) **Joy:** 'Disciples were filled with **joy**.' Acts 13:52. (II Timothy 1:4).
- 7) **Goodness** and **knowledge:** 'Full of **goodness**...filled with **all knowledge**'. (Romans 15:14).
- 8) **Comfort:** 'Filled with **comfort**.' (II Corinthians 7:4).
- 9) 'Filled with the **fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ**.' Philippians 1:11.
- 10) **Praise:** 'Let my mouth be filled with **thy praise**'. (Psalm 71:8).
If we are not filled with these things, then bad things may fill us:
 - 1) **His own ways:** 'The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways.' (Proverbs 14:14).
 - 2) **Wrath:** Filled with wrath. (Luke 4:28).
 - 3) **Fear:** Filled with fear. (Luke 5:26).
 - 4) **Madness:** Filled with madness. (Luke 6:11).
 - 5) **Sorrow:** 'Sorrow hath filled your heart.' (John 16:6).
 - 6) **Satan:** 'Satan hath filled your heart to lie to the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 5:3).
 - 7) **Envy:** Filled with envy. (Acts 13:45).
 - 8) **Unrighteousness:** Filled with all unrighteousness. (Romans 1:29).

258. THE GREATEST STATEMENT EVER MADE: John 3:16

- 1) God – The Greatest Lover
- 2) So loved – The Greatest Degree
- 3) The world – The Greatest Company
- 4) That He gave – The Greatest Act
- 5) His only begotten Son – The Greatest Gift
- 6) That whosoever – The Greatest Opportunity
- 7) Believeth – The Greatest Simplicity
- 8) In Him – The Greatest Attraction
- 9) Should not perish – The Greatest Promise
- 10) But – The Greatest Difference
- 11) Have – The Greatest Certainty
- 12) Everlasting life – The Greatest Possession

259. BENEFITS OF HOME SCHOOLING.

Why do state school teens rebel?

Bible Reading: “Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child:...” Proverbs 22:15.; 1 Kings 12.1-20. “Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.” Proverbs 19:27. “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6. “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.” Prov. 13:20. “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.” Psalm 1:1.

Aim: To understand the dangers that government schools present to our children. To protect our children from the many evils of government schools by homeschooling them with a quality curriculum.

Introduction: One of our most valuable possessions is our children. The devil wants to destroy our children so they will be of no use to God’s kingdom. We must not let the devil educate our children by sending them to a school that teaches the devil’s philosophies. State schools do not train children in the way they should go. Many believe that state schools are the greatest cause of wickedness in society.

Jesus Christ was home schooled, as was Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Edison and Queen Elizabeth II.

There are many excellent resources available to help homeschoolers achieve a quality education, such as textbooks, good websites, and Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) curriculum.

Question: What errors and dangers exist in government schools?

Answer: Teen pregnancy, Immodest clothing, Profane language, Few moral values, Nicotine addiction, Alcohol addiction, Drug addiction, Promiscuous sex, Physical violence, Emotional and mental problems, Rock music addiction, Anti-God and anti-authority behaviour, False religions adopted from peers, Abortion’s effect of guilt and depression, Youth suicide, Low self-esteem from peer ridicule, bullying, Homosexuality, Aggressive behaviour.

Question: How can we protect our children from these evils?

Answer: By withdrawing them from government schools and homeschooling them using a quality Christian curriculum.

Question: What are the benefits of homeschooling?

Answer: Let us consider them under two headings.

I. Positive Reasons for Home Schooling

1. **One-on-one tutoring** is the most effective method of teaching. A government school teacher cannot do as good a job with 25 students, as parents with a good homeschool curriculum can do with their own children.
2. Homeschoolers are **not held back** by slower students, nor dragged forward prematurely by brighter students.
 - a) He can learn a wider range of subjects that a government school would not offer if the class was too small.
 - b) If a government school teacher waits for the slower students, then better students are unchallenged and bored. If a government school teacher adapts the class for the brighter students, then the slower and average students often fall behind and give up. In Maths, if the child misses the basic foundational concepts, he finds it difficult or impossible to grasp later concepts. Hence the class teacher must teach at the average level, which bores the bright, and leaves the slow student behind.

3. Home Schooling allows **Bible truths to be taught** all through the curriculum. Those who write government school subjects and philosophies, generally strongly oppose Bible Christianity. Examples are:
 - a) History curriculum ignores the beneficial effects of Christianity and focuses only on negative events in church history. History should start with creation and Jesus Christ, not Napoleon.
 - b) State schools ignore the Christian influence behind the founding of USA, Britain and Australia.
 - c) Homosexuality is presented as an acceptable lifestyle, rather than as a sinful lifestyle from which one can be delivered.
 - d) Sex education is social engineering to spread promiscuity. Biblical sexual values are not taught, so students can make ‘their own decisions’. This produces a generation of children with no moral guidance. Parents of government school children must accept this harmful indoctrination, or spend much time deprogramming their children. This conflict between parents’ and school values produces confused children, with no moral compass to guide them. The Home Schooling curriculum is taught from a Bible World view, where Parents’ Christian values are taught and reinforced, and no deprogramming is necessary.
4. Home Schooling is **God’s plan for our children**. Nowhere in Scripture does God tell us to give our children’s education to government teachers with false doctrines. Proverbs 19:27 forbids this.
5. Home Schooling **strengthens the family** and hence **society**. Sharing education draws the family closer together, than sending children away to be educated by strangers with unbiblical values.

II. Home Schooling Avoids Many Negatives

1. Government schooling is sin because it violates Psalm 1:1 ‘Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful’
 - a) Government schools are not godly institutions, but are ungodly. If you send your children to be counselled by ungodly teachers & students, you are putting a curse on your children & yourself.
 - b) The design of government schools is to **oppose** the things of God. Under the guise of ‘religious freedom’, government schools have been turned to be hostile to Christianity. School textbooks are hostile to Bible truths.
2. Avoiding government schools **avoids physical danger**. Children are assaulted and bullied daily in government schools. It is foolish to place your children in dangerous situations. As well as violent physical assaults, children are emotionally assaulted by cruelty from fellow students. Some children mercilessly taunt other children because they wear glasses, or wear unpopular clothing, or come from a poor family, or are in some way “different”.
3. **Socialization** in government and Christian Schools is virtually **all negative**. ‘Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child’ (Proverbs 22:15). By having children as the main source of socialization for my child is to make him a ‘companion of fools’. ‘A companion of fools shall be destroyed.’ Prov. 13:20.
4. Christian schools are often **very expensive**, and are only slightly better than government schools, because their main source of socialization is still other children with many foolish ideas.
5. Don’t endanger your **children’s spiritual health** by exposing them to false, unbiblical views in science, health and history, that you will have to deprogramme later.

Endangering them is irresponsible and sinful. Don't force them to hear teachers and students ridiculing, challenging and contradicting Bible truths such as creation in 6 days 6000 years ago, that you are teaching them.

Socialization

Definition: Educate to conform to society. To place under group or government control.

Question: Should we socialize our children in a government school?

Answer: Nowhere in Scripture are parents told to give control of their children to the government or to any other group. Separated from adult influence, children are more easily moulded into whatever thinking the government desires. When raised properly (away from bad influences), most children grow up fairly friendly, co-operative and sociable. School is an unnatural, artificial environment. When not raised properly (or under bad influences), most children become unfriendly, unco-operative, and unsociable. It is right to reverse this pattern.

Key: If a large number of children are together, children usually follow the bad examples rather than the good examples. Government schools spend much time trying to help students resist peer pressure. Peer pressure is the socialization of government schools.

Key: Constant exposure to the immaturities and abuses of other children, brings harmful conformity, not individuality. Children being pressured into using tobacco, alcohol, drugs, promiscuity, bad language, immodest clothing and piercing body parts, does not help family, church or country. Socialization must not be destructive to mind, body, spirit or property.

Question 1: What is '**Positive Socialization**'?

Are the following values more likely to be instilled by a state school or by a home school?

- a) Learning how to get along well with people of diverse backgrounds in diverse situations. The artificial age-segregated state school classroom does not allow this, being confined to children of the same age. Home school children interact with people of all ages and backgrounds in all situations of life, under mature adult supervision. Home school wins.
- b) Learning how to treat people with respect. Peer groups in a state school fail here. Peers call slower children 'retarded'. Those with acne are viciously ridiculed, smart children are ridiculed for being smart, children from poor families are ridiculed for not wearing the popular clothes, some children are beaten up for no reason. State schools fail to teach children to treat others with respect.

Key: When children are the main source of socialization, then childish values will be transmitted. Mature adults are necessary to teach children proper values.

Key: A State School teacher in a class of 25 children cannot overcome and counteract all the negative behaviour of the students. In home schooling, the parent can carefully reinforce the good in a child and correct the bad. This is not the case for a State School child.

- c) Learning to conform to good standards of behaviour.

Question: What behaviour do children learn from other children: good or bad? Does the good child or badly-behaved child more greatly influence the crowd?

Answer: Crowds tend to follow the lowest examples. This is why so many churches see their youth rebel and leave church as they 'progress' through their teens. The positive training received in the home and church during their formative years gets worn away by constant exposure to the negative behaviour of State School classmates.

'Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child.' (Proverbs 22:15). So when a child gets his main interaction from other children, he grows up as a companion of fools. Sending a child to state school puts you in a tug of war for him with his peers.

Key: Those who get their main interaction from fools grow up to be fools. 'A companion of fools shall be destroyed'. (Proverbs 13:20).

Question: Parents, by sending your child to a State School, if he becomes a companion of fools, he will be destroyed, and God will hold you accountable.

Question: How can a State School destroy your child? By:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1) Teen pregnancy | 18) Evolution, no accountability. |
| 2) Immodest clothing | 19) Atheism. |
| 3) Profane language | 20) Socialism or Communism. |
| 4) Few or no moral values | 21) Pornography addiction. |
| 5) Nicotine addiction mates. | 22) Reckless driving to impress |
| 6) Alcohol addiction | 23) Satanism, Occult, Harry Potter. |
| 7) Drug addiction | 24) Sexually explicit English novels. |
| 8) Promiscuous sex. | 25) Tolerating all false opinions. |
| 9) Physical violence and Bullying. | 26) Ridiculing the Bible and Creation. |
| 10) Emotional and mental problems | 27) No Bible teaching. |
| 11) Rock music addiction | 28) No absolute right or wrong. |
| 12) Anti-God and anti-authority behaviour | 29) Wild parties, Discos. |
| 13) False religions adopted from peers | 30) Introduction to the Pub scene. |
| 14) Abortion's effect of guilt and depression | |
| 15) Youth suicide | |
| 16) Low self-esteem from peer ridicule | |
| 17) Homosexuality | |

Question 2: What is '**Negative Socialization**'?

Are the following wrong values more likely to be instilled by a State School or by home school?

- a) Developing Peer Dependence. We all naturally want the approval of those around us. Children in a State School look to other children around them for their main source of approval.

Key: In order to gain approval of the group, children need to conform to the behaviour and thinking of that group. Thus, State School children will grow up dependent on their peers for approval. Telling them to 'resist peer pressure' is too late after they are already locked in to peer group dependence. Old habits are hard to change. In home education, the main source of approval is the family, where family values and behaviour are transmitted as dictated by the parents.

Home education, thus, protects children from negative peer dependence.

- b) Drug abuse, Alcohol abuse, Tobacco abuse, Profanity, Promiscuous sex, Anti-social behaviour.

The standards of the group become the standards of the individuals in the group, or they risk rejection and ridicule. If a child is constantly in a place exhibiting these behaviours, the child is likely to participate in them, or at least view them as acceptable.

If 'nice children' hear bad language enough, they become accustomed to it, then they become accepting of it, and then they start using it. In a home where these behaviours are not accepted or exhibited, the children are much less likely to accept or exhibit them. Home school wins again.

- c) Cliques. There is nothing wrong with having a close group of friends, but it is wrong when the group attitude is, "If you are not one of us, you are a nobody." State Schools are a fertile breeding ground for cliques that reject others. Home education is a far superior way of developing mature, respectful, responsible, law-abiding adults. Government schools provide almost no positive value to the socialization of children. What little it does provide, is more than outweighed by the negatives that come with it.

What about some teens who go to a government school and come out as fine young adults? This is in spite of government school socialization, not because of it. It is often due to the powerful counteracting, deprogramming influence of a Christian home or a good church.

Objections to Home Schooling.

Objection 1: Your children will be sheltered.

Answer: Children are supposed to be sheltered from things like gang violence, drugs, bullies, ungodly philosophies and immoral sex education. This is the whole purpose behind parenting. Children are not ready to be exposed to these things and shouldn't be.

Example 1: We don't ridicule a florist for keeping a young tender plant in a greenhouse to protect it from things it cannot handle. Why should parents be ridiculed for sheltering young, tender children from things they can't handle?

Example 2: If a toddler tries to put his hand on a hot stove, we stop him. This is not "sheltering". It is "protecting" your child. When children are protected from the negative influences in government schools, they will grow up more emotionally healthy, and more firmly established in their parent's values. If children are immersed in positive values, they will be more able to recognise negative values later. Many adults with mental disturbances are due to school rejection, ridicule and abuse.

Objection 2: Your children will not know how to deal with the real world.

Answer: Age segregation is not the real world. In the "real world", people who can excel are not held back until the slower people catch up, which is how government schools operate.

Objection 3: Your children will become too dependent on you.

Answer: Too many children are disrespectful of parents and all authority. Close knit families, submission to authority and consideration for others are necessary for a strong, stable society. It's better for children to depend on their parents a bit more, than to rebel against their parents wishes.

Objection 4: Your child will not have any friends.

Answer: In homeschooling, it is the parents who choose and monitor their children's friends. Many homeschoolers make many friends at church, Christian camps, clubs and with local Christian children. In government schools, parents never know all the wrong friends that may be influencing their children for evil. It is better to have a few quality friends than to have many bad, ungodly or questionable friends.

Objection 5: Your children will be socially younger than their government school peers.

Answer: Homeschooled children will not be forced to act more mature or independent than they really are to protect themselves from being mocked. They should be allowed to enjoy their childhood by not exposing them to things that rob them of their youth and innocence. They will gain independence after they have developed the moral and emotional maturity to handle it. Home schoolers tend to be more respectful, more self confident, more mature & more capable than government school children as a general rule. Homeschoolers tend to be more accepting of people of different backgrounds since they don't need to deal with peer pressure to conform to their peer group's beliefs.

Objection 6: Parents are not qualified to teach all subjects.

Answer: Those who wrote the homeschooling curriculum are highly qualified. It is self explanatory. Source: Used with kind permission of Fred Worth.

www.hsu.edu/faculty/worthf/why.html

260. THE GOSPEL IN THE STARS

Bible Reading: Psalm 19:1-6.

Aim: To show how God recorded the plan of salvation in the 12 signs of the Zodiac. To show that reading horoscopes is an abuse of the true message of the Zodiac.

Introduction: There are strong reasons to believe that the star groups and their symbols were originally designed and used to convey God's plan of salvation to people of all places and at all times.

God states that one purpose of the heavenly bodies was to be "for signs and seasons". (Genesis 1:14).

In Psalm 19:1-6 we have the revelation of God written in the heavens.

In Psalm 19:7-14 we have the revelation of God written in His Word.

PROOF OF THE GOSPEL IN THE STARS

From 4000 BC to 1500 BC the world was without a written revelation from God.

Question 1: Did God leave Himself without a witness? No.

Question 2: How was God known? In Romans 10:18 Paul answers the sceptics objection that 'Gentiles have not heard the gospel' by quoting Psalm 19:4 that Gentiles have heard the Gospel message in the Zodiac Signs in the stars. 'But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world'. So the Gentiles are without excuse (Romans 1:19,20).

Question 3: What is the Zodiac?

Definition: The Zodiac consists of 12 groups of stars called constellations or signs or hosts, each 30 degrees wide, which form the background for the motions of the sun, moon and planets (except pluto). The ancients knew that, if the stars could be seen in the daytime, the sun would appear to move through a series of constellations, entering a **new sign** or constellation **each month**. These constellations make up the Zodiac. The constellations inside the Zodiac do not now correspond to those named by the ancients, because precession of the earth's axis has tilted the earth in a different direction. As the Sun makes the annual circuit through the 12 houses of the heavens, so this journey depicts Christ's journey from being born of a virgin, redeeming mankind, and returning in glory to destroy satan and to rule the earth.

Question 4: What is the **content** of the Zodiac message?

Answer: Book 1: The Redeemer = Christ's First Coming (Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius).

'The Sufferings of Christ'.

Book 2: The Redeemed = Results of Christ's Sufferings (Capricorn, Aquarius, Pisces, Aries).

Book 3: The Redeemer = Christ's Second Coming. (Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo).

'The glory that should follow.' (I Peter 1:11).

Question 5: What is the **meaning** of the Zodiac signs?

Their meaning: These pictures preserved and taught the great promise and prophecy of Genesis 3:15, that all hope for **man** and **creation** was in a **coming Redeemer** who would

- be born of a virgin;
- first suffer and later triumph;
- first be wounded by satan, but later crush the head of satan.

These ancient star pictures set forth 'the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.' I Peter 1:11

There are **48 signs**, made up of **12 signs** of the Zodiac and **36 constellations**. (Each of the 12 signs contain 3 constellations). These 12 signs are contained in 3 Books, each with 4 signs.

Question 6: Where does **Mazzaroth** (Zodiac) **begin**? (Job 38:32).

Answer: It starts at Virgo because:

a) **The Bible narrative** shows **VIRGO** as the start and **LEO** as the end.

Genesis 3:15 starts with the **woman** bearing a Son who would crush the serpent's head. (This is Leo crushing Hydra, the crooked serpent, sign 12 as in Revelation 5:5).

b) "**Bringing forth Mazzaroth** in his season" is identical to "**guiding Arcturus**". The star Arcturus is one of the brightest & is next to Virgo in one of her decans (constellations). Arcturus guides/leads the Signs.

c) The **Sphinx** is found on some ancient Zodiacs. **The Sphinx** shows the **VIRGO** woman's head as the start, and **LEO** (lion's body) as the end.

d) **It fits the Biblical narrative** of the redemption story starting with the Virgin bearing a son, and ending with the Son, the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Christ) destroying the great fleeing serpent Hydra.

e) The **ancient Zodiacs** of Egypt, India, Greece, Israel and China exhibit the same 12 major signs and 36 decan signs.

Note. God forbids astrology, the use of the Zodiac signs to predict one's future (Deuteronomy 4:19; Isaiah 47:11-14; 2 Kings 23:5; Acts 7:42,43; Zephaniah 1:5), because:

- our future is determined by our moral decisions, not by stars.
- God judged ancient Israel for "worshipping the host of heaven" which was worshipping demons or fallen angels. (Isaiah 14:12-15; 2 Kings 21:3-6; Deuteronomy 32:16,17; Revelation 9:20).

Question 7: Where does the **Bible** teach that the Gospel in the Zodiac constellation signs is a valid revelation from God?

Answer: Romans 10:18; Psalm 19:1-6; Job 26:13; Genesis 1:14. The heavens contain information from God.

I. Romans 10:18. Paul endorses the Gospel in the stars as a valid revelation from God in Romans 10:18 by quoting Psalm 19:4: "But I say, Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their **sound** went into all the earth, and their **words** unto the end of the world."

II. Psalm 19:1-6. 'The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork' v.1. (These show God's power, greatness, glory, wisdom and intelligence). "Day unto day uttereth speech, and **night** unto **night** showeth knowledge." (v.2).

Question 8: How does every night show knowledge?

Answer: By the message contained in the Zodiac signs about Christ's birth, work and return.

"There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard." (v.3).

Question 9: How can a voice convey its message without language, or to all languages?

Answer: By pictures depicting a message. These Zodiac signs are understandable in all languages.

"Their **line** (voice, sound) is gone out through **all the earth**, and their **words** to the **end of the world**."

In them (space) hath he set a **tabernacle** (house) for the **sun**." (v.4).

Hence: a) They show knowledge (v.2). b) It is understood by people of all languages (v.3).

c) It shows **Christ** as the **heavenly bridegroom** (v.6) and a **strong man running a race** to finish His plans.

It shows Christ's work of redemption as a circuit (Zodiac) from one end of heaven to the other. (v.6). **Question 10:** What is the tabernacle or house that the sun moves through?

Answer: It is the **12 houses** or signs of the Zodiac that the sun spends one month in each sign or sector. The 12 signs of the Zodiac are the 12 houses the sun moves through each year.

"Which (the sun moving through the Tabernacle of 12 houses) is as a **bridegroom** (Christ is the heavenly bridegroom [Revelation 19:7] whose wife will be the Church) coming out of his **chamber** (heaven), and rejoices as a **strong man** (Christ is the all powerful God/man) to run a **race** (the race of redemption, from Virgo to Leo, to secure full and final salvation of mankind and creation)". (v 5).

"His (the sun's) going forth is from the **end of heaven**, (as the sun appears to move through the 12 Zodiac signs) and his **circuit** (yearly course around the 12 Zodiac signs, see Hebrew words 8622, 5362) unto the **ends of it** (heaven); and there is nothing hid from the heat of it". (Psalm 19:1-6).

III. Job 26:13. Job states that "**God's Spirit** garnished the **heavens**, and **his hand** hath formed the **crooked serpent**." (Job 26:13). Hydra, the largest constellation, stretches below Cancer, Leo and Virgo. As Hydra validly depicts Satan as the crooked serpent, so do the other constellations teach a valid message, as confirmed by the written Word of God.

IV. Genesis 1:14. "And **God** said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for **signs**, and for **seasons**, and for days, and for years."

These **signs** are the 12 signs of the zodiac telling us of the plan of redemption by Jesus Christ.

Ancient farmers planted & harvested their crops in **season** according to stars appearing at different times.

V. Psalm 147:4; Isaiah 40:26. The Bible states that God has **numbered** and **named** the stars.

"He telleth the **number** of the stars; he calleth them all by their **names**." Psalm 147:4.

"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by **number**: he calleth them all by **names**..." Isaiah 40:26.

The figures are arbitrary and there is nothing in the groups of stars to suggest the figures. These pictures were designed to preserve, teach and perpetuate the first great promise of God given to man in Genesis 3:15 that hope for all mankind of being delivered from sin and suffering was bound up in a **coming Redeemer**; One who would be **born of a woman**; One who would **first suffer**, and afterwards **gloriously triumph**, One who would **first be wounded by Satan**, who was the cause of all sin, sorrow and death, but who would finally crush the head of "that old Serpent the Devil". These ancient star pictures reveal this coming Redeemer.

They set forth "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow". (I Peter 1:11).

The 12 signs of the Zodiac contain: a) 3 great books, each containing 4 chapters,

b) 48 constellations, 4 in each of the 12 signs of the Zodiac.

II. ZODIAC and CONSTELLATIONS IN THE BIBLE

- Pleiades (known as the seven stars in Amos 5:8) are in Taurus. 'Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades?' (Job 38:31; 9:9).
- Orion is in Taurus, 'or loose the bands of Orion'. (Job 38:31; 9:9; Amos 5:8).
- Arcturus is in Cancer in Ursa Major. 'Canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?' (Job 38:32; 9:9). Polaris (the Polestar) is in Ursa Minor. Arcturus' sons are the stars in the tail of Ursa Major, being:
 - Alioth (meaning 'she goat');
 - Mizar (meaning 'small');
 - Al Cor (meaning 'the lamb');
 - Al Kaid (meaning 'the assembled').
- Chambers of the South (Job 9:9) are opposite in the Zodiac to Taurus, which would be Scorpio.
- Hydra in Leo is the 'crooked serpent'. 'By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent'. (Job 26:13). This shows the gospel message in the stars is ordained by God.
- Mazzaroth (Job 38:32) is the 12 signs of the Zodiac (Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p 462, 4216). 'Mazzaroth' (Aramaic and later Hebrew) means 'girdling stars', the Zodiacal circle. 'Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth (4216) in his season?' (Job 28:32). 'Season' means 'separated, divided' as the spaces given to the 12 Zodiac signs mark the successive seasons in the year.
 - Thus the constellations were known in Job's time, and well understood by believers of that age.
 - This grouping of the stars in pictures is shown to be the work of God by His Spirit: 'By His Spirit He garnished (or decorated) the heavens; His hand hath formed the crooked serpent'. (Job 26:13).

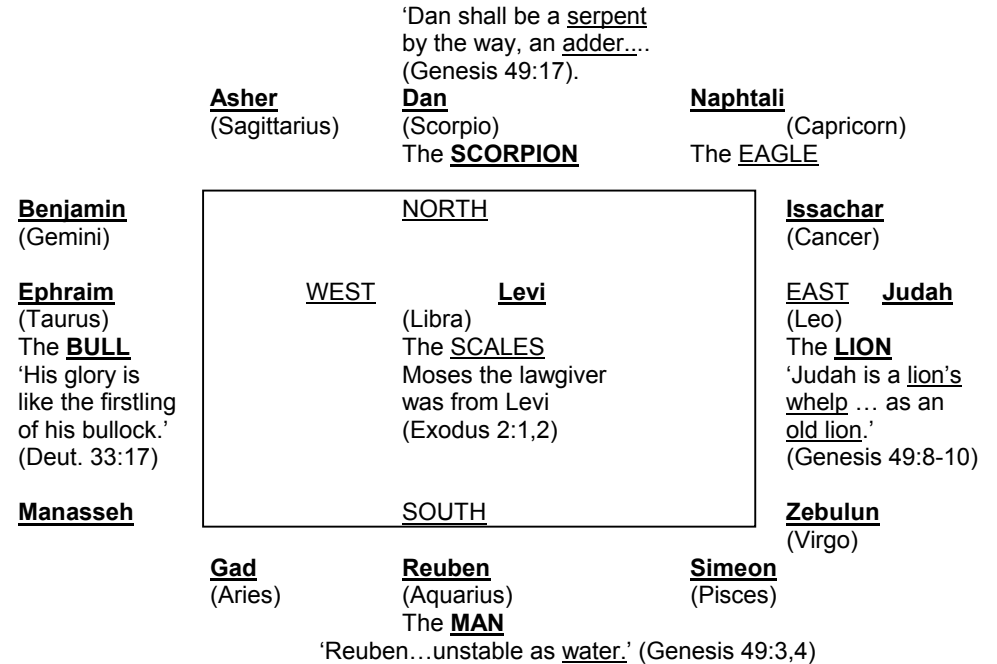
God forming the crooked serpent (Hydra) is an example of that sacred garnishing, that we may know from a specific part what is true of the whole Zodiac. That work is ascribed to the Spirit of God.

Question 11: How else may we confirm that the 12 Zodiac signs validly teach the Gospel in the Stars?

Answer:

- The Ancient nations of China, Babylon and Egypt show that the 12 Zodiac signs have the same order and meanings. These date from before 2000 BC.
- The 12 sons of Jacob were later identified with the 12 Zodiac signs (Genesis 37:8-10). Joseph dreamed of the sun, moon and 11 stars bowing down to him, he himself being the 12th star. Details in the blessing of Jacob (Genesis 49) and in the blessing of Moses (Deuteronomy 33) witness to knowledge of the 12 signs' existence in 1500 BC.
 - Deuteronomy 33:17 depicts Ephraim and Manasseh (Joseph's 2 sons) as a BULL (Taurus).
 - Genesis 49:3,4 depict Reuben as unstable as water, just as a MAN pouring water (Aquarius).
 - Genesis 49:8-10 depict Judah as an old LION (Leo).
 - Genesis 49:17 depict Dan as a serpent or adder, reminding us of Scorpio's sting.
- The 12 Tribes of Israel each bore one sign on its standard. 'Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house'. (Numbers 2:2).

Ancient Jewish authorities declare that each tribe had one of the signs as its own. It is likely that 4 tribes carried its sign at the 4 sides of the camp. If the Lion was allocated to Judah, then the 4 standards would equally divide the Zodiac at its 4 points, and divide the camp at its 4 sides. According to "OT Bible History" Alfred Edersheim Book 2, p.151 and to Numbers 2:1-34, especially v.3,10,18,25, the camp of Israel was pitched as follows:



- The 4 faces of CHERUBIM correspond to the 4 main Zodiac signs (the Lion, the Bull, the Man, the Eagle/Scorpion). 'They four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; and they four also had the face of an eagle.' (Ezekiel 1:10; 10:14). Notice that the lion and ox had the same positions as in the camp of Israel. 'And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.' (Revelation 4:7). The eagle, the scorpion's enemy, replaces the scorpion. One constellation of Capricorn is Aquilla, the eagle.
- The 4 New Testament Gospels' descriptions of Christ correspond to the 4 main Zodiac signs:
 - Matthew shows Christ as King (the Lion). (Matthew 2:2; 21:5; 27:11,37).
 - Mark shows Christ as a Servant. (the Bull, Ox). (Mark 9:35; 10:44,45; 12:2).
 - Luke shows Christ as the perfect Man. (Aquarius, the man pouring water). Luke 19:10; 15:2; Jn4:10-15
 - John shows Christ as God. (The Eagle flying high in the heaven). (John 3:13).

6. Christ is introduced **4 times in the OT** by the word **“behold”**: Behold the King (Zechariah 9:9), Behold my servant (Isaiah 42:1), Behold the man (Zechariah 6:12), Behold your God (Isaiah 40:9).
What then is the true message of the Zodiac symbols?

I. The Gospel in the stars may be summarized as follows:

BOOK 1: The PERSON of the REDEEMER

1. VIRGO (The Virgin). **From a young virgin will be born the Saviour of the World.**

Genesis 3:15. “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel”. Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23, Isaiah 9:6,7. That Virgo represents the coming of the Promised seed of the woman is seen by the names of stars and constellations in Virgo.

Coma constellation (The woman and child) = This coming Branch will be a child who will be the “Desire of all nations”. “The desire of all nations shall come”. Haggai 2:7.

Coma in Hebrew means “Desired or longed for”.

2. LIBRA (The Scales) = **Christ’s Payment for our Sins.**

The price of man’s sins have been paid by Christ’s sacrifice. Libra is a pair of scales with one end up and the other end down, in the act of weighing. Since man is a sinner and under judgment, an adequate price must be paid to redeem him and balance the scales of God’s justice. By Christ paying for our sins on the cross, God’s justice in requiring that our sin be punished, has now been satisfied. That Libra represents Christ paying for our sins can be seen by the names of the main stars in Libra:

- Zuben Al Genubi, means in Arabic. “The price which is deficient”. This points to the price that man would attempt to pay for his own redemption by his works. All mankind are like Belshazzar, being weighed in the balances and found wanting. (Daniel 5:27).
- Zuben Al Chemali, means “The Price which covers”, which is the blood of Christ. The atoning sacrifice of Christ is sufficient to pay the penalty for man’s sin and to purchase our redemption.
- Zuben Akrabi, meaning in Arabic “The Price of the Conflict”. The payment of the price of man’s redemption at Calvary involved a conflict.
- Crux (The Southern Cross). 4 bright stars form a cross. The southern cross was last visible in the latitude of Jerusalem about the time Christ died on the cross. It’s ancient name in Hebrew was “Adom”, meaning “cut off”. This word is used in Daniel 9:26 to describe the Messiah’s death before Jerusalem’s destruction in 70AD.
- Corona (The crown bestowed). This pictures the crown of glory adorning Christ’s head now that His sufferings for our sins are over. The cross is followed by the crown. “The son of man, having on his head a golden crown.” (Revelation 14:14).

3. SCORPIO (The Scorpion). **Christ’s Mortal Conflict.**

The scorpion is seeking to wound Christ, but is itself trodden underfoot. The sign of Scorpio depicts a huge scorpion trying to sting the heel of a mighty man (Christ) Who is wrestling a great snake (Serpens). At the same time the scorpion is being crushed by the other foot of the mighty man.

The coming Redeemer would bruise the serpent’s head while He Himself is bruised in the heel. (Genesis 3:15). Virgo shows Christ as the promised seed of the Virgin. Libra shows the price Christ would pay to secure man’s redemption. Scorpio shows the conflict Christ would have to endure. That Scorpio represents Christ’s mortal conflict with Satan is seen by the names of some stars in Scorpio:

- Serpens constellation (The serpent struggling with Christ for the crown).
- Ophiuchus constellation (The mighty man defeating the serpent and treading him underfoot).
- Unuk, the brightest star in Serpens means “encompassing”. “Dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me”. Psalm 22:16.
- Cheleb, in the head of the serpent, means “The Serpent Enfolding”.
- Ras El Hagus, in the head of the man, means “The head of him who holds”.
- Hercules constellation shows a mighty vanquisher kneeling on one knee, seeming to sink in the conflict, but holding aloft the tokens of victory, with his foot on the dragon’s head.

4. SAGITTARIUS (The Archer). **Christ’s Victory over Satan.**

The Archer is a Centaur having the body and legs of a horse, with the body, head and arms of a man. His bow is drawn to the full. The arrow, ready to fly, is aimed at the heart of Scorpio, the enemy, marked by the bright red star Antares.

This 2 natured Centaur depicts Christ as the God-man triumphing: “O most mighty...Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King’s enemies”. (Psalm 45:3-5). That Sagittarius depicts Christ’s victory over Satan is witnessed by the names of some of the stars in Sagittarius.

- Lyra constellation pictures a lyre or harp, an instrument of praise prepared for Christ the Conqueror. “Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion.” (Psalm 65:1; 33:2). When the wait is over, Christ will come forth, then the praise shall be given, as in Revelation 11:17 and 19:7. “When thou shalt make ready thine arrows upon thy strings...Be thou exalted, LORD, in thine own strength: so will we sing and praise thy power.” (Psalm 21:12,13). The harp follows the victorious horseman archer.
- Vega is the bright star in Lyra meaning “He shall be exalted”. (Revelation 5:9,13). In Lyra, the harp shows the joy and gladness at the Archer’s victory.
- Ara constellation is an upside down altar, depicting the fires of judgment on the archer’s enemies. (i.e. the Lake of Fire). The Greeks used Ara as a curse. Jesus will one day say to some, “depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels”. (Matthew 25:41).
The consuming fire of Ara follows the triumphant praise seen in Lyra. “Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: The LORD shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them”. Psalm 21:9.
- Draco constellation is the Dragon, the Old Serpent, the Devil cast down from Heaven (Rev. 12:9,10). Isaiah describes God destroying Satan: “in that day, the LORD with his sore, great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.” (Isaiah 27:1). Stars in the head of Draco are Rastaban (the head of the subtle) and Ethanin (The Long Serpent).

Conclusion: Each of the 3 Books or Acts ends with similar theme:

Book one ends with Draco, the Dragon being cast out.

Book two ends with Cetus, the Sea monster being bound.

Book three ends with Hydra, the Old Serpent being destroyed.

BOOK 2: The RESULTS of Christ's Redeeming Work.

5. CAPRICORN (The Sea Goat) = A goat with the tail of a fish. The goat is dying with a bowed head and folded leg, while the fish tail is living and vigorous. The **Blessing of life from death**.

Meaning: The goat was a sacrificial animal used in the sin offering (Leviticus 9:1-3) on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:1-34).

Capricorn, the dying goat, speaks of Christ dying on the cross for sinful man. From the dying goat comes a living fish typifying the many redeemed who have been given life as a result of Christ's sacrifice. (Matthew 4:19). The fish symbolizes that the believer in Christ is a new creation (II Cor. 5:17). Hence Capricorn represents new life resulting from the sacrificial death of Christ.

6. AQUARIUS (The Water pourer) = **Jesus Christ pours living water to his redeemed people**. "Whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." (John 4:46).

Jesus Christ pours out the water of life in blessing His people the Church ("If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink" John 7:37), and on Israel in the Millennium ("He shall pour the water out of His buckets." Numbers 24:7). As Moses struck the rock, water gushed out giving life, refreshment and blessing to Israel in the wilderness. Aquarius teaches the blessing of salvation's fullness.

7. PISCES (2 fish bound at the tails by a cord, attached in the middle to the neck of Cetus, the Sea Monster). The **Delay of the promised blessing**.

Meaning: Fish in the gospels represent people who are caught in the gospel net for the Kingdom of God. ("Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." Matthew 4:19; 13:47). God's people consist of 2 groups, saved Israelites and saved Gentiles (the Church), both of which are still bound to live in a sinful world until Christ returns, where the full blessings of salvation will be revealed and our bondage to sin will be broken (Romans 8:18-23). "We ourselves groan within ourselves...waiting for the redemption of our body." (v.23). Pisces shows that the full blessings of salvation are delayed until Christ returns.

8. ARIES (The Lamb) represents Jesus Christ as the **Lamb of God** who by the sacrifice of Himself takes away the sin of the world, but now reigns as King of Kings. John the Baptist said of Jesus, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29). This lamb is a sacrificial lamb who was bound, bruised and slain as witnessed by the names of some of the stars in Aries.

- Elnath, the brightest star means "The wounded or slain".
- Sheretan means "The Bruised".
- Mesartim means "The Bound".

When the Israelites in Egypt were ordered to slay a lamb and sprinkle its blood on the doorposts and lintels of their houses, the sun entered Aries on this very day, the fourteenth day of the Jewish month Nisan. At the time of Christ's crucifixion, the fourteenth day of Nisan, the sun stood in the head of Aries near the stars Elnath (the wounded) and Sheretan (the bruised).

False astrology begins with Aries because its modern structure was developed in classical times when the sun was in Aries at the Spring equinox. This is a perversion of God's intention of the signs, for they were to speak of Christ's coming and work of salvation. The correct beginning is Virgo, not Aries.

In Isaiah 53 Christ is presented as the lamb led to the slaughter. In Isaiah 54:5-8 Christ is presented as Jehovah the Son, the husband of Israel, the restored wife of Jehovah. So in this sign, Aries the Lamb is followed by Cassiopeia, the bride. (Isaiah 54:5-8).

BOOK 3: REDEMPTION COMPLETE.

9. TAURUS (The Bull) represents Christ as the strong one, the **Great Judge coming in power and glory** to judge and rule the earth. Taurus is an enormous rushing bull of mighty energy and fierce wrath with long, sharp horns pointing forward and upward to push, pierce through and destroy his enemies.

Balaam describes the power of God on behalf of Israel as "God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn". Numbers 23:22; 24:8.

When Moses blessed the tribes before his death, he said of the tribe of Joseph, "His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth". (Deuteronomy 33:17). Job spoke of the unicorn, wild bull, or aurochs as having great strength, ferocious and untamable (Job 39:9-12), and of great speed (Psalm 29:6).

The unicorn or wild ox was much larger, stronger, faster and more ferocious than modern bulls. It was a prize hunted by Egyptian and Assyrian kings like Tiglath Pileser I (1115-1102 BC) in the Lebanon mountains. It became extinct in Europe around the 15th Century. That Taurus represents Christ coming to judge and rule the world is witnessed by the names of some of the stars in Taurus:

- Aldebaran, the brightest star in the bull's eye means "The Governor, Leader or Captain".
- Pleiades means "The Congregation of the Judge."
- Alcyone means "The Centre" showing that the central truth of all prophecy is that Christ is coming to rule the earth.
- Betelgeuse, the brightest star in Orion, means "The Coming of the Branch". See Jeremiah 23:5,6; 33:15,16; Zechariah 3:8; 6:12,13 which speak of Christ as the BRANCH coming to rule, judge and build the Millennial temple.

10. GEMINI (The Twins) represent **Jesus Christ** as the **God/Man** coming to rule the earth with His **Bride** the Church (Ephesians 5:25-33). We see the twin roles of Christ as follows.

- His twofold work: suffering Saviour and Coming Prince of Glory.
- His twofold nature: fully God and fully man.
- His twofold comings: humiliation and future glory.
- The heavenly Bridegroom with His Bride, the Church.

Gemini is represented by two human figures, a man and a woman walking united in fellowship, at rest and in peace after victory has been won. This clearly tells us how Christ and His bride the church will be united in peaceful fellowship during Christ's 1000 year reign on earth. These twins are named after two bright stars, "Castor and Pollux" in Latin, and "Apollo and Hercules" in Greek.

(Paul was shipwrecked in a ship called "Castor and Pollux" in Acts 28:11).

- Castor or Apollo means "Ruler or Judge".
- Pollux or Hercules means "He who comes to labour or suffer".

Hence Gemini shows Christ coming in His twin roles of suffering Saviour and ruling King of Kings, as God and man, to rule with His Bride, the Church. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour.." (Acts 5:31).

11. CANCER (The Crab) means "**Christ's redeemed people held safe and secure**". Cancer comes from the Latin word "to hold or encircle". As the crab holds tightly with its large claws, so this sign tells us of the time when Christ will return to gather, protect and shelter God's people safely into "everlasting habitations." (Luke 16:9). The Egyptian name for this sign (Klaria) means "Cattlefolds". The Arab name (Alsartan) means "Who holds or binds".

That Cancer represents Christ returning to "hold fast and secure His redeemed people" is witnessed by the names of some of the stars in Cancer:

- a) Tegmine, the brightest star (in the tail), means "Holding".
- b) Acubine, in Hebrew, means "Sheltering or Hiding Place".
- c) Ma'alaph, in Arabic, means "Assembled thousands".
- d) Praesepe, the cluster in the middle, means "Multitude".

Abraham looked for a heavenly city where the redeemed are held safely forever.

"He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God". (Hebrews 11:10).

e) The constellation Argo in the sign of Cancer, means "A company of travellers". It pictures the safe arrival of God's people back to the land of blessing, where the "redeemed of the Lord shall return and come with singing unto Zion". (Isaiah 35:10; 51:11). It is an immense star group. Argo was a legendary ship which carried Jason and his argonauts to search for the Golden Fleece, which they recovered from the great serpent who guarded it. Jason is the Greek equivalent of Joshua or Jesus.

f) Canopus, the leading star in Argo, means "The possession of Him who comes".

g) Soheil means "The desired", reminding us of Psalm 107:30 "So he bringeth them unto their desired haven". Isaiah 60:4,5,9 describe the return of Jews to their own land.

Hence, Cancer means "The redeemed held safe" and Argo means "Travellers safely home".

12. LEO (The Lion crushing the head of the serpent).

As the Lion is king of the beasts, so Jesus Christ as the "**Lion of the tribe of Judah**" (Revelation 5:5) will return as "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (Rev. 19:16) to take over the earth and crush Satan's head by locking him in the pit for 1,000 years, then casting him into the Lake of Fire. As Cancer pictures the final rest and homecoming of the redeemed, so Leo shows the final end of the enemy. That Leo shows Christ coming as the exalted King to rule earth is witnessed by some stars names in Leo:

- a) Regulus, the first magnitude star, means "Treading underfoot".
- b) Denebola, the next brightest star, means "The Judge who comes".
- c) Algibha, (in the mane) means "The exaltation".
- d) Zozma, in the hindquarter, means "Shining forth".
- e) Minchar Al Asad (Arabic), the star in his head, means "The tearing of the Lion".
- f) Aldafera (Arabic), means "The enemy put down".

All these names consistently bear witness of Christ who is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, who is now exalted and will soon rise up for judgment.

Three constellations in the sign of Leo complete the gospel in the stars, which are:

- a) Hydra, the old serpent destroyed (Rev. 12:9).
- b) Crater, the cup of Divine wrath poured out upon him (Rev. 16).
- c) Corvus, the bird of prey devouring him (Rev. 19:17-21). The Hebrew name for this sign is Arie, which means "The lion hunting down his prey". The Lion's foot is over the head of

Hydra the great serpent about to crush it. Jacob, on his death bed spoke of Judah as: "Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey my son, thou art gone up..." (Genesis 49:8,9). Christ will destroy Satan, the old serpent, all his seed, and all his works. The Hydra constellation is immense and is beneath Cancer, Leo and Virgo. Some stars in the Hydra constellation are:

- a) Al Phard (Arabic) meaning "The separated, put away".
- b) Al Drian, meaning "The abhorred".
- c) Minchar al Sugia, meaning "The piercing of the deceiver".

The PERSON of the Redeemer.

1. Manhood Christ would assume. (Virgo = The virgin born Saviour).
2. The Price he would pay. (Libra = The Blood of Christ pays the penalty of our sin and balances the scales of God's justice).
3. The Battle He would fight. (Scorpio = The Scorpion seeking to wound, but itself crushed. Satan wounding Christ).
4. The Victory He would win. (Sagittarius (The Archer) = The victory of Christ over Satan). "Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies". (Psalm 45:5). The conquering Archer goes on in his battle to completely overthrow Satan.

Notice the more complete picture given by the Decans (or constellations) in each of the 12 signs:

BOOK 1: Christ's First Coming: 'The Sufferings of Christ'

1. Chapter 1: VIRGO: The Promised Seed of the Woman. (Genesis 3:15).

The Redeemer would be born of a virgin.

- i) Coma (The woman & child = the desired. Christ, the 'Desire of all nations shall come.' (Haggai 2:7)
- ii) Centaurus (The Centaur with two natures, spearing a victim) = the Despised Sufferer. Christ would suffer, 'He is despised and rejected of men.' (Isaiah 53:3).
- iii) Bootes (A man walking quickly with a spear in his right hand, and a sickle in his left) = The Coming One will judge the earth. 'For he cometh to judge the earth'. (Psalm 96:13).

2. Chapter 2: LIBRA (the Scales): Christ's Payment for our sins.

The price of mans' sins is paid by Christ's sacrifice.

- i) Crux (The Cross endured) = The Southern Cross. 'It is finished.' (John 19:30).
- ii) Victima (The Victim slain) = 'Christ became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross' Phil 2:8
- iii) Corona (The Crown bestowed) = 'Jesus..for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour.' (Hebrews 2:9).

3. Chapter 3: SCORPIO (The Scorpion): Christ's Conflict.

(Psalm 91:13)

The Scorpion seeking to wound Christ, but itself trodden underfoot. 'Thou shalt tread upon the adder.'

- i) Serpens (The serpent struggling with Christ for dominion).
- ii) Ophiuchus (The man grasping the serpent).
- iii) Hercules (The mighty vanquisher seeming to sink in the conflict, but holding aloft the tokens of victory, with his foot on the dragon's head). (Romans 16:20).

4. Chapter 4: SAGITTARIUS (The Archer): Christ's Triumph.

The two-natured conqueror triumphing.

'O most mighty ... thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies'. (Psalm 45:3-5).

- i) Lyra (The Harp) = Praise prepared for the Conqueror. 'Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion'. (Psalm 65:1; 33:2).

- ii) Ara (The Altar) = Consuming fire prepared for His enemies. 'Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' (Matthew 25:41).
- iii) Draco (The Dragon) = The Old Serpent, the Devil cast down from heaven. (Revelation 12:7-10).

BOOK 2: The Redeemer's People: The Blessings of Salvation.

5. Chapter 1: CAPRICORN (The Fish-Goat, A dying Goat with a fish's tail). (Leviticus 10:16:17).

Christ's sacrificial death brings life to many.

- i) Sagitta (The Arrow of God's justice piercing the sin-bearer) 'Thine arrows stick fast in me' Psa 38:2
- ii) Aquila (The pierced falling Eagle). Christ as a Dying Eagle. 'I bare you on eagles' wings and brought you unto myself'. (Exodus 19:4). 'As an eagle...beareth them on her wings, so the LORD alone did lead them.' (Deut. 32:11,12). The faces of the cherubim were a man, lion, ox, eagle. (Ezekiel 1:10).
- iii) Dolphinus (Dolphin springing out of the water). Christ rose from the dead. The dead Redeemer rising again, full of life, head up. In death Christ could say, 'All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me'. (Psalm 42:7). 'He was raised again for our justification.' (Romans 4:25).

6. Chapter 2: AQUARIUS (The water-pourer is Christ giving living water of eternal life and blessings of salvation to His redeemed people). **Salvation's full blessings**. 'The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.' (John 4:14).

- i) Piscis Australis (Open mouthed Fish that is drinking water from Aquarius, pictures His people receiving Christ's endless stream of blessings). 'Whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.' (John 4:14).
- ii) Pegasus (The Winged Horse) is the bringer of Christ's salvation to a weary world (Zechariah 1:8-10) and Christ returning with power and great glory (Revelation 19:11-16). 'Peg' means 'chief', 'sus' means 'a swiftly coming horse'. It means 'the chief, coming again in great victory and blessing'. 'Surely I come quickly.' (Revelation 22:20).
- iii) Cygnus (Flying Swan) teaches that Christ will return in beauty and glory. 'They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory'. (Matthew 24:30).
'He shall come to be glorified in His saints and admired in all them that believe.' (II Thessalonians 1:10).

7. Chapter 3: PISCES (Two fish bound at the tails to the neck of the sea monster).

Blessings delayed.

- i) The Band. The groanings of Creation and God's people still bound in a sinful world until Christ returns. (Romans 8:18-23).
- ii) Andromeda (The Chained) is a woman with chains on her hands and feet, bound securely in misery and distress. This pictures Israel bound in suffering during the church age, along with the church persecuted and suffering in a sinful world.
- iii) Cepheus (The Deliverer coming to Rule). Cepheus is a king sitting on a throne near Cassiopea his wife. He is the Deliverer for whom the chained woman, Andromeda waits. He is the Coming King who shall unloose the chains that bind them freeing them to inherit all the blessings awaiting them.

8. Chapter 4: ARIES (The Lamb). **Blessing fully realised**. Christ is the Lamb of God, by whose sacrifice takes away sin, and will rule on earth as King of Kings. (John 1:29).

- i) Cassiopeia (The Enthroned Woman, freed and making herself ready for presentation to marry her Redeemer). Andromeda was chained and miserable. Cassiopeia is free and happy. They are a before and after presentation of the same person. The Church and Israel are now suffering, but later will be free and rejoicing. Christ will present it to Himself 'a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish'. (Ephesians 5:27).
- ii) Cetus (The Sea Monster). Satan subdued and bound. Cetus is the Leviathan (Job 41:1-2; 9-10) and Dragon (Revelation 20:1-3). 'In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.' (Isaiah 27:1). The Lamb is above the head of Cetus.
- iii) Perseus (The Strong Soldier delivering the Redeemed). Perseus has a helmet on his head, a sword in his right hand, and the head of his enemy in his left hand. Christ releases His people from captivity. Perseus means 'the Breaker'. Micah prophesies that God's flock shall be gathered when 'the breaker is come up before them'. (Micah 2:12,13).

BOOK 3: Christ's Second Coming: The Reigning Redeemer Delivering us from the Presence of Sin.

9. TAURUS (The Bull). **Christ the Great Judge Coming in power and glory**. This ferocious, large, rushing bull with long, sharp horns is mentioned as the unicorn or rimu in Job 39:9,10; Numbers 23:22; Deuteronomy 33:17; Isaiah 34:2-8). Taurus represents the Coming Judge and Coming Judgment (II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 6:12-17).

- i) Orion (A Mighty Hunter with a club in his right hand, & a freshly killed lion skin in his left hand). The Prince of Glory. The Orion constellation is mentioned in Job 9:9; 38:31; Amos 5:8. The brightest stars in Orion are Betelgeuse (The Coming of the Branch) and Rigel (The Foot that Crushes).
Orion means 'He who was slain is coming as the Prince of Light and Glory to judge the world'.
'Arise, shine; for thy light is come ... Gentiles shall come to thy light ...' (Isaiah 60:1-3).
- ii) Eridanus (The River of Fire). The Wrath of God poured on His enemies. From the raised foot of Orion flows a river of fire toward Cetus the sea monster. It teaches that the wicked will be cast into the Lake of Fire. 'A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him.' (Daniel 7:10);
'The LORD cometh from far, burning with his anger,...his tongue is as a devouring fire.' (Malachi 3:2);
'His fury is poured out like fire' (Nahum 1:6); 'he is like a refiner's fire.' (Malachi 3:2).
- iii) Auriga (The Shepherd). The Protection of the Redeemed in the Day of Wrath. Taurus shows the Power of His Coming. Orion shows the splendour of His Coming. Eridanus shows the fiery judgment of His Coming. Auriga promises protection for God's people. The Shepherd Auriga sits in calm grace above the rushing wild bull. Auriga holds a mother goat who has just given birth to a pair of kids in her lap, all being safe and protected in the arms of the shepherd. Auriga is Christ as the Chief Shepherd who will keep His people safe in the day of His coming in power and wrath. (I Peter 5:4). 'He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young...and meted out the heaven with the span.' (Isaiah 40:11,12).

10. GEMINI: (The Twins). **Christ married to the Church.** (Revelation 19:7-9).

i) **Lepus** (The Enemy). Christ treads Satan underfoot as a snake.

ii) **Canis Major** (The Dog) or **Sirius** (The Prince). Christ as the 'Prince of Peace' (Isaiah 9:6).

Coming Prince of Glory. Sirius is the brightest star only 9 light years away. The feminine form of Sirius is Sarah meaning Princess.

iii) **Canis Minor** (His princely following). 'The armies of heaven follow Him on white horses' (Rev 19:14)

11. CANCER: (The Crab). **Christ's Possessions held secure.** God's people sheltered safely. (I Th 4:16-18)

i) **Ursa Minor** (The Sheepfold). The **Stronghold of the Saved.** (Little Dipper). Not a bear, but a collection of domestic animals. Polaris is here. Christ transfers His church to heaven, while yet unmanifested to the rest of the world. (I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

ii) **Ursa Major** (The Assembled Flock). **Christ will regather Israel to regain her land.** 'The house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.' (Obadiah 17-19). This Constellation is called Arcturus in Job 9:9; 38:32. 'Canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons.' 'He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.' (Jeremiah 31:10; Ezekiel 34:11-16).

iii) **Argo** (The Ship in Harbour). **Travellers Safely Home.** It prophesies the safe arrival of God's people back to the land of blessing. 'So be bringeth them unto their desired haven'. (Psalm 107:30). 'The redeemed of the LORD shall return and come with singing unto Zion.' (Isaiah 51:11; 60:8,9).

12. LEO (The Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah). **Triumphal Return of Christ.** Leo is a strong lion killing and tearing his prey. Leo is treading underfoot the great serpent Hydra. Leo is the fourth symbol of Christ crushing the head of his enemy (Scorpio, Sagittarius, Taurus, Leo). Cancer shows the final rest and homecoming of the redeemed. Leo shows the final end of the enemy. The Old Hebrews called this sign 'Arieh' meaning a lion hunting down its prey. 'The lion did tear in pieces' (Nahum 2:12; II Samuel 17:10). See Revelation 5:5; Genesis 49:8,9; Numbers 24:8,9; Isaiah 42:13.

'The Lion of the Tribe of Judah ... hath prevailed.' (Revelation 5:5).

i) **Hydra** (The Serpent). **The Old Serpent Destroyed.** Hydra is the largest constellation in the sky, stretching 100 degrees across the sky below the constellations of Cancer, Leo and Virgo.

Hydra (The Abhorred) depicts Satan through whom evil entered the world and by whom sin multiplied. The Great Lion of Judah will cast out from heaven and earth that old serpent the devil to destroy him in the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:10).

ii) **Crater** (The Cup). **God's Wrath poured on the Serpent.** This cup of God's indignation (Rev. 14:10) lies below the hind feet of Leo and rests on Hydra the snake. This cup of God's wrath will be poured on:

- unbelievers (II Thessalonians 1:7-9), - all the wicked of the earth (Psalm 75:8; 11:6),
- Antichrist's armies (Zechariah 12:2,3), - Beast worshippers (Revelation 14:10),
- Mystery Babylon (Revelation 16:19; 17:4; 18:6),
- Devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 10:10).

iii) **Corvus** (The Raven). **Devouring the Old Serpent.** Ravens are powerful scavenger birds of prey who tear flesh from dead animals. The enemy of God and men is finally defeated, torn to pieces and devoured. Corvus is clutching the serpent Hydra with his claws and tearing his flesh with his beak. An angel will stand in the sun, calling to all the fowls and birds of prey to come and feast themselves on the flesh of the enemy (Revelation 19:17,18).

Stars in Corvus are Algoreb (Raven), Minchar Algoreb means 'the raven tearing to pieces', and Minchar Alsugia means 'the Deceiver torn to pieces.'

Conclusion: Here the prophetic story written in the sky so long ago comes to a close. The Redeemer has triumphed, the redeemed are safely home, and the enemy is destroyed. While the fuller, clearer and more explicit revelation of the written Word is available to all today, making the stellar revelation no longer necessary, we can praise God for Mazzaroth as a means of glorifying Christ. 'The heavens declare the glory of God;...night unto night showeth knowledge (v.2). There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard (v.3). ..Which is as a bridegroom (Christ) coming out of His chamber (Heaven), and rejoiceth as a strong man (Christ) to run a race (of redeeming mankind).(v.5). His going forth is from the end of heaven, and his circuit (zodiac) unto the ends of it (v.6).' (Psalm 19:1-6).

261. RICHES FROM THE RENT

Bible Reading: Judges 14:1-9-20.

Aim: To show how God can bring great riches out of rent things.

Introduction: Judges 14:5-8 tells us about Samson's exploits when he met a lion. The Holy Spirit came on him and he rent the lion as one would rend a kid (baby goat) (14:6). Later, on the way back, Samson found that bees had built a beehive in the rent lion's carcass with enough honey in the carcass to satisfy his hunger. He scooped out the honey and brought it to his parents in both hands, for them to eat, but did not tell them that it came from a dead lion's carcass. (This violated his Nazarite vow not to touch dead corpses). I want to preach on how God has brought great riches out of rent things. "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." Judges 14:14.

Lesson: We have some great riches that have come from that which was rent. On six main occasions a rent brought forth something sweet and wonderful.

1. The **High Priest's Garment** was rent, and out of this came a **New Advocate**. Matthew 26:63-65-68.

"The High Priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy,..." v.65. This act of the High Priest rending his clothes was highly illegal, and was highly offensive to God. When Caiaphas rent his garments that day, he not only disqualified himself from being the High Priest, but this act resulted in God setting aside the entire levitical priesthood, and replacing it with the Melchisedec Priesthood of Jesus Christ.

"He that is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes." Leviticus 21:10

"Thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all of blue. (v.32). And there shall be a hole in the top of it. In the midst thereof: it shall have a binding of woven work round about the hole of it, as it were the hole of an habergeon, that it be not rent." Exodus 28:32,31.

Pomegranates (v.33) = fruitfulness of God's High Priest;

Bells of gold = testimony of God's High Priest.

Habergeon = a coat of steel meshing to protect the neck and shoulders, but later reaching to the thighs and knees, to protect a soldier from being cut with a sword. Hence, the High Priest's garment had a binding of woven work around the neck and chest that made it difficult to tear (rend).

When Caiaphas rent this garment he must have ripped it very intensely, in great anger and rage. The Levitical priesthood could not function without several elements. (The Temple, garments, brazen altar, lambs, bullocks, High Priest etc). When Caiaphas the High Priest rent his garments, he violated his priesthood, disqualified himself and was set aside by God.

Question: So what riches came out? **Answer:** Another High Priest who was not disqualified.

"Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top without. v.24. They said therefore among themselves, Let US NOT REND IT, but cast lots for it." John 19:23,24.

Jesus had 5 garments:

1. Head-gear (Sudar) wound into a turban.
2. Sandals.

3. Girdle = long embroidered linen sash, wound around the middle of the body several times. Ex 28:39

4. Undergarment = undertunic or long shirt of fine linen seamlessly woven with a pattern, sleeves and a tie around the neck. This was necessary for anyone publicly reading scriptures in the synagogue.

5. Outer garment (Tallith) = short, square, outer, sleeveless coat with fringes.

Some say that, "Had the soldiers ripped apart the Lord's seamless robe, this would have disqualified Him as our High Priest."

Hebrews 5:9,10 "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec." Look at Jesus in Revelation 1:13, "And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle." We see Jesus with a golden girdle (signifying His Kingship) around his chest, telling us that His work is complete. (The girdle was positioned around the waist to do a day's work. After the day's work was done he moved his girdle to around his paps (chest)). Jesus has finished His atoning work on the cross and is now our ADVOCATE with the Father (1 John 2:1,2). "If any man sin, we have an advocate.."

2. The **Side** and **Body of Jesus** was Rent (pierced) and out of this came forth a **New Atonement**.

"One of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." John 19:34

Jesus' SIDE was Rent. Blood came out first, to show that we are saved by the blood of Christ, not by water baptism. Five wounds of Jesus were: Head, hands, feet, back and side. Each of these were rent.

What compassion, what love, that He would bleed and die for you and me.

If Baptismal regeneration were true and water really did wash away sin, they'd need a sin filter in the baptism pool. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed and He sweat great drops of blood.

In the Old Testament, sins were pushed back, just like being swept under the carpet.

The Atonement of Jesus is much better than the Atonement of the Old Testament.

The theme of Hebrews is that God has given us better things. (Better than angels...).

Hebrews 9:12. "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."

Question: Have you applied Jesus Christ's precious blood to cleanse you from your sins?

"We also joy in God through our LJC by whom we have now received the atonement." (Romans 5:11).

"When God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." (Romans 3:25).

3. The **Veil** in the Temple was Rent, and it brought forth a **New Access**. (Luke 23:45).

"The sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst." Luke 23:45.

a. What was the purpose of the veil? (Exodus 26:31-33).

i) It served to stop anyone reaching the Ark of the Covenant.

ii) It made a room for the Holy Place (Candlestick, Table of Shewbread, Altar of Incense).

Holy of Holies had Ark of Covenant, 10 Commandments, Aaron's Rod, Manna Pot, Mercy Seat.

b. Why was the Veil Rent? To make a new way of access to all people.

Three teams of oxen could not tear the veil. The priests must have tried to sew and mend the veil. This may explain why many of the priests believed (Acts 6:7).

- c. There is no one today who can stop you having full access to God's Throne. Hebrews 10:19,20. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh."

a) Court of Gentiles. Gentiles & unclean people could only go this far. Market & money changers.

b) Court of women entered through the Beautiful Gate. Israelite ladies only went this far. Treasury.

c) Upper Court was divided into two parts: Court of Israel (Jewish men) and Court of the Priests.

d) The Sanctuary was on a higher terrace than the Court of the Priests. (12 steps higher). Only Levites could go there. A two leaved gate opened to it, being divided into 2 parts, The Holy Place with the candlestick (South), Table of Shewbread (North), and Altar of Incense. A heavy double veil concealed the entrance to the Most Holy Place (or Holy of Holies).

e) Most Holy Place. Only the High Priest, on the Day of Atonement could go into Holy of Holies.

When Jesus Christ died, He took away the guards, so all could enter the Most Holy Place. Heb4:16

4. The Rocks were Rent, and brought forth a New Accommodation. (Matthew 27:51-53). Rocks were rent and graves were opened and many bodies of OT saints arose after Christ's resurrection and walked the streets of Jerusalem. Jesus went down and opened the prison house of paradise where OT saints were and delivered them to the Father in Heaven. (Ephesians 4:8-11).

Q: What kind of accommodation do we now have? "We have a building of God." 2 Cor. 5:1-8.

5. The Tomb was Rent and it brought forth a New Assurance. (Matthew 28:2-7). A new assurance in:

1. Our preaching message of resurrection reality. 1 Cor. 15:14-20. "Now is Christ risen from the dead."
2. Our minds = mental confidence. "He was seen of above 500 brethren at once;" (1 Cor. 15:6).

Firstfruit of barley harvest was given to God (v.23). Every sermon in Acts included the Resurrection.

6. The Eastern sky will be Rent and will bring forth a New Age of Christ's Reign on earth. Matt. 24:27

Satan will be bound, the curse will be removed, Jesus Christ will reign in peace for 1000 years. Rev20.

Mt of Olives will be rent (Zech. 14:4); the East Gate will be opened (Ezekiel 44:1-2). A new river will flow to heal the Dead Sea (Ezekiel 47:1-12). Christ will reign as King of Kings. All will worship Him.

262. JEWISH MARRIAGE CUSTOMS SHOW THE EVENTS OF CHRIST'S RETURN

Bible Reading: Revelation 19:7-9.

Aim: To increase our, love, readiness and understanding of Christ's return.

Introduction: Bible marriage customs centre in the two events of betrothal and wedding. The relationship between husband and wife, pictures the relationship between God and His people, Israel (Hosea 1-3), and between Christ and His church (Ephesians 5:22-33).

The following stages in a Jewish marriage teach the main events surrounding our salvation by Jesus Christ as our heavenly bridegroom and His Second Coming.

1. The Negotiation Stage

A price had to be paid by the bridegroom and accepted by the bride. As Rebekah was asked about Isaac, "wilt thou go with this man?" and she said, "I will go", so every sinner must answer the question if he wants Jesus Christ to be His Saviour.

As Jesus Christ shed His precious blood to pay for our sins and redeem us, so we must accept that price He paid to be saved. "Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your Spirit, which are God's." (1 Corinthians 6:19,20).

"Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, ...but with the precious blood of Christ..." (1 Peter 1:18,19).

Q: Have you accepted the price of Christ's shed blood to pay for your sins to be your Saviour?

Some gifts the Groom's father has given us that Jewish brides were given are:

a) Servants: "They sent away Rebekah and her nurse and Abraham's servant." (Genesis 24:59). God the Father gives us angels as "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation." (Hebrews 1:14).

b) Clothes: "The servants brought forth...raiment, and gave them to Rebekah." (Genesis 24:53). As Abraham's servant gave Rebekah clothing, so God the Father has given believers clothing of Christ's righteousness.

"His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white. For the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints."

(Revelation 19:7,8).

"He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." (Isaiah 61:10). Jewels represent people won to Christ. (Malachi 3:17).

The Bride wore embroidered garments (Psalm 45:13,14).

c) Spiritual gifts: "He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers." (Ephesians 4:11,12).

d) Spiritual gifts: "He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers." (Ephesians 4:11,12).

2. The Betrothal Stage

"Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together." (Matthew 1:18).

God's love and faithfulness to believers are pictured as a betrothal.

"I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, in judgment, in lovingkindness, in mercies, and in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord." (Hosea 2:19,20). See Ephesians

5:23,24,27,28,30,32.

The espoused bride would wear a veil that said to this world, "I'm not my own, I've been bought with a price." God wants us to wear the veil of separation so people know we belong to Christ, and not to the world. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world..." (1 John 2:15-17).

3. The Preparation Stage

The groom would go home to prepare for the wedding and to make everything ready. He could not return for his bride until his father said, "go get your bride." So Jesus Christ is preparing a place in heaven for His Bride the church. "In my Father's house are many mansions...I go to prepare a place for you. 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." (John 14:2,3).

4. The Snatching away of the Bride. When all things were ready, the groom would come in the night to the bride's place. Before he entered the room, he would call out "Behold, the bridegroom cometh." (Matthew 25:6). He could not take his bride unannounced. So it will be at Christ's return from heaven for His Bride the church. There will be "a shout, the voice of the archangel and the trumpet 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).
Q: Are you ready for Christ's return? Would you be left behind to enter the 7 year tribulation?

Would you be ashamed to face Christ because of some sins in your life? Get right with God today. Christ will come one day, catch away His bride from this wicked earth, and bring her into the wedding chamber of heaven. This was known as the wedding "procession" where the groom (Christ) and His friends (OT saints as in John 3:29) went with the bride (NT church) to the groom's house, with singing, for the marriage supper. "She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions (OT Jews) that follow her shall be brought unto thee with gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace (heaven)." (Psalm 45:14,15).

5. The Examination Stage (The Judgment Seat of Christ)

The groom would remove his bride's veil to see if she really was the bride he had sacrificed for. (Jacob got the wrong wife Leah when he thought he had married Rachel). So, one day, Christ will remove the veil from each believer at the Judgment seat of Christ and "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day (JSOC) shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." (1 Corinthians 3:13-15). "For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ) that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done whether it be good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10). "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever." (Daniel 12:3).

Q: How will you feel when your life's work for Christ is examined & made manifest for all to see?

Will you receive a reward, or will you suffer loss by all your useless activities being burned up.

6. The Consummation stage lasting 7 days. While earth is enduring the horrors of the 7 year Tribulation, Christ and His Bride the Church will be enjoying the greatest marriage of all time.

Parents and friends would first bless the couple and wish them well (Genesis 24:60; Ruth 4:11).

The father of the bride drew up a written marriage contract, called the "Ketuba" in the Mishnah. The bridechamber was prepared. The parents escorted the bride and groom to this room (Genesis 29:23). "Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber." (Psalm 19:5).

Before coming together, prayer was offered by husband and wife.

7. The Marriage Feast (Revelation 19:7-9)

The Marriage Feast continued for 7 days as in Genesis 29:27:

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready (v.7). Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the lamb." (Revelation 19:7-9). These celebrations were times of rejoicing and music ("gladness and rejoicing" Psalm 45:15). All believers will be present at this marriage feast.

Contrast this happy marriage feast of Christ with the unholy feast of antichrist's armies being eaten by birds (Rev. 19:17-19), and the antichrist burning his whore and eating her flesh. (Rev. 17:16).

Q: Will you be at the happy marriage supper of the Lamb?

8. Setting up House Stage.

We will do this with Jesus when we return to earth with Him. "The LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee". (Zechariah 14:5). The LORD shall be king over all the earth (Zech. 14:9). We shall return with Christ to earth which will be our home for 1000 years of peace and happiness, which we will set up for God's glory. This 1000 year rule of Christ will be the greatest time of joy, peace and prosperity the world has ever known. To some Jesus will say:

"because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities." (Luke 19:17).

"And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." (Rev. 5:10). Q: Are you proving yourself faithful to Christ now? Let us live for Christ now so He will say to us "Well done thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou unto the joy of thy Lord." (Matthew 25:21).

263. ECCLESIASTES: Solomon's Search for Meaning in Life.

Challenge: What are you living for? Yourself and pleasure, or for Christ and eternity.

Bible Reading: Ecclesiastes 2; 1 Kings 10:1-13.

Aim: All human endeavours apart from God lack ultimate value. Life should be lived in the fear of God, as a gift from His hand.

Introduction: Ecclesiastes means the Preacher, or one who calls an assembly.

Ecclesiastes is a divine commentary on Christ's words: "whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again." (John 4:13).

Ecclesiastes is the autobiography of Solomon when he had backslidden away from God and tried various methods to find happiness and satisfaction. Three books written by Solomon were:

- The Song of Solomon was written in the glory of Solomon's first love.
- Proverbs was written at the height of Solomon's glory and wisdom.
- Ecclesiastes was written later on in Solomon's life as testimony of his genuine repentance.

The key word "Vanity" occurs 37 times. The phrase "under the sun" (apart from God) occurs 29 times.

The theme of Ecclesiastes is announced at the beginning (1:2),

"Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, all is vanity" (12:8). See also 1:14;

2:1,11,15,17,19,21,23,26; 3:19; 4:4,8,16; 5:10; 6:2,9,11; 7:6; 8:10,14; 9:9; 11:8,10; 12:8.

Without God, everything in life is vanity, meaningless and without real value. This includes toil (1:14; 2:11,17; 4:4,7,8), wisdom (2:15), wealth (5:10; 6:2), pleasure (2:1,2), youth (11:10), life (6:12; 7:15).

Question: Why did Solomon pass this verdict on man's toil?

Answer: Because we always risk losing the fruit of our labour by:

- oppression or injustice (5:8,9),
- unpredictable misfortune (5:14),
- the judgment of God (5:6),
- death, leaving our wealth to others (2:18),
- loss of health and the ability to enjoy it,
- a little sin (9:18),
- a little folly (10:1),
- improper timing (10:11; 3:1-8),
- lack of proper appreciation (9:15).

Ecclesiastes is a critique of modern secular humanism (devotion to human interests and ignoring divine interests). Though life is short, inequitable and difficult, we should not despair, but live life by completely trusting God. Solomon, the author, observed that no man seems satisfied, regardless of what he has seen, heard or achieved (1:8).

Question: Could a wise healthy man, by searching, find peace and purpose?

Answer: Solomon tried to find purpose by giving himself to:

1. Human Wisdom and Knowledge (1:16,17).

Solomon had more ability than any man (except Christ) to correctly apply knowledge, but he sadly concluded, "for in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." (1:18). Why? Because the more we know of mankind, the less likely we

are to trust them or admire them. The more man knows of science, the more man can apply knowledge to destruction and moral evils, such as nuclear bombs, weapons of mass destruction, using the lie of evolution to turn people away from God as our Creator, and many others.

2. Pleasure, Laughter, Alcohol (2:1-3).

Since knowledge has failed, Solomon turns to humour, entertainment, pleasure, and alcohol. Solomon concluded that these are futile and meaningless because they accomplish little or nothing. But we know that leading people to Christ (Daniel 12:3), teaching God's Word, training preachers and planting churches lays up much treasure in heaven that can never be lost. "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall find it". (Matthew 16:24-27,25).

3. Great Building Projects (2:4).

"I made me great works; I builded me houses". Solomon now attempts to plug that hole in his soul by a great public building program.

He built palaces, aqueducts, pools, Solomon's temple, store cities, defenced cities, chariot cities

(2 Chronicles 8:1-7), house of the forest of Lebanon (1 Kings 7:1-7), Pharaoh's daughter's house

(1 Kings 7:8-12). The court comedians gave way to great architects. But all too soon the building campaign wears thin and is quietly dropped.

4. Beautifully Landscaped Gardens and Parks (2:4-6).

"I planted vineyards: I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits: I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees." (2:4-6). How well qualified was Solomon to build gardens, orchards, and vineyards may be understood when we recall his knowledge of botany, and how he wrote about vegetables, plants and trees, from the cedar to the hyssop, of rare flowers, tropical plants and water gardens. "He spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall." (1 Kings 4:33). His interest extended to natural science. "He spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes". (1 Kings 4:33). But before long he lost interest in landscaping and moved on to something else.

5. Personal Indulgences and Luxuries (2:7-11).

"I got me servants and maidens (2:7), Whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy." (2:10).

Solomon had servants to wait on his every wish. He had everything he saw or wanted that gave him pleasure. How many people today think that this is the secret to happiness? See 2 Chronicles 9:3,4. But none could serve up his wish for inward peace and purpose.

"All was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun". (2:11).

6. Cattle Breeding (2:7).

"I had great possession of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me". (2:7).

Have you ever wanted to be a farmer owning a big cattle property? Solomon had great herds of cattle, sheep, oxen, goats and other animals grazing on green pastures. But while the skins and meats of these animals clothed and fed the outer man, the inner man remained naked and starving.

7. **Great Wealth (2:8).**

"I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces." (2:8).

Solomon received 666 talents of gold each year, as well as gold from the kings of Arabia. He made 200 targets of gold and 300 shields of gold. His throne of ivory was overlaid with pure gold. All his drinking vessels were of gold. (2 Chronicles 9:13-20). Every 3 years his ships brought gold, silver, apes and peacocks from beyond Tarshish (Spain), possibly from Africa or America. (v.21). "King Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom." (9:22). He made silver in Jerusalem as stones (9:27). He had 1400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen (9:25). Yet Solomon found that money cannot buy happiness and inner peace.

8. **Music (2:8).**

"I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts." (2:8).

How many people today seek peace in rock music, opera, classical music, or rap music? But the missing chord of contentment was not to be found in music, however beautiful the song or talented the singers and musicians.

9. **Literature (1 Kings 4:32).**

"He spake 3000 proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five."

Many people today seek refuge in books of fiction, mystery, or non fiction. Some people become movie addicts. Yet this is often an escape into an unreal world of fantasy that passes away with the daily workload. Writing books and reading books never fully satisfy the deepest needs of man.

10. **Military Power (1 Kings 4:26).**

"Solomon had 40,000 stalls of horses for his chariots, and 12,000 horsemen." (1 Kings 4:26).

"King Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red Sea and fetched from Ophir 420 talents of gold". (1 Kings 9:26).

"Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river (Euphrates) unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt." (1 Kings 4:21).

"He had peace on all sides around him. And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree." (1 Kings 4:24,25).

Although Solomon's military brought national peace and security, it could not bring him internal peace.

11. **International Reputation (1 Kings 10:1-13, v. 6,7).**

Solomon had great international prestige, majesty and respect for his wisdom and wealth.

"And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart." (1 Kings 10:24). We all like our peers to approve and admire us, but Solomon was

greatly honoured by all people of his time. He satisfied the Queen of Sheba's hard questions, yet Solomon still said "I hated life; all is vanity and vexation of spirit".

(Ecclesiastes 2:17). Solomon knew that all his honour would leave him after his death. His foolish son Rehoboam destroyed Solomon's life work and national reputation.

12. **Sex (1 Kings 11:1-9).**

"King Solomon loved many strange women (v.1). He had 700 wives, princesses and 300 concubines: and his wives turned away his heart after other gods (11:3,4),.....the LORD was angry with Solomon." (1 Kings 11:9). Not even 1000 women could satisfy Solomon's inner spiritual needs in his backslidden state. These wives introduced idol worship into Israel which led to the destruction and captivity of the nation in 722 BC and 606 BC.

Conclusion: After Solomon returns home (4:1) from his study and search for meaning, he concludes that life apart from God is:

a) utterly futile and vain (2:11),

b) full of discontent and envying others (4:4),

c) uncertain dangers, tragedies and death (9:11,12),

d) without purpose except to eat, drink and be merry (8:15),

e) full of unsolvable problems (1:15),

f) injustice (7:15).

Even with God life is a mystery, but apart from God, life becomes a horrible nightmare.

Therefore, it is best if man:

a) Finds God early in life (12:1,2).

b) Fears God and keeps His commandments throughout his life (12:13,14).

Old age is described as:

i) The keepers of the house shall tremble = arms and hands grow weak and shaky (v.3).

ii) Strong men shall bow themselves = legs grow bent and feeble.

iii) Grinders cease because they are few = teeth become fewer.

iv) Those that look out the windows be darkened = eyesight beginning to fail (12:3).

v) Doors shall be shut in the streets = lips shutting due to loss of teeth (12:4).

vi) Sound of the grinding is low = little noise is now made in eating because teeth are lost.

vii) He shall rise up at the voice of a bird = old folk rise early because of their inability to sleep (12:4).

viii) All the daughters of music shall be brought low = he can no longer carry a tune anymore.

ix) When they shall be afraid of that which is high = being so feeble, they are afraid to ascend steps without help.

x) Fears shall be in the way = fear to walk outside lest they meet some danger they can't escape.

xi) Almond tree shall flourish = hair turns grey and white as almond blossoms are white.

xii) Grasshopper shall be a burden = little things annoy him.

xiii) Desire shall fail = diminished appetites for food and sex.

xiv) Man goeth to his long home = the grave.

After the external evidences of old age, we now see what occurs in the body to produce death (v.5).

xv) Silver cord be loosed = the spinal cord and nervous system are loosed at death (v.6).

xvi) Golden bowl be broken = the brain in the skull stops functioning.

xvii) Pitcher be broken at the fountain = lungs stops breathing.

xviii) Wheel broken at the cistern = heart stops beating.

xix) Dust returns to the earth = body decays to dust.

xx) Spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

264. JESUS CHRIST'S 7 SAYINGS ON THE CHRIST

Bible Reading: Luke 23:27-49.

Aim: To see Jesus Christ's great sacrifice and dying love for others.

Introduction: Jesus made 7 statements while on the cross. First, He thought of **Others**: those who crucified Him (Luke 23:34), the repentant thief (Luke 23:39-43), and His mother (John 19:25-27). The central (fourth) word concerned His relationship with His **Father** (Matt 27:45-49). His last 3 statements focused on **Himself**: His body (John 19:28-29), His soul (John 19:30; Isa. 53:10) & His Spirit (Luke 23:46). **Question:** What do we learn of the Father, Son, Holy Spirit and man from these 7 sayings?

1. **"Father forgive them for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34.**

Jesus Christ pleaded to stay the wrath of a righteous Father as He viewed His beloved Son being murdered by wicked and sinful men. Peter stated this later in Acts 3:14,15,17.

This fulfilled the prophecy "He made intercession for the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:12), being the Jews and Roman soldiers. The Romans were ignorant that Jesus was the Son of God and were just obeying their rulers' commands. The Jews knew Jesus was innocent and had evidence He was the Messiah, but did not know the effect their guilt would bring in judgment and calamities on their country. The Jews, not believing Jesus was their Messiah had no sense of His rank, majesty and dignity as the "Lord of glory". Paul stated this, "had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory". I Cor.2:8. The Jews did not fully understand the greatness of their sin of crucifying their God and Creator. Ignorance does not excuse a crime, but it diminishes a person's guilt. Jesus shows His compassion in imploring God to pardon His murderers. Christ urges their ignorance as a reason why they should be pardoned. God forgave Paul because He "did it ignorantly in unbelief" (I Timothy 1:13). God winked at (overlooked) the ignorance of Gentiles (Acts 17:30). Yet this is no excuse for those who reject Christ. Do we forgive others who wrong us? We learn from Christ's prayer that:

- i) We should pray most for our enemies when they are trying to hurt us.
- ii) We should pray that God would pardon them and give them better minds.
- iii) This shows the power and excellence of Christian belief, in teaching men to pray for their enemies forgiveness. Worldly men seek revenge. Christians bear persecutions & insults with patience & prayer.

2. **"Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Luke 23:42,43.**

The repentant thief believed Jesus was the Messiah He claimed to be and wanted to enter His Kingdom. It is likely that Jesus while on the cross, acquainted these two men with the nature of His kingdom. One malefactor railed on Him, becoming more hardened in guilt, while the other was repentant. Some may come to Christ on their deathbed. "Paradise" is a word of Persian origin, and means a garden of pleasure, filled with trees, shrubs, flowers and fountains. It was like a place of happiness attached to mansions and palaces of the rich. It was entered immediately after death. We learn from this that:

- i) The soul after death exists separately from the body. The soul is in paradise. The body is in the grave.
- ii) Immediately after death, righteous souls will be happy, secure and assured of a future resurrection.
- iii) This promise was made to only 1 thief, showing that the state of the righteous differs from the unsaved.

iv) It is the chief glory of paradise and heaven to see Jesus & be with Him. "I desire to depart." Phil.1:23. We learn 3 things about salvation here: i) Salvation is offered to anyone, anywhere, anytime.

ii) Salvation is by grace, through faith alone, and not by our works. It refutes the doctrines of
a) Sacramentalism (eg: Lord's Supper and confirmation for salvation);
b) Baptismal Regeneration; c) Purgatory; d) Universalism because only one thief was saved.

iii) Salvation will be rejected by some in spite of all that God does.

- a) We see 3 men here: - One was dying FOR sin (Christ).
- One was dying IN sin (unsaved thief).
- One was dying FROM sin (repentant thief).
- b) All classes of humanity are represented at the cross:
 - indifferent (people stood beholding. v.35).
 - religious (rulers deride Him. v.35).
 - materialistic (soldiers parted His garment and casts lots. v.34).
 - earnest seekers (Lord remember me. v.42.)

Jesus was thinking about Paradise, the better place He was going to. Jesus was a soul winner, taking every opportunity even in His darkest hour, of getting others into heaven. Let us be soul winners.

The thief on the cross had very little information, but showed great spiritual illumination. He knew:

- 1) Death was not the end (Heb. 9:27).
- 2) His own sinfulness and worthiness of God's judgment. (v.41a).
- 3) Christ's sinlessness ("He hath done nothing amiss" v.41).
- 4) Deity of Christ. (Lord, v.42).
- 5) He needed a Mediator ("remember me," v.42).
- 6) Kingship of Jesus (thy kingdom, v.42).
- 7) Christ's second coming ("when thou comest" v.42).

Question: Which friends of yours are not yet saved? Go see them and tell them of salvation in Christ.

3. **"Woman, behold thy Son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy Mother." John 19:26,27.**

Jesus, in His dying moments, filled with tender care for His mother, secured for her an adopted son in the apostle John, obtained for her a home, and consoled her grief by John's attention. What a model for all children in providing for our parents' needs who have done so much for us. "Behold thy mother". Mary would be to John as a mother. Tradition says that Mary continued to live with John in Judea until her death 15 years later. Jesus would have us care for one another. "Honour thy father and thy mother." Ephesians 6:2; Eph. 4:32-5:2. "A new commandment I give.." John 13:34,35; "As we" Galatians 6:10.

4. **"My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken me?" Matthew 27:46,47.**

"Eli,Eli" was Galilean Aramaic, Jesus' native tongue. Jesus quoted this from Psalm 22:1 "My Elohim", denoting His intense sufferings. Jesus was forsaken by the Jews, His disciples, the Father and the Holy Spirit. "He came unto His own, but His own received Him not." (John 1:11).

The people who will understand a glimpse of what Christ went through are those to whom it will be said, "Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire.." Matthew 25:41; Galatians 3:13.

Question 1: In what sense was Jesus forsaken by God? God approved His work. He was innocent. He had done nothing to forfeit the favour of God. God still loved Him. i) This was

when Jews & satan were permitted to do their worst. The devil departed from Jesus for a season (Luke 4:13) to return at the cross.

ii) Christ had to suffer all that human nature could endure in a short time. Clear views of God's justice and goodness may have been withheld from Jesus at this time.

iii) Isaiah 53:4,5 tells: "He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. 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."

"He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." (Galatians 3:13). "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:6). "He hath made him to be sin for us." (2 Cor.5:21). "Who his own self bare our sins in his body on the tree." (1 Peter 2:24). Christ's intense sufferings were caused by our sins being laid on Him and the manifestation of God's intense hatred of sin to His soul. This had never happened before.

Question 2: Why did the Father turn His back on the Son?

Because he was bearing the sin of the world, and God cannot look on sin (Habakkuk 1:13).

Question 3: Why did the Son not know the reason?

Because of the depth of His sufferings, and because Christ voluntarily abstained from using some of His divine qualities as the perfect human while on earth (Philippians 2:5-8).

5. "**I Thirst.**" John 19:28.

Jesus had refused the pain deadening wine that was offered to those about to be crucified (Matt 27:34).

In order to fulfil the Scriptures (Psalm 69:21 "In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink") He said, "I thirst." He had just endured three hours of darkness when He felt the wrath of God and separation from God (Matthew 27:45-49). Jesus experienced darkness, thirst and isolation as well as spiritual sufferings "My soul thirsteth for God" (Psalm 42:1,2,3).

A soldier moistened Jesus' lips with cheap vinegar on a sponge (John 19:29). Today, we can "give Jesus a drink" by sharing what we have with those in need. "I was thirsty and ye gave me drink" (Matt. 25:35).

Messianic themes in Psalm 69:

i) Ps. 69:3 "my throat is dried".

ii) Ps. 69:4 "They hated me without a cause" = John 15:25.

iii) Ps. 69:8 "I am become a stranger to my brethren" = "Neither did his brethren believe in Him" Jn.7:5

iv) Ps. 69:9 "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up" = John 2:17.

v) Ps. 69:21 "they gave me gall for my meat:in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink" = John 19:28,29

This shows the deep suffering Jesus went through. This fulfilled Psalm 22:15, "My tongue cleaveth to my jaws." Jesus had earlier said: "He that believeth on me shall never thirst." John 6:35, and

"If any man thirst, let him come into me and drink." John 7:37.

Jesus who gave His life so man need never thirst spiritually, endured great physical thirst. John 4:13-15.

6. "**It Is Finished.**" John 19:30.

In Greek, this is "Tetelestai", meaning, "It is finished, and as a result it is forever done."

Three applications of this are:

a) An artist who finished a great masterpiece would stand back and say "Tetelestai, Tetelestai," meaning that the painting is so perfect that nothing can be added to it. A writer finishing a manuscript said this.

b) A servant reporting to his master would say "I have finished the work you assigned to me"(John 17:4)

c) A merchant would say this when "The debt is paid in full".

d) A priest examining a perfect animal sacrifice would say this.

e) Christ said it to describe His payment for our sins on the cross being such a full, complete and perfect payment that nothing could be added to it, especially no human good works of ours. Jesus fully met the righteous demands of a holy law. He paid our sin debt in full. The Lamb of God shed His blood to take away the sins of the world (John 1:29; Hebrews 9:24-28).

Hallelujah what a Saviour! The word 'finished' occurs 3 times:

a) Genesis 2:1. At the completion of God's physical creation,

b) John 19:30. When salvation was completed on the cross.

c) Revelation 16:17. "It is done" at the 7th vial judgment.

Question: Will you finish your life's work that God has given you to do?

Paul said "I have finished my course." II Timothy 4:6-8.

7. "**Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.**" Luke 23:46.

Christ gave up His own life. Nobody took it from Him.

Question: Have you committed you life into God's hands? Romans 12:1,2.

This fulfilled Psalm 31:5 "Into thine hand I commit my Spirit."

Events following Christ's death are:

i) A watching Centurion said "Truly this was a righteous man." Luke 23:47.

ii) The temple veil was torn in two from top to bottom.

iii) An earthquake opens some tombs, and many Old Testament saints arose and appear to many in Jerusalem after Christ's resurrection. (Matthew 27:51-53).

iv) A watching centurion cries out in fear and awe 'Truly this was the Son of God.' Matthew 27:54.

v) 3 hours of darkness finishes and light breaks forth again.

Compare Jesus Christ's gracious words with the **7 last sayings of the crowd:**

1. "Thou that destroyeth the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." Matthew 27:40.

2. "He saved others, himself he cannot save. If he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross and we will believe him." Matthew 27:42.

3. "He trusted in God, let him deliver him now." Matthew 27:43.

4. "If thou be the Christ, save thyself." Luke 23:39.

5. "Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Luke 23:42.

6. "This man calleth for Elijah....let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." Matthew 27:46-49.

7. "Truly this man was the Son of God." Mark 15:39.

Note: The veil in the temple that was rent from top to bottom was a type of Christ (Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45). The torn veil had the following significance:

1. It opened the way of salvation for all to come unto God by Jesus Christ (Hebrews 10:19-22).

2. It teaches the priesthood of believers (1 Peter 2:5,9). Any man may enter God's presence through Christ.

3. It teaches that the separation between Jews and Gentiles was now abolished (Ephesians 2:13-18).

Conclusion: In view of Christ's last words, let us have a greater love, loyalty and commitment to Jesus Christ as our Saviour and God. Let us make more sacrifices to serve Christ and others unselfishly as we follow His example. Let us seek to win more people to Christ by sharing the gospel more regularly.

265. SAMSON

Bible Reading: Judges 16:1-31.

Aim: To beware of wasting your life. If we let pride and passion displace God's rightful first place, we will miss God's best and experience much sorrow, suffering and loss.

Problem: Many Christians today have no concept of God using them in His service because they are so concerned about their own lives and doing what they feel like doing. "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways." (Proverbs 14:14). Samson was like this. Let us not be like Samson. Samson's strength had great potential for God. Samson's failure was caused by his living for self.

Introduction: Samson had great potential and ability that could have been used for God's glory and other's benefit in a great way. Notice: a) He was born in answer to prayer (Judges 13:8,9).

b) He was a Nazarite (13:7). According to Numbers 6:1-6, the Nazarite was set apart for God and had three restrictions: i) Not to touch wine. ii) Not to cut his hair. iii) Not to touch a dead body.

Samson violated all three restrictions in Judges 14:8,9; 14:10; 16:19. Samson then had to learn the high cost of low living in 16:21. Samson represents the great potential for good of a believer yielded to God.

The value of our life to the cause of Christ is what we do with God's Holy Spirit power resting on us.

I. Events of Samson's Life The Philistines were oppressing Israel 40 years (13:1).

- i) He was raised by Godly parents as a Nazarite (13:2-4).
- ii) He killed a lion on the way to his wedding (14:1-7).
- iii) He killed 30 Philistines to pay off a riddle that the Philistines deceitfully solved (14:19).
- iv) Upon his wife being given to another man he burned the Philistines' fields (15:1-13).
- v) He then killed 1000 attacking Philistine soldiers with the jawbone of an ass (15:14-20).
- vi) He ripped the doors off an iron gate at Gaza City and carried them to the top of a hill (16:1-3).
- vii) He was betrayed into the hands of the Philistines by a harlot called Delilah (16:4-20).
- viii) He was shaved, blinded and enslaved (16:21,22).
- ix) When his hair grew back, God empowered him to destroy many Philistines in their temple by toppling its two middle pillars (16:23-31). He was killed in the process. He judged Israel for 20 years.

II. Lessons from Samson's Life

- 1) God raises people to deliver others from bondage (13:5) & Christians to tell the lost how to be saved.
- 2) God wants parents to dedicate their children to Jesus Christ, and to bring them up in the fear of God to obey Him wholeheartedly (13:8-14).
- 3) It is wrong for Christians to commit fornication and to marry unbelievers (14:1-3).
- 4) God can turn bad situations to bring about His plans (14:4). We can entrust our difficulties to God.
- 5) Don't trust ungodly people to play fair (14:15). They have few moral boundaries & a seared conscience.
- 6) Samson failed to spend quality time with his wife, by leaving her and returning to his father's house. (14:19). In his absence her father gave her to Samson's friend (v.20).

Communication is essential in marriage (14:20-15:2). He violated Ecclesiastes 9:9 "Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest..".

7) Control your anger. Samson burnt the Philistines' corn, vineyards & olive fields with 300 foxes. 15:3-6

8) The Israelites were out of fellowship with God by delivering Samson to the Philistines. They should have supported him as their judge and deliverer (15:7-13). They did what was right in their own eyes.

9) The only time anything beneficial occurred in Samson's life was when the Spirit of the Lord came upon him (13:25; 14:6,19; 15:14). The same is true for us. We must be continually filled with the Holy Spirit and submit to His leading (Ephesians 5:18).

10) As God supplied Samson's need of water after killing 1000 enemy soldiers, so God will supply our needs as we serve Him (15:19).

11) Samson foolishly visited a harlot named Delilah. She destroyed one as strong as Samson (16:4-22). See Proverbs 6:26-35; 7:1-27; 9:13-18. "Many strong men have been slain by her." (Proverbs 7:26).

12) Some things need to be kept secret. "A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards." (Proverbs 29:11). Samson should not have told her the secret of his strength.

13) If we continue in sin, we will lose God's power. Samson did not know that the Lord had departed from him and that he had lost God's power. The saddest verse in the Bible may be, "he wist not that the Lord was departed from him." (Judges 16:20).

14) Sin not confessed leads to God's discipline and to loss of privilege, as seen by Samson's loss of strength and eyesight (16:21).

15) God can still use us if we repent and get back into serving God, as Samson did (16:30).

16) Samson judged Israel 20 years (15:20). His death was premature. He should have served God 40 yr.

17) Samson started his life with the philosophy that God's ways were no fun, so he put himself first and cheated God. He wasn't aware that the cheater finally gets cheated of the best.

18) Manoa's prayer for unborn Samson should be the prayer of every parent for their children: "Teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born." (13:8). Do you pray this for your children?

Do you seek to train your children in God's ways? Samson's childhood is described in three ways.

- a) The child grew.
- b) The Lord blessed him.
- c) The Spirit of the Lord began to move him.

A youth that is not moved by the Spirit of God is closed minded to God. A young person needs a vision of God's Holy Spirit using him to do great things for God. Parents, train your children to hear God's voice, and to follow the Holy Spirit's leading. Young people, are you obeying the Holy Spirit's leading?

19) Youth, as well as being a time of God consciousness, is also for young men a time of women consciousness. Young people must let God's Word choose a suitable marriage partner. He chose a wife based on physical appearance without considering her godliness (Prov. 31:30). Samson's wrong basis for choosing a mate was, "she pleaseth me well". (14:3). What about, "she pleaseth the Lord"? This never entered his mind. One reason for the success of the beauty industry is that men, in choosing a wife, use their eyes more than their brains. You marry a person's brain as well as their body. So it was with Samson ignoring his parents' advice to choose a Godly Jewish girl. Samson's will as a child had not been broken to submit to God and his parents' will. God spoke to Samson through his

266. SEVEN NAMES OF GOD

parents, but he refused to hear God's voice. He rejected God's perfect will for His life. He chose his own will. God permitted him to go astray in God's second best. Samson's parents failed to recognize God working His second best through Samson's disobedience (14:4). They lost sight of God still being in control.

20) Samson killing a young lion made him aware of his supernatural strength. This built his pride and ego, rather than the right response of humility and thanks to God. How do you handle success?

21) Samson failed to realize that women were his weak point. Your spouse's problems become your problems. What is your weak point in your spiritual life? What sin so easily besets you? (Heb. 12:1,2).

22) The path of sin for Samson led downward from spiritual blindness to physical blindness to bondage and death. Similar consequences await those who choose to remain spiritually blind.

23) Samson only prayed when he was close to death (15:15-20; 16:27-31). "Pray without ceasing".

III. Samson's Life is Like Israel's History

1) As God's plan for Samson's life was revealed to his father Manoah before his birth, to be a Nazarite who would deliver Israel (13:1-14), so God promised Abraham before the birth of the nation Israel, that Israel would be separated to God, and through Israel would come the Deliverer. (Gen. 12:1-3; 17:1-22).

2) While Samson kept his Nazarite vow, he had miraculous power over his enemies. So Israel under Joshua was separated from sin, consecrated to God's work and had power over her enemies.

3) As Samson tempted God by his disobedience and sin, so Israel tempted God by their sin (Num. 14:22).

4) As God's strength delivered Samson each time he was bound by his enemies, so God delivered Israel each time she was bound by her enemies. (Six times in Judges.)

5) As Samson exhausted God's patience by breaking his vows, God turned him over to judgment under the Philistines. So Israel exhausted God's patience and the nation was turned over to be judged by her enemies Assyria, Babylon, Rome, Islam and others.

6) When God departed from Samson, his enemies took him captive, blinded him, caused him to serve and mocked him (16:20,21). So God departed from Israel, allowing her to be led captive to other nations, blinded as to Jesus being the Messiah (Romans 11:25), and being mocked as a proverb (Deut. 28:36).

7) As Samson finally turns to God who hears his prayer and glorifies God; so Israel finally calls on Christ to save them (Zechariah 13:9), is saved as a nation (Romans 11:26,12), and is used to glorify God among the nations ("they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles." Isaiah 66:19).

Conclusion: Will you waste your God given talents like Samson in selfish pursuits, or will you be aware of God's calling on your life, the important job you need to do, and seek to obediently do God's work. Will you be a good example and a blessing to others or a disgrace and have regret at the end?

Bible Reading: Genesis 1; Psalm 91:1,2.

Aim: To know God and to know ourselves.

Introduction: All teaching and preaching are to make us better know God and ourselves. For example,

Peter did not know his own weakness when he boasted he'd never deny Christ.

Do we know and trust God as the Bible commands us? As Adam and Eve covered their nakedness with fig leaves so modern man covers his disobedience with excuses.

Man has hard thoughts of God and high thoughts of himself. Pagan idols look unmoved at the destruction of man.

God has revealed Himself to man as 7 NAMES in Scripture:

1. **ELOHIM** (God)
2. **JEHOVAH** (LORD)
3. **EL SHADDAI** (Almighty)
4. EL ELYON (Most High)
5. **ADONAI** (Lord)
6. EL OLAM (Everlasting God)
7. **JEHOVAH SABAOth** (LORD of Hosts)

Names 1 - 4 reveal what God is, the Rest, Refuge and Comfort of believers.

Psalms 91:1,2 reveals all 4 in one sentence: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High⁴ (EL ELYON) shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty³ (EL SHADDAI). I will say of the LORD² (JEHOVAH), He is my refuge and my fortress: my God¹ (ELOHIM): in him will I trust."

Note: No one name can fully express the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:19). Just as 4 gospels and 4 cherubim faces are needed to reveal Christ's various aspects and relations, so God cannot fully describe Himself under a single name or title.

Illustration:

- 1) To know David, we see him as a Shepherd, Warrior, King, Prophet, Poet and Musician.
- 2) To know God, we see His rich nature as: Creator, Judge, Saviour, Provider, Love, Power, Wisdom.
- 3) As white light consists of 7 colours, so God has 7 names. These are:

1. ELOHIM (God) = God in **Covenant Love**. This is a plural form of the Hebrew noun Eloah. This is the only name God reveals to us in Genesis 1. This is God's name we must know before all others. **Definition:** God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

"God (Elohim) said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." (Genesis 1:26). Elohim, though a plural noun, when used of the one true God, it is constantly joined with singular verbs and adjectives (Genesis 1:1).

ELOHIM = I will be with them in covenant relationship. Examples include:

1. **Noah:** "Elohim said to Noah, the end of all flesh is come before me... but with thee will I establish my covenant." (Genesis 6:13,18; 9:9,17). "Elohim remembered Noah." (Genesis 8:1).
2. **Abram:** "I am the Almighty God; walk before me and be thou perfect: and I will make my covenant between me and thee...I will be their Elohim." (Gen. 17:1-8). I will be with them in covenant relationship. "When God destroyed the cities of the plain, God remembered Abraham." (Genesis 19:29).

3. **Rachel:** "Elohim remembered Rachel, and opened her womb." (Genesis 30:22). (Gen 26:2-4)
4. **Isaac:** "I am the Elohim of Abraham thy father: fear not for I am with thee and will bless thee."
5. **Jacob:** "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac ... I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest.... I will not leave thee" (Genesis 28:13-15).
6. **Joseph:** "Elohim will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land." (Genesis 50:24).
7. **Moses:** "Elohim spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am YHWH: I appeared,... I established my covenant...., I heard...., I have remembered my covenant. I will bring you out.... I will redeem you, I will be to you a God,.. I will bring you unto the land,... I will give it you for an heritage." (Exod. 6:1-8).
8. **David:** "Why art thou cast down O my soul? ... hope thou in God." (Psalm 42:5,11). "The God of Israel said,... yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant." (2 Samuel 23:1-3,5). "Thou art my father, my God (v.26), my covenant shall stand fast with him (v.28), my covenant will I not break." (v.34). (Psalm 89:26,28,34).

Key: Because God is "Elohim", the "One who keepeth covenant" (1 Kings 8:23) this is the foundation of our hope in every extremity. "God is our refuge and strength. A very present help in trouble." Ps. 46:1 "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." (Hebrews 13:5).

Note: The law was needed to show man what God's standard is, and to slay in man the fallen life of independence. (Galatians 3:15-18). Regarding the nation Israel who killed and rejected Christ:
 "God is able to graff them in again ... for this is my covenant with them, when I shall take away their sins." (Romans 11:23-36). This is what Elohim means when he says he will be our God. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the House of Israel. I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts. I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." (Hebrews 8:10).

Key: Whenever "Elohim" appears in scripture, God reminds us of the riches of his unforsaking covenant love to us. Let us bless God who says, "I will be to you a God." Let us live for God and say, "My Elohim, in Him will I trust." (Psalm 91:2).

Conclusion: God remembers you. Do you remember God?

- 1) Psalm 105:5 Remember his marvellous works.
- 2) Eccles 12:1 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.
- 3) Song 1:4 We will remember thy love.
- 4) Luke 17:32 Remember Lot's wife.
- 5) Acts 20:35 Remember the words of the Lord Jesus.
- 6) 1 Cor. 11:24 This do in remembrance of me.
- 7) Galatians 2:10 Remember the poor.
- 8) 2 Timothy 2:14 Of these things put them in remembrance.
- 9) 2 Timothy 3:8 Remember the Lord Jesus was raised from the dead.
- 10) Hebrews 13:3 Remember them that are in bonds.
- 11) Hebrews 13:7 Remember them that have the rule over you.
- 12) Revelation 2:5 Remember from whence thou art fallen.

2. **JEHOVAH (LORD)** = Jehovah is **righteous**. He must judge evil. This name includes:
 - i) Jehovah loves and requires righteousness and truth.
 - ii) Jehovah must judge evil, at whatever cost to the creature or creation.
 - iii) Jehovah is grieved and hurt by our sin.
 - iv) Jehovah's righteousness is not complete if it only judges and condemns, for the devil also condemns.
 Jehovah's righteousness seeks to make the sinner righteous.

Note: Elohim declares God is love. Jehovah presents God as truth and Righteousness. If a child rebels, or a friend deceives, or a spouse is unfaithful, this produces a breach of love, a separation and judging the evil. If you don't separate from or judge evil, you condone the evil.

Definition: Jehovah is formed from two tenses of the Hebrew verb (Havah) "to be", meaning "One who is what He is", as God introduced Himself to Moses as "I AM THAT I AM". (Exodus 3:13-15). Jehovah says, "Be holy, for I am holy" (Leviticus 11:44,45). Jehovah, being who he is, "Loves righteousness and hates iniquity" (Psalm 45:7), and finds all evil antagonistic to His nature, which because it is not true, must be opposed and judged. Elohim (covenant love) is how God begins to reveal himself. The Name "Jehovah" expresses God's being as Just, Holy, True, Righteous and as Judging sin.

Key:

a) Elohim is the general name of God concerned with the creation and preservation of the world. (Genesis 1 we see Elohim, not Jehovah).
 As Jehovah, he is the God of Revelation to Israel.

b) Elohim is mentioned mostly in OT books of a universal audience, such as Daniel and Ecclesiastes. (Jehovah is only mentioned in Daniel 9:2,4,10,13,14,20. Jehovah is not mentioned in Ecclesiastes, because it is a book of men living apart from God "under the sun".)

Jehovah, on the other hand, is mostly mentioned in Israel's strongly theocratic, historical books such as Joshua (170 x), Judges (134 x), Isaiah (366 x), etc. Let us look at occurrences of God's name Jehovah.

1. Jehovah first appears in **Genesis 2:4-9**, where the **creation** of man is seen. Why? Because attributes of Jehovah were not manifested in creating the material world, but were only manifested when man was created. Man is at once put under a law to prove his love. God as Jehovah places man under moral obligations, under a law with a warning of punishment for disobedience. "Thou shalt, and thou shalt not." (Genesis 2:16-17). "Jehovah God commanded the man saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." (Genesis 2:16,17). Jehovah looks for righteousness by calling man's attention to the difference of 2 trees in Eden, the tree of Life, and the tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, which man was forbidden to eat from. This was a test of man's love for God. Love is always tested by obedience to God's laws.
2. The **death penalty** was imposed for blaspheming the name Jehovah: "he that blasphemeth the name of Jehovah, he shall surely be put to death." (Leviticus 24:16).

3. In the whole **sacrificial system**, the object of approach is Jehovah, not Elohim. For example,

a) In the sacrifices of Leviticus 1-7, Jehovah occurs 86 times, Elohim once.

b) In the Day of Atonement of Leviticus 16, Jehovah occurs 12 times, Elohim not at all.

4. In Genesis 3:1-5 when the **Serpent and Eve** discuss eating the forbidden fruit, neither mention the name Jehovah. They only refer to God as Elohim, the God of Covenant Love. Both omit Jehovah.

God as Jehovah pronounces judgment on Adam and Eve (Gen.3:8-24), sending them out of Eden (3:23).

5. God as Jehovah required a **sacrifice** from **Cain and Abel** (4:1-5).

God as Jehovah sought and judged Cain for killing Abel (4:6-16).

6. God as "Jehovah saw that the **wickedness** of man was great in the earth (6:5).

Jehovah said, I will destroy man whom I have created." (6:7).

7. God as Jehovah **requires holiness in man**. "I am Jehovah your God: Be ye holy, for I am holy: Neither shall ye defile yourselves (v.44). Make a difference between the unclean and the clean." (v.47).

Question: Are you defiling yourself in some way? (Leviticus 11:44,45).

Question: Do you make a difference between unclean and clean? Are you holy as God is holy?

8. God as Jehovah made a **covenant of grace** with Noah.

"But Noah found grace in the eyes of Jehovah." (Genesis 6:8).

God as Elohim fellowshiped in covenant with Noah. "Noah walked with God (Elohim) (v.9).

God said unto Noah (v.13) "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he."(Genesis 6:22)

9. God as Jehovah appears to Noah in the year of the **Flood**. "Jehovah said unto Noah, come ..." (7:1) "Jehovah shut him in" (7:5).

God as Elohim remembered Noah during the flood, preserving him because of his covenant loving relationship "God remembered Noah." (8:1). "God spake unto Noah, saying, Go forth of the ark" 8:15,16

10. God as Jehovah required Noah to **build an altar to Jehovah** (8:20). God as Jehovah smelt a sweet savour of Noah's burnt offering on the altar (8:20-22). God as Elohim blessed Noah (9:1), established his covenant (9:8-11), remembered his covenant (9:15,16), and set a token of the covenant (9:13,17).

11. God as Jehovah came down to **judge** and scatter the disobedient people at **Babel** (11:1-9). "Jehovah came down to see..." (v.5).

12. God as Jehovah calls unsaved **Abram** out of Ur. (Genesis 12:1-5).

13. God as Jehovah plagues **Pharaoh's house** for taking Abram's wife Sarai (Genesis 12:17).

14. God as Jehovah appears to Abram aged 99, saying "walk before me and be thou perfect." Gen 17:1.

God as Elohim spoke to Abram about his covenant. "God said, my covenant is with thee (v.3,4,9,15,19-27) I will be their God". (v.8).

15. God as Jehovah appeared to Abram to discuss the judgment of Sodom & Gomorrah. 18:1,17,20-22,33

16. God as Jehovah appeared to **Lot** to rescue him from **Sodom's destruction** (Genesis 19:13). "Jehovah hath sent us to destroy it." (19:13). "Then Jehovah rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Jehovah out of heaven." (19:24).

God as Elohim remembered Abram and Lot after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. (Gen 19:29).

17. God as Jehovah had fast **closed the wombs of Abimelech's house** (20:18).

God as Elohim healed Abimelech, his wife and his servants after Abraham prayed to Elohim (20:17).

18. God as Elohim commanded "two of every living thing were to be taken into the Ark" (Gen 6:19) to continue each species. God as Jehovah added the command, "Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens." (Genesis 7:2) because Jehovah the truth requiring God looks for a **blood sacrifice** to cover sins. Hence, after the righteous judgment of the flood had purged the earth of its pollution, "of every clean beast, Noah offered burnt offerings to Jehovah." (Genesis 8:20).

19. God as Jehovah **loves righteousness**, and requires his own likeness in his own people.

a) "Hear O Israel, Jehovah our Elohim is one Jehovah: and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." (Deut 6:4,5). Jehovah wants us to love him as he loves us.

b) "The righteous Jehovah loveth righteousness; his countenance doth uphold the upright" (Psalm 11:7)

c) "Upon the wicked he (Jehovah) shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, & an horrible tempest." Ps.11:6.

d) "I, Jehovah thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments." (Exodus 20:5).

20. God as Jehovah says, "I am Jehovah, I change not." (Malachi 3:6). God as Jesus Christ says "Jesus Christ the same, yesterday and today and forever." (Hebrews 13:8). Thus Jesus Christ is Jehovah.

21. It is never "Thus saith Elohim", but "Thus saith Jehovah".

Key: a) Because Jehovah is righteous, he must condemn evil.

b) After the law has done its work of condemnation, Jehovah says, "This is the covenant that I will make after those days, I will put my law into their mind and will write it in their hearts" (Jeremiah 31:33).

Conclusion: It is Jehovah who: 1) Pronounces judgment and metes out punishment

2) Expels man from Eden

3) Is of purer eyes than to behold evil (Habakkuk 1:13).

4) Pronounces destruction on the pre-flood world.

5) Rains fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah.

6) Is often angered by sinning Israel.

7) His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel (Judges 10:16).

8) In His holiness He must condemn. In love He seeks to redeem man back to fellowship with Himself.

9) Delivers Israel from Egyptian bondage – "I am Jehovah, I will bring you out." (Exodus 6:6).

10) Is "a just God and a Saviour". (Isaiah 45:21).

11) Is Righteousness and Strength. (Isaiah 45:24).

3. **EL SHADDAI (God Almighty)** = the One who pours forth blessings to make us fruitful.

"El Shaddai" occurs 48 times in the Old Testament (31 times in Job, 6 in Genesis, 8 in Revelation).

Bible Reading: Genesis 17:1-27.

Aim: To be fruitful and blessed by El Shaddai by "walking before me and being perfect." (Gen. 17:1).

Introduction: “Shaddai” means “Breasted”, as “Shad” (Hebrew) means “breast” or a “woman’s breast”.

Nothing can quieten a crying, hungry, restless baby like it’s mother’s breast milk, by giving it nourishment and fresh life. So the Almighty God, by giving his self-sacrificing love to us can quieten, satisfy, supply, nourish and strengthen us as the breast does to a child. “El Shaddai” is the One mighty to nourish, satisfy, supply and pour out blessings to us. “El Shaddai” the “pouder forth” gives His life and His Spirit to His receptive creatures, saying, “Come unto me and drink” (John 7:37), and “Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it.” (Psalm 81:10). This makes us fruitful.

Paul prays “That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.” (Colossians 1:10). God wants us to be fruitful for him. Are you bearing fruit? When “**El Shaddai**” is mentioned, fruitfulness is discussed, as seen below:

1. When Jehovah God first made himself known to **Abram** as “**Almighty God**” (El Shaddai) with the command “walk before me and be thou perfect”, He changed his name from fruitless Abram to fruitful Abraham, the “father of many nations” (Gen. 17:5). By adding the Hebrew letter “He” (ה), the chief letter of his own name, Jehovah or Yhwh, the sound which can only be uttered by an out-breathing, thus giving his children something of his own nature. The same letter was added to change “Sara” to “**Sarah**” (Gen. 17:15,16). Abraham yielded himself to God in circumcision and in sacrificing Isaac to God. Thus, God gives Himself to us, as we give ourselves to Him. By God giving Himself and His life to us, this can make us like Himself, givers of ourselves and our lives to Him, then by Him to others.

First Mention: El Shaddai first appears in Gen. 17:1,2 to confirm the promise to Abram to make him a great nation and to multiply him exceedingly (17:20) and to make him exceedingly fruitful (17:6).

Gen. 17:1,2 “When Abram was 99 years old, Jehovah appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God (El Shaddai): walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.” (v.2). See v.3-8. God here changed Abram’s name to Abraham (father of many nations, 17:5), saying “I will make thee exceedingly fruitful” (v.10).

2. When **Jacob** flees to Padan-Aram to seek a wife, **Isaac** says: “God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee.” (Genesis 28:3, v.1-4). God wants to bless us and multiply us also.

3. To **Jacob** returning to Bethel, God Almighty (El Shaddai) says: “I am God Almighty; be fruitful and multiply ...” (Genesis 35:11-15).

4. **Jacob** by the Almighty blesses **Joseph**: “Joseph is a fruitful bough, ... by the Almighty who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above,...blessings of the breasts and of the womb.” (Gen. 49:22,25).

Note: “Almighty” is always linked with gain or loss of fruit or fruitfulness.

5. God compares Israel’s future blessings in the **Millennium** with blessings of the breast: “Thou shalt also suck the milk of the nations, and shalt suck the breasts of Kings.” (Isaiah 60:16).

6. **God’s Millennial blessings** will be poured out through Christ ruling on earth with Israel: “Rejoice ye with Jerusalem (v.10) ... all ye that love her:... that ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out (v.11). I will extend peace to her like a river, then shall ye suck (v.12). As one whom his mother comforteth; so will I comfort you.” (v.13). (Isaiah 66:10-13). The Hebrew word for “breast” is “shad” from which comes “Shaddai”, God’s name translated as Almighty.

7. When **Balaam** blessed Israel in the wilderness, he said: “Which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open (v.4)... His seed shall be in many waters, and his King shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted.” (v.7). (Numbers 24:1-9).

Sometimes “El Shaddai” (Almighty God) is used in the context of judging, chastening, purging so one can bring forth more fruit. “Every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” (John 15:2). Examples include:

8. **Naomi** twice speaks of her loss of husband, home and two sons as afflictions from the Almighty: “The Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me”. “The Almighty hath afflicted me.” (Ruth 1:20,21).

9. In **Job**, “El Shaddai” is used 31 times to show how a “perfect and upright man”, by suffering is purged from imperfections to bear greater fruit (Job 42:10-17), is made an instrument to silence Satan, and to intercede for those who condemned him.

Job’s 3 comforters mention the “Almighty” as proof that Job’s troubles are judgment for his sins, because “Shaddai”, the “pouder forth” of blessings would surely bless the upright. Hence they thought Job must be an evil doer.

Neither Eliphaz (speaking of God’s power), Bildad (of God’s justice) or Zophar (of God’s wisdom) have any idea how God permits his saints to suffer to silence the accuser. Job needed to be emptied to be better filled. “God Almighty” having emptied Job, filled him with double blessings. Hence, let us “despise not the chastening of the Almighty” (Job 5:17).

10. After commanding believers to “come out from among them, be ye separate, ... touch not the unclean thing;” (2 Cor. 6:17) the Almighty promises, “I will receive you and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” (2 Corinthians 6:18).

11. Introducing the **New Jerusalem blessings**, we read: “The Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb are the temple of it.” (Revelation 21:22).

Conclusion: The name “Almighty God” (El Shaddai) speaks to us of:

- 1) God’s sacrificial love pouring itself out for others to bless us and make us fruitful.
- 2) God’s strength and sufficiency is most manifest in our weakness and insufficiency, so that from us may flow rivers of living water to thirsty and needy mankind. Shall we not bless God for these and continually “abide under the shadow of the Almighty”. (Psalm 91:1,2).

4. JEHOVAH SABAOTH (LORD of Hosts)

Bible Reading: Psalm 84:1-12.

Aim: To see that the LORD of Hosts waits on us to comfort, guide, protect and minister to us.

This name of God is only known in the failures of Israel. It is never found in the books of Moses, Joshua, Judges, Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. It occurs mostly in the Prophets who most keenly felt Israel’s failure. It occurs in Jeremiah (80 times), Haggai (14 x), Zechariah (50 x) and Malachi (25 x).

Key: The “LORD of Hosts” uses His hosts for the correction and deliverance of His people, and to punish his adversaries. He punishes His people for their unfaithfulness, then punishes their adversaries to bring them full deliverance.

First Mention: It is when Israel has failed, (not in Egypt or the Wilderness) but in the Promised Land, that the name “**Jehovah Sabaoth**” (LORD of Hosts) is first seen. When Israel is divided, and in peril of being led captive out of the land, this is the name that the prophets turn to for comfort and deliverance, when there is no other helper. Let us see how this name is used:

1. **Hannah**, a suffering, barren woman first trusts in this name. (I Samuel 1:1-3,10,11). The LORD of Hosts gives her a son, Samuel who later delivered Israel.

2. **Israel's army** uses this name hoping to avoid being smitten by the Philistines. (I Samuel 4:1-4).

3. **Saul** was commanded by the LORD of Hosts to smite Amalek who had attacked Israel when they journeyed through the wilderness (I Samuel 15:1-3a). Through Saul's failure, God raised up David to deliver Israel from the Philistines.

4. **David** came to Goliath in the name of the LORD of Hosts whom he had defied. (I Samuel 17:45). Jehovah Sabaoth used David to judge Goliath and deliver Israel from the Philistines.

Key: With the prophets, the "LORD of Hosts" is the "God of Heaven" and of the "hosts of heaven", through whom He can fulfil His will, though men on earth rebel and turn from Him. These 2 titles are equivalent.

5. **Elijah**, living in the days of **Ahab** and **Jezebel** said, "As the LORD of Hosts liveth, before whom I stand" (I Kings 18:15) in a famine brought by Ahab's and Jezebel's wickedness. Elijah then defeated and killed the 850 false prophets of Baal. God then brought rain and deliverance to Israel. Jezebel threatened to kill Elijah, so he ran into the wilderness, sat under a Juniper tree, and requested to die (I Kings 19:4). An angel of the LORD of Hosts ministered to the distraught Elijah, feeding him with cakes and water to strengthen him (I Kings 19:5-10).

6. **Isaiah**, living in the days of wicked King Ahaz "who walked after the abominations of the heathen", until Judah was smitten and led captive into Damascus (2 Chronicles 28:1-5), so that "the daughter of Zion was left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, and as a besieged city" (Isaiah 1:7-9). Isaiah turns to the name of the LORD of Hosts for comfort, saying, "Except the Lord of Hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah". (Isaiah 1:9).

7. **Isaiah**, while mourning the death of godly king Uzziah, was comforted by a vision of the LORD of Hosts who was stronger than the earthly king who had just died, who was worshipped as "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of Hosts:.....mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Hosts". (Isaiah 6:1-5).

8. **Judah**, when sieged by the confederated kings of Israel and Syria, "the heart of the people was moved as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind" (7:12). The Lord said, "Say not, a confederacy, neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid, but sanctify the LORD of Hosts himself, and let him be your fear...And he shall be for a sanctuary (Isaiah 8:11-14). The zeal of the LORD of Hosts will perform this" (Isaiah 9:7). It is the "LORD of Hosts" who punishes His people for their unfaithfulness (Isa. 9:13,19), who later smites their adversary, bringing help and full deliverance. (Isaiah 10:12,24-27).

9. **Jeremiah**, in the destruction of Jerusalem uses "LORD of Hosts" 80 times. When God's people are captive and have no might to help themselves, "LORD of Hosts" is most often repeated by the prophets for their comfort. "Thus saith the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place". (Jeremiah 7:3).

10. **Haggai** constantly repeats the name of the "LORD of Hosts" to exhort the little remnant who have returned to Jerusalem from Babylon to build the house of the LORD. (Haggai 2:4-9,23).

11. **Malachi** complains at Israel's growing corruption (Malachi 3:13-15). But a little remnant shall "fear him, and think upon His name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of Hosts, in the day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him". (Mal. 3:16,17).

12. **David**, when tempted to number his army to count how strong he was, found 800,000 swordsmen of Israel and 500,000 men of Judah. (I Chronicles 21:1-16).
Question: Was not David stronger, unaided and alone, when he replied to the taunt of Goliath, by "the name of the LORD of Hosts", than he was later with 1,300,000 valiant swordsmen? The Lord's answer to David's sin of numbering Israel, is to show His host. "God sent an angel,... destroying throughout the coasts of Israel....70,000 men." (I Chronicles 21:14-16).

13. **Micaiah** the prophet, when Ahab and Jehoshaphat joined to attack Ramoth-gilead, saw another host "And Micaiah said, I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him, on His right hand and on His left". (I Kings 22:19-22,34). Of this host "a spirit went forth", and in spite of all the hosts of Israel, by this spirit, Ahab is deceived and drawn to his destruction.
"A certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the King of Israel between the joints of his harness." (I Kings 22:19-22,34). A chance shot, as men speak, silently accomplishes God's judgment, but rather it was an angel of the LORD's host directing the arrow.

14. **Elisha** the prophet warned the King of Israel where the King of Syria was to attack. (2 Kings 6:8-23). (v.17). This led the Syrian King to send his army to capture Elisha at Dothan. Elisha's servant was greatly troubled when he saw the great Syrian host surrounding the city, so he asked "How shall we do?" (v.15). Elisha's famous reply is great comfort to all God's people ever since, "Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them" (v.16). The LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha". (v.17). By the hosts of the LORD the prophet is delivered. "And the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel". (6:23). The host of the LORD was revealed to comfort and deliver from the host of the enemy.

15. **Hezekiah** and **Isaiah**, when the King of Assyria sent Rabshakeh with a great host against Jerusalem in 710BC, prayed to the LORD for deliverance (2 Kings 19:14-19). The LORD of Hosts replied, promising deliverance (19:20-35), "I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back (v.28)...the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this." (v.31). That night, the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians 185,000: and when they arose in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses". (v.35). One angel of the host of the LORD was greater than the 185,000 host of the Assyrians. God's host have always been serving God's people.

16. **Jacob**, when returning in fear to Esau, "the angels of God met him" (Genesis 32:1,2). He said "This is God's host". So it is when there is real need. "The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them". (Psalm 34:7).

17. **New Testament** interventions of the host of the LORD, constantly appear to supply needs or avert danger. The angel of the LORD appeared to **Joseph** (Matthew 1:20), **Zechariah** (Luke 1:13,19), **Mary** (Luke 1:26,30), **Shepherds** (Luke 2:9,10,13). These heavenly hosts wait on us continually. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14). Their ceaseless ministry to Christ is the pattern of our ministry to Christ. This name LORD of Hosts reveals that God's help is always near. Thanks to God that the LORD of Hosts is with us. There are angels of the churches, angels bound in the river Euphrates, angels ministered to **Peter** in prison, guiding **Philip** in the desert, keeping **Paul** safe in the storm, revealing scripture to **John** on Patmos. Cries of suffering saints enter into the ears of the LORD of Sabaoth (James 4:4). "The cries of them which have reaped are entered into the LORD of Sabaoth." (James 4:4). Their injustices shall be righted, if not by man, yet by the LORD of Hosts. All of us are called to know how near He is, and how near are His unseen Hosts to do His pleasure and minister to us.

5. ADONAI (Lord and Master). Our Encourager, Confidence, Helper and Strength.

Bible Reading: Genesis 15.

Elohim (His unchanging love), Jehovah (His Righteousness and truth), El Shaddai (giver and pourer out of himself to others), El Elyon (though Most High he is of kindred nature with us) reveal perfections of God's nature.

Adonai, El Olam, Jehovah Sabaoth reveal God's relationships to men, angels or dispensations through which He works His purposes.

"Adonai" is first found in Abram's address to God:

a) After giving tithes to Melchisedek the word of Jehovah came unto Abram in a vision, saying, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord GOD (Adonai Jehovah), what will thou give me, seeing I go childless?" (Genesis 15:1,2).

b) Jehovah said: "I am Jehovah that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. And he said Lord GOD (Adonai Jehovah), whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" (Genesis 15:7,8).

c) Abram when interceding for Sodom uses this name to address God, "Oh let not the Lord be angry" (Genesis 18:30,32). "I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord." (Genesis 18:27,31).

d) All of God's servants use this name.

Question: What does this name, Adonai, reveal?

Answer: "Adonai" is the plural of "Adon" (in Hebrew) meaning "lord" or "master".

Note: When applied to men, it expresses the relationships of a master to his servant, (Genesis 24:9,10, 12,14,27,35; Judges 19:11), as well as that of a husband to his wife (Genesis 18:12; Judges 19:27; I Kings 1:17,18; Psalm 45:11; 1 Peter 3:16).

Key: The title "ADON" (Lord) meaning "master" or "husband" expressed a personal relationship, involving rights of lordship and possession.

ADONAI is plural possessive when referring to God and means "my Lords". This confirms God as a Trinity, as seen in Elohim being plural as well. Used of men, it is always in the singular form "ADON" (Hebrew). Only of God is it in the plural, as seen from Psalm 110:1 "Jehovah said unto my Lord (Adonai) sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Psalm 110:1).

The Lord Jesus refers this passage to Himself in Matthew 22:41-45.

Peter refers this passage to the Lord Jesus in Acts 2:34,35.

Paul refers this passage to the Lord Jesus in Hebrews 1:13 and 10:12,13.

Key: David speaking of one member of the Trinity, uses not the plural "ADONAI", but the singular form "ADONI".

"Jehovah said unto my ADONI" refers to Christ the second person of the Trinity.

ADONAI (Lord) signifies ownership or mastership. God is the owner of each member of the human family, and He thus claims total obedience of all of us.

"Behold, the fear of the Lord (Adonai), that is wisdom". (Job 28:28).

The use of Adonai in the OT reveals what God expects of us as His servants. See how Adonai is used:

I. The slave and wife were not their own, but belonged to their Lord (voluntarily or involuntarily). Slave and wife were subject to their Lord, where faithfulness received honour and reward, while unfaithfulness received just judgment.

Hence the name "Adonai" (Lord) teaches that as servants submit to their lord, and wives submit to their husbands, so man submits to God, with dependence on God as well as faith in God's faithfulness as Lord to sustain, keep and help us. Mutual submission to God & each other is the key to a good marriage.

Jesus Christ claims this title of God for Himself, "If I then your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet." (John 13:14).

Note: Islam has little concept of God as a servant, but as a dictator. Hence most Muslim countries are ruled by dictators. Contrast this with many Christian countries being democracies where leaders serve.

The church is the church because it acknowledges a relationship with God (John 17:3).

The world is the world because it denies a relationship with God ("I never knew you" Matthew 7:23; Jeremiah 9:24; 24:7; 31:34), it denies knowing God, and acts in independence of God.

The world's way is to do as it likes, think as it likes, speak as it likes, without regard to God's will.

i) They do according to their own will (Daniel 8:4; 11:3,16,36).

ii) They live as if they are their own.

iii) They see obedience to God as degrading.

iv) They speak as if they are their own. "Our lips are our own: who is lord over us?" (Psalm 12:4).

God's saints own Christ as their Lord ("no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the H.Ghost" 1 Cor. 12:3).

i) All saints say: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do". (Acts 9:6).

ii) All saints say with Christ our Lord: "I come to do thy will, O God". (Hebrews 10:9).

II. Believers as servants, in trials, turn to their master to lift their burdens:

1) When Abram first met God as Adonai, he had two burdens. A seed and an inheritance had been promised him, and years had passed, yet he was still childless and without the promised land.

Because Adonai cannot fail, he says, "Lord (Adonai) God, what wilt thou give me?" (Genesis 15:2) and "Lord (Adonai) God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" (15:8). God answers his prayer by a vision promising him land from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates (15:18) and seed as many as the stars of heaven (15:5).

Abram addressed Jehovah as Adonai Jehovah (Lord GOD) in Genesis 15:2, acknowledging God's complete possession and perfect right to all he was and had.

Lordship meant complete ownership and submission. The purchased slave belonged to the master's family, was permitted to eat the passover meal, but a hired servant could not (Ex. 12:43-45; Lev.22:10,11).

2) Moses, when called to deliver Israel, said:

"O my Lord (Adonai) I am not eloquent..."

And the LORD (Jehovah) said unto him, who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and will teach thee what thou shalt say". (Exodus 4:10-12).

3) Joshua, when appointed to lead Israel into Canaan, and they are smitten by the men of Ai, turns to Adonai, saying (7:8), "O Lord (Adonai), what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies?" God directs Joshua how to discover the hidden "accursed thing" that caused Israel's defeat.

4) Gideon, when called to deliver Israel from the Midianites, answers, "O my Lord (Adonai), why is all this befallen us?" (Judges 6:13), and "Oh my Lord (Adonai), wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." (Judges 6:15).

God strengthens him, saying, "Surely I will be with thee: go in this thy might: have not I sent thee?" (Judges 6:14). The servant's strength is in Adonai.

5) Manoah, when childless, entreated Jehovah and said: "O my Lord (Adonai) let the man of God ...come again unto us and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born". Judges 13:8.

6) Samson, when blinded and bound, called unto Jehovah, and said, "O Lord GOD (Adonai Jehovah), remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee." (Judges 16:28).

7) David's prayer, "Who am I, O Lord GOD (Adonai Jehovah)? And what is my house?" (2 Samuel 7:18,19,20,28,29). David, when so greatly tried, confesses the name "Adonai" as his encouragement and hope in every weakness. (Psalm 8:1; 25:23 (My God and my Lord); "make haste to help me O Lord" (38:9,15,22); "Lord, my hope is in thee" (39:7); "I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me" (Psalm 40:17); "O Lord, open thou my lips" (51:15).

8) Daniel's prayer for Jerusalem's restoration: "I set my face unto the Lord God (Adonai Elohim) to seek by prayer and supplication with fasting and sackcloth and ashes" (Dan. 9:3-14). Adonai granted Daniel the 70th week prophecy in answer to his prayer. "Hear the prayer of thy servant" (Daniel 9:17).

9) Jeremiah, lacking self confidence when God called him said:

"Ah, Lord God! (Adonai Jehovah), behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child (Jeremiah 1:6).

But Jehovah said unto me, say not I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee... be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee. (v.8)

Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth." (v.9).

Key: All these men confessed Adonai as their encouragement and hope in every weakness.

10) Isaiah's vision of Adonai and how Seraphim worshipped him, moved him in his darkness following King Uzziah's death, to say in response to God's call "Here am I. Send me." (Isaiah 6:8).

"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord (Adonai) sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up" (Isaiah 6:1).

The Seraphim's coal placed on his mouth imparted new power and purged away his sin (6:6,7). With such a Lord and his help, along with angelic hosts to serve God's servants, Isaiah received confidence to speak the Lord's message, no matter what the cost.

11) Ezekiel, living in evil days, when Israel was a rebellious house, in Babylonian captivity, saw visions of God on a throne (1:26-28). Adonai called Ezekiel, "Thus saith the Lord GOD (Adonai Jehovah) (2:4), be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words (2:6).. thou shalt speak my words unto them". (Ezekiel 2:7).

12) God's messages to Israel (Ezekiel 2:4-8), Ammon (Ezekiel 25:1-3), Moab (25:8-11), Edom (25:12-14), Philistines (25:15-17), Tyre (26:1-3), Egypt (29:1-3), Mt. Seir (35:1-3) and Meshech and Tubal (38:1-3) are prefaced by His title "the Lord (Adonai) God" occurring over 200 times in Ezekiel.

13) When our Lord Jesus Christ became flesh, and "took the form of a servant" (Phil. 2:7) service was seen as honourable and blessed. Till then, so deeply had men fallen, that all service was counted as a disgrace and as a badge of inferiority.

God was serving all; feeding the birds, clothing lilies, opening His hand to satisfy the desire of every living thing (Psalm 145:16; Luke 12:24,27), yet man did not understand God as a servant. So the Lord of all revealed Himself in the service of His father, saying, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold...A bruised reed shall he not break" (Isaiah 42:1-4; Matt. 12:17-20). "Behold my servant, shall deal prudently. His visage was so marred more than any man." Is.52:13-53:12. Christ was among us as one that serveth (Luke 22:27) revealing the blessedness of subjection to our heavenly Lord, which gives man the master he needs to "uphold and put His Spirit on us", but shows selfish fallen man how to rule and govern, by serving others. None have spoken of service like our Lord Jesus Christ. "The disciple is

not above his master, nor the servant above his Lord: it is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his Lord" (Matthew 10:24,25).

"Whosoever therefore will be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant, even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many". (Matthew 20:26-28).

"Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching. Verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them". (Luke 12:37).

Paul said, "His I am and Him I serve." (Acts 27:23).

Christ will approve our faithful service: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." (Matthew 25:21,23).

Conclusion: The writer of Psalm 77:7-11 found help and comfort in the names of God:

1) "Will the Lord (Adonai, my Lord & Husband) cast off forever? Will he be favourable no more? (v.7) Is his mercy clean gone forever? Doth his promise fail forever more? (v.8).

2) Hath God (Elohim, who is in covenant love with me) forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah. (v.9).

3) And I said, this is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High (El Elyon, we are His offspring). (v.10).

4) I will remember the works of the LORD (Jehovah, the righteous One, who gives Himself to be our righteousness): surely I will remember thy wonders of old". (v.11). Psalm 77:7-11. We only truly know God as we obey Him. They who know God's Names will put their trust in Him, and shall never be confounded.

267. TEMPTING GOD TEN TIMES

"All those men...have tempted me now these ten times." (Numbers 14:22)

Bible Reading: Numbers 14:22-25; 1-45.

Aim: To see 10 ways Israel tempted God in the wilderness, so that we do not tempt God.

Introduction: Ten is the number of completeness. Israel in the wilderness tempted God 10 times, setting forth their complete failure and weakness. Notice other occurrences of the number ten:

1) The woman losing 1 of 10 pieces of silver marred the completeness of her marriage (Luke 15:8).

2) The 10 toes of Nebuchadnezzar's statue show the completion of gentile world kingdoms. Dan 2:40-45.

3) The 10 plagues on Egypt show Jehovah's complete victory over Egypt's false gods. (Exodus 7-12).

4) The 10 commandments show man's complete failure to keep God's law (Exodus 20; Gal. 3:24,25).

5) The 10 servants being entrusted with 10 pounds reveal man's complete accountability to God. The faithful servants ruling 10 cities teach the complete joy resulting from faithfulness to God now. (Luke 19:11-26). God greatly rewards Christians who faithfully serve God through all of life's trials.

Question: How do we react to trials? Do we tempt God as Israel did, or do we walk by faith, patience and fruit of the Spirit?

Israel tempted God's goodness 10 times, due to wrongly reacting to problems.

Let us study the 10 times Israel tempted God in the wilderness and see what their sins & solutions were:

1st Temptation: At the **Red Sea** when Israel **despaired** of being delivered (Exodus 14:10-15).

- a) **Their sin.** They: i) Accused Moses of trying to kill them. ii) Reminded Moses that they'd prefer to serve the Egyptians than to follow God into the wilderness when things got difficult.
- b) **Their solution** (v.13,14). i) Fear not. ii) Stand still – don't panic but trust God. iii) See the salvation of the LORD - wait and see what God will do for you. iv) The LORD shall fight for you. v) Ye shall hold your peace – don't complain.
- c) **The Result** (v.29-31). Israel: i) Saw the LORD work. ii) Feared the LORD. iii) Believed the LORD.

2nd Temptation: At **Marah** when Israel **murmured** because of **bitter waters** (Exodus 15:22-27).

Lesson: Don't complain when bitter experiences come, but look to Christ for deliverance.

- a) **Their sin** (v.24). Murmuring = continual complaining.
- b) **Their solution** (v.25). i) The Lord showed them a tree (the cross). ii) The branch (Christ) of the tree (the cross) when cast into our Marah's (bitter experiences) brings victory. **Lesson:** Look to Christ during trials, reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God.
- c) **Their result:** i) God **proved** them (v.25). See trials as tests to prove us and make us better people. ii) God **promised** if they obeyed God, he would "put none of these diseases upon thee". (v.26). iii) God's **personal name** was revealed as Jehovah Rapha, "I am the LORD that healeth thee." (v.26). God can heal bitterness, which is a cause of disease. iv) God's **rest** after a **test**, or blessing after trials (v.27). "They came to Elim, where were 12 wells of water and 70 palm trees." (Exodus 15:27).

3rd Temptation: In the **Wilderness of Sin** when Israel **murmured** because of hunger (Exodus 16:1-5).

- a) **Their Sin:** Hunger was the cause of their murmuring (16:2,3).
- b) **Their Solution** (16:4). i) God's **provision**, "I will rain bread from heaven for you." (Exodus 16:4). "I am the living bread which came down from heaven." (John 6:47-51). ii) God **proved** them whether they would walk in God's law (v.4). iii) God **provided** double on the day before the Sabbath so they would not lack due to honouring God.
- c) **Their result:** i) They disobeyed God in keeping manna till the next day when it bred worms (Exodus 16:19,20). ii) God gave them the Sabbath day (16:23-26). iii) Some disobediently gathered on the Sabbath (16:27,28).

4th Temptation: At Rephidim when Israel **chided** Moses because they had **no water** (Exodus 17:1-7).

- a) **Their Sin.** Because they had no water they chided (scold, rebuke, find fault), murmured against Moses and were ready to stone him. Instead of humbly praying to God, they blamed Moses (17:1-14).

Question: When things go wrong, do we blame others or do we accept it from God for our betterment?

Note: Christ is Jehovah God because Israel tempting Jehovah (Exodus 17:2) is the same as tempting Christ ("Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed." I Cor. 10:9).

- b) **Their Solution:** Jehovah stood on the rock in Horeb. Moses struck it. Water gushed out to quench their thirst (17:6). This pictures Christ being struck on the cross to pay for our sins ("We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted". Isaiah 53:4), so we could have the living water of salvation promised to the woman at the well (John 4:10-15). "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink" (John 7:37).
- c) **Their Result:** Moses called the place **Massah** (testing, trial) and **Meribah** (quarrel, provocation, strife) because they chided and tempted the LORD saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?" (17:7). This was a foolish question because they had seen God work many wonders, but forgot them. Jews committed the same sin 1500 years later of **doubting God's presence** by asking Jesus, "What sign showest thou then, that we may see and believe thee?" (John 6:30,31).

Lesson: Remember God's past answers to prayers.

5th Temptation: At **Sinai** when Israel became **impatient** because of **Moses' delay** (Exodus 32:1-35).

- a) **Their Sin.** i) They gave in to **impatience** at Moses' delay to come down from Mt Sinai with the Law. ii) Aaron made a **golden calf** for the Israelites to worship (32:1-6).
- b) **Their Solution:** i) God would have destroyed them except for **Moses' intercession** that God had brought Israel out of Egypt, what would the Egyptians say if God killed them, and remember Your promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to multiply Israel. (32:11-14). ii) Moses **burnt** the calf and **ground** it to powder (32:15-20). iii) Moses asked, "Who is on the LORD's side?" (32:26). The Levites came forward and killed 3000 men (32:26-28). Contrast this with 3000 being saved at Pentecost in the Age of Grace (Acts 2:41). iv) The Lord **plagued** the people because they made the calf. (32:35).
- c) **Their Result:** i) YHWH sent His angel before them (32:34). ii) The LORD gave Moses a new copy of the 10 commandments that Moses broke (34:1-4), and a covenant (34:10).

Lesson: Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him..fret not thyself in any wise to do evil." (Ps. 37:7,8).

6th Temptation: **Wilfulness** of Nadab and Abihu in **offering strange fire** (Leviticus 10:1-10). (Part II).

- a) **Their sin.** i) Nadab and Abihu, (Aaron's sons) offered strange fire before the LORD which He commanded them not. (Leviticus 10:1). ii) They may have been **drunk** at the time (Leviticus 10:8-10). iii) They acted **impulsively** without awaiting the voice of God.

- b) **Their solution:** i) YHWH sent fire to devour them (10:2).
 ii) YHWH said, "I will be sanctified in them that come near me, & before all the people I will be glorified." 10:3
 iii) Command Aaron "Do not drink wine nor strong drink,..when ye go into the tabernacle." (10:8,9).
 iv) Put a difference between the holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean. (Leviticus 10:10).

7th Temptation: At Taberah, Israel complained loudly (Numbers 11:1-3).

- a) **Their Sin:** Israel complained. This displeased the LORD who sent fire which consumed those in the uttermost part of the camp. (Numbers 11:1).
 b) **Their Solution:** They cried to Moses. Moses prayed to YHWH and the fire was quenched (11:2).
 c) **Their Result:** Moses called the place Taberah meaning "a burning" to remind Israel that their sin of complaining displeased God and brings judgment. (11:3).

8th Temptation: At Kibroth-Hattaavah (graves of lust) when Israel lusted for flesh. Numbers 11:4-9,31-35

- a) **Their Sin:** i) The mixed multitude lusted for flesh to eat. "Who shall give us flesh to eat?" (11:4).
 ii) Their hearts were back in Egypt. "We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic." (11:5). They remembered the good in Egypt, but not the bad taskmasters, whips and hard labour. They did not remember God's wonders and provision.
 iii) They were ungrateful for the manna God gave them (11:6).
 b) **Their Solution:** i) The LORD appointed 70 elders to share Moses' workload (11:16-25).
 ii) The LORD sent quails to eat for one month (11:20,31-32).
 "he that gathered least gathered 10 homers" (860 gallons). (11:32).
 c) **Their Result:** i) The quails became rotten, the LORD smote the people with a very great plague, and they buried the people that lusted (11:33,34).
 ii) God taught them thankfulness, and that lusting leads to death. "Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (2 Peter 1:4; James 1:15).

9th Temptation: At Hazereth, Miriam and Aaron usurped Moses' authority. (Numbers 11:35 12:16).

- a) **Their Sin:** i) Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses. (12:1).
 ii) They usurped Moses' authority claiming the LORD spoke by them also. (12:2).
 b) **Their Solution:**
 i) The LORD came and stood in the door of the tabernacle to defend Moses' meekness. (12:3-8).
 ii) The LORD being angry against Miriam and Aaron, smote Miriam with leprosy. She was shut out of the camp for seven days after which she was received in again (12:9-16).
 c) **Their Result:** i) The sin of rebellion slows down God's work.
 ii) Israel learned that God hates rebellion against authority. "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." (1 Timothy 2:12). See I Samuel 15:23.

10th Temptation: At Kadesh-Barnea, Israel disbelieved God could conquer Canaan. Numbers 13,14.

- a) **Their sin:** i) Their unbelief that the LORD could bring them into Canaan, sealed their doom (13:31).
 ii) 10 of the 12 spies brought an evil report of the land. They had a grasshopper complex (13:32,33).
 iii) They all murmured against Moses and Aaron.
 iv) They all requested God to die in Egypt or in the wilderness (14:2).
 v) They accused YHWH of endangering their wives & children by bringing them into the land (14:3).
 iv) They rebelled saying, "Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt." (14:4).
 b) **Their solution:**
 i) Joshua & Caleb told them not to rebel because YHWH was with them & would bring them in (6-9).
 ii) The Lord intended to destroy them all, but Moses successfully interceded to spare them. (14:10-21).
 iii) Yhwh reminds them that this is the tenth time they tempted God and ignored His voice (14:22).
 iv) Yhwh forbids those over 20 years from entering the land. After wandering 40 years in the wilderness, their children under 20 years would enter the land under Joshua and Caleb. (14:23-35).
 v) Yhwh killed the 10 unbelieving spies in a plague.
 vi) Yhwh told the people to turn around tomorrow to wander 40 years in the wilderness (14:25,32-35). They mourned greatly (14:39). They presumed to enter and conquer the land, but were defeated by the Amalekites and Canaanites (14:39-45).

Conclusion: Their tempting the LORD 10 times proved their complete failure.

Their excuse for disobeying the LORD was that they feared for their wives and children's safety, yet those over age 20 perished, while their children under age 20 entered the promised land 40 years later.

Question: Which of their 10 temptings of the LORD are we guilty of? Are your sins blocking your usefulness for God and grieving His Holy Spirit?

- 1) Are you despairing of deliverance?
- 2) Wilful and failing to sanctify the LORD?
- 3) Murmuring at bitter experiences?
- 4) Complaining?
- 5) Murmuring at hunger or lack of provision?
- 6) Lusting, ungrateful, forgetting God's blessings?
- 7) Fault finding and blaming others?
- 8) Rebelling and slandering authorities?
- 9) Impatient at delays?
- 10) Disbelieving in God to fulfil his promises?

268. THE GOOD SAMARITAN - WHAT SIN DOES TO US

Bible Reading: Luke 10:25-37.

Aim: To show how greatly we need Jesus Christ (the Good Samaritan) to save us from our sins and as an example of showing mercy to those in need.

Introduction: Satan deceives people into thinking that sin has no consequences. When we see the terrible effects of sin, we really hate it and avoid it.

I. The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-33).

This story Jesus told must be interpreted on two levels:

i) The plain teaching is that we should live like the good Samaritan by helping others in need,

“Go thou and do likewise.” (v.37).

ii) The metaphorical teaching is seen in the context of the Jews rejecting Jesus.

As the Jewish leaders were of no help to the beaten, robbed man, neither could they help lost people. As the outcast Samaritan was the only one willing to help the beaten man, so Jesus was the outcast One who was willing to seek and save lost sinners. “Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan?” (John 8:48).

Background: An expert in the law asked Jesus: “Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal Life?” (v.25). This question surfaced on several occasions such as with the rich young ruler (Matthew 19:16-22) and Nicodemus (John 3:1-15). This was not a sincere question because:

i) The lawyer tempted or tested Jesus (v.25).

ii) Luke said that the lawyer wanted to justify himself (v.29).

Answer: Jesus replied with 2 questions, driving him back to the Old Testament law, which is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. (Galatians 3:24).

The lawyer replied by correctly quoting “Thou shalt love the LORD thy God...” (Deuteronomy 6:5) and “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Leviticus 19:18). One must love God & our neighbour 100% always in order to keep the law properly. If the lawyer did this, he would live (v.28).

The lawyer’s response should have been to ask: “How can I keep the law perfectly always? I am not able. I need help”. Instead, he tried to justify himself and defend himself against the implications of Jesus’ words. Every sinner desires to justify himself by bringing the law down to his standard, rather than frame his life by it’s requirements. So he tried to move the focus off himself by asking:

“Who is my neighbour?” Jesus answered him by telling the story of the Good Samaritan. Jesus compelled the lawyer to acknowledge that a Samaritan, a race hated by Jews, had shown neighbourly kindness, while a priest and Levite had denied kindness to their own countryman.

The road from Jerusalem to Jericho descends about 3000 feet north-east over 17 miles of rocky, mountainous terrain towards the Jordan Valley. When Herod the Great dismissed 40,000 temple constructions workers, many of them became highwaymen robbers (Josephus, Antiquities,15,7).

Hence it was a dangerous road to travel because many robbers hid along its steep, winding road.

The main characters are:

i) The Priest who avoided the wounded man, passing by on the other side (Luke 10:31). 12,000 priests and Levites lived at Jericho and worked at Jerusalem.

ii) A Levite, of the tribe of Levi (a temple assistant), came and looked on him more attentively, but did nothing to help him (Luke 10:32).

iii) A certain Samaritan (part Jew, part Gentile), who would not be expected to help a Jew, overcame all the usual hostility between Jews and Samaritans, saw the wounded man as a neighbour, one who needed help, and denied himself in order to show kindness to the wounded stranger.

The good Samaritan stopped, came where he was, pitied him, bound up his wounds, poured in oil and wine, set him on his own beast, conducted him to an inn, passed the night with him and paid the inn-keeper to take care of him. All this was done without expecting any reward (Luke 10:34,35).

If this kindness had been shown by a Jew it would have been admirable.

If it had been shown by a Gentile, it would have been a great kindness.

But, being done by a Samaritan, a man of a nation most hateful to the Jews, it strongly shows how we should treat friends and foes in distress.

(Luke 10:36).

Question: “Which of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?”

Answer: “He that showed mercy on him.” (v.37). “Go and do thou likewise”.

Show the same kindness to all, to friend and foe. Then you will have evidence that you keep the law.

Lessons: i) Knowledge of the law is needed to show us our sinfulness and need of a Saviour.

ii) The one who loves most proves it by denying himself to help others in times of need.

iii) All religions should require us to do good to all men (Galatians 6:10). Real love for our enemies will lead us to deny ourselves to do good to them and help them in times of distress.

iv) A true neighbour will help needy people with whom there has been a controversy or difference.

v) True religion teaches us to regard every man as our neighbour, and to do good to all men, irrespective of their national or religious differences.

vi) When men differ in religious opinion, as did the Jews and Samaritans, they should still treat each other kindly and help each other in necessity. Christian kindness must not be marred by differences in doctrine or forms of worship.

vii) The ultimate perfect neighbour is Jesus Christ, whose compassion contrasted with the Jewish religious leaders who had no compassion on those who were perishing. Jesus’ followers are to live like that true neighbour.

II. A Deeper Meaning In This Story

“A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.” (Luke 10:30).

Many aspects of this story remind us of the history of mankind from the fall to Jesus Christ’s return.

1. A **certain man** reminds us of the first Adam.

2. **Jerusalem** (city of peace) reminds us of the happy peace and rest man enjoyed before the fall in Eden.

3. **Went down** from Jerusalem to Jericho reminds us of man departing from God and falling down morally in obeying the serpent.

i) **Jerusalem** = city of peace (Shalom in Hebrew).

ii) **Jericho** = a city of curse and death, just as man is now living under the curse and death in this world.

Joshua (Hebrew for Jesus) pronounced a curse on this city after it was destroyed (Joshua 6:26) that whoever rebuilt it would experience the death of his first born and youngest sons at the beginning and end of the construction project. This was fulfilled 520 years later when Hiel the Bethelite rebuilt Jericho by seeing his sons Abiram and Segub die as Joshua prophesied (I Kings 16:34).

4. He fell among **thieves**. Satan and sin remind us of the thieves, who stripped man of his clothing (man's first righteousness before the fall), and spiritually wounded him leaving him half dead.

(Though man was alive in his body, he was dead in his spirit. Ephesians 2:1).

"In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." (Genesis 2:17).

5. The **Priest** and **Levite** who had no compassion on the wounded man remind us of the Law and the Levitical priesthood which set a high standard but cannot save us. The law can't save us, nor can our attempts at holiness by religious rituals save us.

6. The **Good Samaritan** reminds us of Jesus Christ Who was sinless, compassionate on man's plight and able to restore us to our right state by paying the penalty for our sins on the cross.

7. He poured in **wine**. This reminds us of the blood of Jesus Christ which saves us and cleanses us from all sin. The wine in the Lord's supper is to remind us of Christ's saving blood.

8. He poured in **oil**. This reminds us of the comforting, restoring, joyful work of the Holy Spirit received by those putting faith in Christ's blood sacrifice. "Thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness." Ps45:7

9. He set him on his own beast (v.34) reminds us of the doctrine of Christ (Hebrews 6:1,2), Bible doctrine and the gospel of Christ. Why?

Because as a donkey carries the body, so doctrine metaphorically carries the soul. Notice:

i) "Barnabus also was carried away with their dissimulation." (Galatians 3:13).

ii) "Be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine." (Eph. 4:4)

iii) "Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led" 1Cor 12:2

iv) "Be not carried about with diverse and strange doctrines." (Hebrews 13:9).

10. The **Inn** reminds us of a local church, since a church is a place of spiritual recuperation. True doctrine carries us to a true church.

11. The **Host** (v.35) in charge of the inn reminds us of a Pastor /Bible teacher who feeds people God's word and takes spiritual care and oversight of believers.

12. **Two pence** remind us of: i) Spiritual gifts given by Christ to a local church such as pastor/teacher, evangelist etc. to meet believers' needs in the church age, and ii) 2000 years from Christ's first coming to his second coming. As average wages were a penny a day, so two pennies wages correspond to two days wages, reminding us of the time between Christ's comings as implied in Hosea 6:1,2 "After two days will be revive us".

13. **Samaritan going away** (v.35) remind us of Christ's ascension to heaven. Christ has given believers talents to use to win the lost and train the saints. Whatever we spend now in God's service, when Jesus Christ returns, He will repay us and reward us at the Judgment Seat of Christ (II Corinthians 5:10).

III. What Do Sin and Satan Do To Us As Thieves?

1. They **rob men** of their:

i) Time - by telling them they have plenty of time to get saved, & by telling Christians not to serve God.

ii) Fellowship with God, by getting men to sin, then loading them with guilt by telling them that God hates them.

iii) Peace with God and a peaceful conscience.

iv) Souls and eternal life by getting them to reject Christ.

v) Crowns and rewards in eternity.

2. They **bind men** hand and foot, and take away their treasure. Paul said to Simon the Sorcerer, "Thou are in the bond of iniquity" (Acts 8:23). "He shall be holden with the cords of his sins." (Proverbs 5:22). Satan and sin bind men with cords or bonds of:- i) Bond of ignorance. ii) Bond of unbelief.

iii) Bond of a hard heart. iv) Bond of false religions. v) Bond of fear. vi) Bond of debt.

3. They **promise much** but achieve little. They persuade men to give up eternal treasures for earthly toys.

4. They make men **believe strange things** contrary to reason, such as by sowing evil, they'll reap good.

IV. Things Sin Is Compared To

1. A **Debt** (Matthew 18:21-35).

We as sinners are represented by the servant who owed his King 10,000 talents which he was unable to repay (18:24:25). Debt and sin expose a man to arrest, filling his mind with trouble & fear (I Tim. 6:9,10).

2. A **Heavy Burden** (Psalm 38:4).

"For my iniquities are gone over my head as a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me." (Psalm 38:4). Sin is a weight or burden that weighs heavy on lost people and restricts man's potential.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28).

“He bore our sins upon his own body on the tree.” (Luke 22:44).

“Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us.” (Hebrews 12:1). Sin hinders Christians in our spiritual race, as a weight hinders an athlete.

3. A Sting “The poison of asps is under their lips.” (Romans 3:13).

- i) “The sting of death is sin.” (1 Cor. 15:56). Death is like a poisonous serpent, with a cruel and tormenting sting called sin. Sin torments people.
- ii) Snake sting is very painful.
- iii) As snake sting can kill our body, so sin can kill the body on earth and the soul in hell.
- iv) As snake sting spreads quickly through our blood and body, so yielding to one sin can spread its sting all through our life and kill us.
- v) As the sting of a snake must be pulled out before a person can be healed, so sin must be pulled out of our life by Christ at salvation.

4. A Wound. “My wounds stink and are corrupt” (Psalm 38:5). “A wounded spirit who can bear?” Prov.18:14 Sin wounds the soul of a sinner, a church and a nation. Every part of a sinner’s soul is wounded.

- i) Their judgment is corrupt.
 - ii) Their understanding is darkened, vain, blind, unbelieving, hateful and unteachable (Ephesians 4:18).
 - iii) Their will opposes God, is proud and stubborn.
 - iv) Their affections are wounded. They love the creature more than God. They love their lusts.
 - v) Their memory is wounded, being forgetful of God’s goodness, but remembering injuries and blaming them on God.
 - vi) Their conscience is wounded and misguided. Instead of accusing their own sin, they excuse it. “Their minds and consciences are corrupt.” (Titus 1:15).
- Come to Jesus Christ the Great Physician Who can heal your wounded soul and spirit.

5. A Plague. “Every man shall know the plague of his own heart.” (1 Kings 8:38).

“In the skin of his flesh like the plague of leprosy.” (Leviticus 13:2). “Command the children of Israel that they put out of the camp every leper.” (Numbers 5:2). Leprosy represents the hateful nature of sin.

- i) As leprosy spreads through all parts of the body, so sin spreads to all parts of the soul.
- ii) As leprosy is stinking and hateful to men, so sin is detestable and hateful to God & to true Christians.
- iii) As leprosy is contagious and infectious to people, houses, clothing, walls and vessels, so is sin contagious to others. “A companion of fools shall be destroyed.” (Proverbs 13:20). “Learn not the way of the heathen.” (Jeremiah 10:2). “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, said the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you.” (2 Corinthians 6:17).
- iv) As leprosy separates the victim from society, so sin separates people from God, friends, families, believers and heaven. “Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear....your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.” (Isaiah 59:23). None but the High Priest (Jesus Christ) could pronounce a person clean from leprosy (Leviticus 13:2), so only Jesus Christ can cure our sin plague.

6. A Sickness.

“The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and purifying sores.” (Isaiah 1:5). “The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.” (Matthew 9:12). Spiritual sickness is twofold:

- i) To be sick with sin. This is all mankind.
- ii) To be sick of sin. This is necessary to be saved.

7. Vomit. “The dog is turned to his vomit again.” (2 Peter 2:22).

A wicked man, or one who returns to his old evil ways is like a dog, and his sins are like vomit which a dog eats up. Sin is like vomit because:

- i) Vomit is a very loathsome thing, but dogs’ vomit is most detestable.
Sin is a very loathsome thing, but apostasy (returning to past sins) is the worst of sins.
- ii) As some men vomit by eating something bad, so, many sinners, by hearing a soul-searching message, vomit up some sins in their life by repentance. BUT, after some time, they grow more sick of Christ’s ways than they ever were of their sins, and so, as the dog, they lick up their own vomit again, by returning to their old sinful ways.

Lesson: It is very hateful to see someone who has turned his back on Christ, rolling in the vomit of his old sins. Do not be like this.

8. Uncleaness: “To work all uncleanness.” (Ephesians 4:19).

Sin is an unclean thing. Those who see the face of sin in the mirror of the law (James 1:23), see it to be the most ugly and deformed object in the world. The Holy Spirit compares sin’s uncleanness to:-

- i) Menstrual blood and afterbirth of newborn babies. “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags.” (Isaiah 64:6).
 - ii) The stink of a rotten corpse in a grave. “but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness.” (Matthew 23:27).
 - iii) The scum of a drain. “How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh in iniquity like water?” (Job 15:16).
 - iv) Loathsome, stinking, putrefying sores (Isaiah 1:5).
- Sin is so unclean that it defiles all it touches. All a sinner’s faculties are unclean, including his understanding, will, memory, judgment, love, conscience, eyes, hands and feet.

Conclusion:

Do you see your sin as detestable? Repent of it today.

269. THE 12 SONS OF JACOB

Bible Reading: Genesis 29:31-30:24; 49:1-33.

Aim: To see how the meaning of the names of the 12 sons of Jacob teach us how to live for God.

Introduction: In Scripture, all names and name changes contain important lessons for us. For example:

i) Adam: Before the Fall, man and woman were both called Adam (Genesis 5:1,2), yet after the fall her name was changed to Eve (Genesis 3:20) meaning the mother of all living, or Life-Giver. Eternal life had just been lost in the Fall when death entered the world, so Adam was inspired to prophesy of when Jesus Christ the Life-Giver and seed of the woman (Gen.3:15) would come to be the Saviour of the world.

ii) Abram (High Father) had his name changed to Abraham (Father of many nations) in Genesis 17:5. He lost the "High" from his name. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" James 4:6 "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up." (James 4:10).

iii) Sarai (Dominative = 8297) was changed to Sarah (princess, queen = 8283). (Genesis 17:15,16). She lost her dominating role and became a role model for godly women. "Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham calling him Lord (head), whose daughters ye are as long as ye do well..." (1 Peter 3:6).

iv) Jacob (Cheater = 3290) was changed to Israel (prince with God). Thus Jacob lost his cheating and became God's prince (Genesis 32:28). After salvation we lose our sin bent and become God's princes.

v) Saul of Tarsus (Big) was changed to Paul (little). "Saul (who is also called Paul), filled with the Holy Ghost..." (Acts 13:9). Saul's name was changed to Paul when he first spoke on his first missionary journey. The first mention of Paul describes his future ministry as one filled with the Holy Ghost, rebuking sin, people believing on Jesus Christ and astonishing doctrine.

Hence, the BIG was knocked out of Paul, as the HIGH was knocked out of Abram, and as the CHEAT was knocked out of Jacob. Believers must be humble and trained for God to use them greatly.

From this we see that Bible names have important meanings.

Let us see how the names of Jacob's 12 sons show truths about salvation and Christian living.

In Genesis 29:32 - 30:24 and 35:18 we see Jacob's sons being born and named.

In Genesis 49:1-33, Jacob gathers his 12 sons around his bedside just before his death so "that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days." (Genesis 49:1).

1. REUBEN = Behold a Son (7205). (Genesis 29:32).

His mother Leah said this when he was born, as a sign of God's blessing and Jacob's love for her, when the favourite wife Rachel was barren. He was entitled to double honour, but Jacob passed him by because he had sex with Bilhah, Jacob's concubine (35:22). This tribe settled east of the Jordan River which meant they were the first to encounter any invaders from the east such as Assyria and Babylon. They almost caused a civil war by erecting a monument which other tribes saw as an idol (Joshua 22).

Lesson: To be saved we must "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29,36). "He that has the Son has life." (1 John 5:12). "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." (Isaiah 45:22). "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee." (Matthew 25:6). "Behold, the bridegroom cometh."

(Matthew 25:6). "Looking unto Jesus" (Hebrews 12:2) is the key to salvation and to living for God.

Question: Have you received Jesus Christ as your Saviour? (John 1:12). Do you look to Jesus Christ in all things? (Colossians 3:17).

2. SIMEON = to Hear, Understand and Obey (8095). (Genesis 29:33).

Leah was now satisfied that God had heard her cry for a son and understood her sorrow.

Lesson:

i) After we are saved, the LORD hears our prayers and understands our every need.

ii) Every believer needs to hear God's word and seek to understand it, so that we live obediently.

Note: Simeon and Levi were men of violence and injustice in killing the men of Shechem (34:25) for raping Dinah their sister. Jacob does not bless them (49:5-7). Their descendants would be scattered throughout Israel, without being given regular land holdings as were the other tribes. Levites dwelt in various cities. Simeonites shared Judah's land.

3. LEVI = to Join, Attach, Unite (3867). (Genesis 29:34). When Levi was born, Leah was sure that her husband Jacob would favour her and be joined to her, as much as he loved Rachel.

Lesson: There are three Biblical joinings that apply to us:

i) Jesus said: "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." (1 Corinthians 6:17). After salvation and while we listen to God's voice in His word, we realise our oneness with God.

ii) Fellow believers: "That ye all speak the same thing, be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1 Cor. 1:10). God wants believers in a local church to agree in doctrine and in judging what is right and wrong.

iii) Marriage partners: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." (Ephesians 5:31). God wants spouses to be joined spiritually, mentally and physically, in agreement and without conflict.

4. JUDAH = Praise (3063). (Genesis 29:35; 49:8-12). After Judah's birth, Leah praised God for joy.

Lesson: i) After salvation, we begin a life of praising God. This means that we should stop complaining, murmuring, back-biting and begin to praise God daily. "Seven times a day do I praise thee." (Psalm 119:164).

ii) "Thy father's children shall bow down before thee." (Genesis 49:8). This will be fulfilled when Israel bows down to Jesus Christ the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, as King when He returns.

"At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow" (Philippians 2:10,11).

iii) Judah, through Jesus Christ, would destroy His enemies and be left undisturbed as a young lion. This applies to David and Christ destroying their enemies. (Genesis 49:8,9).

iv) "The sceptre shall not depart from Judahuntil Shiloh (Jesus Christ) come." (Gen 49:10). Page 12: 36

5. DAN = to Judge (1835). (Genesis 30:1-6; 49:16-18). Because Rachel was barren, she gave her handmaid Bilhah to Jacob, who bore Dan on her behalf. She called him Dan because Rachel said, "God hath judged me, and hath heard my voice, and hath given me a son." (30:6). "Dan shall judge his people." (49:16). An old tradition is that Antichrist will come from tribe of Dan.

Lesson: What does God say that we should judge?

i) Ourselves (1 Cor. 11:31) or God will judge (or discipline) us.

ii) Those within our church (1 Cor. 5:12).

iii) The world and angels in the millennium. (1 Cor. 6:2,3).

iv) Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. (John 7:24).

6. NAPHTALI = to Wrestle (5321). (Gen. 30:7,8; 49:21) When Bilhah bore Naphtali, Rachel said, "With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed." (30:8).

Lesson: i) We are in a spiritual warfare. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Ephesians 6:12).

ii) Naphtali was noted for his mobility, swiftness in battle and eloquence with words.

"Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words." (49:21). We will succeed in the spiritual warfare if we are swift in spiritual battles (rather than lazy), and if we speak goodly words. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." (Proverbs 18:21).

7. GAD = a Troop or Overcome (1408). (Genesis 30:10,11; 49:19). "Leah said, a troop cometh, and she called his name Gad." (30:11). Gad was Leah's maid Zilpah's first son. He was born when a troop of soldiers passed by. "Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last." (49:19). Gad will be attacked by a troop of attackers, but he will attack and overcome them. Border raids were often experienced by tribes on the east of the Jordan River (1 Chronicles 5:18-19).

Lesson: i) God wants us to attack the devil's strongholds (Jesus said "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18). We do this as we seek to win people to Christ, teach God's word, and build sound churches.

ii) God wants us to be overcomers in the spiritual battle. As the devil attacks us, we must not quit, but "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2Tim 2:3). We have no excuse to be lazy or defeated.

Question: How do we overcome the devil?

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

ii) "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (1 John 5:4).

iii) "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death." (Revelation 12:11).

iv) By serving God in a local church. The letters to the 7 churches in Revelation 2,3 are to overcomers.

8. ASHER = to be Happy, Joyful (836). (Genesis 30:12,13; 49:20).

When Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son, Leah said, "Happy am I... she called his name Asher." (30:12,13). The tribe of Asher would have fertile land and produce much food. (Genesis 49:20).

Lesson: The Christian life is a happy life when we think of all the good things God does for us, and when we avoid ungodly people and behaviour. There is no room for sadness or depression if we live by the Bible. Learn to see the happy side of things.

Question: How can we be happy?

Answer: i) If we have many children (Psalm 127:5). ii) If we fear the Lord (Psalm 128:1-3).

iii) If our God is YHWH (Psalm 144:15). iv) If we find wisdom (Proverbs 3:13).

v) If we have mercy on the poor (Proverbs 14:21). vi) If we trust in God (Proverbs 16:20).

vii) If we have a servant's heart (John 13:13-17). viii) If we suffer for righteousness sake (1 Peter 3:14).

ix) If we endure (James 5:11). x) If we condemn not ourselves in what we allow (Romans 14:22).

9. ISSACHAR = He will bring a Reward, Hire, Servant (3485). (Genesis 30:14-18; 49:14,15). "Leah said, God hath given me my hire, ... and she called his name Issachar." (30:18). "Issachar...became a servant unto tribute." (49:15). Issachar was Leah's fifth child. She regarded this son as God rewarding her for giving Zilpah, her handmaid to Jacob.

Lesson: i) After salvation we should serve God. God doesn't want us to be lazy. Attempt things for God.

ii) All God's people are hired. Jesus said, "When I come again, I will repay thee." (Luke 10:35).

Jesus promises, "My reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:12.

10. ZEBULUN = to Dwell (2074). (Genesis 30:19,20; 49:13).

Zebulun was Leah's sixth and last son. "Now will my husband dwell with me, because I have born him six sons; and she called his name Zebulun." (30:20). This convinced Leah that Jacob's favour would dwell with her. After we are saved (Reuben), and while listening to God (Simeon), and continuing to praise God (Judah), we discover and enjoy God's blessings dwelling with us (Zebulun). Zebulun would dwell near the sea shore, "he shall be for an haven of ships; and his border shall be into Zidon." (49:13).

Question: Where are we to dwell?

i) "Thou Lord only makest me dwell in safety." (Psalm 4:8).

ii) "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." (Psalm 23:6).

iii) "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." (Ps. 91:1).

iv) "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." (Psalm 133:1).

If we don't dwell here, we will be as the "rebellious who dwell in a dry land." (Psalm 68:6).

11. JOSEPH = to Add, to Increase (3130). (Genesis 30:22-24; 49:22-26).

Joseph was Rachel's first son. He was to be a fruitful bough due to his faithfulness to God in Egypt. Rachel called him Joseph and said: "The LORD shall add to me another son."

(30:24). Joseph's son Ephraim means fruitful. Jacob prophesied victory (49:23-24a) and prosperity (49:25) on Joseph's two tribes. Victory in battle was experienced by Ephraim's tribe under Joshua, Deborah and Samuel, as well as by Manasseh's tribe under Gideon and Jephthah. In Genesis 49:24,25 are five titles of God, these being, the Mighty God of Jacob, the shepherd, the stone of Israel, the God (Elohim) of thy father, and the Almighty (El Shaddai). Jacob bestowed on Joseph the greater blessings.

Lesson: After salvation, God wants us to add to our faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity. "If these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 1:5-8).

12. BENJAMIN = Son of My Right Hand (1144). (Genesis 35:16-20; 49:27,28).

Rachel died here in childbirth. She named the child Ben-oni (son of my sorrow), but Jacob renamed him Benjamin (son of my right hand), thus turning a time of sorrow to triumph and victory. Benjamin was an answer to Rachel's prayer (30:24) for a second son after Joseph.

These two names are a type of Christ. Ben-oni reminds us of Jesus Christ the suffering Saviour at His first coming, "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3).

Benjamin, reminds us of Jesus Christ the head of the warrior tribe (49:27), firmly joined to Judah the Kingly tribe (49:8-12), defeating earth's armies at His coming. Jesus said to Caiaphas the high priest, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." (Matthew 26:64).

Jacob describes Benjamin's tribe as a violent, ravening, devouring wolf (49:27). See their civil war (Judges 20).

Lesson: i) After salvation we are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Ephesians 1:3,4.

ii) We are "predestined unto the adoption of children (son placing in heaven) by Jesus Christ." (Ephesians 1:3).

The Old Testament Saul and NT Saul were both from Benjamin's tribe. Consider our great position as sons of God.

Conclusion: Will you apply these truths contained in the names of the 12 sons of Jacob?

270. THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

Bible Reading: Luke 24:1-53 or Matthew 28:1-20.

Aim: To understand the evidence and importance of Jesus Christ's resurrection.

Memory Verse: "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." Luke 24:34.

Introduction: Jesus Christ's birth, death and resurrection are the central events of history. Belief in these are essential to be saved (Romans 10:9). Christ's resurrection proves Him to be God and Saviour of the world. Because Jesus Christ rose from the dead, this proves that all believers will be raised from the dead. Some proofs of Jesus Christ being the only way to God are His resurrection, His miracles, His prophecies and His fulfilment of Old Testament Messianic prophecies.

One of our first comments to Muslims should be that, "Jesus rose from the dead.

Mohammed is dead. Why would anyone follow a dead man? What hope do you have?"

In 1 Corinthians 15:12-19, Paul shows that everything stands or falls with Christ's bodily resurrection. If Christ did not rise then: i) The apostles' preaching is vain and useless (v.14).

ii) The Corinthians' faith is vain (v.14). iii) The apostles are false witnesses (v.15).

iv) The Corinthians are still in their sins (v.17). v) Those fallen asleep in Christ are perished (v.18).

vi) Christians are of all men most miserable (v.19). These negative things are true of all other religions who are without a resurrected Saviour. All through Acts, Peter and Paul preach and strongly emphasise Christ's resurrection. With Christ's resurrection being true, all Bible miracles are verified.

I. Illustrations of Resurrection

1. As a young man D L Moody was called upon suddenly to preach a funeral sermon. He hunted through all four gospels to find one of Christ's funeral sermons, but without success. He instead found that Christ broke up every funeral He ever attended. Death could not exist where Jesus was. When the dead heard His voice they sprang to life. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25).

2. A British explorer entered a pyramid and was permitted to open one of the mummies which was undisturbed for 3000 years. As soon as the air touched the mummy, the rose in it's hand crumbled to the finest dust except for the seed of the rose. This seed was brought back to England and planted in his garden where it sprouted and grew to produce beautiful flowers. There was nothing quite like it in their botany range. They named it after the Swedish botanist Dahl, and is to-day one of the Dahlia family.

3. A certain European countess who was strongly opposed to the resurrection of her body ordered that her grave be covered with a granite slab, surrounded by blocks of stone, with the corners fastened to each other and to the slab with heavy iron clamps. Upon the covering, this inscription was written:

"This burial place, purchased to all eternity, must never be opened". All that human power could do to prevent any change in that grave was done. But a little birch tree seed sprouted, and the root found it's way between the granite slab and the stone blocks. The root grew until it tore away the iron clamps and raised the granite lid of the grave, which is now resting upon the large trunk of a flourishing birch tree.

II. Events of Christ's Resurrection

1. Jesus Christ rose early Sunday morning (Luke 24:2).

2. Mary Magdalene, Mary the Mother of Jesus and Salome coming to the tomb to prepare the body, find the stone rolled away and see a vision of angels (Matthew 28:1-8; Mark 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-8).

3. They separated at the tomb. Mary Magdalene going to tell Peter and John (John 20:1-2), and the other two going to tell the other disciples at Bethany (Luke 24:8-11).

4. Peter and John, notified by Mary Magdalene, ran to the grave ahead of Mary, look in and return without seeing the Lord (John 20:3-10).

5. Mary Magdalene returns to the tomb weeping, sees two angels, then meets Jesus whom she initially mistakes for the gardener. She then went to tell the disciples as Jesus commanded her (John 20:11-18).

6. Mary (Mother of James and Joses) meets the women with the spices, and returns with them to the tomb, and sees the two angels (Luke 24:4-5).

7. They go to seek the disciples and are met by Jesus (Matthew 28:8-10).

8. The guarding soldiers report the events to the chief priests (Matthew 28:11-15).

9. Jesus appears to Peter in the afternoon (Luke 24:3-4; 1 Corinthians 15:5).

10. Jesus appears to 2 disciples (one was Cleopas) on the road to Emmaus toward evening (Luke 24:13-33).

11. These 2 disciples return to Jerusalem to tell the eleven that Jesus is risen (Luke 24:33-35).

12. Jesus appears to the 10 disciples (except Thomas). (John 20:19-25).

13. Jesus appears to the 11 disciples, 8 days later and rebukes Thomas' unbelief (John 20:26-31).

14. Jesus appears to the 7 disciples who are fishing by the sea of Galilee and restores Peter (John 21:1-25).

15. Jesus appears on a mountain to the apostles and to 500 brethren at once (1 Cor. 15:6; Matthew 28:16).

16. Jesus appears to James at Jerusalem and Bethany (1 Corinthians 15:7).

17. Jesus appears to the 11 disciples (Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:14-20; Luke 24:33-53; Acts 1:3-12) and gives them the Great Commission.

18. Jesus ascends to Heaven in a cloud (Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:3-12).

19. Jesus appears to Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-6; 1 Cor. 15:8).

20. Jesus appears to Paul in the Temple (Acts 22:17-21 and 23:11).

21. Jesus appears to Stephen at his stoning outside Jerusalem (Acts 7:55).

22. Jesus appears to John on Patmos to give him the Book of Revelation (Revelation 1:10-19).

III. Proof That Jesus Christ Died

1. The Centurion and soldiers declared Jesus Christ to be dead (Mark 15:44,45; John 19:33).

2. Three women came to the tomb to anoint Jesus' dead body (Mark 16:1).

3. Blood and water flowed from Christ's wounded side (John 19:34,35). This water flowed from the pericardium and the blood flowed from the heart. The pericardium is a closed sac encasing the heart. It normally contains 5ml of fluid. Mallory and Wright's "Pathological Technique" states that "The normal amount (of pericardial fluid) is about a teaspoonful, but may be increased to 100ml (24 teaspoonfuls) where the death agony is prolonged".

4. He did not appear to His disciples on the 3rd day as half dead, but as the mighty conqueror of death.

5. Christ Himself declared that He died and rose again (“I am He that liveth and was dead”. Rev. 1:18). Christ’s death and resurrection are the central events in Christianity. All other religions base their claim to recognition on the teachings of their founders. Without Christ’s death and resurrection, Christianity is reduced to the level of other religions.

The correct view of Jesus Christ’s death is the Substitution View. Christ in His death fully satisfied the demands of a righteous God for judgment upon sinners and, as our infinite sacrifice, provided grounds for our forgiveness, justification and sanctification. Christ’s death solves the sin problem by paying the penalty for our sins that the law of God demanded. Christ’s resurrection solves the death problem by proving that He will raise us from the dead. Christ’s death was necessary because of:

a) God’s holiness (Leviticus 11:44), and b) Man’s sinfulness (Romans 3:10-20).

IV. Jesus Christ’s Descent into the Lower Parts of the Earth is based on:

“When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive.....(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?”. (Ephesians 4:8,9).

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit. By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah.” (1 Peter 3:18-20).

Question: What did Jesus do when He descended into the lower parts of the earth?

i) He led Old Testament believers from the paradise part of Hades up to the third heaven (Luke 16:19-31). The final sin debt of Old Testament believers was now paid. This allowed them to enter the third heaven, as believers do now (2 Corinthians 12:2).

ii) He preached judgment on the fallen angels of Genesis 6:1-4 who tried to corrupt human flesh and thus prevent the promised birth and saving work of Jesus Christ. Christ’s message to them was that their scheme failed (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6).

V. Christ’s Resurrection was Predicted By Many Old Testament Writers

i) **David:** “For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither will thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.” (Psalm 16:10).

ii) **Isaiah:** “Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days.” (Isaiah 53:10). “Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust.....and the earth shall cast out her dead.” (Isaiah 26:19).

iii) **Jesus:** “After I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.” Mark 26:32; Luke 9:22; John 2:18-22.

iv) **Job:** “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.” (Job 19:25,26).

v) **Daniel:** “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” (Daniel 12:2).

vi) **Hosea:** “I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death” Hosea 13:14

VI. Proofs of Jesus Christ’s Resurrection

1. The empty tomb and the ordered graveclothes, when the disciples examined the tomb (John 20:5-8).

All other religious leaders have an occupied tomb. Not so Jesus Christ. Anyone stealing the body would have taken the body in the graveclothes. Yet the graveclothes were left in an orderly manner in the tomb.

2. The mass psychological change in the disciples from being cowards at Christ’s death, to become bold preachers after the resurrection. Their enemies said that they “turned the world upside down”. How else can this mass psychological change be explained?

3. Over 500 people saw Christ over a 40 day period after He had risen from the dead. So convinced were they that they were willing to die as martyrs than to deny Christ’s resurrection. Would you die for an event that you were not sure about? These witnesses have a high credibility having given the world it’s highest moral code. Most of these 500 witnesses were still alive in 59AD to confirm it (1 Cor.15:6).

4. The change from Saturday to Sunday as the main day of worship (1 Corinthians 16:1,2; Acts 20:6).

The Sabbath being so important to the early Jewish Christians would not have been dropped except for an extremely important event, the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

5. The Church’s existence can only be explained by the miracle of Christ’s resurrection. In 50 years after Christ’s death, the Christian church had become a mighty power, causing the Roman government great concern over it’s influence on the world.

6. The New Testament could not have been written because its central theme is eternal life through Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection.

7. The silence from both the Romans and Pharisees. Not once did either of these groups ever attempt to deny Christ’s resurrection. All they had to do was to produce Christ’s body to silence the early Christians. They hated Christ’s resurrection and tried to suppress it, but they could not refute it.

8. People recognised Him after His resurrection, even His nail prints. Jesus said to doubting Thomas, “reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side and be not faithless, but believing”. (John 20:27). Jesus will still have His nail prints at His second coming (Zechariah 13:6).

9. Jesus prophesied that He would rise bodily (John 2:19,20,21).

10. Two angels in Christ’s tomb declared that He had risen from the dead as He said (Luke 24:4-8).

11. The resurrected Christ said that He had flesh and bones. He invited the terrified disciples to “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken he showed them his hands and his feet”. (Luke 24:39,40).

12. Jesus Christ appeared to women who held His feet (Matthew 28:9), to James (1 Cor. 15:7),

to Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts (9:3-6), to welcome Stephen into heaven (Acts 7:55),

to John on Patmos (Rev. 1:10-19), to Peter as the friend who never forsakes (Luke 24:34), to Thomas in rebuking his unbelief (John 20:26-29), to the seven disciples when fishing (John 21:1-23),

to the eleven disciples (Mark 16:14), to two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35),

to 10 disciples in the upper room (Thomas absent) (John 20:26-29), & to over 500 at once (1 Cor. 15:6).

13. Jesus Christ ate food with His disciples after His resurrection. “They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them”. (Luke 24:42,43).

VII. The Significance of Christ's Resurrection

1. It proves we will rise from the dead also. "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you". (Romans 8:11; 1 Corinthians 15:51-57).
2. It proves Christ is God. "Declared to be the Son of God with power,...by the resurrection from the dead". (Romans 1:4).
3. It proves Christ's death really did pay for our sins. "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification". (Romans 4:25). It proves the acceptance of Christ's work on the cross. Christ's resurrection makes our justification possible. We could not have the same confidence that God has accepted Christ's sacrifice, had he not risen from the dead.
4. It proves that Jesus Christ is the only way to God, as no other religious leader has risen from the dead.
5. It made Christ our interceding High Priest. Through His resurrection He became our intercessor and protector. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (Romans 8:3,4).
He delivers us from sin and intercedes for us when we fail. "There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 2:5,6).
6. It proves that Satan is a defeated foe. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8).
7. It proves that all necessary power for life and service is available to us through Christ. If Christ can raise Himself from the dead, He can supply all our needs. "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection." (Philippians 3:10).
8. It proves that Christ will judge the world in righteousness. The day of judgment has been appointed and so has the Judge. This is proven by Christ's resurrection. "Because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised Him from the dead." (Acts 17:31).
9. It prepared the way for Christ to sit on David's Throne in His millennial Kingdom. "God had sworn with an oath to Him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne." (Acts 2:30).
10. It enables each believer to bear fruit. "That ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." (Romans 7:4).
11. It allows each believer to walk in newness of life. "Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in the newness of life." (Romans 6:4).
12. It is the centre of the gospel and our preaching, "I declare unto you the gospel..." (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

VIII. What Will Our Resurrection Body Be Like?

1. It will have flesh and bones. "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." (Luke 24:39).
2. It will be an immortal body. "This mortal must put on immortality." (1 Corinthians 15:53).
3. It will be a glorious body. "It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory." (1 Cor. 15:43). "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." (Philippians 3:21; 1 John 3:2).
4. It will be a powerful body. "It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power." (1 Corinthians 15:43).

5. It will differ in glory from other believers' resurrection bodies. "They that turn many to righteousness, (will shine) as the stars forever and ever." (Daniel 12:3). "One star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead." (1 Corinthians 15:41,42).
6. It will be a spiritual body, that is, a spirit controlled body. "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." (1 Corinthians 15:44).
7. It will have the ability to pass through walls, as Jesus could do. (John 20:19).
8. It will be able to eat food, as Jesus did. (Luke 24:41-43; Revelation 19:9).
9. Our flesh shall be fresher than a child's, we shall return to the days of our youth. (Job 33:25).
10. We will use our new powerful, glorious resurrection body to serve God and glorify God through all eternity. "His servants shall serve Him." (Revelation 22:3).

IX. The Resurrection Song (1 Cor. 15:54-57)

"Death is swallowed up in victory (v.54). O death where is thy sting? (This will be sung by living believers at the rapture who receive their resurrection body without dying).
O grave, where is thy victory? (This will be sung by dead believers who will be resurrected from the grave at Christ's return). (v.55). The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law (v.56). Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (v.57).

Conclusion:

1. Have you received Jesus Christ as your Saviour? Are you sure of eternal life?
2. Do you tell people the Gospel of how Jesus Christ died for their sins, was buried and rose again?
3. Can you explain the reasons why Jesus Christ rose from the dead?
4. Are you living the victorious Christian life and serving God in the power of Christ's resurrection?