



The CCP Pastoral Training Course



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# The CCP (Community Church Planting) Pastoral Training Course Book 1

*Reaching all the Nations for Jesus Christ*

*Bereik al die Nasies vir Jesus Christus*

**OMS INTERNATIONAL (South Africa) T/A OMS INTERNASIONAAL (Suid-Afrika) H/A**  
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**ÔNEMISSION**  
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*One Lord. One Life. One Calling.*

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

With grateful thanks, we acknowledge all those who contributed to the financing, writing, editing, translation and formatting of the CCP Pastoral Training Course.

We trust that God will use this Training Material to further His Kingdom on earth.

## **PREFACE**

### **THE PURPOSE OF THIS MATERIAL**

Church planters require training for them to be adequately equipped for the task that is before them. Often Bible Schools and seminaries are remote options for rural and some urban pastors. Church planters and church leaders need access to structured and foundational material in order for them to gain skills, knowledge and competencies. This material is offered as a tool for the equipping of pastors, providing the necessary biblical and educational foundations, as well as practical ministry skills, which are required by pastors for church planting and pastoring. The CCP Pastoral Training Course was designed for rural pastors in Africa, but we believe that it could be useful in training pastors in other contexts.

This curriculum has been designed to accomplish two goals:

1. To provide training for pastors.
2. To encourage mobilization in the whole Body of Christ toward a church planting movement.

We see church planting movements taking place in many countries throughout Africa and the world and we believe that Church planting is the best method for world evangelization and disciple making. This material is designed to facilitate the planting and multiplication of spiritually mature churches

## **CURRICULUM OVERVIEW**

The CCP Pastoral Training Course is a three year program consisting of 6 Books. Each Book contains 4 to 7 subjects of 5 lessons.

The curriculum has been designed to be used in parallel with the actual planting of churches. As such it is one tool along with the CCP Manual and other material which is used in Church Planting and equipping pastors while in ministry. Each Subject has been designed to provide theological knowledge and practical skills, answer questions, and discuss potential problems related to pastoring in a church planting movement process.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **1. Trainer**

- Find and Train reliable people.
- Each Subject consists of 5 lessons, and each should take 2 hours.
- It is not necessary to teach every point of the lesson as trainees can study the material themselves.  
As a trainer you should seek to highlight 3 or 4 of the most important points of each lesson.
- Be creative in your training methodology. Refer to the "Training Trainers" Material.



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- Make use of class discussion as this helps student assimilation of the material and for the assessment of trainee's performance.
  - Each subject concludes with a test for partial fulfillment for graduation.

## 2. Trainee

- Never skip a lesson
- Seek to put into practice your learning.
- Be prepared to participate in group or class discussion.
- Speak to your trainer or mentor for any clarification.
- Tests are designed for the assessment of the knowledge of the material.
- It is extremely helpful to have a mentor to encourage and advise you as you apply yourself to this learning. A mentor can also serve your need for accountability as you apply what you are learning. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to prayerfully seek some form of mentoring to enhance and strengthen your learning and ministry.

### **Further help**

Do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance to you.

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# Subjects As Per Book

<b><u>Book One</u></b>	<b><u>Book Two</u></b>
Train the Trainers	Shepherding and Epistles
Proclamation of the Gospel	Homiletics
Survey of the Old Testament	Mending Broken Lives—Part one
Survey of the New Testament	Introduction to Islam—Part One
Doctrine of God	History of the Christian Church
Christology	Acts
<b><u>Book Three</u></b>	<b><u>Book Four</u></b>
Corinthians	Cultural Anthropology
Discipleship	Ecclesiology
Mission to Children	Kingdom and the Sermon on the Mount
Sustainable Development	Eschatology
Gospel of John	Pastoral Counselling
Mending Broken Lives—Part Two	Introduction to Islam Part 2
	Holism
-	
<b><u>Book Five</u></b>	<b><u>Book Six</u></b>
Genesis	Mending Broken Lives—Part Three
Man, Sin and salvation	Ezra and Nehemiah
Mission to Youth	Spiritual Gifts
Human Dignity	1 John
Psalms	Ethics
Pneumatology	Angels and Demons



# The 40 Month CCP Pastoral Training Program

Month One			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Manual</b>			<b>10</b>
<b>Omega Book 1</b>			<b>6</b>
	SCP Vision		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
	The Church		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
<b>Mobilizing Members</b>			<b>4</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>20</b>

Month Two			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 1</b>			<b>6</b>
	Training the Trainers		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
<b>Omega Book 1</b>			<b>11</b>
	The Church		
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
	Spiritual Character		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	Prayer		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
	Bible Study Methods		
		Lesson One	
<b>Africa Outreach - Chronological</b>			<b>3</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>20</b>

Month Three
Inspect First Generation Churches are Functioning



The CCP Pastoral Training Course



Month Four			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 1</b>			<b>6</b>
	Training the Trainers		
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	Proclamation of the Gospel		
		Lesson One	
<b>Omega Book 1</b>			<b>11</b>
	Bible Study Methods		
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
		Lesson Six	
		Lesson Seven	
	Evangelism		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
<b>End of OMEGA Book 1</b>			
	SCP Vision		
		Lesson Five	
		Lesson Six	
<b>Africa Outreach - Chronological</b>			<b>3</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>20</b>

Month Five			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 1</b>			<b>6</b>
	Proclamation of the Gospel		
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
<b>Omega Book 2</b>			<b>11</b>
	SCP Vision		
		Lesson Seven	
	The Church		
		Lesson Five	
		Lesson Six	
		Lesson Seven	
		Lesson Eight	
	Spiritual Character		
		Lesson Seven	
		Lesson Eight	
	Prayer		
		Lesson Four	
	Leadership		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
	Cell Groups		
		Lesson One	
<b>Africa Outreach - Chronological</b>			<b>3</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>20</b>

Month Six
Inspect Second Generation Churches are Functioning



The CCP Pastoral Training Course



Month Seven			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 1</b>			<b>6</b>
	Proclamation of the Gospel		
		Lesson Five	
	Survey of the Old Testament		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
<b>Omega Book 2</b>			<b>11</b>
	Cell Groups		
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
		Lesson Six	
	Bible Study Methods		
		Lesson Eight	
		Lesson Nine	
		Lesson Ten	
		Lesson Eleven	
	Evangelism		
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
<b>Africa Outreach - Chronological</b>			<b>3</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>20</b>

Month Eight			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 1</b>			<b>6</b>
	Survey of the Old Testament		
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
<b>Omega Book 2</b>			<b>11</b>
	Evangelism		
		Lesson Six	
		Lesson Seven	
<b>End of OMEGA Book 2</b>			
<b>Omega Book 3</b>			
	SCP Vision		
		Lesson Eight	
		Lesson Nine	
	The Church		
		Lesson Nine	
		Lesson Ten	
		Lesson Eleven	
	Spiritual Character		
		Lesson Eight	
		Lesson Nine	
		Lesson Ten	
	Prayer		
		Lesson Five	
<b>Africa Outreach - Chronological</b>			<b>3</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>20</b>

Month Nine	
Break	



The CCP Pastoral Training Course



Month Ten			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 1</b>			<b>6</b>
	Survey of the New Testament		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
<b>Omega Book 3</b>			<b>11</b>
	Prayer		
		Lesson Six	
		Lesson Seven	
	Leadership		
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	Cell Groups		
		Lesson Seven	
		Lesson Eight	
		Lesson Nine	
	Evangelism		
		Lesson Eight	
	Disciple-Making		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
<b>Africa Outreach - Chronological</b>			<b>3</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>20</b>

Month Eleven			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 1</b>			<b>6</b>
	Survey of the New Testament		
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
<b>Omega Book 3</b>			<b>11</b>
	Disciple-Making		
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	Spiritual Warfare		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
<b>End of OMEGA Book 3</b>			
<b>Omega Book 4</b>			
	SCP Vision		
		Lesson Ten	
		Lesson Eleven	
		Lesson Twelve	
	The Church		
		Lesson Twelve	
		Lesson Thirteen	
<b>Africa Outreach - Chronological</b>			<b>1</b>
<b>Evangelism Training</b>			<b>2</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>20</b>

Month Twelve
Break



The CCP Pastoral Training Course



Month Thirteen			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 1</b>			<b>6</b>
	Doctrine of God		
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
<b>Omega Book 4</b>			<b>11</b>
	The Church		
		Lesson Fourteen	
	Spiritual Character		
		Lesson Eleven	
		Lesson Twelve	
		Lesson Thirteen	
	Prayer		
		Lesson Eight	
		Lesson Nine	
	Leadership		
		Lesson Six	
		Lesson Seven	
		Lesson Eight	
		Lesson Nine	
		Lesson Ten	
<b>Evangelism Training</b>			<b>3</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>20</b>

Month Fourteen			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 1</b>			<b>6</b>
	Doctrine of God		
		Lesson Five	
	Christology		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
<b>Omega Book 4</b>			<b>10</b>
	Cell Groups		
		Lesson Ten	
		Lesson Eleven	
	Disciple-Making		
		Lesson Six	
	Stewardship		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	The Family		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
<b>End of OMEGA Book 4</b>			
<b>Omega Book 5</b>			<b>1</b>
	SCP Vision		
		Lesson Thirteen	
<b>Evangelism Training</b>			<b>3</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>20</b>

Month Fifteen
Inspect Third Generation Churches are Functioning



The CCP Pastoral Training Course



Month Sixteen			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 1</b>			<b>6</b>
	Christology		
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
<b>End of CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 1</b>			
<b>Omega Book 5</b>			
	SCP Vision		
		Lesson Fourteen	
		Lesson Fifteen	
		Lesson Sixteen	
		Lesson Seventeen	
	The Church		
		Lesson Fifteen	
		Lesson Sixteen	
		Lesson Seventeen	
		Lesson Eighteen	
		Lesson Nineteen	
	Spiritual Character		
		Lesson Fifteen	
		Lesson Sixteen	
<b>Evangelism Training</b>			<b>3</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>20</b>

Month Seventeen			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 2</b>			<b>6</b>
	Shepherding and Epistles		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
<b>Omega Book 5</b>			
	Prayer		
		Lesson Ten	
		Lesson Eleven	
		Lesson Twelve	
	Leadership		
		Lesson Eleven	
		Lesson Twelve	
	Cell Groups		
		Lesson Twelve	
		Lesson Thirteen	
	Preaching		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
	The Family		
		Lesson Three	
<b>End of OMEGA Book 5</b>			
<b>Evangelism Training</b>			<b>3</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>20</b>

Month Eighteen
Break



The CCP Pastoral Training Course



Month Nineteen			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course</b>			<b>18</b>
	Shepherding and Epistles		
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	Homiletics		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	Mending Broken Lives Part 1		
		Seminar 1	
<b>Evangelism Training</b>			<b>2</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>20</b>

Month Twenty One			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course</b>			<b>10</b>
	Church History		
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	Acts		
		Lesson One	
<b>Camel Evangelism Training</b>			<b>10</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>20</b>

Month Twenty
Break

Month Twenty			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course</b>			<b>18</b>
	Mending Broken Lives Part 1		
		Seminar 2	
	Introduction to Islam		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	Church History		
		Lesson One	
<b>Evangelism Training</b>			<b>2</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>20</b>



The CCP Pastoral Training Course



Month Twenty Three			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 2</b>			<b>8</b>
	Acts		
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
<b>End of CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 2</b>			
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 3</b>			<b>12</b>
	Corinthians		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	Discipleship		
		Lesson One	
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>20</b>

Month Twenty Four			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 3</b>			<b>20</b>
	Discipleship		
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	Mission to Children		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	Sustainable Development		
		Lesson One	
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>20</b>

Month Twenty Five			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 3</b>			<b>14</b>
	Sustainable Development		
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	Gospel of John		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
<b>Denominational Training</b>			<b>6</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>20</b>



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Month Twenty Six			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 3</b>			<b>16</b>
	Gospel of John		
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	Mending Broken Lives		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
<b>End of CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 3</b>			
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 4</b>			
	Cultural Anthropology		
		Lesson One	
<b>Denominational Training</b>			<b>4</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>20</b>

Month Twenty Eight			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 4</b>			<b>20</b>
	Cultural Anthropology		
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	Ecclesiology		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	Kingdom and Sermon on the Mount		
		Lesson One	
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>20</b>

Month Twenty Seven
Inspect Fourth Generation Churches are Functioning

Month Twenty Nine			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 4</b>			<b>20</b>
	Kingdom and Sermon on the Mount		
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	Eschatology		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	Pastoral Counseling		
		Lesson One	
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>20</b>



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Month Thirty			
Break			

Month Thirty Two			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 4</b>			20
	Holism		
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
<b>End of CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 4</b>			
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 5</b>			
	Genesis		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	Man, Sin, and Salvation		
		Lesson One	
<b>Total Hours</b>			20

Month Thirty One			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 4</b>			20
	Pastoral Counseling		
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	Introduction to Islam		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	Holism		
		Lesson One	
<b>Total Hours</b>			20



The CCP Pastoral Training Course



Month Thirty Three			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 5</b>			<b>20</b>
	Man, Sin and Salvation		
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	Mission to Youth		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	Human Dignity		
		Lesson One	
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>20</b>

Month Thirty Four
Break

Month Thirty Five			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 5</b>			<b>20</b>
	Human Dignity		
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	Psalms		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	Pneumatology		
		Lesson One	
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>20</b>



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Month Thirty Six			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 5</b>			<b>20</b>
	Pneumatology		
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
<b>End of CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 5</b>			
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 6</b>			
	Mending Broken Lives		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	Ezra and Nehemiah		
		Lesson One	
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>20</b>

Month Thirty Seven			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 6</b>			<b>20</b>
	Ezra and Nehemiah		
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	Spiritual Gifts		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	First John		
		Lesson One	
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>20</b>

Month Thirty Eight
Encourage Fifth Generation Church Planting



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<b>Month Thirty Nine</b>			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 6</b>			<b>18</b>
	First John		
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
	Christian Ethics		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>18</b>

<b>Month Forty</b>			
Course	Subject	Lesson	Hours
<b>CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 6</b>			<b>10</b>
	Angels and Demons		
		Lesson One	
		Lesson Two	
		Lesson Three	
		Lesson Four	
		Lesson Five	
<b>End of CCP Pastoral Training Course Book 6</b>			
<b>Total Hours</b>			<b>10</b>



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The CCP Pastoral Training Course



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# Training the Trainers

~ Andre van Blydenstein



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## Train the Trainer

In writing these lessons, I have been completely indebted to Elaine Biech and her book *Training for Dummies*. Wiley Publishing Indianapolis 2005. Her work has provided the backbone for these lessons. I would recommend her book for anyone wanting to learn about training. I have also used Bruce Wilkinson's material from *Walk thru the Bible*, both *The 7 laws of the learner* and *Teaching with Style*. I have also used course material from the HSRC in South Africa called *Occupational Exploration Workshop*.

The minor part of the work is originally mine.



# 1

## Introduction to Training

### Lesson Purpose

- Introducing the meaning of training and its component parts to students to increase their effectiveness in training

### Lesson Outcomes

- By the successful conclusion of the course the learner will have the skills needed to train more effectively.

### Table of Contents

- Definition of training
- Biblical reasons for training
- What is training?
- Why is training necessary?
- What do trainers do?
- 4 Influencers on training outcomes
  - Needs
  - Method
  - Content
  - Situation
- Adult Learners
  - Theory
  - Types of learners
- Tips to maximizing learning

Training is a process whereby people gain knowledge or skills that they are then able to apply. The process of training is a dynamic one. It contains different elements and the trainer must become aware of these elements in order to improve their training ability. There are a number of elements and principles that the learner can master in order to improve their training impact.

Bruce Wilkinson defined teaching or training in the following manner

“To provide information...to cover material....to impart truth” (7 Laws of the Learner)

This definition is useful but another dimension must be added. Jesus taught in Mt 28 16-20 that His disciples should teach people TO OBEY. This element of training must never be forgotten. Acquiring information, covering the material and learning the truth is one part of the process. People must be equipped to do what they know.

So we can define training in the following way:

*Training is the process in which learners acquire information or skills, cover required material, learn the truth and do or pass on what they have learnt.*

Training does not stop with knowing. It does not stop at the end of the seminar. Training in this sense is more like discipleship.

### **The Biblical Reason for Teaching and the mandate to Teach.**

Teaching is vital in the life of the believer and in the life of the Christian Church. It has this importance because it does two things. Firstly teaching brings knowledge and secondly through accurate teaching we are better able to pass on the faith. (Heb 11). This process of gaining and passing on is reinforced in Scripture in many passages. (Deut 4:9, 6:7, 11:19). It has been carried down through the ages orally (Abraham blessing Isaac, Isaac blessing Jacob, Jacob blessing his sons.), in memorial feasts (Passover), and supremely through the teaching of Scripture. In the Gospels there is a great deal of emphasis on Jesus teaching truth to his disciples and the crowds. Furthermore Jesus gives the instruction to his disciples to teach Mt 28:20. So teaching has a very grounded Biblical base and carries a great deal of weight.

There are many different topics that could be included in a section on teaching and in this course only four topics will be considered.

The four we will consider are

1. Teaching for Truth and Freedom
2. Teaching to feed
3. Who we should teach
4. Teaching as a spiritual gift

Training people is an exciting job because it helps the individual and the organization. In the case of the church, training can help to change and improve on what it is currently being done. New methods can be learnt and implemented. New skills can be acquired by the individual. As a trainer you have the opportunity to greatly influence the organization and the process it deploys. One thing must however be made clear. Training can help people to be more effective disciples but at all times in Christian training we must recall that it is God who converts, God who adds the increase and God who directs. He graciously calls us to join alongside Him. The trainers task is to train reliable men who are able to train others. 2 Tim 2:2.

### **What is Training?**

Training is about change and transformation. It is a process in which people learn new concepts, skills or applications. The result of training is a changed situation or an improved performance.

In current thinking the concept of 'a learning organisation' is a popular one. This means that whatever the organization, be it a business or a church, it ought to be able to learn to improve and do things better. In the church's case it must constantly learn to align with the will of God and be relevant to the society.

## **Why is training necessary?**

There are four critical reasons for training. (pg 9 Training for Dummies)

1. There is a need or a requirement that must be met: for example the process of church multiplication.
2. There is a need to improve or change performance: This often deals with improved processes, models or ways of doing things.
3. There is a need to gain knowledge and skills: This is both classroom and on the job oriented, and includes such things as disciple making, preaching skills pastoral skills etc.
4. There is a need for change in the environment: Sometimes people know what to do but the organization prevents them from effectively doing what they know. In this case the organization or the church must be trained to change.

## **What do trainers do?**

Trainers train, coach, mentor, instruct, evaluate, consult, and more. But there are three parts to training that must be embedded in the mind and heart of the trainer.

1. Content: Get the information that the learner needs and find out all about it.
2. Process: Both design and delivering of training is vital to the trainer. Designing the training logically, incrementally and in a way that adults can learn is critical. The delivering of the training is equally vital. Most learners report that boredom is the most common barrier to learning. Do not ever let your learners get bored. (This will be covered in detail further in the course).
3. Evaluation: are the learners doing what they have been taught?

Trainers take content and transfer the knowledge to the learners in such a way that learners are able to use the content in their work.

As the course proceeds we will look at each one of these parts of training in detail.

## **What does it take to be a trainer?**

Training is a very demanding job. It requires the trainer to be always learning themselves. If a trainer does not learn he/she will not be able to teach beyond what they currently know. So a trainer must also be a learner.

Training brings about change, either in an individual or in an organization. Change is not something that all people want or like. They find it difficult to change. Trainers must be people who are able to instill confidence in the learner. If they do not they will not be able to convince people to do what they have trained on.

Trainers need to be convinced that what they have to offer is of value. If they do not believe in the material or are not confident that it is good they will not train effectively.

## The CCP Pastoral Training Course Training the Trainers

Here is a list of some more things that it takes to make up a trainer. (Training for Dummies pg 21)

- Willing to work long hours
- Stay after ending time to be available to learners
- Able to maintain energy for the whole day
- Can work even when you feel sick
- Give without expecting return
- Model what you teach
- Cope with logistical problems because they happen.
- Able to deliver hard feedback
- Able to process failure as not every training session is fantastic

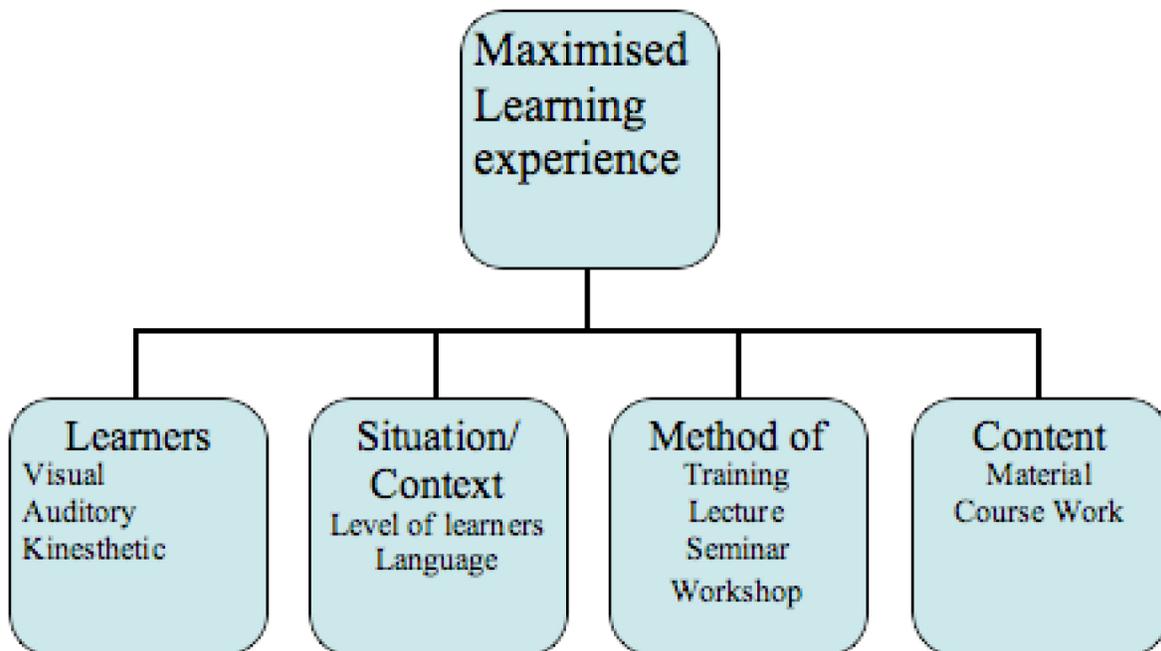
### There are 4 basic Influences in Training Outcomes

In training there are four basic influences that impact on the training outcome.

1. Learners needs. The trainer must discover what they are.
2. The Method. Which method can be most effectively used in a particular session?
3. The Content. What is the message and how to set it out.
4. Situation what helps or hinders in the situation?

As we proceed we will discover that the each of these elements will affect the training outcome. Any deficiency in one area will reduce the overall effectiveness of training. For instance if the content is good and the communication of that content is poor then the overall outcome will be reduced.

This can be pictured in the following manner



For training to maximize the learning experience the trainer must consider all these four influences. This will be done in following lessons. Before we look at this we must think about why Adults learn.

### **Why Adults learn. (Training for Dummies pg 27-38)**

In this section you will:

- Look at the basic principles of adult learning
- Identify the trainers responsibility to ensure adults learn
- Identify types of learning
- Define training roles

### **Adult Learning Theory**

Adults learn differently to children. Children learn more sequentially eg they learn to add, subtract, multiply divide before they do fractions, algebra etc.

With children the instructor is the expert who passes on wisdom. The instructor is responsible for all the learning processes and the learning is content centred. Learners are motivated from outside eg. pass a test.

With adults things are very different.

- Adults want to know why they must learn something before they will give of their time and energy to the instruction.
- Adults see themselves as being self directed responsible people. The trainer must then help them want to learn and want to integrate new learning.
- Adults come with a lot of experience and a willingness to contribute.
- Relevance is of great importance to adults. They need to see its applicability.
- Adults are motivated by internal factors.

So if you are the trainer then you need to think about your learners before you start training. Some of the things you must consider are:

- Create a safe learning environment. One in which the learners are never put down, made to feel stupid etc.
- Have clearly defined objectives based on the needs of the learners
- Ensure transfer of the material
- Respect your learners
- Have learners share experience and knowledge

There are many theories of learning in the academic world. A popular and simple one is Bloom's theory.

Bloom's theory suggests that adults learn in three ways.

**Knowledge**  
**Skills**  
**Attitude.**

Knowledge is simply gaining information about something that was not know before or seeing how things connect and relate to one another. Once knowledge is gained comprehension is said to have occurred. When learners comprehend they are then able to apply it.

Skills are learnt psychomotor activities. They are either physical or behavioural. So for instance someone can learn the skill of kicking a ball, or doing carpentry. Or the skill could be in their behaviour. For instance learning to listen, train etc.

The attitude that one acquires is also key to the theory of learning. If people come with a positive attitude they are more likely to learn more rapidly and easily. This simply means that knowledge must be passed on before someone can understand anything.

A second model of learning has been developed over the years in response to the way different people learn.

The Nerolinguistic Programming model suggests that adults learn through one of three modes.

**Visual**  
**Auditory**  
**Kinesthetic**

Different people learn differently. Some prefer to see directions, others to hear it and still others to be shown the direction.

As a trainer you will need to develop the skills over time to understand the different modalities of learning and how to identify them in the learners. If you know the preferred modality then you can adjust your training style to maximize learning.

**Visual learners prefer**

- Written directions
- Graphs, charts, illustrations
- Lots of colour in the posters, notes

**Auditory learners prefer**

- Spoken directions
- Discussion, debate, panels interviews
- Talk groups, teach backs

**Kinesthetic learners prefer**

- Physically active experience
- Things for their hands to play with
- Frequent breaks
- Role play, modeling

Most often you will have a mix of all these three types in your classes. So simply plan to use each learning modality over the course of your training.

### **Practical Tips to maximize learning**

1. Create a safe environment
  2. Create a comfortable environment
  3. Encourage participation
  4. Facilitate more than lecture
- 
1. To create a safe environment you will need to do the following
    - Greet people properly. Know their names, allow time for important information to be shared
    - Share the learning objective as soon as possible
    - Let people know how they will benefit
    - Respect
    - Ensure confidentiality “what is said in the room stays in the room”
    - Use peoples names frequently
  2. Create a comfortable environment
    - Sit in normal, natural light if possible
    - Make sure the room is tidy and neat
    - Make sure you can be heard, and visuals seen
    - Use the most comfortable chairs possible
    - Make sure everyone has space
    - Have extra paper, pens etc
    - Have refreshments of some kind
    - Plan for ample breaks
  3. Encourage participation
    - Divide people into small groups
    - Invite people to speak by name
    - Use nods, smiles eye contact to show approval
    - Learn techniques to get people talking
  4. Facilitate more than lecture
    - Create discussions, especially between learners
    - Get opinions out before you lecture. Many times people know a lot already
    - Allow for personal evaluation
    - Help learners discover



# 2

## The Training Cycle

### Lesson Purpose

- To help the learner understand the training cycle and how to use it to design training courses.

### Lesson Outcomes

- By successful completion of the lesson the learner will know the components in the training cycle and be able to use the process.
- more effectively.

### Table of Contents

- The biblical basis for training
- The training cycle
  - Assess Needs
  - Develop Objectives
  - Design Program
  - Implementation
  - Evaluation
- Critical points to know before training Tips to maximizing learning

### The Training Cycle

### Biblical Basis: Teaching for Truth and Freedom (Bible Knowledge.com)

**Jesus says in Jn 8:32 that you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free. The process is clear. You first have to know what the truth is, before the truth can start to work to set you free. This is why teaching in the church is so important. Believers need to know the truth and they only get to know the truth if they are taught it.**

The Bible tells us that we will find a peace that will pass all human understanding once we have accepted Jesus as our personal Lord and Savior and have become truly born again.

However, once you are born again through accepting Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, there is now something you must do. You must now grow in the knowledge of God and grow in the personal relationship that He wants to establish with you. (2 Pt 1:5-8). To do that you need to be learning from the Bible and passing on what you know.

Paul put it this way "**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God**, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16). A look at the life of Paul demonstrates the necessity to learn as much as you can and teach what you know.

2 Tim 3:16 tells us that by reading and researching the Bible we can establish solid Christian doctrine about the truths of God, as well as preparing us to instruct others. This Scripture reinforces again and again the objective which is that we may all be made complete and thoroughly equipped to go to work for God in the calling that He has set up for each and every one of us in this life.

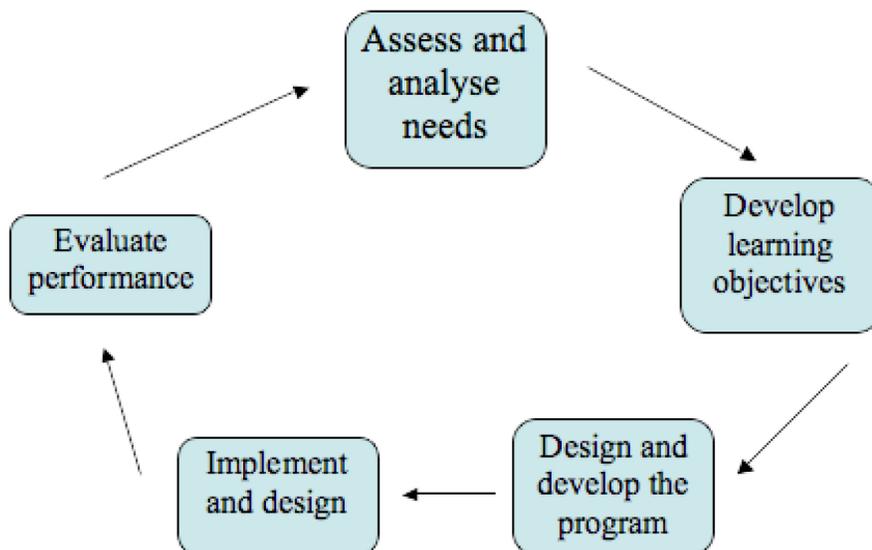
So we can say 2 important things about teaching.

1. Teaching is something that we need to submit to and
2. Teaching is something every Christian should be doing

### The Training Cycle

This Lesson is concerned with the training cycle, its parts and how learning occurs. By the end of the lesson learners will know the cycle and have a framework from which to develop their training skills.

Whenever you attend a training session someone has developed the program, the process and the outcomes. Training begins long before the actual training event. Generally the better prepared the trainer is, having given attention to the training cycle the more effective the training event will be.



Dummies pg 59-100

## Assess and analyse needs

The very first question that must be asked is “why are we training?”  
There may be no need or you may be able to do training on the job modeling.

The second question which is arrived at after the analysis is: What must be taught?

There are many ways to assess needs. It can be done through simple observation. Seeing what skills are lacking. For instance a trainer can watch and listen to a person preaching and evaluate their competency. Or it can be done more formally through question and answer techniques. For instance a trainer can ask learners about their knowledge of a person of peace, or evangelism, or the content of a book of the Bible.

The important point to remember is that when there is a gap between what is required to do the job and the skill or knowledge of the person there is then a training need. The trainers’ job is to find out if there is a need and design a training program to fill it.

## Developing Learning Objectives

Once a need is established the next step would be to develop objectives that meet the need. This helps to clarify exactly what you need to train on. Objectives should be stated as clearly as possible. It may well be that as you go further in the training cycle that you need to adjust the learning objectives. This is fine.

Very important: Learners should know what they must DO when the training event closes. Objectives should always include this element.

One simple way of writing an objective is to use the following guideline

*Who* (answer The learners, church planters, disciples etc)  
*Will do what* (be able to do research, evangelise, preach, house visit, pray etc)  
*By when* (with or without assistance)  
*How well* (100% or with growing ability)

By asking these questions the trainer can easily write an outcome that will guide the design of the training program.

So for example

The training objective for this section is:

“You will be able to write good learning objectives by the time you finish this section, 100% of the time.”

## Design and Develop the Program

Once objectives are written down it then becomes easier to develop the program as you can target just what is needed to fill the need.

Many time people use pre-designed courses like Omega, VCP etc. In these cases the material is already laid out and designed for a training event. However even with packaged programs the trainer ought to evaluate which are the most critical aspects for the learners at this particular time and focus on those.

This phase of training design is crucial and demanding on the trainer. A trainer needs to spend at least as many hours on this part as he or she will spend in the actual training. So if the training event is going to be 3 hours the trainer ought to spend that time on the design of the training itself. If it is 3 days then 3 days preparation is probably what is needed.

There is NO substitute for adequate design and preparation!

Generally in a design there are three parts

Beginning: creating a learning climate

Middle: the content and the process (This will be covered in lesson 4)

End: Developing applications of what is learnt

### **Impementing the design**

This is the training event itself. There is no guarantee that just because the trainer is prepared that the training event will be a great success. The delivery of the content and the engagement of the learners is vital.

### **Evaluating Performance**

The training is only finished when evaluation is done. There are three evaluations that must de done.

- The first is an evaluation of the learners. Did they get the required skills, knowledge etc.
- Secondly, evaluate the trainer. How was the training conducted? How could it be improved next time?
- Thirdly the training is only effective when implemented. Evaluation of training must take place a few weeks or months after the event.

### **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU TRAIN**

3 BASIC POINTS ABOUT TRAINING that every trainer must consider before training.

1. Be familiar with the course material.
2. Critical points learners must know by the end of the learning experience.
3. How to do what they have learnt.

**1. Knowing the material and the direction in which you are going.**

- Read the material thoroughly
- Prepare an outline for yourself on the material. The outline should be in point form or written in less than 100 words.
- You should be able to say what you know without reference to the outline. (You can train by referencing the material, but the heart of what you want to train on should be clearly in your mind. If it is not clear for you it will not be clear for the learners!)

**2. Critical points learners must know by the end of the learning experience.**

- Ask yourself as a trainer: What should the learners know by the end of this learning experience?
- Write this down in point form or in less than 100 words.
- It will differ to the outline because there are usually 3-4 critical points that must be learned.
- Now think of a way to evaluate if the learners have understood and comprehended the points.

**3. Train them how TO DO what has been taught.**

This is the reason for training. Training that does not result in the learner being able to share what they know or do what they know, has not been effective. The facilitator or trainer must help the learners to either:

- Practice what has been taught
- Discuss what has been taught
- Discuss practical ways of implementing or of conveying the message.
- Hold people accountable for the implementation. Accountability should be tested during the training or at the next training whichever is appropriate.



# 3

## Teaching is Feeding

### Lesson Purpose

- To help the trainer to understand the need to feed the students in the best possible way.

### Lesson Outcomes

- The student will understand the feed metaphor and know some methods of helping others learn.

### Table of Contents

- Teaching is Feeding
- Method
- Lectures
- Alternatives

### Teaching for feeding ([bible\\_knowledge.com](http://bible_knowledge.com))

#### God's Word is Alive and has Power

As we saw in the last lesson that **All Scripture is given by inspiration of God**, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16). So if we want to grow in this we need to be learning from the Bible. Jesus pushes this further.

Jesus instructed his apostles to **"feed"** His sheep. Implied here is that the disciple must first feed from Scripture and then feed what is known to others.

Our human physical bodies need physical food to be able to grow and survive and in like manner our spirit needs spiritual food. And the only true solid spiritual truths that can feed us to cause any kind of true spiritual growth to occur in this life are truths that come direct from God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Here are 9 verses that tell us of the power of the Word of God and reasons for us to learn from it and to teach others.

1. **"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword,** piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12)
2. **"So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."** (Isaiah 55:11)
3. **"Is not My word like a fire?" says the Lord, "And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?"** (Jeremiah 23:29)
4. "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. **The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life**" (John 6:63)
5. "This is my comfort in my affliction, **for Your word has given me life.**" (Psalm 119:50)
6. **"Your words were found, and I ate them,** and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart ..." (Jeremiah 15:16)
7. **"How sweet are Your words to my taste,** sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Psalm 119:103)
8. But He answered and said, "It is written, '**Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.**'" (Matthew 4:4)
9. "... as newborn babes, **desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,** if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious." (1 Peter 2:2)

Notice all of the food analogies that God is using to compare His Word with. What He is trying to tell us is that when you are studying the words that are contained in the Bible - you are **spiritually feeding yourself**. Clearly an important element in spiritual growth is the study of Scripture. This in turn means that disciples should become familiar with at least the basics of interpretation.

#### **Four Influences on Training Outcomes (Dummies 49-62)**

Let us look at each element of the training dynamic. By giving consideration to these 4 elements you will be able to train more effectively. This is so because you will better understand the audience, the lesson, the situation and the dynamic of getting the message across. By knowing the impact of these four influences the trainer can better decide how to train.

## The CCP Pastoral Training Course Training the Trainers

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A most effective manner of thinking learning about the influences is to ask questions. The following questions should help you obtain important information for each influencer.

### The Content

- Is the content readily available?
- Must the content be condensed?
- Must the content be developed?
- Is the content sufficient and logical?

What other questions can you think of to help you know more of what impact content has?

### The Learners

- Who are they? (male/female/young/old/formal school education level etc)
- What do they know about the subject you are going to teach?
- What are they excited about?
- What concerns do they have (about topic or situation, not personal)
- Why are they here?
- How long is their attention span?

Write down other questions you can think of to ask so that you can better know your students.

### The Situation

- Where will training be done?
- When does it start and finish?
- How long will each lesson be?
- Is the situation helpful to learning?
- Is the situation a hindrance to learning? If so what can you do to improve it

Write down other questions about the situation that you think are important.

### The Learning Method

- What learning methods are there?
- Which learning method would help most in the specific situation?

List as many learning methods as you can think of.

Some of the learning methods:

- Lecture
- Seminar
- Discussion
- Games
- Research
- Project
- Self study

Discuss amongst yourselves the various methods.  
The following questions may help you in the discussion

Is there a best method?  
When would you use the lecture method?  
How do you encourage learners to self study?  
What is needed to run a successful discussion group?  
When would you use the different methods?  
Think of other questions that would help.

## The Lecture

Lectures are extremely useful:

- When **specific** information has to be conveyed.
- When there is critical knowledge that the learners must know.
- When you have a large groups.

Lectures may be problematic when:

- It does not involve participants
- It ignores participants knowledge or experience
- It may create passive learners
- Success often depends on the speakers ability

If a lecture is used consider

- Adding in a quiz
- Ask questions to see if learners understand
- Ask questions to see if learners can recall information
- Add in some task or activity
- Have a note guideline for participants
- Build participation into the lecture

## Alternatives to lectures

There are many alternative methods to the lecture.

Try and name 10

Most of the alternatives use group work in different ways. Either they work through guided information gathering or they work through discovery from group knowledge.

Usually alternative methods are activity oriented. Activities are good ways to enhance learning for the following reasons:

- Activities help raise the mental and physical energy of the participants. They help by giving people time to stretch their bodies and their minds.
- Activities often require group work which helps build trust, knowledge, sharing and learning
- Activities engage other senses to help the brain learn.
- Activities reinforce information as people share their understanding and possible applications
- Activities motivate as it is an experiential way to learn and is engaging.

## Variations to the lecture

Variations can use many different techniques, skills or methods. These include such things as presentations, experiential learning, demonstration, modeling, reading, drama, discussion, case study, art work, games, participant directed, among others.

## Presentation Variations

- Debates: Get two teams to debate an issue from different sides
- Storytelling: Most people love stories and can easily remember them. If you tell stories (true or fictional) people listen, absorb, integrate and remember learning. This method is particularly useful in conveying truths and morals eg. Parables.
- Mini lecture: A subject is introduced, some ideas shared and then group discussion adds to the learning.
- On site inspection: Visiting the place, people, organization or host helps people see and learn.
- Panel discussion: Here 3- 4 people make up a panel and they share their perceptions.

## Experiential Learning

- Inductive studies (see Omega material)
- Act, reflect, think cycle  
The process is a simple one in which people are taught to do something, reflect on what they have done and then think how it could improve.

## Demonstrations

- Instructor role play to make a point or show a technique
- Participant role play where learning happens as participants find themselves in a non threatening environment.
- Video, DVD
- Coaching on the field or in the classroom. Get participants to do something while the trainer watches and adjusts what the learner does.
- Interview someone, (outside expert or a participant) to obtain a perspective, or to add knowledge.

## Reading

- Read ahead ( helps if you want to use interviews, group discussions etc)
- Write a letter/story/lecture for someone else to present

## Drama

- Skits
- Problem solving in teams

## Discussion

- Brainstorming
- Fishbowl (some participants are put in a group and they discuss or plan while others observe.)
- Round Robin where each person says something and everyone discusses what was said until everyone has expressed their views.
- Buzz group, where two people talk together for a minute or two about a topic and then share their ideas with a larger group.

## Cases

- Case studies (real or fictional) Scenario and information is presented and participants have to analyse and suggest improvements.
- In Baskets Items or problems are given to participants and they have to decide what to do first and how to respond to different situations.
- Problem solving groups

## Art

- Draw portraits to illustrate some aspect
- Posters individual or group posters to illustrate learning
- Draw what you fee about.....

## Games

- Card games
- Board Games
- Game Shows

## Participant directed

- Participants team up and teach the group
- Teach backs where participants tell back to the group what was said in the lecture, group discussion etc.
- Research individually or together.

You will have discovered there is more to training than just lecturing. Experiment and learn yourself to use other methods. A trainer must use his/her imagination to help learners learn. You will not get it right all the time but thinking about different methods of presentation will help improve your training skills. As a result your training events will become dynamic, interesting and fun for participants. Half the problem is then solved as people then want to come to training and want to learn. It makes it all so much easier. So try and try and try. That is the way to improvement in training.

## The Lesson itself

Many times the lesson is already given. Training material or course work is generally laid out. The real question about the lesson is how do you best use it?

Two or three members to share a bad lesson experience.

Why was it bad?

Lessons are bad because

- They are poorly written
- They are poorly presented
- They are confusing
- Write down some other reasons.

Often learners complain of BOREDOM. This is the biggest downfall of the trainer. They make interesting material boring. As a trainer you have to work hard at not being boring.\

You can make material interesting by using some simple training skills that we will look at in a following lesson on style and techniques.



# 4

## 8 Influences that Affect Learning

### Lesson Purpose

- Maximising the learning by knowing influences brought by trainer and student.

### Lesson Outcomes

- The student will know the 8 influences that effect learning.

### Table of Contents

- What the learner brings
- What the trainer brings

### Biblically Who should we teach?

We should teach our children. The Bible commands us to do so. Deut 4:9 tells us to watch ourselves so that we do not forget the things we have been taught and that we must teach them to our children. In teaching our children we would need to give attention to teaching content as well as reasons for that teaching. For instance if we are teaching about the love of God Jn 3:16 we need to also be pointing out the wrath of God against sin and that his love is extraordinary and goes beyond sin and law. We should be teaching children to memorise verses. This can be done in many different ways and needs to be fun oriented.

By laying gospel foundations early in the life of a child will help that person to love God more intensely and deeply as the years progress.

We also need to be teaching others. Each disciple is required to teach someone else. This is basic discipleship. One need not be an expert, we just have to be one step ahead of the other person and sharing with them what we know. Through passing on Biblical truth like this we build ourselves and others up in the process.

Learning is influenced by the set of criteria that the learner brings to the training experience. Equally the trainer also has a set of criteria that he/she brings that influences learning. In this lesson you will discover 8 influences from both learner and trainer that impact on learning. In general there are 4 influences that come with the learner and 4 with the trainer.

Trainers must give attention to all of these influences to maximize the learning for participants.

The four influences that learners brings:

1. Anticipation
2. Applicability
3. Remembering/retention skills
4. Equipping

The four influences that a trainer brings:

1. Cargo Carrier
2. Conviction
3. External behaviour
4. Personality

The Learners influences

Learners arrive at a training event with their set of influences. These influences may be positive or negative. Whatever they are it is up to the trainer to use the positives and to change the negatives so that learners learn! This is a difficult thing to do and trainers must be prepared to work hard so that their students are impacted positively. A lot of thought prior to the training event is necessary. By thinking about the students and what motivates them to come to training helps the trainer to focus the material more accurately. Likewise during training, the trainer needs to be constantly evaluating the impact of the training on students. After training is completed the trainer must evaluate what went well, what hindered learning and what was just average.

Trainers need to know the following influences of the students. They will vary from student to student and from group to group. Never assume that people come to training in the same way. For instance some people come to training reluctantly. Others are keen. Some arrive with big concerns which distract them. Others come eager to apply what they are learning, others fear that they will be confronted by something too big for them to handle. It is the wise trainer who gives attention to these aspects before, during and after training.

There are many different influences that have an impact but here we will look at the four most common influences.

### **Anticipation**

Every student or learner arrives at training anticipating something. They either think that they will benefit from the training or not. They expect to gain or be bored! Learners anticipate future learning based on past and present experience. If in the past they have been bored at the training events they will likely anticipate being bored again. If it was fun, exciting and stimulating they will likely anticipate the same this time around. This attitude, positive or negative, is something the trainer must be aware of and utilize to the best advantage.

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For instance if learners are bored do something to change it. If they are keen capitalize on that eagerness. The way to do this is to observe their behaviour. If learners are indicating through their behaviour that they are bored or disinterested they are communicating that they are anticipating that their time will be wasted. The trainer must watch closely and stimulate their behaviour to be more positive.

Another impact of anticipation is whether expectations will be met. Sometimes expectations are placed too high. This can be by either the trainer or the learners. If expectations are too high for the students they will feel failures. Likewise if set too low by the trainer the learners will soon be bored.

Expectations from the learner are critical to the success of the learning event. The trainer ought therefore to enquire what it is the learners hope to learn from the event. It is at this point that expectations can be set more accurately by both trainer and learner.

By getting people to anticipate the correct learning helps empower them as they have a clear goal in mind. So through expressing expectations from both learner and trainer all people involved are better equipped to set the expectations at the right level. This makes for more meaningful teaching and learning.

In simple terms the trainer must observe and then encourage appropriately.

### **Applicability**

The second influencer that learners are quick to be impacted by is the applicability of the learning. If the learning has little or no application learners soon lose interest. However if it is highly applicable learners are motivated.

Application of the lesson is the responsibility of the learner. They have to apply what they have learnt. The trainer cannot do for all the students what he/she has taught. The burden rests on the student. However the trainer must ensure that the material that is taught has clear applications. There is a balance between new information and the application of that information. It is the trainer's responsibility to find this balance for the learners and to help them attain both.

Application ultimately leads the learner from gathering information, to retaining it to doing it. The trainer must therefore plan lessons accordingly. All parts of the lesson should contribute to the application of the information. This means that the trainer must know what the needs of the learners are and be able to feed into that need. In fact the trainer must go further. The trainer must lead the students from general information to general application and then to specific application. If this is done there is a much greater likelihood of success in the learners being able to apply what they have learnt.

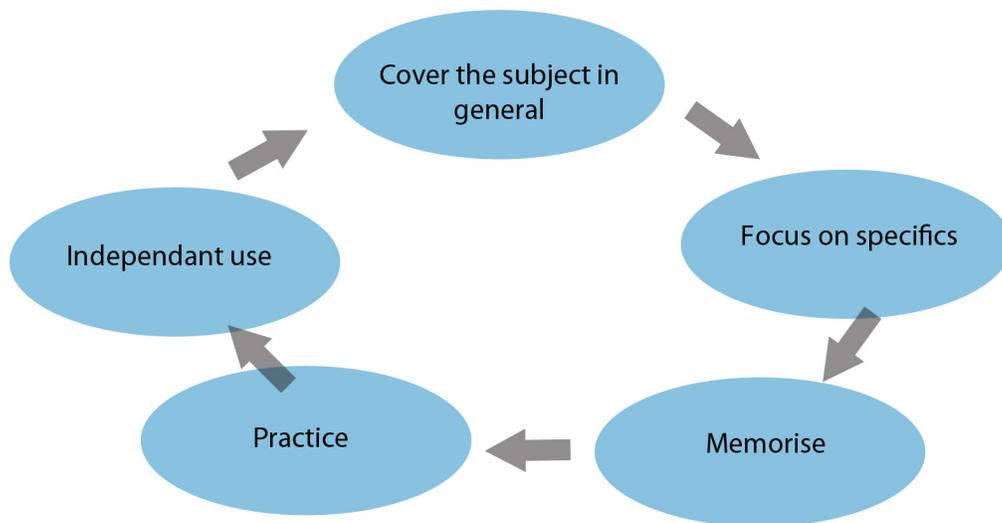
The trainer can build on the perceived needs of the learners. The trainer must uncover the needs of the learner or the situation in which the learner will be placed. The trainer is then able to determine what to train on. Uncovering a need will always assist the trainer to bring across the message.

## Remembering/Retention

Retention of information is crucial in all learning. Obviously without retention or remembering the facts there can be no long term change or application. Retention is something that the trainer must give serious attention to when planning the lessons. How to best help the learner retain information is something that the trainer needs to have clearly laid out before the training starts.

There are many different methodologies to help learners retain information. All of them however depend on the trainer sketching out the big picture and then focusing on smaller parts. In order to retain information learners must be taken through a cycle.

The cycle looks like this



So the trainer must arrange the information in a logical or appropriate manner so that students can gather the information, process it, see its applicability and then memorise, practice and independently use it.

## Equipping

When a learner arrives at training with the desire to be equipped to do something training becomes easier. Training sessions therefore should always aim to equip people to do what they have been taught. Being equipped to do something is a powerful motivational incentive for learning. In addition when learners feel equipped they can then act independently. That is the purpose of training. In order to maximize learning the trainer ought to focus on the most important aspects of the lesson, communicating that and enabling the students to retain the information and do it.

Equipping is best evaluated on the field.

There are four other factors that influence learning to a great extent. These are all connected with the trainer and relate to the style of the trainer.

## The Trainers Style

Style is the way in which the trainer delivers the content of the lesson to the learners. It is completely the responsibility of the trainer and in his/her total control. Trainers can learn to improve their style and learn to adapt their style to the situation. For instance training 5 people and speaking and training 5000 people demands a different style.

Whatever the size of the audience the trainer will need to consider his/her style.

The style in which one presents is influenced by your personality but is something that can be adjusted by the trainer. Presentation style is a skill and can be learned. It is not something that one is born with. As with all things that can be learnt there are some basic principles that need to be highlighted and then applied.

If you think about some training that you have received, what sessions stand out for you? Why do they stand out? Think about this for a moment before proceeding.

### 1. Cargo carriers

A trainer must present information. This we call cargo. How it is carried is of great significance. Effective carrying of the cargo requires the cargo to be carried in ways that are

- Memorable
- Unexpected
- Visual
- Unique
- Involving many senses
- Captivating
- Incarnational

*Bruce Wilkinson in his Training material **Teaching with Style** highlights these as being ways in which God communicates. See if you can write down stories that fit these categories. (Some examples are over the page).*

When you present information (cargo) like this then people remember it! They have little difficulty recalling it and they understand what it means. They are able to repeat the stories and the learning to others with ease. Think and practice presenting like this.

### 2. Conviction

A trainer needs to speak with conviction. The trainer must believe what is being taught. In this regard the trainer must have prepared, must seek the truth, must do it and then teach it. As a trainer if you have not done, or at least attempted to do what you teach your teaching will lack conviction. Students are quick to pick that up and they do not then believe it themselves. This often results in students leaning information but not practising it.

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In order to convey conviction the trainer must

- Desire to communicate. Not do so out of obligation.
- Have a passion for the students
- Know that as a trainer you are commissioned to train
- Be well prepared. Care must be taken in being prepared in oneself. Prepared by knowing your students needs, Prepared by having the training place as organised as possible.
- Be convicted of the message oneself

### 3. External behaviours

External behaviours fall somewhere between big and broad behaviours and small and specific behaviours. Neither is right or wrong. The right behaviour is situationally dependant. So the trainer may need to use big hand movements to convey greatness and small hand movements to convey detail.

As a trainer you must become aware of the following and learn to improve on your usage of each aspect.

- Voice: Use a variation of voice modulation. That is higher range and lower range. Use the pitch of your voice either loud, middle or soft. Use the speed at which you talk. Speak quickly or slowly to emphasise something.
- Eye Contact. Connect with each person in a small group. In a larger group make sure that you connect with people in different areas of the room. Never stare at someone for too long and never just jump from person to person. Hold eye contact with an individual for a time and then move on to eye contact with the next person.
- Face: Your face tells the story. Are you glad, sad or mad! Let your face speak!
- Gestures. Generally when communicating in a teaching environment gestures have to be bigger than normal. When we stand and talk with a friend we dont use large hand gestures. However in talking to a large group your gestures have to be bigger to be effective.
- Movement: try and not stand still. Move around, draw closer to students, move away. Keep them following you.

### 4. Personality:

Your personality impacts greatly on your style. Some people are quiet and others loud. Some are high passion people and others quiet and assuring. There are as many variations as there are people. The point is this. Be who you are and adjust and compensate according to the needs of the learners. Here are a few categories for you to think about and adjust. Sometimes they feel unnatural but practice and you will overcome any inhibition you may feel.

- Boldness
- Quietness
- Dramatic
- Serious
- Humourous
- Authority
- Confidence

## The CCP Pastoral Training Course Training the Trainers

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As a trainer you must be a student of your students and of yourself. Always be prepared to learn about them and about your own abilities and effectiveness. Most times learners report that the trainers style and presentation makes the subject content understandable or boring. It is in your hands!

Memorable: The rainbow and Noah, Thomas told to touch the Lord's hands, Tables overturned in the temple, The Messiah riding into Jerusalem on a donkey

- Unexpected: The donkey talking to Balaam, The Burning bush.
- Visual: Peter and the sheet, Daniel's vision of the statue, The tabernacle, The Nazarites.
- Unique: Angels talking to shepherds, Buring Bush
- Involving many senses: Plagues, 1Jn 1 that which we have seen, touched, heard.... Passover.
- Captivating: Writing on the wall, Mt Sinai, Parables
- Incarnational: The Word became flesh, Washing feet.



# 5

## Techniques

### Lesson Purpose

- To expose the learner to some techniques which help learners learn.

### Lesson Outcomes

- The student will have learnt 5 methods in which to increase student involvement.

### Table of Contents

- Some techniques to help trainers increase their skills

There are many different methods of increasing student involvement and participation. One can simply listen more attentively to devising a game to play. Here are 5 methods

#### 1. Listening

Basic to any good interaction is the ability to listen, hear and understand what the other person is trying to say. Good listening skills should form part of the basics of any trainers skills. Learn to listen by repeating back what you have heard and checking if what you heard is what was meant. At first this seems tedious but it is a skill that can be learnt quickly and once learnt it is useful in all of life.

To learn to listen you need to

- Pay attention to what is said
- Pay attention to non verbal communication
- Ask questions to clarify anything that is not understood
- Repeat what the learner has asked
- Answer the question

You can practice listening by pairing off with a person and reflecting back to them what they have said about a topic. Or you can put three people together. One talking, one listening and one observing. Get people to talk about a topic that you choose and then have the listener repeat back what they heard. The observer must reflect back to the listener how well they heard. This can be repeated with each group member changing roles.

## 2. Repeating

The trainer teaches a section of the lesson and then has participants as individuals repeat in summary form what was said. The trainer can randomly ask people to repeat what he has just said.

Variations of this may be better to use depending on the time available. The trainer can put participants in groups of 2 or 3 and have them tell each other what the trainer has just said. Then ask an individual or a volunteer to say what the group member said. By doing this the trainer gains an understanding of what has been communicated and how well it has been done. By doing this you also reinforce 3 times what you have just said. Once from you, once from a group member in the group and once from a group member to the whole class.

## 3. Drama or role play

Have participants create a drama or do a role play using the information given or the technique that was taught. Be careful to ensure that the participants are able to do this. If they cannot do this spontaneously you will need to provide a drama outline or a role play outline for them to facilitate their participation.

Drama and role play is extremely powerful and often underutilized by trainers. They are methods in which one can see the integration of learning. Information needs to be processed, internalized and then done or acted out. It is often fun and the whole group learns from each presentation.

E.g. People of peace role play.

Have 2 people leave the room. Then give the following instructions to the remaining group members.

Allocate one person to be the person of peace. All others to either show disinterest or hostility to the people outsiders when they come in. The objective is for the 2 to find the person of peace.

Variations on this can be done by having more than one person of peace, or having no person of peace.

Debrief afterwards as to how people approached the problem and how they felt.

## 4. Art

Have participants draw in some way what they have learnt. You will need to offer guidance and a lot of encouragement as some people find this very difficult. An easy method is for participants to be formed into groups and have them draw a poster which they need to present to the group. The group can ask questions or comment and in this way people learn and integrate a lot of information.

## 5. Game playing

You can devise various games for people to play. A simple game is to put people into groups and have them write up 12 questions and answers on the topic that has been covered, (good to use when the whole section has been taught).

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Group A then asks Group B to choose a question. Group B chooses and Group A asks the appropriate question. If B gets it right they get a point. And they can then ask the next question of the next group. And so on. If the question is answered incorrectly then Group A gets a point and is allowed to ask Group C a question and so on.

Group members are allowed to confer with one another before answering the question.

The first group to get to the required level of points say 5-6 wins. You can offer a small fun prize if you like.

The point here is to make learning a participative process. By so doing the trainer checks how well the information has been conveyed and integrated.

The real test of learning of course comes later. Trainers must evaluate how learners have applied what they have been taught. In some instances eg T4T we advocate that learners not be allowed to continue in the classes until they have done what was taught last lesson.

Training is fun and training is life changing. It is up to you the trainer to make it so. Content must always be good, but how it is delivered and received and practiced is the only measure that indicates if training has been successful.

In groups play dice game.





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# Proclamation of the Gospel

~ Dr Wally Marais



# 1

## Meet God's Messenger

### Lesson Purpose

- To introduce you to the man, Paul, the Apostle of Christ and the consequences of his encounter with the Living God.

### Lesson Outcomes

When the student has completed these lessons

- He will have a working knowledge of the contents of the writings of Paul
- He will understand his own spiritual experiences in the light of revealed truth He will understand the backgrounds of the New Testament peoples
- He will be able to make the necessary applications of truth to the present situation

### Table of Contents

- Paul's day and age
- His activities before conversion
- His encounter with God and conversion on the road to Damascus
- Paul's ministry. Missionary and church planter
- Reaching for his goals...the road to Rome

### Paul's Day and Age

The Apostle Paul is one of the best known personalities from the early Christian times, and almost half of the letters in the New Testament are attributed to him.

Paul came from a strict Jewish family living in the Diaspora which is the name given to the time when the Jewish nation was scattered all over the known world. He was born in the city of Tarsus at the beginning of the Christian era (note Acts 21:39; 22:3).

Tarsus was the capital city of the Roman province of Cilicia. Although the town of Tarsus is small and insignificant today, it was flourishing during Paul's time as a centre for trade and commerce as well as education.

This Hellenistic or Greek city was a centre for Greek culture and it is even mentioned by some historians together with Athens. It appears that Paul spent his childhood, and received his religious education in Jerusalem.

It is clear that Paul was proud of his Jewish ancestry (note 2 Co 11:22). Being born in a Roman province, Paul also had, apart from being a Jew, Roman citizenship. This played an important role in his later life as God's missionary amongst the gentiles (note Acts 16:37; 22:28).

**He also qualified himself in the trade of tent making before his conversion and thus later became an important means of supporting himself as a missionary to the Gentiles.**

As a Jew, thus belonging to the Jewish faith or Judaism, Paul lived in times when many people found the Jewish faith attractive. It was times when the late classical world was in a state of profound confusion as far as religion was concerned.

**People had an urgent need for salvation and redemption.**

**Before his conversion, Paul believed that Judaism was the only answer.** Amongst the many different religions, promising salvation and deliverance from eternal death, he became a teacher and defender of the Jewish faith. This largely accounts for his persecution of the Christian faith and it is possible that the Christian faith appeared to him as just another sect.

**Thus Paul needed an intervention from God in order to change and convert him to Christianity.** Before his conversion he was a devoted Pharisee and a passionate student of the Law, studying in Jerusalem, which was the Pharisee's spiritual home.

He was extremely zealous for the traditions of his fathers and considered himself to be blameless as in regard to righteousness under the Law (Php 3:6).

This is important background information in order to understand his activities before his conversion on the road to Damascus.

### **Paul's Activities before Conversion**

The early Christians took a dramatic stand against the Jewish believers and they were in direct conflict with the Jewish view and understanding of the Law. They questioned the Jewish traditions, the temple worship and their exclusive claim to salvation. **This became the main reason why Paul, as a devoted Pharisee, was impelled to persecute the Christians.**

**In his mind, his persecution of the Christians was a proof of his righteousness under the Law (note Gal 1:13, Php 3:6).** To him Christianity was nothing more than one of the many heresies invading the known world during his time of living.

In order to accomplish his mission as a persecutor of Christianity, he received authority from the High Priest to ban Christians from the synagogues which became their usual place of gathering. **Thus his zeal for his understanding of the truth turned him into an enemy of the truth.**

**This information is important in the understanding of many of the things written in his letters after conversion:**

Paul actually became converted from religion to Religion or from "truth" to Truth; and

He had first hand experience of the dangers of being zealous for God without the correct knowledge.

We read in Romans 10:2...*"I can testify about them (the Jews) that they are zealous but their zeal is not based on knowledge."* **Thus Paul's personal experience turned him into a witness of the truth revealed to him by the grace of God.**

**This is a very important religious principle and applicable to our own situation:**

It is possible for a person to be religiously active **without knowledge**.

One can even belong to a church or be a preacher, but without the knowledge of truth revealed to you by the grace of God in his Word, you can still remain in darkness.

Thus the "preacher" without knowledge named Saul of Tarsus mounted his horse one day and took the road to Damascus with the view in mind to harass and expel the Christian community gathering in the synagogue. **In his pocket he carried the authority from the High Priest, but his heart was empty and his knowledge of God incomplete.**

But while galloping away with a zeal to defend the "truth" as he understood it, the scene was set for a strange encounter, an appointment made by God in his unmerited grace. For this galloping "preacher" was soon to discover his mission in life...

### **Paul's Encounter with God and Conversion on the Road to Damascus**

Only heaven will one day finally reveal to us what exactly happened to Paul that day on the road to Damascus. Although Luke reports quite lengthy on the matter in the book of Acts (note Acts 9), Paul himself is reluctant to give detailed information in his letters. **He tends to concentrate more on the meaning of the event than on what actually happened.**

**To him, his conversion was an act from God which resulted in practical things happening to him.** Thus when we read that Paul says "I let myself suffer the loss of all things" (Php 3:8) he refers to this event on the road to Damascus. Do not think that God was treating Paul in a special way, he was a sinner who needed salvation and he had to believe like anyone else. He believed, he put his faith into action and obeyed Jesus, was filled with the Holy Spirit and then became God's instrument. This was not some special treat for someone special, we have to all start by confessing that we are sinners.

**Paul's conversion led to a complete change of heart, mind and mission or direction.** It is clear that this is something that can only be done by God and Him alone. **It is clear from the Bible that no other person, except Jesus Christ, shaped the history of Christianity like the Apostle Paul.**

**The intensity with which he formerly persecuted the Christians was changed by his conversion into a dynamic and mighty force, carrying the Gospel of Salvation to the nations.**

**He can be viewed as the first missionary because little or nothing was done before his conversion to reach the heathen nations.** Paul's conversion did not only change his heart, it also opened his ears in order to hear and understand the last command of Christ in a new way...*"Go and make disciples of all nations"* (Mt 28:19).

**Thus when Paul had an encounter with God on the road to Damascus, it was the result of an action taken by God.** His conversion became the cradle in which his understanding of grace as unmerited favour was born.

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This understanding of grace forms an important aspect of his teachings on faith and his understanding of faith as a gift from God as written in Eph 2:8...*"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this not from yourselves, it is a gift from God."* God's free grace is available to all sinners who respond with the abilities that grace makes possible. The grace of God through Jesus and His work makes everybody savable, and God gives everyone the gift of faith so that they can respond to His call to salvation and sanctification.

From the above it is clear that God had a plan with the life of Paul including his background and life before conversion, just like He has a plan for each one of us, God has no pets. His training as a Pharisee, his family background as a faithful Jew, as well as his Roman citizenship as the man from Tarsus acted as important preparation for his final destiny in life as God's missionary towards the gentiles. Your past as a sinner becomes useful to God when you become a Christian; your natural talents given to Him can become instruments for furthering the gospel.

Task: Paul's encounter with the Living God on the Road to Damascus, is mentioned three times in the Book of Acts. Find these passages and compare the details given. Which Letter of Paul also briefly refers to this incident?

### Paul's Ministry as Missionary and Church Planter

#### Paul, the Missionary

**Paul's missionary work can be divided into four different categories i.e.**

His **first** missionary journey.

His **second** missionary journey.

His **third** missionary journey.

His **final** voyage to Rome.

**All these missionary journeys resulted in church planting and the letters of Paul recorded in the Bible are some of the letters that he wrote to these young congregations.**

**Before we look at his church planting activities, we must first have an overview of his missionary activities:**

#### Paul's First Missionary Journey (Acts 13:1-15:35)

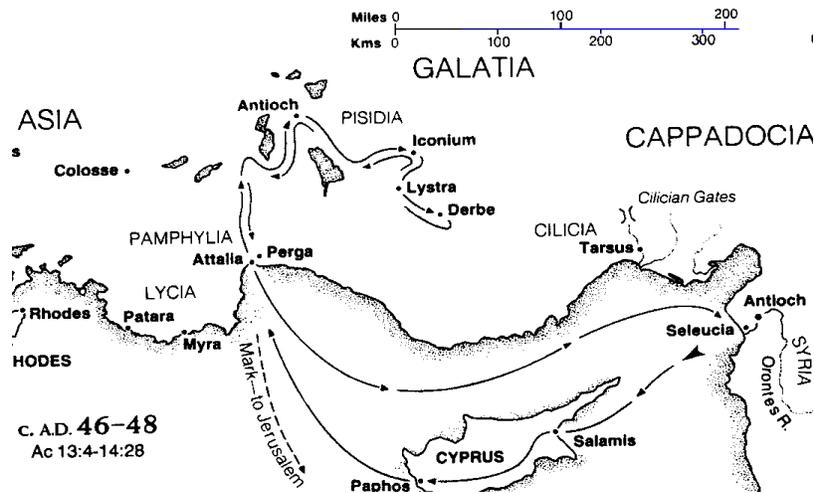
The Church in Antioch, inspired by the Holy Spirit, ordained Paul and Barnabas as foreign missionaries and they set forth on an evangelistic tour, accompanied by John Mark.

Their work began at the Island of Cyprus, from where they went to Perga in Asia Minor where John Mark deserted the party. **(See map on opposite page)**

Paul and Barnabas carried on with their evangelistic campaign to Antioch where they turned south east to Iconium and Lystra. There Paul was stoned and they departed to Derbe.

From Derbe they returned on their footprints through the same cities to Perga and Attalia, from which port they sailed to Antioch, the city from which they started.

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It is estimated that they covered a distance of about 2400 kilometres and their journey lasted about two years.

**Paul's First Missionary Journey**



**Paul's Second Missionary Journey (Acts 15:36-18:22):**

Starting from Antioch again with Silas as his companion, Paul revisited the churches planted during his first journey (**See map on next page**). He then extended his work further into Galatia and westward to Troas.

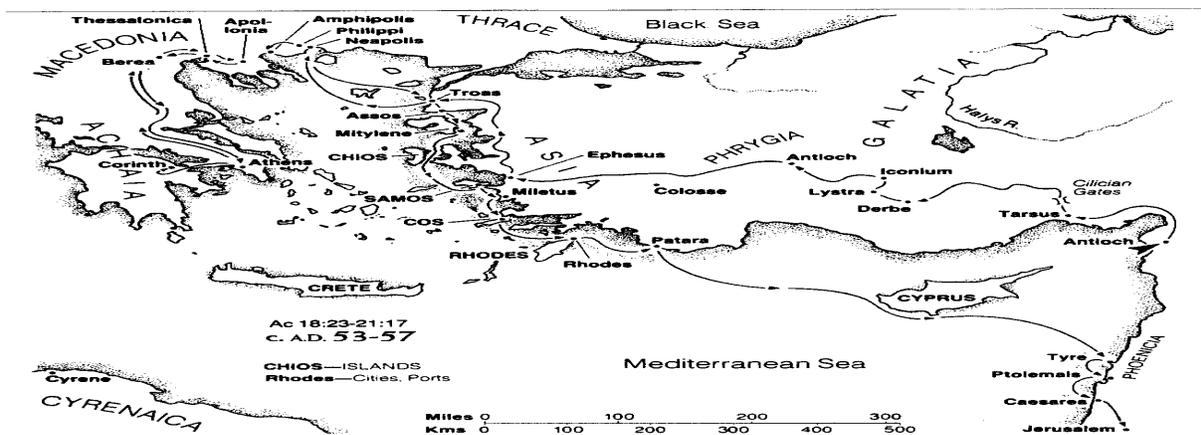
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At Troas they were called into Europe by a vision and came to Philippi where they were beaten and imprisoned, but miraculously delivered by an earthquake. Before they left, they established both the Philippian and Thessalonian Churches.

As they moved on they came to Athens, but soon discovered that the soil for the gospel seed was not ready yet and they could not establish anything permanent. Thus they left for Corinth. Here Paul was met with violent opposition. He was, however, encouraged with a vision and remained to found a flourishing church.

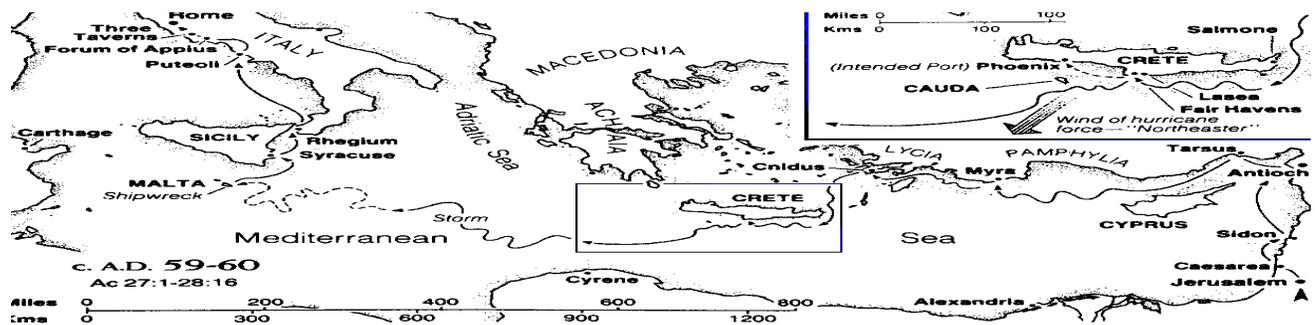
Then the missionaries returned to Antioch, by way of Jerusalem, stopping at Ephesus. It is estimated that the second missionary journey lasted about three years and that they travelled more than 4000 kilometres.

**Paul's Third Missionary Journey (Acts 18:23-21:16):**



Leaving his home church in Antioch again for the third time, Paul revisited the churches of Galatia and Phrygia and came to Ephesus (See map on opposite page). During his absence some preliminary work had been done in the city by Apollos, which prepared the way for a successful campaign.

Here Paul's preaching made a very good impression and his miracle working power put confusion to those using black magic to deceive the people. A great work was accomplished and a church founded, but labour problems made it wise for Paul to leave and he departed to Macedonia and Greece.



He remained three months at Corinth, then revisiting the churches of Macedonia, came to Troas, where he

preached a midnight sermon and raised Eutychus to life. On his way to Jerusalem he stopped at Miletus where he delivered a farewell address to the elders.

Shortly after his arrival at Jerusalem, he was met with hatred and discovered that a conspiracy against his life was formed. He was arrested under false charges, but the Roman soldiers rescued him from the mob because of his Roman citizenship. (Read Acts 21:17-26:32)

### Paul's Third Missionary Journey

#### The Voyage to Rome (Acts 27 & 28):

From Jerusalem Paul was taken to Caesarea where he was kept in prison for two years. During this time he appeared before Felix, Festus, and King Agrippa but appealed to Caesar, the Roman King. Thus he was sent to Rome, chained to a soldier, he preached to Caesar's household and others who came to him. While he was confined he wrote letters to many churches he had founded. It is believed that he was finally beheaded in Rome at about 67AD. **(See map on next page)**

#### Paul, the Church Planter:

Paul founded many congregations on his missionary journeys and his letters in the New Testament were all addressed to these congregations or groups of people he encountered on his journeys.

#### The following were some of the congregations founded by Paul:

- The congregation in **Rome** Letter to the Romans
- The congregation in **Corinth** Letters to the Corinthians
- The congregations in the province of **Galatia** Letter to the Galatians
- The congregation in **Ephesus** Letter to the Ephesians
- The congregation in **Philippi** Letter to the Philippians
- The congregation in **Colosse** Letter to the Colossians
- The congregation in **Thessalonica** Letters to the Thessalonians
- There are also **letters** of Paul in the New Testament **addressed to individuals** leading some congregations like the letters to **Timothy and Titus**. Then there is a letter to a wealthy and influential individual i.e. to **Philemon**.

In our next Lecture we are going to look in more detail into these letters, but from this Lecture it is clear that the essence of Paul's ministry can be summarised in the following statement he made in his letter to the Philippians:

*"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in this body, this will mean fruitful labour for me" (Php 1:21-22).*

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Assignment (Result to be discussed in class):

Use a concordance and find all the references in the NT concerning Paul's preaching/proclamation of the Gospel to the Gentiles/Non-Jews. How are we in the present day to view ourselves in the light of this missionary objective of Paul



# 2

## Messages He wrote to the Churches

### Lesson Purpose

- To obtain a general overview of the Letters of Paul in order to understand the message of these letters

### Lesson Outcomes

- The student will have a good working knowledge of these writings and be able to share their messages with others

### Table of Contents

- General overview of the letters attributed to Paul in the New Testament
- Central theme and message of Paul's letters

### General Overview of the Letters Attributed to Paul in the New Testament

Before commencing with a more detailed study of the letters of Paul, it is important to understand the fact that one must have some general knowledge as in regard to the purpose, the date written, the setting, and the people or congregation to whom the letter was originally written.

**In this general overview of Paul's letters we are going to discuss each letter under the following themes:**

- *The Purpose of the Letter*
- *The People or Congregation to whom the Letter was Originally Written (Addressees)*
- *The Date Written*
- *The Circumstances of the People Receiving the Letter*

### The Letter to the Romans

This letter will be discussed in detail in our next session and we are therefore not going to look at it now. The reason why we are giving detailed attention to this letter is because it is considered by many as Paul's testament in the sense that it deals fully with his understanding of Christianity.

**The letter to the Romans can be considered as a summary of all the theological insights recorded in all the other letters written by Paul.**

## **The First Letter to the Corinthians**

### **Purpose of the letter:**

Paul knew about some problems in the congregation and he addressed these problems and wrote the letter to offer some solutions. The main purpose of the letter can be considered as a teaching to Christians on how to live in a corrupt society. They were abusing the gifts so he writes to instruct them in the use of spiritual gifts. Chap 12.

The clue to the message and understanding of this letter is the mental, moral and spiritual condition of the Corinthians. This letter is distinctly a letter of reproof. (1 Cor 5:1-11; 6:15-18; 11:21; 15:12)

### **Addressees:**

This letter was addressed to the church in Corinth.

### **Date written:**

It is generally accepted that this letter was written at about AD. 55 near the end of Paul's three years ministry in Ephesus, during his third missionary journey.

### **Circumstances of those receiving the letter:**

Corinth was a major cosmopolitan city, a seaport and major trade centre. It was a city filled with idolatry and immorality.

The church in Corinth consisted largely of Gentiles and it was established at Paul's second missionary journey.

## **The Second Letter to the Corinthians**

### **Purpose of the letter:**

To affirm his own ministry and to defend his authority as an Apostle and to refute the false teachers in Corinth.

It appears that Paul received some negative comments from some people in Corinth after his first letter and that he had to react on them.

This second letter contains more of Paul's personal history than any other of his epistles. It can indeed be regarded as a revelation of Paul himself. (See 2 Cor 1:8-10; 5:14; 10:10; 11:6; 11:23-33; 12:7-9)

### **Addressees:**

The church in Corinth.

### **Date written:**

At about 55-57 AD. from Macedonia.

### **Circumstances under which the letter was written:**

As a reaction against false accusations made after his first letter, it is generally believed that Paul wrote more letters to Corinth and that 1 Corinthians is actually his second letter.

### **Thus 2 Corinthians is viewed as his third letter to the church in Corinth.**

This letter has an intense personal quality, addressing personal matters and misunderstandings between Paul and the members of the congregation.

### **The Letter to the Galatians**

#### **Purpose of the letter:**

To refute the Judaizing teachers who taught that Gentile believers must obey the Jewish law (salvation by works and the necessity of circumcision) in order to be saved. Also to call Christians to faith and freedom in Christ.

Paul heard of the backslidden condition of the Galatians and, due to the urgency of the matter, he did what he did not usually do, he wrote the letter himself (1 Cor 6:11). He makes it clear that those still functioning with the sinful nature need to be delivered so that the fruit of the Spirit can operate in their lives and the church. There would be no solution to these problems if they were not in step with the Holy Spirit. The old self of sin needed to be crucified once and for all.

There is no place for the acts of this sinful nature in the Kingdom of God.

**The doctrine of justification by faith and deliverance from the sin nature is stated here more emphatically than in any other of Paul's writings.** It is also important to note the emphasis that Paul places on the inward and spiritual nature of the Christian faith in contrast to the mere externalism of the other isms (see Gal 1:16; 2:20; 4:6 & 19).

#### **Addressees:**

To all the churches in southern Galatia founded on Paul's first missionary journey, including Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.

#### **Date written:**

About AD. 49 from Antioch just before the Jerusalem council which took place at about 50 AD. (Note Acts 15).

#### **Circumstances of those receiving the letter:**

One of the main problems that confronted the early Christian church was the relationship between the Jewish laws and Christianity. This became a big problem in the young churches founded by Paul on his first missionary journey.

Thus Paul wrote a letter to these congregations to address this problem. Later at the council in Jerusalem (Acts 15) the conflict was officially resolved by the church leaders. The emphasis is placed on the purifying of their hearts and not merely forgiveness and then do as you like. This a kingdom way and it will not be changed. God never has a sale, it is death to sin..

## **The Letter to the Ephesians:**

### **Purpose of the letter:**

To strengthen the believers in Ephesus in their Christian faith and to explain to them the nature and purpose of the church as the body of Christ.

There is an emphasis on predestination showing us that God predestined for all people to come to Christ and to enjoy all His preplanned blessings for them. First on the list is His love which has made it possible for all Christians to live holy and blameless before God. The emphasis of this letter lies with the church as the body of Christ, and the believers as members of that sacred body. Romans and Galatians focused on justification, reconciliation and sanctification; this letter and Colossians concentrate on the church, the Holy people of God.

### **Addressees:**

The church in Ephesus.

### **Date written:**

About AD. 60 from Rome during Paul's imprisonment there.

### **Circumstances under which the letter was written:**

This letter was not written to confront any heresy or problem in the churches. It was sent with Tychicus to strengthen and encourage the churches in the area. Paul spent over three years with the church in Ephesus and he was very close to this church.

The letter was written during Paul's first imprisonment at Rome, ten years after he had established the Ephesian church.

He met with the elders of this church for the last time at Meletis and this was a meeting that was filled with great sadness because Paul was leaving them for the last time.

**It appears that Paul intended this letter to be a circular letter, to be read at all the different congregations in the area.**

## **The Letter to the Philippians:**

### **Purpose of the letter:**

The Phillipian church was noted for its generosity. Repeatedly it had ministered to the needs of Paul (Phil 4:15,16). Paul wrote this letter to thank the Philippians for the gift they had sent him and to strengthen the believers by showing them that true joy comes from Jesus Christ alone.

### **Addressees:**

To all the believers in Philippi.

**Date written:**

About AD. 61 from Rome during Paul's imprisonment there.

**Circumstances of those receiving the letter:**

The church in Philippi was the first church established on the European continent and it was founded by Paul on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:11-40).

The Philippian church had sent a gift to Paul as a Roman prisoner and this indicates that the believers in Philippi were one with Paul in his suffering.

**The Letter to the Colossians:**

**Purpose of the letter:**

To combat errors in the church and to show that believers have everything they need in Christ.

One needs to study this letter by looking at its portrait of the church (in which the headship of Christ is emphasised) and of the Christian (Note Col 1:18; 2:10 & 19; 1:13 & 14; 4:7-13).

The chief object and purpose of this letter is to draw a faithful portrait of the Lord Jesus in all his dignity, deity and glory!

**Addressees:**

The church at Colosse, a city in Asia Minor.

**Date written:**

About AD 60 during Paul's imprisonment in Rome.

**Circumstances of those receiving the letter:**

Paul had never been at Colosse himself and the church was possibly founded by Epaphras and other converts from Paul's missionary journeys. The church was invaded with "believers" who wanted to combine heathen practices with Christian doctrine. Thus Paul confronted these false doctrines.

**The First Letter to the Thessalonians:**

**Purpose of the letter:**

To strengthen the Thessalonian Christians in their faith and give them assurance of Christ's return.

**Addressees:**

The church at Thessalonica.

**Date written:**

About AD. 51 from Corinth. This is one of Paul's earliest letters.

**Circumstances of those receiving the letter:**

The church in Thessalonica was still very young and it has been established about three years before the letter was written.

The Thessalonian Christians had to mature in their faith and there was a misunderstanding in regard to Christ's second coming.

Some thought He would return immediately and they lacked motivation to work towards the coming of the Kingdom and became passive. They also had some misconceptions regarding the bodily resurrection.

**The Second Letter to the Thessalonians:**

**Purpose of the letter:**

To clear up the confusion about the second coming of Christ. Paul sets their minds at rest by declaring that certain events must take place before the day of the Lord will be ushered in.

In the first letter, Paul taught that the Lord's coming will be sudden, but in this second letter, he points out that sudden does not mean immediately.

**Addressees:**

The church in Thessalonica.

**Date written:**

About AD. 51 or 52, a few months after 1 Thessalonians was written, also written from Corinth.

**Circumstances of those receiving the letter:**

Many in the church were confused in regard to the time of Christ's second coming.

Because of growing persecution they thought that the final return of the Lord must be imminent and they interpreted Paul's first letter as a confirmation of the fact that Christ would come any minute.

Many became lazy, stopped working, and became disorderly with the excuse that they are waiting for Christ's return.

## **The First Letters to Timothy:**

### **Purpose of the letter:**

The two letters to Timothy and the one to Titus are known as the pastoral epistles or letters. They were addressed to individuals and not to congregations. Being written when Paul was about 70, they have the mellow wisdom of old age.

This first letter was written to give encouragement and instruction to Timothy, a young leader.

The purpose of this letter is clearly indicated in 1 Tim 3:15: "... *this letter will let you know how we should conduct ourselves in God's household.*"

The standard of this matter is then given in 1 Tim 4:12: "... *be an example for the believers in your speech, your conduct, your love, faith and purity.*"

### **Addressees:**

Written to Timothy as a young leader of the church.

### **Date written:**

About 64 AD from Rome or Macedonia and probably just before Paul's final imprisonment in Rome.

### **Reason for this personal letter to Timothy:**

Timothy was one of Paul's closest companions and Paul had sent Timothy to the church in Ephesus to counter the false teaching that had arisen there (1 Ti 1:3-4). He most probably served for a time as a leader in the church at Ephesus.

Paul hoped to visit Timothy but sent him the letter in the meantime in order to give him some practical advice for the ministry.

## **The Second Letter to Timothy:**

### **Purpose of the letter:**

To give final instructions and encouragement to Timothy, urging him to come at once with Mark and the things that were left (2 Tim 4:9, 11, 13 & 21).

### **Date written:**

About AD. 66 or 67 from the prison in Rome before his execution by Nero.

### **Reason for this personal letter to Timothy:**

Paul was alone in prison and he wrote this letter to pass the torch to the new generation of Church leaders. He also asked for visits from his friends, for his books, and his parchments which was probably parts of the Old Testament, the Gospels and other biblical manuscripts.

### **The Letter to Titus:**

#### **Purpose of the letter:**

To advise Titus in his responsibility of supervising the churches on the Island of Crete.

#### **Addressees:**

To Titus, a Greek convert, who had become Paul's special representative to the Island of Crete.

#### **Date written:**

About AD. 64 around the same time 1 Timothy was written, probably from Macedonia while travelling between Roman prisons.

#### **Reason for this letter to Titus:**

Paul sent Titus to organise and oversee the churches on Crete and this letter tells him how to go about doing so.

### **The Letter to Philemon:**

#### **Purpose of the letter:**

To convince Philemon to forgive his runaway slave, Onesimus, and to accept him as a brother in the faith.

#### **Addressees:**

Written to Philemon who was probably a wealthy member of the Colossian church.

#### **Date written:**

About 60 AD. during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome.

#### **Reason for this letter to Philemon:**

Slavery was common in the Roman Empire and evidently some Christians had slaves. Paul did not condemn slavery in his writing, but he called Philemon to accept this runaway slave as his brother in Christ.

### **The Central Theme and Message of Paul's Letters**

The recipients were living under different circumstances and different reasons compelled Paul to write to them.

**A careful study of all his letters reveals that the theology taught by Paul under the guidance of the Holy Spirit runs like a golden thread throughout his letters.** Thus we can summarise the main message in his letters as follows:

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**The Good News proclaimed** by Paul to the nations is that of forgiveness of sins, reconciliation and the removal of the guilty barrier between God and man, and deliverance from the sinful nature and its power. Paul's message is always a clear message of God's plan of full salvation. This new eternal life is available to all who will accept Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord by grace through faith. This life was Jesus living in them and sharing His new life with them. They were not saved by works, and their intellectual faith could not save them, the only way to be saved was to accept Jesus into their lives by faith. Only Jesus saves from all sin.

**True obedience** results from a reconciled relationship with God.

In our next Lecture we are going to look in detail at the letter to the Romans, which is also called by some as Paul's Testament.

**From Paul's personal experience it is clear that God never wastes a person's time and that He can use our past, our present, and our circumstances in order that we can learn the true meaning of serving Him.** Even difficult circumstances that prevailed in some of the congregations to whom he sent his letters, contributed to this fact.



# 3

# Motivating the Romans with Truth

## Lesson Purpose

- To obtain an introductory overview of the Letter of Paul to the Romans

## Lesson Outcomes

The student will be taken step by step through the theology taught in Romans and he will:

- See that sin is two fold; it is what a man is before God – a sinner and also has a sinful nature in his spirit controlling him.
- See the double cure that God has provided in Jesus Christ.

## Table of Contents

- The purpose, receivers, date, and circumstances when the letter was written
- The outline of the letter
- Theological themes covered in the letter
- Theological message of the letter...righteousness by Faith alone

## The Purpose, Receivers, Date, and Circumstances when the Letter was Written

### The purpose of the letter:

It is believed that Paul wrote this letter to introduce himself to the Romans and to give them an example of his message before he arrived in Rome.

### Addressees:

The letter was originally addressed to all the Christians living in the Roman capital city, Rome.

### Date written:

About 57 AD. from Corinth, as Paul was preparing for his visit to Jerusalem.

### Circumstances of the people receiving the letter:

Apparently Paul had finished his work in the East, and he planned to visit Rome on his way to Spain after bringing a collection to Jerusalem for the poor Christians there (Ro 15:22-28). The Roman church consisted mainly of Jews, but there were also some Gentile Christians.

**Apart from the above it is also clear that Paul wrote the book of Romans as a carefully presented statement on his faith.** It does not have the features of a typical letter, but he did spend some time greeting different people known to him in the congregation in Rome.

**The book of Romans is sometimes called Paul's testament in the sense that it contains his ultimate understanding of the Christian faith.**

### **The Outline of the Letter**

The letter can be divided into eight different sections each containing a number of themes, as follows:

#### **Section 1:**

##### **Introduction: Qualifications and reason for writing 1:1-15**

- The apostolic calling qualifies the author 1:1-7
- Grateful, prayerful concern for the readers motivates the writing of the letter 1:8-15

#### **Section 2:**

##### **The power of the Gospel and the righteousness of God are revealed 1:16-17**

- This is the main theme of the book and the basis upon which the message around which the rest of the theological themes in the book are developed.

#### **Section 3:**

##### **All people need salvation from the power and the presence of sin 1:18-3:20**

- The power of sin rules among the Gentiles 1:18-32
- The power of sin rules among the Jews 2:1-3:8
- All humanity, Jews and Gentiles, have the presence of the sinful nature in them. 3:9-20

#### **Section 4:**

##### **God provides salvation from sin through Jesus Christ on the basis of faith 3:21-4:24**

- God reveals His plan of making everything right 3:21-26
- Justification and cleansing from all sin by faith is for all persons 3:27-4:25

#### **Section 5:**

##### **Salvation in Christ results in victorious new life 5:1-8:39**

- Justification results in peace and righteousness 5:1-21
- Christian life is a victorious freedom from all sin and an expulsion of the sin nature. 6:1-7:25

The Law of the Spirit of LIFE sets us free from the law of sin and death; now God's righteous requirements can be met in us through faith in Jesus Christ..8:1-39

### Section 6:

#### God is faithful in all his promises 9:1-11:36

- Paul grieves over Israel's rejection of Christ 9:1-5
- God's sovereignty is displayed in his dealings with Israel. God's actions show us that every Jew can be saved by grace through faith in Christ, He never gave them special treatment 9:6-29
- Israel's freedom to choose reveals their rejection of Christ. Their unbelief brought the judgment of God upon them. 9:30-33
- God's righteousness is displayed in Gods Grace and His mercy 11:1-36

### Section 7:

#### The saving mercy of God in Christ summons Christians to obedience 12:1-15:13

- Christians need to be transformed 12:1-2
- Christians must be responsible members of the Body of Christ 12:3-21
- Christians must fulfil their appropriate obligations to the state 13:1-7
- Christians must remember the supremacy of love and the urgency of the times 13:8-14
- Christians must seek to edify one another in the fellowship of the Church 14:1-15:13

### Section 8:

#### Conclusion 15:14-16:27

- It is clear that these different sections or themes discussed in the book, form a unity which ends with the fact that Christianity has a calling towards the world in making the love of Christ visible and real.

### Theological Themes Covered in the Letter

**When one looks carefully at the letter to the Romans it becomes clear that there are different theological themes in the book.** All these different themes deal from different angles with the fact of sin, the fact of salvation from the power and presence of sin, the righteousness of God through Jesus Christ and the faithfulness of God.

It is clear that these themes were foremost in the mind of Paul as he presents the Good News that salvation is available to all, regardless of their identity or sin.

This Good News can be summarised under the main theological theme which states that **we are all saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ which is an unearned, undeserved favour from God, through faith in Christ and his finished work. Only through Christ we are able to stand before God, justified and be reconciled to Him.**

This major theme is effectively summarised in the key verse of the book namely Ro 5:1...*"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

This fact has been described in theological terms as salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone and has become a major doctrine in the Church of Christ since the reformation in the 17th Century.

In order to understand the concept of salvation by grace and faith in Christ alone one must look at five different themes covered by Paul in his letter to the Romans which deal with this very important theological doctrine from different angles.

**These Five Themes are as Follows:**

- Sin...and salvation by grace and faith.
- Salvation...and undeserved and unmerited free grace of God.
- Growth...and undeserved and enabling grace of God.
- Sovereignty...based on undeserved grace and the Love of God.
- Service...and undeserved grace allowing God to fulfil His plan in and through us.

All these different themes are pointing towards the theological message of the book which is that the only holiness that man can ever experience is righteousness by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone. This theological message will be summarised in 3.4 below.

**We are now going to look in more detail into the five themes covered in the book of Romans:**

**Sin:**

Sin means refusing to do God's will and failing to do what He expects from us. It is man trying to please God while he is still under the control of the devil's nature within him. He needs to appropriate by grace through faith in Christ his deliverance from the sin nature. This is the natural state of all human beings outside of Christ, since the fall of man in paradise. The fall of Adam, called original sin, results in man being unable to obey God and powerless to save himself. In fact it is worse than that, man's spirit is reconciled to Satan's spirit and therefore has the presence of his sinful nature in him. This sinful nature corrupts every part of man's humanity but cannot destroy the image of God in him. Yes it has warped and twisted man's nature that it is almost impossible to know what is human and what is sin. But once a person is recreated by God's Holy presence in him he discovers his real humanity and understands that he is no longer a sinner in Christ but a whole new man. The image of God is restored in him by God's grace through his response in faith in the only one who can deliver him, the Lord Jesus Christ..

Sin causes man to live his own way rather than God's way. Because of the fact that God is righteous and perfect, He has the right to condemn sinful man.

This important theme in the book of Romans communicates to us the great truth that all have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God (Ro 3:23). No matter what our background or how hard we try to live good and moral lives, **no man can ever earn salvation or remove his sin by personal efforts.**

**What we need is to put our faith in Jesus and experience His full salvation. There is no other way.**

**Salvation:**

Knowing that we are sinners, we are introduced to the concept of salvation, because sin must be dealt with in the sense that man needs forgiveness and changing in order to be saved from eternal condemnation, and to be able to live pleasing to God in the here and now.

Although we do not deserve it, God in his merciful kindness, reached out to us. Because He loves us, He forgives us. He provides the way for us to be saved, because **the death of Christ on the cross paid the penalty for our sins** (Ro 5:8). The penalty was not like money being paid to someone as a fine to set us free. It was far more costly than that. An innocent sinless sacrifice had to forfeit His life by dying because sin demanded death, physically, spiritually and eternally. That is what it cost Jesus, nothing short than absolute death, and he trusted God's power to raise Him from this death, which is what happened. He had more life as the Holy Son of God than the devil, who had thought he had all power over death, because all men were under his control and power, and no one could kill death. That was the final end. But he had totally underestimated God's power. Jesus died and fulfilled all the requirements from the devil's side, but also satisfied all the requirements from God's righteousness side. That is what we mean when we say He paid the ransom. It does not mean that we have been let off the hook and run around still under the control of sin, because no matter how we live Jesus has paid the price for our freedom. Rather because He really changed places with us we now have to live for Him, for we belong to Him.

This good news must, however, be believed and applied to our lives. Only when we **believe** in Christ, our sins are forgiven, and are we allowed to live in a wonderful new relationship with God. If you Walk with God you are going to want to be Holy, and then you will be ready for Him to do a subsequent work of grace in your heart. He will expel the sinful nature from your life and you will be free from sin once and for all Romans 6:6 – 6;23. You cannot grow out of sin. Why should you when you can by faith reckon yourself dead to sin? How does it happen? Yield yourself to God, and He will set you free from sin in one moment. Do not glorify the devil by saying that God cannot undo what the devil has done. Take another look at the cross. If he raised Jesus from the dead it is a small thing to sanctify your life from the sin nature. We all know it does not belong in our lives. It is an intruder, so let Jesus deal with it the same way He deals with all sin.

Now that we are in a new relationship with God we have to grow to become more like His Son Jesus Christ. This is His plan for all Christians. This is the next important theme in the book of Romans.

### **Growth:**

When we are born again we are spiritual babies and need to get the right nourishment to grow and to mature. The fruit of the Spirit cannot grow in the soil of a sinful nature. If you continue to allow this evil principle of sin to enslave, you will actually become devil like and not Christlike. You are becoming the person of your choices, every time you stoop to sin you are allowing an evil thing to happen to you. This is how some Christians get demonized even though they profess to be followers of Jesus. It is a very dangerous way to live. If God has provided for your freedom in the work of Jesus on the cross, why not accept the work by faith. He did not die merely to give you a ticket to heaven, but He died to take everything that has to do with the devil and sin to the grave and to bury it forever, which He did.

We are growing in our relationship with Christ and in this process we are freed by the Holy Spirit from the demands of the law and the fear of judgment.

The most important aspect of spiritual growth is learning to trust in the Holy Spirit and learning and allowing him to help us in overcoming temptation.

The Holy Spirit imparts to us all the holy things we need to grow with. It is called the Fruit of the Spirit. We can never produce them on our own; they are the gifts given us to use so that in choosing to use them we can grow in them and grow in Christlikeness. The fruit

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of the Spirit, which is love, which is Joy, which is peace and so on. It is the quality of Jesus' Holy life being imparted to us as we learn to use them in the power of the Holy Spirit. We are becoming the experiences we are choosing to have, so if you are choosing Jesus experiences by choosing to do Jesus things you will grow to be like Jesus. Rom 6:13 – 15. Listen to what God's Word says, "Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey – whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience which leads to righteousness." He leaves us to make the choice and we can, by grace through faith in the One who can do it.

**Sovereignty:**

The sovereignty of God means that He oversees and cares about his people, in the past, in the present, and in the future and that his ways of dealing with people are always fair. This means that the acts of God are never to be questioned by man and that God is free to do whatever He likes. We also know that He acts redemptively towards us and that His whole basis of acting is governed by His love. It has never been His will that anyone should perish. That is why we cannot accept that God has actually decreed who goes to heaven and who goes to hell. That is not the God who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. Within his Sovereignty He makes His own rules and sticks to them. That is how we can always trust His promises. It was His plan to create man as a free moral agent and God always respects our decisions and they are for real. He does not have some hidden agenda, that without our knowledge he is doing something else. He is a transparent God.

Because He is in charge over creation, He is free to save, and to heal, and to bless whomever He wants. Thus because of his mercy both Jews and Gentiles can be saved, and for that matter both blacks and whites. All can be saved by His grace through our faith response to Jesus Christ. God does not work apart from Christ as some theologians teach, that God apart from Jesus makes all the decisions and just calls Jesus to do what fits his plans. Jesus and the Holy Spirit are the same essence with the Father God and they are always in agreement with each other.

The greatest responsibility of man is the accepting of the fact that we must allow the Holy Spirit to reign in our hearts. A natural outcome of the acceptance of responsibility and the rule of the Holy Spirit in our hearts is **Christian service**.

**Service:**

True Christian service grows from understanding the truth that we are free to serve God because He loves us and that we serve Him in order to give credit to Him for his love, power, and perfection.

Serving God means to make the image of God a living and visible reality in the world. It unifies all believers and enables them to show love and sensitivity to others. It takes the entire body of believers to fully express Christ. Thus the congregation, as the body of Christ, are called to care for each other and build each other up into the full stature of Christ. Thus Christian service becomes a choir song of service to God. One needs more than one person to make a choir and in the same way we need more than one Christian in order to effectively serve God (note Ro 13:8-15:13).

**The Theological Message of the Book to the Romans ... Righteousness by Faith Alone**

**The above themes all point towards a very important fact and that is that true righteousness and Holiness are only possible by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.** The way towards true righteousness, that means being right and living right, calls for believing the very important fact that one cannot be freed from sin without believing. **One must believe in the full salvation presented to us by**

## **God in the work and person of Christ.**

It is further of the utmost importance that we should believe in spiritual growth, because it is only by growing in faith that we will be able to serve God. **Without accepting the sovereignty of God, and the fact that He wills only our good, we will never become His servants.**

**Believing all the above facts, points towards the great truth called: Faith in God. Faith is not just faith in our faith. It means trusting in the faithfulness of our God.**

**Thus the only righteousness we will ever have is the righteousness granted to us by faith.** The gift of faith enables us to believe and thus be made right before God. We have to respond by grace through faith to all that God has provided for us in Christ. There is no other way for all sin to be dealt with in our lives. No man can ever make himself holy, and it is no good waiting to grow out of sin for growth only changes the size of something never its quality. Only Jesus makes saints out of the stuff of sinners.

**Having faith in God is more than believing in God.** The devil also believes in God, but this does not make him righteous in the eyes of God.

Many other religions, apart from Christianity, believe in God, but this also does not make them righteous in the sight of God. Thus, the theological meaning of being righteous by having faith in God, must be interpreted correctly.

**Being righteous in the sight of God means to conform to the Divine will in thought, purpose, and action (note Ro 6:18). It means to be right before God, living right and doing right and thinking right. Only God can change us to do that. His offer of full salvation is to everyone who will hear and obey.**

This is only possible if we understand the theological meaning of the righteousness of God. This is defined in Paul's statement of the theme of the book of Romans in Ro 1:16- 17...*"For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith..."*

**The righteousness revealed in the Bible is that God sets things right in Jesus Christ.** Thus the only true picture of righteousness is the picture of Christ as revealed to us in the Bible as the Word of God. Jesus in His humiliation (Kenosis) has made everything that was wrong between man and God – RIGHT- God is fully satisfied with His atoning work. We put our faith in Him alone, because He did it all for us, every one of us. He made us saveable.

**The only true definition of righteousness is the description of the life of Christ as our Master.** We see true righteousness defined in his deeds, his words, and his example. The acts of Christ are acts of righteousness and when we see Him eating with the tax collector or praying for the sick we are looking at righteousness in action.

The final and utmost deed of righteousness is the death of Christ on the cross. If God loved us it was the right thing for Him to do, and it did it right in every detail. That is how we are to be in our world. We have been given His love and power to do what is right to others and to our world. Imagine if everyone was doing this. There would be no wars, no cold lonely people, no hungry people. What a different world it would be and that is exactly what his new world is going to be like. It is much more than a ticket to heaven as an escape mechanism from hell to eternal life. We are disciples of Jesus allowing Him to live out His righteousness in and through us.

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We will only be able to understand righteousness correctly after we had a clear look at the life and ministry of Christ as stated above. Only when we have a clear understanding of this work and ministry, will we be able to make the righteousness of God operative in our personal life through faith in Him and what he can do through us..

**This righteousness through faith is only possible through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Faith then is not just believing for a moment and then we are made righteous for ever. It is an ongoing obedience to all He shows us to do and when He asks us to get involved in things that are too big for us, it is this faith that He imparts that helps us to stand in the gap, where He can perform miracles and prove His mighty power. Faith is trusting at all times in His faithfulness and we need the Holy Spirit to keep giving us this faith.**

Assignment (Result to be discussed in class):

Prepare a short sermon outline based on the key verse of the Letter to the Romans.



# 4

## Measure all Philosophies and Theologies with God's Word

### Lesson Purpose

- To understand and implement the teachings of Paul, the Apostle of Christ, on the lostness of man and salvation

### Lesson Outcomes

- The student will be able to implement the teachings of Paul on the lostness of man and salvation

### Table of Contents

- The Teachings of Paul on the Lostness of Man
- The Teachings of Paul on Salvation

### Measure all Philosophies and Theologies with God's Word

The teachings of Paul are to be found in all his letters, but as already indicated, the book of Romans can be considered as Paul's testament. This means that this book serves as a summary or comprehensive account of the theology proclaimed by Paul in the early Church.

Thus, in dealing with this theme, we are going to take the book to the Romans as our point of departure, but we will also refer to his other books.

### The Teaching of Paul on the Lostness of Man

The Bible reveals that man needs to be saved because he is eternally lost and also powerless to do Jesus things on his own in this world. More than that, man is a slave to the sinful nature in his spirit, and he is being controlled by this sin principle. The question however is, will man ever understand this? How will man ever be convinced of the fact that he is doomed and in rebellion against God's will for his life? Is there any means whatsoever that will reveal to man his lostness?

Paul gives an answer to this question by explaining the function of the law. Thus, the way in which we come to an understanding of the lostness of man is by means of understanding the function of the law.

## The Function of the Law:

**Before his conversion, Paul used to believe that the law was God's call to and sign of salvation and life.** Originally this was the function of the law in Old Testament times, but the history of the people of Israel serves as an indication that man will never be saved by doing the works of the Law.

The law serves as an indication to the fact that man needs a Mediator because it is impossible for sinful man to adhere to the demands of the Law. This very important theological fact is clearly communicated to us by the apostle Paul in the book of Romans.

His understanding of the function of the Old Testament law is clearly communicated to us in Romans 2-3. These chapters deal with God's faithfulness as point of departure (Ro 3:1-8). This is followed by the statement that no one is righteous, even though they may be living under the Old Testament law (Ro 3:9-20).

This fact is followed by the statement that the only righteousness comes through faith (Ro 3:21-31). **But the fact of faith is something with a deep theological meaning.** To have faith in something is much more than simply believing in something. Abraham had to obey God and leave his homeland and head towards the land that God had promised to give him and his children. It would have never happened had he not moved in faith. James makes this clear that faith does not just believe, it gets its hands dirty, just as Jesus did. Faith always does what is right. That is why it is counted as righteousness.

**There is a difference in believing in God and having faith in God and this important difference is communicated to us by Paul.**

One must believe in the lostness of man, in order to be saved from eternal destruction. **But this belief must be followed by the fact that one must have faith in the solution which is the way of salvation,** and only Jesus is the answer.

This faith must become a very personal act in the sense that one must believe and have continuing faith in the truth that **all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God** (Ro 3:23). When Paul's letter was first read in the Roman church, no doubt many heads nodded in confirmation as he condemned the idol worshippers, homosexual practices and violent people. But his listeners must have been surprised when he turned on them and said: "You are all sinners." The Jews were religious sinners, but still sinners. (note Ro 1:30-32 and Ro 2:1).

By doing this Paul made a statement with deep theological meaning and which is central to the understanding of the Good News of salvation. **No one is good enough to save himself, but the faithful works of Christ has made all men savable, and He even gives everyone enough faith to believe and enough power to continue following Him.**

**The salvation of the individual, as well as the human race depends upon the grace of God.** Any person who feels justified or who considers himself to be perfect must be careful.

**It often happens that such a person becomes very critical as in regard to the sins of others or the society in which he lives.** This can become a dangerous practise, because the correct understanding of man's sinful nature gives birth to true openness and brokenness before our Holy God.

The function of the law is to guide **all men** into understanding the fact that **all have sinned and fall short in the glory of God. There is indeed none that is righteous or good enough to save themselves. Jesus**

**is the only way.**

Thus the law is the mirror in which one can look in order to discover your own sinfulness. No one will ever be able to become saved by doing the works of the law because the correct understanding of the law means that it is impossible for sinful man to be perfect in the sight of God.

The law has one main function and that is to guide us towards believing this very important fact. It is only by understanding the law that we are able to understand salvation. The law was given to show us that we are sinners who need to get cured by an all powerful God who has provided the way of full salvation in His Son Jesus Christ. In this sense Paul said that the law is holy and good.

This fact is clearly stated by Paul in Ro 3:20 which can be freely translated from the original language as follows: "*...No one can ever be made right in the God's sight by doing what the law demands. For the more we know of God's laws, the clearer it becomes that we aren't obeying them; his laws serve only to make us see that we are sinners.*"

Thus, the teaching of Paul on the lostness of man deals extensively with the understanding of the function of the law.

Another very important aspect in regard to the lostness of man, is the understanding that we must have in regard to what we can call Paul's view on **man in the World**.

**Man in the World:**

It is clear from the above that the function of the law is to reveal sin and to demonstrate man's lost state in its true colours. Paul further explains these ideas concerning the law in a well known passage in the book of Romans i.e. Ro 7:7-25.

In Romans 7 Paul talks about "I" and it is often mistakenly explained as he himself. This is not correct, because Paul is not talking about his own life in this section, but he uses this to describe the utter lostness of man without Christ. This passage deals with the lostness of man under the law with accepting and serving Christ as Saviour.

**The reason why Paul speaks in these intense personal terms is because we are dealing in this passage with his understanding of the situation of man in the world.** It is not something to be viewed in a collective sense.

Man does not experience suffering because he is living in an unjust society. The main reason for human suffering is not to be found in unjust systems, but in unjust people. Sin is born in one's own personal existence and effects one's own personal quality of life.

**It is only possible to understand salvation if one understands man's personal lostness as being in the world.** This understanding of the human situation, of the situation of man in the world, is very important for our understanding of Paul's theology.

Man is constantly living in a state of total lostness because he is unplugged from God who is the source of life, light, power and purity. More than that he has connected himself to the power and being of satan's spirit. That is why so many people in this world are filled with evil spirits and need not only salvation, but also deliverance from these spirits.

**This means that man is in danger of becoming reconciled with sinfulness instead of reconciled with God.**

**This whole situation is clearly explained by Paul in Ro 7 in intense personal terms i.e:**

I will what is good and do what is evil (Ro 7:15).

I am no longer my own master (Ro 7:17).

This situation gives rise to the cry from the human heart, the cry erupting from man living in the world...  
*"Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death" (Ro 7:24).*

The situation of man in the world described in Ro 7 appears as if this passage clearly demonstrates that in the encounter with sin, the law itself can become a power operated by the devil or death. But this is not true. It only demonstrates the dangers of the incorrect use of the Law.

The devil tends to misuse Godly things for his own benefit. Even the law can be misused by the devil!

It is only by correctly understanding and interpreting the law that we will come to the correct understanding of salvation. True salvation only becomes a reality for man living in the world after discovery of personal lostness.

That is why Paul ends this very important message in Ro 7 as a message for the whole world living in sin and suffering with the following: *"What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death. Thanks be to God -- **through Jesus Christ our Saviour.**"* People in Paul's day understood the term body of death. The body of death is the corpse that was tied to the murderer, hand to hand, face to face and he was left like that until the putrefaction of the corpse ate into his flesh and killed him. Paul was showing us that unless we get rid of the body of death it will soon get rid of us!

It is important to understand that the teaching of Paul on the lostness of man must be viewed together with his teaching on salvation.

**This Teaching on Salvation Deals with Four Main Themes:**

- The righteousness of God.
- The grace of God.
- Faith.
- The saving event within the history of man.

**The Teaching of Paul on Salvation**

In order to understand Paul's teaching on salvation correctly, one must have a clear understanding in regard to his understanding and teaching on the righteousness of God.

**The Righteousness of God:**

From the writings of Paul it becomes clear that righteousness must be viewed as **God's love in action, setting things right between sinful man and perfect God.**

The main reason why God declares man to be righteous, is that man must understand that he can become righteous. Thus all believers are declared righteous by God with the specific goal in mind that we are called to be actively involved in what God wishes to accomplish in our world.

**This means that righteousness is not a state of being that allows us to be spectators in the world. It is an activity in which Christians should be engaged.**

Thus righteousness means that we are called to do what God expects us to do in his world. Thus being made righteous by the grace of God means to be actively involved in the world by sharing the Gospel with others (Ro 1:14-15), using the gifts of service in the church (Ro 12:3-8), and demonstrating a lifestyle that is contrary to that which belongs to the world (Ro 12:1-2). We stand before Him ready to do all the right things that are in His will for us.

Understanding righteousness from this point of view means to understand a very important theological truth, that God makes us right again. Righteousness is not something God gives us, it is a state that He makes us. We are righteous by what he does in and to us. And now he expects us to do what he says is right.

Paul understood the truth that faith is a gift from the righteous God (Eph 2:8). It is a gift he has given all men by free grace because no one could ever merit it or earn it, and this brings another important insight in regard to salvation. The salvation given to man must be viewed as a gift of free grace.

### **The Grace of God:**

The grace of God comes to man through Christ as a free gift that can only be accepted by grace. The believer depends on the grace of God which is *Soli Deo* (by God alone) which gives salvation **solam gratiam** (by grace alone). All this is possible through the death of Christ and forms the essence of Paul's teaching on justification.

**In the book of Romans this is proclaimed victoriously and viewed by Paul as unmerited favour.** That is why he concludes his exposition of justification in Romans 3:21 with a shout of victory: "Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On the principle of works? No, but on the principle of faith. **For we hold that man is justified by faith apart from works of the law** (Ro 3:27-28).

This fact is repeated in 1 Co 15:55: "*O death where is thy victory?  
O death where is thy sting?*"

**Thus the justification of man is the result of the grace of God and this grace makes possible our reconciliation.** As justification, reconciliation is the work of God alone. It demonstrates the way God has always felt about us. He has always loved us and that is why he sent Jesus to the cross to reconcile us. It is all his idea.

Through Christ God reconciled the world to himself (2 Co 5:19) and as a gift of grace this becomes an important calling to the world...**to be reconciled to God.**

This makes it clear that God's saving act in the death of Christ embraces the whole world. Thus man's justification is an act of God which establishes a state of salvation "**...a grace in which we stand**" (Ro 5:1).

Understanding grace must also lead to understanding faith as taught by Paul.

**Faith:**

**Paul never deals with the subject of faith as a separate topic and he never tries to define faith.** This is so because faith is founded upon Divine grace and must be viewed as a gift from God (Eph 2:8).

Faith always means faith **in something** (note Gal 2:16, Ro 10:14, Php 1:29 in this regard). From another perspective faith also means **faith that does something** (note 1 Th 4:14, Ro 6:8 in this regard). Faith means accepting in obedient trust and trustful obedience the saving act of God as proclaimed in the gospel (Ro 1:5, 6:16, 2 Co 10:5).

Faith as a divine gift, brought to man by the Holy Spirit, includes patient waiting and is build upon the foundation of Christian hope. It cannot be made by man and it never stands upon general opinions or man made convictions.

It is much more that a set of doctrines or man made believes. **God has given to everyone the gift of faith making all men able to respond and to be saved.**

Receiving as a gift from God means to start a new way of living. It is the end of the old existence and the beginning of the new in which the believer has now to stand and prove himself (note 1 Co 16:13, Gal 5:1, Php 1:27, 1 Th 3:8).

Thus receiving faith as a gift from God sets man on a road without obtaining the final goal instantly. To believe in God or to have faith means to enter a new life which is an adventurous journey with God.

It places man on the road to discovering wonderful new insights and truths in the dynamic reality which is called the Kingdom of God.

This new road of faith is described as follows in Php 3:12...*"Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own."*

In this Lecture we have given an introduction to the most important teachings of Paul. In the next Lecture we are going to look at the practical implications of these teachings in what is called the new obedience.



# 5

## Aligning Motives with Kingdom Values

### Lesson Purpose

- To understand and implement the the practical implications of the new obedience made possible through faith as a gift given by God to man through the Holy Spirit.

### Lesson Outcomes

- The student will be able to implement the practical implications of the new obedience made possible through faith

### Table of Contents

- The practical implications of faith
- The function of the Holy Spirit (Ro 8)
- Conclusion

### Motives of God's children must always align with Kingdom values

In this Lecture we have introduced you to the apostle Paul, a man called by God to teach the Christian church of all ages the basic principles of Christian theology. We have given a survey of the letters of Paul with special attention to the letter to the Romans from which we have given more detail on some of his special teachings.

**This seminar serves as an introduction to the life and teaching of a man sent by God.** As you develop in your theological studies you will no doubt learn much more of this message.

**In this Lecture we want to give some practical applications of his message, because it is clear from all Paul's writings that the saving mercy of God in Christ summons Christians to obedience.**

**This fact becomes clear in the latter part of his book in which the following themes are covered as practical implications of what is called in theological terms, the new obedience in Christ.**

### This deals with the following:

- New obedience in Christ means that Christians need to be transformed Ro 12:1-2
- New obedience in Christ means that Christians must be responsible members of the body of Christ Ro 12:3-21

**This means that:**

- Christians need to view themselves and others appropriately Ro 12:3-5
- Christians must express their different gifts in faith Ro 12:6-13
- Christian life demands love in action Ro 12:14-21
- New obedience in Christ means that Christians must fulfil their appropriate obligations to the state Ro 13:1-7
- Christians must remember the supremacy of love and the urgency of the times Ro 13:8-14

**This means that:**

- Love fulfils the law Ro 13:8-10.
- The critical nature of the times calls for a radical commitment to Christ Ro 13:11-14.
- Christians must seek to edify one another in the fellowship of the church Ro 13:11-14.

**This means that:**

- The strong and the weak in the church must realise that Christ is the Lord of both groups Ro 14:1-12.
- Christians should live by their own convictions, pursue harmony, and avoid making others stumble Ro 14:13-23.
- Strong Christians are obligated to bear with and live in harmony with the weak Ro 15:1-6.
- All Christians are to receive one another as Christ received them Ro 15:7-13.

All the above practical implications of the new obedience is, however, only possible through faith and it can indeed be called the results or practical implications of faith as a gift given by God to man through the Holy Spirit. But how is all this going to happen through people who are still bound by the sinful nature? It can only happen when all the darkness and self seeking sinful nature has been expelled from their hearts and minds, and there is grace and enough faith from God for it to happen. Do not let unbelief keep you out of the promised land. Go in and possess it now.

### **The Practical Implications of Faith**

**Faith is a word with many meanings.** It can mean faithfulness (Mt 24:45). It can mean absolute trust, as shown by the people who came to Jesus for healing (Luke 7:2-10).

It can mean confident hope (Heb 11:1). Or, as James points out, it can even mean a barren belief that does not result in good works (James 2:14-26). Or, in other words, faith in unfaithfulness!

It is thus important that we should endeavour to understand what Paul means when he talks of saving faith or active faith.

**We must be careful in our interpretation of faith as Paul uses the word because he ties it closely to the concept of salvation.**

**Faith is not something that we must do in order to earn salvation.** If that was so faith would have been nothing more than another good work which depends on human initiative and effort.

Paul clearly states that human works can never save us (Gal 2:16). Instead, faith is a gift given to us by God, because he is saving us out of his own free will and undeserved grace (Eph 2:8). It is thus the grace of God that saves us and not our faith.

**When God saves us in his mercy, he gives us faith which enables us to grow in our relationship with Christ and which enables us to become like him.** Thus the faith, given to us by God, carries us from being dead to being alive (John 5:24).

By receiving faith from God we are enabled through the works of the Holy Spirit to live a life that pleases God. This clearly indicates that all that we are and all that we are going to become is a gift from God.

Our love for our fellow man, our influence on the society we live in, the quality of relationships in our congregations, everything that indicates sincere Christian concern is a gift from God.

**But the practical implications of having received faith as a gift from God, always means that the Christian must have an impact on the world and become the salt of the earth.**

This perspective on faith opens up another very important viewpoint and that is the important role of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

### **The Function of the Holy Spirit (Ro 8)**

As human beings, Christians are constantly under the threat of sin in their lives. We thus need a power greater than ourselves in order to be liberated from our sinful natures in us. It is not the human nature that is sinful, it is the human nature under the control of the sin nature that is the real problem. That is what needs to go, not our humanness, for therein we carry the image of God and that can only be restored once the sin nature has gone from us. Grace allows us time to ask for cleansing and faith appropriates this cleansing and the Holy Spirit bears witness that we have been set free from sin. Do you find yourself defended the position that says that it is impossible to be free from the sin nature now, or do you find a hunger and a thirst after this righteousness we have been speaking so much about? The choice is yours.

**We need the Holy Spirit, because He is the power from God that frees us from sin and guides us towards future glory, making us more than conquerors.**

This fact is clearly described in Romans 8 which deals with two main themes i.e.: Ro 8:1-17 dealing with life through the Spirit which frees us from sin and Ro 8:18-39 dealing with the future glory in which nothing will ever separate us from the love of God.

### **Ro 8:1-17...Life Through the Spirit:**

Paul's understanding of the Spirit is very important and from his teachings we know that the Spirit must not be viewed as a possession we hold when we "receive" the Spirit. **It is rather a relationship with a Person which we must love and obey.**

**This is so, because the Holy Spirit is not a mystic power. He is the third person in the Godhead.** This relationship we have with the Spirit means that we, as new children of God have a choice by grace that we can actualize by faith; The choice is, who runs my life?

- the "Spirit of life" 8:2
- "the Spirit" 8:4

- “the Spirit of Christ” 8:9
- “the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus” 8:11
- “the Spirit of God” 8:14

From this it is clear that the Holy Spirit and His work is closely related to God the Father and God the Son.  
**Obedience to the Spirit means in essence, obedience to God.**

**This obedience to the Spirit has definite results in the sense that our obedience leads to the fact that the Spirit gives to us certain things:**

- Obedience leads to **life** 8:2
- Obedience leads to **peace** 8:6
- Obedience leads to **freedom** 8:9
- Obedience leads to **leadership** 8:14
- Obedience leads to **assurance** 8:16
- Obedience leads to **hope** 8:22-32
- Obedience leads to **help** 8:26

**It is through the activity of the Spirit that we become children of God and it is through the activity of the Spirit that we are able to say “Father” when we pray.** It is only possible to call and experience God as our Father through the Holy Spirit.

This Fatherliness of God means that calling Him Father is the result of the fact that we live in a new relationship with Him in which we became His children.

As children of God the Father, we are always led by the Holy Spirit in a personal relationship of friendship and love. This relationship enables us to withstand and pass through suffering in order to finally share in the ultimate glory of God the Son.

Life through the Spirit means that we must choose to follow the Spirit. In this relationship we have with Him, we are free to choose:

- to **live according** to the Spirit 8:5
- to **set our minds** on what the Spirit desires 8:5
- to **be controlled** by the Spirit 8:9
- and to **be lead** by the Spirit 8:18

**In this personal relationship with the Spirit we are called towards loyalty and obedience in following the leadership of the Spirit in all life’s decisions.**

This also means that the Spirit is not irresistible and that we can indeed quench the Spirit. The Spirit prefers to wait and allow us to obey His leadership freely. Thus Paul calls us to obey the Spirit because we live in a personal relationship with Him.

**Paul does not picture the Spirit as an impersonal force or power that falls over us, but as a person waiting and guiding us in full freedom to choose.**

**Life through the Spirit thus means that we have a powerful Friend on earth, leading us towards an eternal friendship with the Father and the Son and that we are free to choose.** This freedom to choose is something that God intended for man, as the crown of creation since the time of Adam and Eve in the garden of God.

The fall of man however has resulted in the fact that this garden of God, this eternal bliss and life in perfect relationship with God had been temporarily postponed.

Man made the wrong choice and through the coming and activity of the Holy Spirit we are now given another chance. We are offered another "garden of God," bought through the blood of Christ and this is called the "future glory."

### **Ro 8:18-39 ... The Future Glory:**

**The future glory described by Paul means that sin will never have the last word in the history of creation.** God has made the earth as a habitation for His people, but the presence of sin brought on decay and frustration.

The purpose of God with His creation has been destroyed by sin (Ge 3:17-19). But the earth will be redeemed by the Creator. Thus the earth is equally awaiting the final day of liberation (8:21).

It is the same Holy Spirit that hovered over the waters (Ge 1:1) that is now being given to the Christians as a leader towards the glorious hope that awaits us.

**The promise of the future glory means that all Christians, no matter what their circumstances are, can expect a new, redeemed world which will once again pass God's examination and about which He will declare "very good" (Ge 1:31).**

But how can we be sure of this future glory? How can we be sure that this hope we have will one day become reality? The coming of the Spirit is the sure sign from God that our hope will become reality.

The Holy Spirit is the first fruits from heaven and God's gift of the Spirit is an event in the present which foreshadows the future union of God and His people on His new earth.

**The ground upon which the Christian hope is build is the risen Christ and the descended Spirit.**

Because Christ is raised from the dead, God will also raise His people up (1 Co 15:20-28).

Because we have been given the Spirit to teach us all these truths we may await our final destiny without fear (Ro 8:15), with assurance (8:16), and with eagerness and hope (verse 23-25).

But we do not only await a future glory while we are suffering in the meantime. Christians also have the promise of a present glory! The present glory is not the result of some ecstatic experience or spirit mindedness. **It is the result of our prayer life. Through the presence of the Spirit and His interpretation and guidance in our prayer life, we are able to pray.** Prayer leads us into the holy presence of God in which we are able to call Him Abba, that is Father. (8:15).

The activity and guidance of the Holy Spirit in our prayers helps us to understand something of the present glory, in the sense that even in troubled times, burdened by a profound sense of need, the Spirit Himself intercedes for us (8:26).

**This intercession of the Holy Spirit leads to our understanding of the fact that in all things we are more than conquerors.** This leads to the fact that Paul, experiencing the present glory, boldly proclaims in Ro 8:38-39: *"I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

## **Conclusion**

**In this seminar we have introduced you to the Apostle Paul, the greatest missionary of all times in the Christian church.**

**We have indicated how he was lead by the grace of God from a man fiercely believing in his traditional religion, towards a new obedience in Christ:**

A man who had accepted the challenge of Christ's command in Mt 28:18: *"Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations."*

A man who experienced the reality of God on the road to Damascus and who had been led by the Holy Spirit to show the Christian church the road to Jericho (note Luke 10:25-37) **leading to new obedience and the future glory.**

**A man who became a church planter and whose footsteps are found all over the ancient world of his times.**

A man who had been a student of the truth revealed to him by God and a man who wrote many letters, from jail, from lonely campsites in foreign countries, in times of plenty and in times of suffering.

A man who had a burning desire to serve Jesus Christ his Lord and Master.

A man who, through his obedience to Christ, urges us today to imitate him (1 Co 4:16) and thus become imitators of God, by living a life of love just as Christ loved us and gave himself for us as a fragrant offering and a sacrifice of God (Eph 5:1).

**We trust that you will, through the apostle Paul, hear the claim of God in your life and that you will yield your life totally to Christ.**

Knowing that you are living in friendship with God through the Holy Spirit,

that you are guided by Him and will always be operating from his love basis to our world.

**We conclude this seminar with the words of Paul in Eph 6:10:**

*"Finally be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes."*



The CCP Pastoral Training Course



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# Survey of the Old Testament

~ Colleen Fitch



# 1

## The Pentateuch (Five books/Torah)

### Lesson Purpose

- To give an overview of the people, geographic locations, historical events, literary style and theological themes in each book of the Pentateuch.

### Lesson Outcomes

- Students will know and be able to briefly define all of the **terms to know**.
- *These terms are in bold throughout the lesson.*
- Students will have a knowledge of key people, historical stories, theological themes, and the geographic setting for each book in the Pentateuch
- Students will be introduced to Old Testament covenants and follow God's faithful fulfillment of his covenant promises in His relationship with the family of Abraham.
- Students will honestly and thoughtfully interact with and apply the lessons to their ministry settings and to their personal lives.

### Table of Contents

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Leviticus
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy
- Questions for Discussion

The first five books of the Old Testament are grouped together as the Pentateuch—the five books of the law. They record the history of God's personal involvement with our world beginning with its creation through the establishment of God's covenantal relationship with the nation of Israel.

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Genesis	Exodus	Leviticus	Numbers	Deuteronomy
Creation: 1& 2 Adam& Eve: Fall 3 Cain & Abel: 4 Noah: 6-9 Tower of Babel: 11	Moses Plagues/Passover	Laws	Census Wilderness Wanderings	Moses' final words- keep the covenant!
Abraham: 12-25 Isaac 21-25 Jacob/Esau 25-37 Joseph:37-50	Exodus 10 Commandments Mt. Sinai Tabernacle Priesthood			
<b>HARAN TO EGYPT</b>	<b>EGYPT TO SINAI PENNISULA</b>	<b>SINAI PENNISULA</b>	<b>SINAI PENNISULA PENNISULA TO THE PLAINS OF MOAB</b>	<b>LOOKING INTO THE PROMISED LAND</b>

**Genesis:**

The name of the first book, Genesis, means “beginning.” The first eleven chapters move the reader quickly through centuries of time. The **creation** account is given in chapters 1-2. The fall of humankind in the Garden of Eden is re-counted in chapter 3 when **Adam** and **Eve** disobey God. Yet even in their punishment, God promised to provide them with a redeemer—one who will “*crush your head*” (Gen. 3:15). This would be the one who would deliver the death blow to the power of sin and death in human life. The resulting contamination of the human heart (**original sin**) is revealed in the story of **Cain** and **Abel** in chapter 4. As the earth is populated, human wickedness increases to the point where God regrets having created men and women and decides to send a world-wide flood to destroy all life, but the righteous life of one man, **Noah**, captures the merciful attention of God who offers Noah a plan for the salvation of his family and of animal life through the construction of the **ark**. When the waters of the flood recede God places a **rainbow** in the sky as a sign of his promise to never again destroy all life on the earth with a flood. Humanity had been saved, but the human heart remained sinful, so the first section of Genesis closes out with the **tower of Babel** in chapter 11. God strikes a blow to human pride and disperses the people throughout the earth and creates distance between them geographically as well as linguistically. The word “Babel” means a confused mixture of sounds and voices<sup>1</sup>. So, if one is looking for information on the creation, the fall, the source of pain and suffering, the flood, the rainbow, or for the origin of nations or languages, the Bible answers these questions in its first 11 chapters.

<sup>1</sup> Babel. Dictionary.com. *Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1)*. Random House, Inc. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/babel> (accessed: June 14, 2009).

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In chapter 12 there is a dramatic narrowing of the focus of the book to one man, **Abraham** (originally called Abram). God calls Abraham to follow him (Genesis 12:1-3, NASB).

Now the LORD said to Abram,  
"Go forth from your country,  
And from your relatives  
And from your father's house  
To the land which I will show you;  
And I will make you a great nation,  
And I will bless you,  
And make your name great;  
And so you shall be a blessing;  
And I will bless those who bless you,  
And the one who curses you I will curse  
And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

Abraham's family home was **Ur**, and they had followed God as far as **Haran**. There his father has settled, so God called again - this time to Abraham

This is the beginning of the story of the nation of Israel and ultimately of the people of God. The land to which God called Abraham is what we know today as Israel. When God promised Abraham that he would make his descendents into a great nation, Abraham was an old man with an old wife. Unfortunately Abraham and his wife Sarah tried to rush ahead of the plan of God, and **Ishmael** was born, the father of the Arab nations. Sarah had given her maidservant, **Hagar**, to Abraham because she did not see how she, an old, barren woman would be able to bear him a son. Stepping outside of God's plan created a problematic situation that still impacts the Middle East today with conflict between Israel and the Arab nations. Yet God was faithful to his gracious promise to the elderly couple in spite of their failure to wait for Him to work in His time and in His way. **Isaac** whose name means "laughter" was born to them in their old age.

In the book of Genesis God is revealed as a maker of promises which are called "**covenants**." Covenants were legal, binding agreements between a superior and an inferior, or between two equals. There is a commitment to faithful fulfillment of the covenant stipulations required from both parties who enter into the agreement. In the Bible this is not merely a contract, but a commitment of oneself. Repeated throughout the chapters in the story of Abraham, God commits himself to Abraham and to all his descendents and to the nations who will be blessed through this family. God required that Abraham and all his male descendents be **circumcised** as a constant reminder and sign of the covenant between them and God. The covenant was made with Abraham, but it was a promise that God also made with us today—the people of the nations who have come to believe in Him and receive salvation through his Son, Jesus Christ. As you read the stories of Abraham's family, take note of how many times God re-affirms his covenant to faithful care and protection of Abraham and his descendents. Often there are signs or symbols that serve as reminders of these covenants: a rainbow, circumcision, and in the New Testament we have the establishment of the Lord's supper/communion. A specific demonstration of God's covenant faithfulness to Abraham came through a strange request—that Abraham take his only son, Isaac, to a mountain in the region of Moriah and there offer him as a sacrifice. Abraham had learned his lessons, and this time set out to follow God's request even though it may have seemed contrary to all he had longed for. Abraham had faith that somehow God would provide a redeemer—a lamb to be sacrificed. Just as he held the knife above his

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only son, the angel of the Lord stopped him. A ram was caught in the bush nearby. The angel told Abraham to release his son, Isaac, and instead to offer the ram in his place. God is faithful to his promises; He is faithful to his promise to provide a redeemer. If we are to experience God's salvation, we must learn to trust him, believe him, and obey him. This is what God was teaching Abraham. The same lessons are taught over again, although in different ways, in the succeeding generations.

Genesis follows Abraham's family through four generations. The first is Abraham and Sarah who give birth to Isaac. When Isaac comes of age, he is married to Rebecca, and they have twin sons, Jacob and Esau. God's promise rests on Jacob, renamed Israel. He had twelve sons. They become the pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel.

<b>Reuben</b>	<b>Simeon</b>
<b>Judah</b>	<b>Zebulun</b>
<b>Issachar</b>	<b>Dan</b>
<b>Gad</b>	<b>Asher</b>
<b>Naphtali</b>	<b>Benjamin</b>

**Joseph**—this tribe took his son **Ephraim's** name.

**Levi**-this tribe was set apart to be the priests so the twelfth tribe was from Joseph's second son **Manasseh**

The book of Genesis ends with the descendents of Abraham relocating to **Egypt**. Through the providence of God, Joseph's trials of enslavement and prison prove to be the means of salvation for his family during a severe famine. The people of Israel settle in the land of **Goshen** on the east side of the Nile River. When the second book in the Pentateuch opens we read this statement, "*The sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filled with them*" (*Exodus 1:7, NASB*). This is what God promised to Abraham in Genesis 12:2.

## Exodus

Exodus records the history of Israel's release from slavery in Egypt and the establishment of the Mosaic covenant on Mount Sinai. Four hundred years had passed since the family of Joseph came into Egypt to escape a terrible famine. They were shown favor by the pharaohs when they first entered the land. But as the Israelites became more numerous, the new family of **pharaohs** who did not know Joseph became fearful that this people group might take power from them. They enslaved the Israelites hoping to subdue and control them, yet the Israelites continued to flourish, increasing in number. In an attempt to decrease the Hebrew<sup>2</sup> slave population, one pharaoh declared that all the male Israelite babies were to be killed, and so begins the story of **Moses**. His family hid him in a basket designed to float on the waters of the river. He was found by one of pharaoh's daughters. **Miriam**, Moses' sister who had been keeping watch over the baby, offered to have Moses' own mother nurse the baby, but with the understanding that the Egyptian princess would claim him as her own. He would then be safe from the slaughter that pharaoh had ordered. Moses, a **Hebrew**, was raised and educated in the wealth and sophistication of the palace of Egypt. As a young man, he witnessed the harsh treatment of his people, and in anger killed an Egyptian, and then had to flee for his life to the wilderness of **Midian** where he became a shepherd. It was there in the wilderness that he met God through an encounter with a bush that burned but was not consumed by the flames.

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1. Hebrew: There are no Jews in the Old Testament – Judaism, like Christianity is a response to the Old Testament. Dr. John Oswalt

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God heard the cries of his people in slavery and chose Moses to be the deliverer of his people. *“But Moses said to God, ‘Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?’ And God said, ‘I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.’ Moses said to God, ‘Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?’”* God said to Moses, **“I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”** God also said to Moses, *“Say to the Israelites, ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.”* (Exodus 3: 11-15 NASB) God was faithful to keep his covenant with the descendants of Abraham. He was faithful to provide a deliverer for his people.

Moses returned to Egypt, and his brother, **Aaron**, served as his assistant and spokesman. Moses repeatedly asked the pharaoh to let God’s people go, but the pharaoh’s heart was hardened to God. God sent **10 plagues** against Egypt to demonstrate his great power and His superiority over all of the Egyptian deities and magicians, but the pharaoh did not relent until the final plague. The first 9 plagues were: water to blood, frogs, lice, flies, livestock disease, boils, hail, locust, and darkness. Each plague brought great suffering to Egypt. These plagues were direct attacks on the gods of Egypt proving that the Lord alone is God.

Before the final plague, the death of every firstborn son, the Israelites were given instructions to keep them safe during the night. They were to slaughter an unblemished **lamb** and put its **blood** on the frame around the door of their homes. The lamb was to be roasted and eaten. Also, they were to prepare **unleavened bread** that would cook quickly and travel without spoiling. They were told to pack and be ready for a quick departure. That evening the Lord passed over every Israelite home marked with the sign of the blood. They were saved from death. God asked that they remember this night with a yearly celebration called **Passover**. The covering of the blood of the lamb that night was a sign of the promised Redeemer, the Lamb of God, who would take away the sins of the world (John 1:29).

Every Egyptian home suffered the death of at least one family member. The pharaoh’s own first born son died. Finally in anger, he called for Moses and told him to take the people and go. Thousands of Israelites followed Moses out of Egypt towards the **Red Sea**. To their dismay, they turned and saw that pharaoh and his armies were pursuing them on chariots. Moses cried out to God and was instructed to lift his staff above the waters. At once the waters were parted, and the people were able to pass through on dry ground. God put a cloud of wind and dust between the people and pharaoh. When the last person stepped to safety on the other side, God allowed pharaoh and his army to enter between the waters. He then brought the waters together over the horses, riders, and chariots. His people were safe on the other side.

Moses would lead the people of Israel for forty years. They lived as nomads and herdsman, wandering throughout the area of the **Sinai Peninsula**. During this time, God miraculously cared for them providing them with fresh **manna**, bread from heaven, and **quail** every day with the exception of their Sabbath when they were to rest. They could gather extra food only the day before the Sabbath. Moses was their human leader, but God wanted them to understand He was their King and Lord. He had Moses gather the people at Mount Sinai. While Moses alone went to spend time with Him on top of the mountain, God gave Moses the **10 commandments** and many other instructions including all of the plans for the construction and equipping of the **tabernacle**—a portable tent of worship—and for the establishment of temple worship, including priestly robes and functions and the system of sacrifices. The 10 commandments,

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instructions for the construction of the tabernacle, its furniture, priestly garments, and dedication of the priests are included in the book of Exodus. This covenant, the complete terms of which extend from Exodus 20 to Numbers 10, was designed to teach the people who God is and what he is like.

God established a **theocracy**, a form of government where God was recognized as the Lord and King. God would communicate through Moses to the people, and His presence and glory were physically visible to the people through a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. God's desire then as now is to be present with His people.

The people, however, were the ones who had a problem being faithful to God. Even while they waited for Moses to return from Mount Sinai, they decided to melt all their gold and make a golden calf, an idol that they worshipped through drunkenness and ungodly behavior. Moses returned from his holy and amazing encounter with God to find the people in defiant rebellion and adulterous worship. Time and time again in Exodus and the remaining books of the Pentateuch Moses confronted the rebellious, complaining, and sinful attitudes and ways of the Israelites. God is always merciful, but several times there are serious consequences and many deaths because the people's sin is so great.

### Leviticus

This is the book of the laws. It addresses the sacrificial laws as well as dietary laws, cleanliness, and relational laws. In contrast to the surrounding nations, there is no human sacrifice or sexual activity allowed in the worship of God. He is **holy**. To be holy is to be set apart, without sin, pure, righteous, and perfect in love and justice. God's Word says that we should be holy as He is holy. The intent of these laws was to instruct the people how to live so that they could be holy, set apart for God. The laws teach them how and when to make sacrifices. They also point to the necessity of the cross and to the need for a promised redeemer. *"For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life"* (Lev. 17:11). The dietary laws were designed to protect them from illness. The laws that address marriage, sexuality, property, disputes and other relational concerns are designed for them to understand how to live in peace and love with one another. *"Love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord"* (Lev. 19:18). Loving God foremost and loving our neighbor have always been the two greatest commands as Jesus pointed out in Matthew 22:37-40.

### Numbers

This book recounts the journey of the tribes from Sinai to the edge of the Promised Land. As such, it begins and ends with a census of the twelve tribes. It also recounts many stories of the testing and struggles in the wilderness. One of the most tragic stories recounts the people's lack of faith in God. In chapter 13, twelve spies are sent to Israel, the Promised Land, to report on its resources. Ten of the spies report that the land is filled with giants and great enemies. The other two spies, **Joshua and Caleb**, see this as the land of promise that is waiting for them to enter. The people of Israel are filled with fear and cry out in anger against God for bringing them into the desert to die. The punishment for their lack of faith is 40 years of wondering in the wilderness. All of that generation would die in the desert with the exception of Joshua and Caleb. The children would enter the land 40 years later without those who even though they had seen the parting of the Red Sea, did not have the faith to trust that God would also give them the land of Israel.

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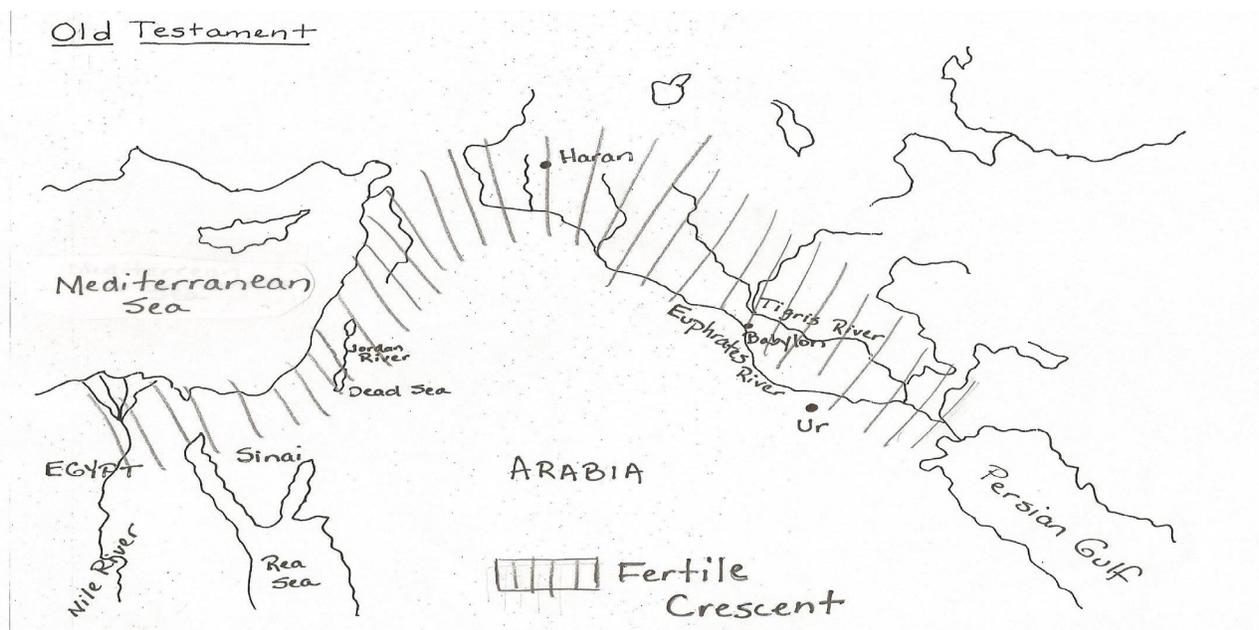
### Deuteronomy:

This is Moses' final message to the people of Israel. In it he seeks to motivate the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation to trust, believe, and obey God in way their parents has refused to do. He calls them to faithful commitment, reminds them of the laws-including the **Ten Commandments**, and of God's faithfulness. He prophesies what will happen if they disobey. He instructs them to pass on this knowledge to their children. Israel is called to remember their covenant with God.

*"See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity; in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the Lord your God may bless you in the Land where you are entering to possess it. But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You shall not prolong your days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants by loving the Lord your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to give to them" (Deut 30:15-20, NASB).*

Deuteronomy ends at the edge of the Promised Land, Israel. Moses had sinned against God during the 40 years of wandering. He was forgiven, but the consequence for him was that he would not enter the land, but God in his mercy did allow him to see it from a distance. The mantel of leadership was to be passed to Joshua.

Historically these five books are attributed to Moses' authorship. His Egyptian education would have equipped him with the necessary writing and organizational skills. He would have had time during the period of wandering, and he also had an extremely close relationship with God. Geographically these five books have taken the people of Israel across the entire Fertile Crescent, from Babylonia to Egypt and back to Israel. God's people have been primarily nomadic, except during their 400 years of slavery in Egypt. Throughout these five books, God is the one who is faithful to His promises, who pursues a relationship with his people, and who is working to call and teach His people to follow and trust Him.



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**Questions for Discussion:**

1. Review the activity of God mentioned in these five books. What do you learn about His character?
2. God called Abraham to leave His home and to follow Him. How has God called you? Is He calling you now to follow Him? Are you willing even if you don't know where you are ultimately going?
3. Read through Moses' words in Deuteronomy. He was speaking to Israel, but let those words speak to you today. What is your choice? Does your life reflect that choice?
4. The laws in Leviticus set the Israelites apart from the other peoples of the land. How do God's laws set you and your church apart from the peoples of your land? What does it mean to be holy?

<b>Terms to Know</b>			
<b><u>Events</u></b>	<b><u>Places</u></b>	<b><u>People</u></b>	
Creation Rainbow Ark Tower of Babel Covenant Circumcision 10 plagues Passover Unleavened bread Lamb's blood Manna Theocracy 10 Commandments Tabernacle	Red Sea Sinai Egypt Israel Fertile Crescent Ur Haran	Adam/Eve Cain/Abel Noah Abraham/Sarah Hagar/Ishmael Isaac/Rebecca Jacob/Rachel Joseph	Pharaoh Moses Aaron Miriam Joshua Caleb I AM



# 2

## The Historical Books (Back in the Promised Land)

### Lesson Purpose

- To give an overview of the people, geographic locations, literary style, historical events and theological themes of the historical books.

### Lesson Outcomes

- Students will know and be able to briefly define all of the **terms to know**.  
*These terms are in bold throughout the lesson.*
- Students will have knowledge of key people, historical stories, theological themes, and the geographic setting for each historical book.
- Students will understand the cyclic pattern resulting from the people's disobedience and God's mercy
- Students will study the movement towards a monarchy, the division of Israel into two kingdoms, and the exile
- Students will honestly and thoughtfully interact with and apply the lessons to their ministry settings and to their personal lives.

### Table of Contents

- Joshua
- Judges
- Ruth
- I Samuel
- II Samuel
- I & II Kings, I & II Chronicles
- Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther
- Questions for Discussion

These books record the history of the nation of Israel. They begin with Israel's conquest of the Promised Land. The new nation struggled with its identity as the people of God in the midst of a pagan world. There was an organizational switch from a theocracy to a monarchy and a progressive deterioration in the loyalty of the people to God and in their faithfulness to observe His laws. The warnings of Moses in Deuteronomy came to fulfillment when the people were taken into exile to Babylonia, back to the land from which God had called Abraham centuries earlier. Yet, God remained faithful to His covenant, and the account closes with the return of a prophesied remnant of people to re-build and re-settle their war ravaged land.

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Joshua	Judges	Ruth	I & II Samuel	I & II Kings	I & II Chronicles	Ezra	Nehemiah	Esther
Conquest The "ban"	Cycle of Chaos	Family of God	Samuel Saul David Promise to David	<b>Divided Kingdom</b>  <b>Time of the prophets</b>		Temple Restored	Building the walls	Story of Courage and Faith (Persecution of the Jews)
<b>Conquest</b>			<b>Monarchy</b>			<b>Exile/Resettlement</b>		
<b>Constant struggle with fidelity to God</b>						New commitment to ethnic and cultic purity		

### Joshua

After Moses died, **Joshua** became the leader of the Israelites. Repeatedly God assured Joshua that He would be with him. The book of Joshua tells how God enabled his people to conquer the land of Canaan (1-12) and how the land was then allotted to the various tribes (13-22). It closes with Joshua's call to the people to reaffirm their covenant with God. Joshua, the man, was the general of the armies, but God was the one who gave him orders and who directed the battles. To enter the Promised Land, the people first had to cross the **Jordan River**. Like the crossing of the Red Sea, the waters were stopped, and the people passed over on dry ground. The **Ark of the Covenant** (Exodus 25:10-22) became a transportable symbol of the presence and power of the Lord for the Israelites throughout the narrative of the historical books. It was carried by the priests and went before the people when it was not in its tabernacle resting place. Once the armies had been consecrated and prepared for battle, the conquest began. One aspect of these conquests, **the ban**, is often difficult for contemporary readers to understand. God declared before each battle what would belong to Him alone. In **Jericho** everything in the town except for **Rahab** and her family were under the ban. She was spared because she feared the Lord and protected the Israelite spies when they came to scout out the land. Everything in Jericho was to be destroyed and burned except for the silver, gold, bronze, and iron items which were to be placed in the treasury of the Lord. The ban required the people to trust God to provide for them. It also taught them to respect and fear the Lord. It may seem harsh or unjust that so many people were killed, yet the example of Rahab demonstrates that there was mercy for those who honored the Lord. Rahab was asked to hang a scarlet cord from her window, a sign that would indicate where she was and lead to the salvation of her family. Scarlet, the color of blood, was a sign of God's promised redeemer. One other purpose for the ban was to cleanse the land of pagan influences. As time passed, Israel became more and more tolerant towards the presence of the pagan people and their religious practices. This was a serious error and set the nation on a course for disaster and judgment. The conquered lands were distributed among the twelve tribes. Joshua's final exhortation to the people was to choose whom they would serve *"whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"* (Joshua 24:15, NASB). *"Now therefore, put away the foreign gods which are in your midst, and incline your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel"* (Joshua 24:23, NASB).

## Judges

One of the astonishing characteristics of the Bible is its honesty. The book of Judges records the tragic history of the Israelite people after the death of Joshua. Their efforts to continue their conquest of the land were unsuccessful because they failed to keep themselves separate from the idolatrous practices of the surrounding pagan nations. God was not pleased with them. There was a cyclical pattern of disobedience, foreign occupation, crying out to God, provision of a judge, period of peace, and then disobedience again.

### **A Few examples of the Judges.**

They were people from all walks of life. God chose them and equipped them to serve as leaders for the people.

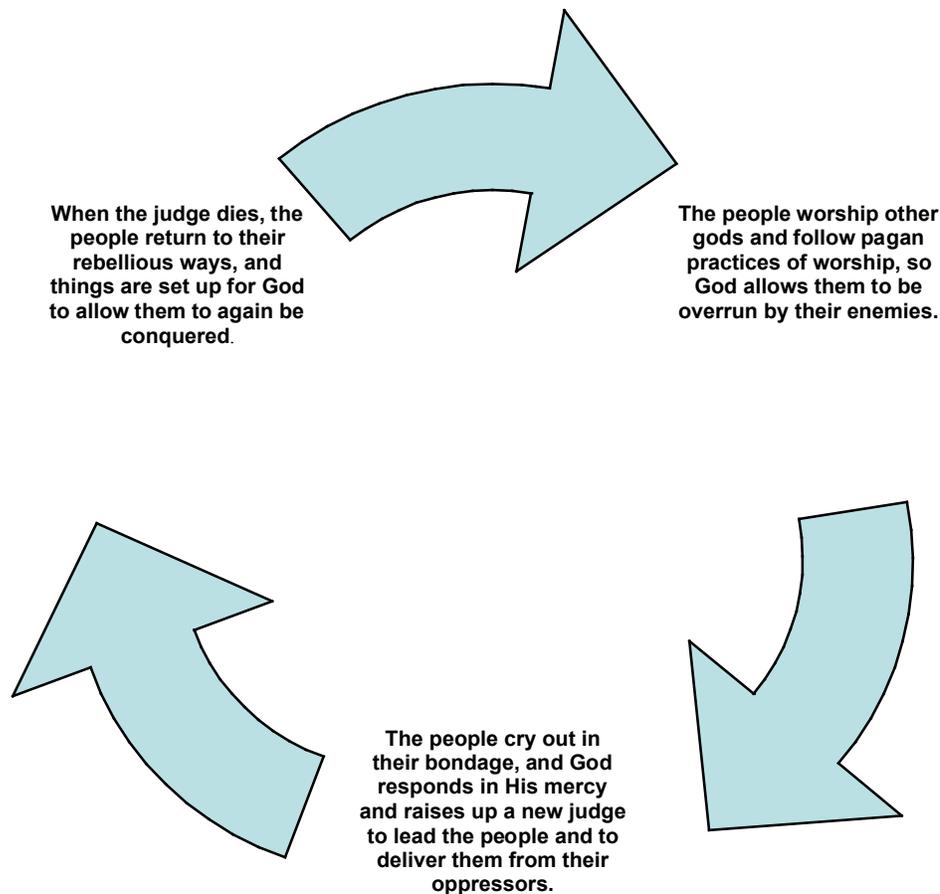
**Ehud**—skillfully used a double edged-sword.

**Deborah**—was a prophetess who listened to God.

**Gideon**—was a man with insecure faith, yet trusted God to direct him in battles.

**Jephthah**-- made a foolish vow that cost his daughter's life.

**Samson**—was filled with God's spirit, but undisciplined and careless about his great gift of strength.



## Ruth

This book is the story of redemption. **Naomi** was a Jewish widow living in the land of Moab with her two Moabite daughter-in-laws, **Ruth** and Orpha. As childless, widowed women with no male family members to marry they were in trouble. They needed to find the shelter of family connections. Ruth chose to return to Israel with Naomi. Her faithful loyalty to her mother-in-law captured the attention of family member **Boaz** who offered to marry Ruth and to pay the purchase price for her family's land. Boaz was her **kinsman redeemer**. He paid the price to bring Ruth and Naomi into the grace and protection of the family thus assuring her that the family inheritance of her deceased husband would be preserved. Obed, the son, born to Ruth and Boaz was the father of Jesse and the grandfather of King David.

## I Samuel

Samuel, the last judge of Israel, was born to **Hannah** after she cried out to the Lord to bless her with a son. She promised to dedicate her child to the Lord. So as a young boy, **Samuel** lived in the tabernacle with Eli the high priest. Samuel became a judge, but more importantly he knew and walked with God. When he was old, he appointed his two sons as judges. Because they were dishonest men, the people of Israel met together and petitioned Samuel to let them organize a new system of government. They wanted a king just like all the surrounding nations. Samuel was deeply upset. He understood the implications of this request. He explained to the people how their lives would be changed if they had a human king, but they refused to listen and demanded a king. So God told Samuel whom he should anoint. Israel had made the choice to exchange the theocracy that God had established for a **monarchy**, so they could be like everyone else.

The first king of Israel was **Saul**. He was tall and handsome, but he suffered from insecurity and impatience. He became increasingly careless with the instructions that Samuel gave to him from the Lord. He then blamed others and lied to hide his failures. Finally Samuel came to him and said, *"For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king"* (I Sam. 15:23, NASB).

Samuel was then sent by God to anoint a new king, the youngest son of Jesse, **David**. He was a shepherd and a song writer, repeatedly described as a man after God's own heart. As a young man, David demonstrated his faith in God when he met the great philistine giant, **Goliath**. He defeated him with a single well-aimed stone from his sling. When Saul realized that God's anointing now rested on David, he sought to kill him. David had to flee his own country and remain in hiding. David's character was revealed in his willingness to wait on God's timing. He never took advantage of any of the situations where he could have taken Saul's life. Many of David's psalms were written during the painful years when he had to live as a refugee.

## II Samuel

With the death of Saul, David began to move towards the throne. There was a seven-year period of civil war during which one of the sons of Saul claimed the throne, but finally David won the loyalty of people. He marched to Jerusalem to defeat the Jebusites and claimed the city as the capital of his Kingdom. *"And David became greater and greater, for the Lord God of hosts was with him"* (II Sam. 5:10, NASB).

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David consolidated his power and worked to establish Jerusalem as the center of both politics and religion. He had the Ark of the Covenant brought to Jerusalem. It was his desire to build a permanent **temple** for the worship of God. This temple would replace the tabernacle and local shrines that had been established during the years of Israel's spiritual unfaithfulness. God, however, said that David had shed too much blood. He promised David that one of his sons would build the temple.

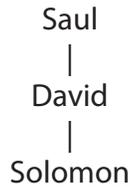
David was an amazing king until he fell into sin. He lusted after and committed adultery with **Bathsheba**. He ordered the murder of her husband in order to cover his sin. God sent the prophet Nathan to confront David who then became filled with remorse. His kingdom never again experienced the extent of peace and blessing that it had before his sin, yet God was merciful. A son, **Solomon**, was born to David and Bathsheba. He was the one on whom God's anointing would fall as the successor to David.

God had made a covenant with David that included God's blessing and protection, the promise that a descendent of David would build the temple, and that *"your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever"* (II Samuel 7:16). God continued to affirm his people that He would provide them a promised redeemer. Solomon was the son who succeeded David and built not only a magnificent temple, but also a great palace. He is known as the wisest man in the world and is remembered for the incredible wealth of his kingdom. Tragically, at the end of his life, Solomon's many wives, many of which were acquired through political alliances, and who had never converted to the Lord, turned Solomon's heart away from the Lord. As a result he reintroduced idol-worship into the land. Nevertheless, God kept his promises to David in the **Davidic Covenant** so that today Jesus, the son of David, sits at the right hand of God ruling a kingdom that has no end.

### **I & II Kings and I & II Chronicles**

These books chronicle the history of the kings. The warnings that Samuel gave proved true as the people struggled under the financial hardships of supporting a large government. By the reign of the fourth king, Rehoboam, the oppression of the people was so cruel that the kingdom divided into two nations: Israel to the north and Judah to the south. Distance from God and constant religious infidelity left the people open to God's judgment and consequent oppression by other nations. The brief description, *"he did evil in the eyes of the Lord,"* was used repeatedly to describe the majority of the kings who reigned. The law of God was lost and forgotten until it was literally rediscovered during a period of temple repair. During that time, God raised up **prophets**, men and women filled with God's spirit, to speak to His people and to call them to repentance.

### History of the Monarchy



#### Kingdom of Israel to the north

10 Tribes  
High Places in Bethel and Dan

Jeroboam was the first king. He set an example of defiance to the laws of the Lord which characterized the kingdom of the north until it was seized by the Assyrians in 722 BC.

The 10 tribes of the north were carried off into captivity and have essentially disappeared.

Some of the prophets who tried to warn the kingdom of Israel to repent:  
**Elijah, Elisha.**

#### Kingdom of Judah to the south

Tribes of Judah and Benjamin  
Jerusalem is the Capital

**Rehoboam** was the first king. The kings of the south also struggled with wickedness, yet there were several periods of grace when men who feared the Lord came to the throne such as: **Uzziah, Hezekiah, Josiah.**

This kingdom was eventually carried off into exile in Babylon, yet God had promised that He would spare a remnant which would return to Israel. God remained faithful to his covenant with David.

Prophets who spoke to the kingdoms of the south: **Isaiah, Jeremiah**

#### **Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther**

The final three books in this section were written during the Babylonian **exile**. Ezra and Nehemiah record events that occurred as the exiled southern Kingdom began its return to Jerusalem. Instruction in the Book of the Law of Moses was the major emphasis in the ministry of Ezra and Nehemiah. They exhorted the people to maintain ethnic purity and religious fidelity so that they would not be returned to the humiliation of judgment and exile. The setting for the book of Esther is the Persian capitol of Susa. It chronicles an event that took place among the Judeans who remained behind in Persia after many of their people had returned home.

**EZRA:** The book of Ezra tells about the two returns of Judeans from exile. The first return occurred when God moved the heart of Persian **King Cyrus** so that the king not only allowed the exiles to return to Israel, but he also equipped them for the work of rebuilding their temple which had been desecrated and destroyed. The reconstruction work was difficult for several reasons. Forty or more years of exile had taken its toll on the people emotionally. They returned to find new enemies in the land who fought against them

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not with weapons, but with lies, discouraging words, and the interruptions that they created with political red tape.

Nearly one hundred years after the first return, although the temple had finally been completed, the city of Jerusalem had still not been rebuilt, and this symbolized the fact that the Judean people were still not exclusively committed to God. **Ezra** was commissioned by King Artaxerses to go review the situation in Jerusalem. This pagan king also ordered Ezra to instruct the Israelite people in the laws and ways of His God. Ezra's life was living proof of his testimony to King Artaxerses that, *"The gracious hand of God is on everyone who looks to him, but his great anger is against all who forsake him"* (Ez. 8:22). Ezra lived faithfully under God's hand. His work and ministry were blessed as he gave spiritual leadership to the people and called them to repent and to serve God in holiness and purity.

NEHEMIAH: Like Ezra, **Nehemiah**, who served as a cupbearer, was also returned to Jerusalem by the pagan King Artaxerses, but he was commissioned to give leadership and direction to the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. Because of Nehemiah's wise leadership, thoughtful planning, and life of prayer, the people worked day and night to rebuild the walls and to set the gates in place. Nehemiah and Ezra were together in Jerusalem. After the public reading of The Book of the Law of Moses, the people came under great conviction and grief over the degree to which they had wandered away from God's law. Nehemiah encouraged them, reminding them of God's grace and mercy with the following statement, *"Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength"* (Neh. 8:10).

ESTHER: The book of Esther is the story of a young woman's faith and courage in the face of racial persecution. **Esther** was a beautiful unmarried Jewish girl. When King Artaxerses needed to find a new queen, all the young, unmarried women of the land were brought to him. Out of them all, he chose Esther as his new queen, but he did not know that she was

Jewish. Esther's uncle, **Mordecai**, challenged her to take advantage of her position as the queen to bring to the king's attention the hateful plans of his leading royal officer, **Haman**. He was planning to annihilate all the Jews. Esther revealed her race and nationality to the king. She informed him that she would be included in this massacre. The king found that intolerable. Haman's life and plans came to an abrupt end. Esther's courage in addressing the king directly without receiving prior royal invitation led to the salvation of her people. The challenge of Mordecai that helped her to take that step of action has become one of the best known verses from this book. *"And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this"* (Esther 4:14). God has a plan and purpose for each person that sometimes comes to fruition at *"such a time as this."* The Jewish festival of Purim was established to commemorate this event.



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**Questions for Discussion:**

1. From Joshua to the exile, God's people repeatedly fail to keep themselves holy-separated onto God. How do they fail? Are there any influences from your culture or the other religions of your land or ancestors that may be hindering you or your church from fully serving and following God?
2. We do not naturally or automatically know the law or will of God. God has had his word written down so that we may know it. We depart from the law when it is not read. What is your plan to grow in your knowledge of the Word of God? How can you help the people in your church to hear and know the word of God?
3. To redeem someone's life is to pay the price required to buy back their freedom and return them to the safety of the family. For the church, this means bringing them back into the family of God. Are there men, women, or children that you may need to redeem as Boaz did for Ruth?
4. There are many who live today as refugees. What words of hope could you bring them from the life of David or from the testimony of the exiles who returned from Babylon?
5. Ezra devoted himself to the study of the word of God, to obedience of the word of God, and he taught others to know and obey it. The presence of God's Hand was seen clearly and powerfully in his life. His example is a worthy one for those who are called into ministry to follow. If you had to rate yourself in those three areas, how would you do? What do you need to do to improve?

<b>Terms to Know</b>			
	<b><u>Places</u></b>	<b><u>People</u></b>	
Ark of the Covenant The ban Kinsman redeemer Monarchy Temple Davidic Covenant Prophet Exile	Jordan River Jericho Israel-Northern Kingdom Judah-Southern Kingdom	Joshua Rahab Ehud Deborah Gideon Jephthah Samson Naomi Ruth Boaz Hannah	Samuel Saul David Goliath Bathsheba Solomon Rehoboam Jeroboam Ezra Nehemiah Esther



# 3

## The Books of Poetry Prayer, Song and Wisdom

### Lesson Purpose

- To give an overview of the literary forms and devices, themes, and unique features of in each book in the Books of Poetry.

### Lesson Outcomes

- Students will know and be able to briefly define all of the **terms to know**.  
*These terms are in bold throughout the lesson.*
- Students will have knowledge of several key literary devices used in this section.
- Students will be able to identify these literary devices in the text and apply their understanding of the device in their interpretation of the biblical text
- Students will be introduced to some of the characteristics of wisdom literature
- Students will honestly and thoughtfully interact with and apply the lessons to their ministry settings and to their personal lives.

### Table of Contents

- Job
- Psalms
- Proverbs
- Ecclesiastes
- Song of Songs
- Questions for Discussion

The literary form of the five books in this section varies between poetry, prose, and wisdom literature. Historical narrative is the primary literary form used in the first 17 books of the Old Testament. In this section the emotions of the human heart are expressed through prayers and song. Universal questions that have troubled the human soul and mind throughout the ages are pondered.

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Job	Psalms	Proverbs	Ecclesiastes	Song of Songs
Job questions God's reasons for allowing his suffering.	Prayers and Songs	Wise Sayings about many things in every day life.	Solomon wrestles with the meaning of life.	A love poem
	Many psalms were written by David.	Many proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs are attributed to King Solomon who is known for his great wisdom.		

Knowledge of literary devices and their use is critical in order to be able to understand and effectively interpret the verses in this section. Some of the most common literary devices used are:

- **Simile**—a comparison that is indicated by the words “like” or “as.”  
*“But as for me, I am like a green olive tree in the house of God” (Psalm 52:8, NASB).*
- **Metaphor**—the juxtaposition of two apparently unlike things to clarify, describe, or to enrich understanding. *“Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones” (Proverbs 16:24, NASB).*
- **Personification**—inanimate objects are given life and personality, such as a storm invested with emotion. *“Wisdom has built her house; She has hewn out her seven pillars; She has prepared her food, she has mixed her wine; she has also set her table” (Proverbs 9:1-2, NASB).*
- **Symbolism**—an object, image, or number represents something else.  
*“O Lord, who may abide in Thy tent?” (Psalm 15:1, NASB). The tent symbolizes the presence and family of God. David is not speaking of a literal, physical tent.*
- **Allegory**—a story with a double layer of meaning—one perhaps literal and the other spiritual.  
*“I am my beloved's, and his desire is for me” (Song of Solomon 7:10, NASB). Some believe that this is a spiritual statement of Jesus' love for the church, his bride.*
- **Parallelism**—phrases or sentences that follow one another and say essentially the same thing but with slight changes. *“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path” (Psalm 119:105, NASB).*
- **Repetition**—words, phrases, ideas are repeated sometimes in exactly the same way or sometimes with a variation that adds to the emphasis or expands the meaning. *In Psalm 150, every line has a form of the phrase, “Praise the Lord.” The repetition creates a dramatic and cumulative effect.*  
*Praise the Lord!  
Praise God in His sanctuary  
Praise Him in the mighty expanse. . .  
Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.  
Praise the Lord! (Psalm 150:1,6, NASB).*

## Job

The book of Job is considered by some scholars to be one of the oldest pieces of writing in the Old Testament. The book begins with a brief introduction to the man Job. His life had taken a tragic turn, and he has found himself enduring unimaginable suffering at the hand of Satan and with the permission of God. The majority of the book records Job's conversation with his three friends. They each tried to make sense of God's purpose for allowing suffering in the lives of men and women.

Job's unwavering belief in God gave him the strength to persevere in his worship of God even though he openly and honestly questioned the justice of God's actions. Throughout the entire conversation, Job defended his personal integrity. Job was unable to remember an unrighteous thought, word or deed that would have merited such judgment from the hand of God. His friends, on the other hand, accused him of being arrogant in his insistence that he had done no wrong. They equated the presence of suffering with judgment and continued to press Job to confess and repent of sin.

Job never cursed God, but he did challenge God to respond to his demand for an explanation. Job's suffering was so severe that he wished to die. His anguish was physical because he was struck with disease, emotional because he had lost loved ones and his ability to work, and spiritual because he could not understand why God had allowed this to happen.

Finally God responded to Job. *"Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me"* (Job 38:3; 40:7). Through a series of questions God revealed his power, majesty, and sovereignty to Job. Job had not sinned, but he had been wrong to accuse God and to question His wisdom. Job said, *"Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know"* (Job 42:3). Job repented of his arrogance and of his failure to simply trust God even in His suffering. Job's three friends received a much more severe rebuke from God for misrepresenting Him as one who always uses suffering to inflict judgment. The book concludes with God's blessing coming in even greater measure again upon the life of Job.

## Psalms

There are 150 psalms. Some psalms specifically name the author, but many do not. Some of the psalms address specific historical events such as episodes from the life of David or the time of exile in Babylon. The psalms express the emotions of the human heart such as joy, fear, anger, despair, and love. They are honest in that both negative and positive feelings are expressed. Often even failures are admitted. God, in contrast, is always seen as constant, faithful, strong, and loving. The world and its people may be filled with many "unknowns," but God remains all powerful, all loving, all merciful, all holy, all righteous, all knowing, and all good. We should find our shelter in Him.

This collection of prayers and songs was written hundreds of years before the life of Jesus Christ. Yet, many of the psalms are quoted in the New Testament. After Pentecost, Jesus' followers discovered that several psalms had prophetic promises that were fulfilled in the life of Jesus Christ. Several examples are: Psalm 2, Jesus, the Son of God; Psalm 22, the cross; Psalm 41, betrayal of Judas; Psalm 110, the lordship of Jesus.

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The Psalms are not written according to a standard pattern. They are of varying lengths with Psalm 117, the shortest, with only two verses and Psalm 119, the longest, with 176 verses. There are, however, several recurring themes:<sup>1</sup>

- Petition to God—the psalmist makes a request to God

*“In you, O Lord, I have taken refuge;  
let me never be put to shame;  
deliver me in your righteousness.  
Turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue;  
be my strong rock of refuge,  
a strong fortress to save me.” Psalm 31:1-2*

- Lament—the psalmist is in serious trouble and cries out to God

*“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?  
O my God, I cry out by day,  
but you do not answer, by night, and am not silent.” Psalm 22:1-2*

- Thanksgiving—the psalmist recognizes the gifts of God

*“I will thank the LORD with all my heart  
as I meet with his godly people.  
How amazing are the deeds of the LORD!  
All who delight in him should ponder them.” Psalm 111:1-2, NLT*

- Praise—the psalmist extols the attributes of God

*“Praise the Lord.  
Praise the Lord, O my soul. I will praise the Lord all my life;  
I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.” Psalm 146:1-2*

- Wisdom—the psalmist describes the benefits of observing the law of God

*“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked  
or stand in the way of sinner or sit in the seat of mockers.  
But his delight is in the law of the Lord,  
and on his law he meditates day and night.” Psalm 1:1-2*

- Confession/Testimony—the psalmist tells a personal story

*“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love;  
According to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.  
Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.” Psalm 51:1-2*

*“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul.” Psalm 23:1-2*

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<sup>1</sup> James Luther Mays, *Psalms: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press, 1994), 19-29.

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## Proverbs

The book of Proverbs is composed primarily of short, memorable statements. These wise sayings each stand alone as statements of truth concerning the aspect of life that they address. They can be easily memorized and quoted. The purpose of the book of Proverbs is given at the beginning of the book:

- *for attaining wisdom and discipline;*
  - *for understanding words of insight,*
  - *for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair;*
  - *for giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young—*
  - *let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance*
  - *for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise.*
- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge,  
but fools despise wisdom and discipline. (Proverbs 1:2-7)*

In the first nine chapters, a father calls his sons to listen and to receive instruction. He teaches them the benefits of following wisdom versus the dangers of folly. Wisdom will keep them on the path of righteousness, away from such evils as the lure of the prostitute. There are many excellent verses in this section, but perhaps the most quoted are: *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight” (Prov. 3:5-6, NIV)*. Throughout the book of Proverbs, the fear of the Lord and obedience to his law are considered as absolutely essential if one to be truly wise.

From chapter 10 through chapter 29 the proverbs of King Solomon flow from one to another. At times several proverbs addressing the same topic are grouped together, but often the proverbs stand alone; each one deserving a moment of reflection before continuing on to the next. Some of the topics that Solomon addresses are:

- The benefits of work in contrast to the destructive results of laziness
- The rightful use of the tongue in contrast to the careless or damaging words
- The wise use of money in contrast to foolish waste
- The value of true friends in contrast to the negative effects of foolish company
- The honor of justice in contrast to the wickedness of injustice
- The blessings of obedience to God in contrast to evil ways
- The wisdom of seeking wise counsel in contrast to foolish pride
- The need for parental discipline in contrast to children left without guidance

The final chapter of Proverbs 31:10-31 ends with a lengthy description of *“the wife of noble character” (Prov. 31:10)*. She is respected, hard-working, financially astute, compassionate, and wise with her tongue. *“Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised” (Prov. 31:30)*.

## **Ecclesiastes:**

The book of Ecclesiastes is an example of another kind of wisdom literature. Like Proverbs, it contains some short, memorable truth statements. The book of Proverbs explains the certainties of the prudent life. Ecclesiastes, however, considers life's uncertainties, injustices, and the vulnerability of humanity. The author begins with a question that he strives to answer in the chapters that follow.

*Meaningless! Meaningless! says the Teacher.  
Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.  
What does man gain from all his labor  
at which he toils under the sun? Ecclesiastes 1:2-3*

Occasionally the author's style is extraordinarily poetic as in the beautiful passage that says there is a time for everything in life (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8) But overall the tone of this book is rather pessimistic. The word "meaningless" occurs more than 35 times in the New International Version. The author repeatedly points out that all life ends in death. Neither riches, nor learning, nor productivity, nor pleasure make any difference in the end. There is injustice in the world, and people live never knowing when their lives will come to an end. Yet, in contrast to this negativity, the author's faith in and respect for God lift the reader up and out of the this world to the reality of eternity. God sees humanity's labors. To delight in work and to attend to the daily demands of life is an expression of praise to God. The church, God's house, is a sacred place where one can listen and spend time with Him in the midst of the toils of life (Ecclesiastes 5:1-7). Humanity may not be able to control their destiny nor what will happen with their legacy once they have died, yet God is God. He will remain, and He is sovereign. And so the author concludes:

*Now all has been heard;  
Here is the conclusion of the matter:  
Fear God and keep his commandments,  
For this is the whole duty of man.  
For God will bring every deed into judgment,  
Including every hidden thing,  
Whether it is good or evil.  
Ecclesiastes 12:13-14*

## **Song Of Songs**

This book is a love poem. It is written as a conversation between the "beloved" who is the woman, the "lover" who is the man, and the "friends" who are the chorus. The language of this book is full of imagery and symbolism which represents both lovers' desire for one another and their descriptions of one another's physical appearance. Because of the sexual nature of this poetry, some interpreter's prefer to interpret this book as an allegorical expression of Christ's love for the church. In the New Testament, Paul uses wedding imagery to describe Jesus Christ's relationship to the church. He is the groom, and the church is his bride. An example of a verse that fits this type of interpretation is 2:4, "He has taken me to his banquet hall, and his banner over me is love" which can be taken to allude to the final banquet that we will share with Jesus in heaven.

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Human sexuality was created by God. The world and society tend to promote a distorted view of the marriage relationship. Song of Songs offers a beautiful example of the joys and pleasures of the wonderful love that can be enjoyed only within the context of marriage.

**Questions for Discussion:**

1. Considering the book of Job, what should be our response to suffering in our own lives and in the lives of others? Mistakes, sin, and foolish choices can lead to negative consequences. In that case, we must take responsibility for the presence of suffering, but it is important to note that suffering does not necessarily mean that God is punishing someone. How can you use this truth to counsel those who are experiencing suffering which is clearly not the result of any sin or error on their part?
2. Read through the different types of psalms:
  - Petition to God—the psalmist makes a request to God
  - Lament—the psalmist is in serious trouble and cries out to God
  - Thanksgiving—the psalmist recognizes the gifts of God
  - Praise—the psalmist extols the attributes of God
  - Wisdom—the psalmist describes the benefits of observing the law of God
  - Confession/Testimony—the psalmist tells a personal story

Choose one and write your own psalm. Share it with the class. Try to include a simile or metaphor. Are there symbols or images that are a part of your life that you can use to express your relationship to God or your understanding of who He is?

3. Are there any proverbs in your village? What is the difference between wisdom and intelligence? According to Proverbs, true wisdom begins with what? How could you use Proverbs in your teaching ministry? Does it address some of the needs in your community? What are those needs?
4. Do the people in your church or town feel that life is “meaningless?” What could you say to encourage them and to show them God’s purpose and plan?
5. What is the concept of marital fidelity in your community? Would husbands and wives benefit from the example of the couple’s relationship in Song of Songs? Would they be comfortable or is that type of expression something that is not openly discussed where you live?

<b>Terms to Know</b>
Simile
Allegory
Metaphor
Parallelism
Symbolism
Repetition
Personification
Proverb: short, memorable truth statement
Psalm: song or prayer



# 4

## The Major Prophets

### Lesson Purpose

- To give an overview of the authors, central themes, warnings and promises in each of the Major Prophets.

### Lesson Outcomes

- Students will know and be able to briefly define all of the **terms to know**.
- *These terms are in bold throughout the lesson.*
- Students will be introduced to each prophet and the setting and situation which he was called to address
- Students will develop their understanding of the prophetic calling and ministry in the Old Testament
- Students will discover God's promises to send a Redeemer for his people
- Students will honestly and thoughtfully interact with and apply the lessons to their ministry settings and to their personal lives.

### Table of Contents

- Isaiah
- Jeremiah and Lamentations
- Ezekiel
- Daniel
- Questions for Discussion

Sixteen of the last seventeen books of the Old Testament bear the name of the prophet whose message is recorded in that particular book. The one exception is Lamentations. It is an additional book written by Jeremiah. The first five are called the **Major Prophets** because of their length, not their importance. The writings of those prophets filled entire scrolls. The second group is called the Minor Prophets. Because of their short length, one scroll could contain all twelve of them.

All of these prophets were called by God to deliver a divine message to God's people. The period of time that God spoke through these prophets extended from the divided monarchy through the fall of both Kingdoms. It continued into the exile and concluded in the post-exilic years. They primarily spoke messages that addressed the present situations of the nations of Israel and Judah, but some of the prophets delivered a word from God to the surrounding nations.

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The message of these prophets generally included the following:

- A charge against the people for their violation of their covenant agreement with God.
- A warning that judgment would come upon them (usually by means of enemy nations) if they did not repent.
- A promise of restoration if they would repent

In addition to their primary concern to address the current situations of God’s people, many of the prophets were also given visions of God’s plans for the future. Sometimes this future was not much more than months away as in Jeremiah’s warnings of the fall of Jerusalem or perhaps as far as 70 years away such as when they spoke of a remnant that would be spared and of the return from the exile. At other times, the promise that they saw extended hundreds of years ahead to the time when God would send the messiah. Finally a few of them saw past even our own time to the promise of a returning Savior who would come to call both the living and dead to everlasting life.

**Prophets** were called by God. It was not a profession that one could choose for oneself. Those who falsified that calling paid the high price of death by stoning when their message was proved to be inaccurate. Prophets were not generally liked and often they suffered persecution because their messages were not well received. Sometimes God asked them to serve as living examples of their message; their lives became a visual representation of the spiritual truth that God wanted his people to hear and see. Their writings tell of their strong emotional response to the call of God on their lives to speak out for Him. They could not refrain from giving the message that they had received. At times their visions were so powerful, some swooned or became ill. Many were priests by profession, but not all.

The prophets are similar to the Books of Poetry in their use of symbolic imagery and poetic form. At times, this makes interpretation challenging because some of the images are no longer familiar or significant to the modern reader. Use of commentaries and Old Testament scholarship is often necessary to understand the context in which the prophets were writing. Many of the prophets quote God directly. It is important for those who study the Bible to take note of who is speaking in the text—the prophet, God, or someone else. Some of the prophets include historical narrative. One other aspect that makes reading the prophets challenging is to determine the time frame of the prophecies. Were they fulfilled? Are they yet to be fulfilled? When were they fulfilled? The prophets themselves move forward and backward in time as they proclaim God’s message to the people. Occasionally the time frame is specified, but generally the burden is on the reader to discern the time setting for each prophecy.

The Major Prophets

Isaiah	Jeremiah	Lamentations	Ezekiel	Daniel
Prophet to Kingdom of Judah	Prophet to Kingdom of Judah before the fall of Jerusalem	Lament of Jeremiah for his country	Prophet during Babylonian exile.	Prophet during Babylonian exile

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## Isaiah

*"The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, concerning Judah and Jerusalem which he saw during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah."(Is. 1:1,NASB).*

**Isaiah** is an extraordinary book. It contains some of the most graphic and specific prophecies of the promised messiah that were without doubt fulfilled by Jesus Christ. God, Himself, is revealed through the words that he gave Isaiah to record. His covenant love and faithfulness to Israel permeate the entire book as His own words flow from chapter to chapter. Isaiah portrayed the tenderness as well as the justice of God through his personal and descriptive writing style. Finally, the length and expanse of time that Isaiah recorded God's message enhance the overall impression of this powerful book.

From the outset, God made it clear that he could not tolerate the disobedience of His people. He was not fooled nor appeased by their form of religious practice such as offering sacrifices. He knew their hearts and saw their actions.

Isaiah 1:16-20, NASB  
"Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean;  
Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight  
Cease to do evil,  
Learn to do good;  
Seek justice,  
Reprove the ruthless,  
Defend the orphan,  
Plead for the widow.  
"Come now, and let us reason together,"  
Says the LORD,  
"Though your sins are as scarlet,  
They will be as white as snow;  
Though they are red like crimson,  
They will be like wool.  
"If you consent and obey,  
You will eat the best of the land;  
"But if you refuse and rebel,  
You will be devoured by the sword"  
Truly, the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

God addressed their sins, yet offered them forgiveness, instructed them in right behaviors, and promised them blessing. Yet, failure to receive this gift would result in their destruction which eventually is what happened with the fall of Jerusalem and the exile of Judah to Babylon.

Isaiah himself was not exempt from God's call to purity and righteous living. He recorded his own story in chapter 6:1-8,NASB . One day when he was in the temple, Isaiah had a vision of God sitting on his throne. The hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphim were with God singing, *"Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts."* Isaiah

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was overcome by his guilt and unworthiness to stand in the presence of God. He confessed that he was a **man of unclean lips**. Considering that he had been serving as a priest in God's temple, this was a humbling admission. One of the seraphim took a burning piece of coal from the altar using tongs and touched Isaiah's lips with it. He told Isaiah that his sin had been cleansed and forgiven. Then Isaiah heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Isaiah responded, "Here am I. Send me!" Even though he was a priest by profession, Isaiah had to come to repentance and be cleansed before he could hear and obey the call of God.

Isaiah's people were called to be a light to the nations, but since they, like Isaiah, were a people of "unclean lips," they too had to have a vision of the Lord's holiness and greatness (chaps. 7-39); they too had to endure the fire of cleansing (chaps. 40-59), so that they could fulfill their mission (chaps. 60-62).<sup>1</sup>

The means by which God would complete his saving and cleansing work was the Messiah. Isaiah's messianic prophecies are often quoted at Christmas and Easter.

*Isaiah 7:14 "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel."*

*Isaiah 9:6 "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace."*

*Isaiah 53:4-6 "Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities, the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray each of us has turned to his own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."*

### **Jeremiah and Lamentations:**

**Jeremiah** is sometimes referred to as the "**the weeping prophet**." He was God's prophet to the nation of Judah in its final years. The Babylonians were literally camped outside of Jerusalem, waiting to take the city as Jeremiah cried warning in the streets and in the palace. He said that the Babylonians were God's hand of judgment and that Judah should surrender to them. The Judean kings branded Jeremiah as a traitor and assured the people of God's faithfulness to them and to his covenant. In doing so they were ignoring all the warnings that God had grown weary with their failure to obey Him and keep their covenant vows. Jeremiah continued to cry out. God occasionally instructed Jeremiah to represent through drama and visuals the impending disaster. No one listened; instead they tried to keep him silent through a period of imprisonment, by ripping up the scroll that contained his prophecies, and threatening to murder him. Jeremiah wept for his people, for the city of Jerusalem, and for himself. He openly shared his own feelings in both the book that bears his name and more personally in his prayer of lament, Lamentations.

Jeremiah's call came when he was young. God's assurances were the source of his strength when he himself could not humanly bear the cost of being God's prophet. "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' because everywhere I send you, you shall go, and all that I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you," says the Lord. (Jeremiah 1:7-8 NASB) Even when Jeremiah tried to run from God's call and keep silent, he could not. "But if I say, 'I will not remember Him or speak anymore in His name,' then in my heart it becomes like a burning fire shut up in my bones; and I am weary of holding it in, and I cannot endure it." (Jeremiah 20:9 NASB) God always promised His presence and His words to those whom He called. He repeatedly

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<sup>1</sup> John Oswalt, author of the commentary on Isaiah. NIV Application Commentary. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003).

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told his appointed servants to not be afraid; He would be with them.

Even though the immediate context of Jeremiah was the impending destruction of Jerusalem, his book of prophecy held promises of hope and redemption of the people of God. Through Jeremiah the people were prepared for **70 years of exile**; they knew that there was a beginning and an end after which they would return to their land.

A promise for 70 years into the future: *Jer. 30:2-3 (NLT) "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Write down for the record everything I have said to you, Jeremiah. For the time is coming when I will restore the fortunes of my people of Israel and Judah. I will bring them home to this land that I gave to their ancestors, and they will possess it again. I, the LORD, have spoken!"*

A promise that would be fulfilled in Jesus: *Jer. 31:33-34 (NLT) "But this is **the new covenant** I will make with the people of Israel on that day," says the LORD. "I will put my instructions deep within them, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they need to teach their relatives, saying, 'You should know the LORD.' For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will know me already," says the LORD. "And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins."*

A promise for each and every day: *Lam. 3:22-23 (NASB) "The Lord's loving kindnesses indeed never cease, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is His faithfulness."*

## Ezekiel

**Ezekiel** received his call from God in exile. Many of the Judeans were taken into exile before the fall of Jerusalem, and there they heard the word of the Lord through his prophet Ezekiel. The first 24 chapters record God's words spoken during the seven years before Jerusalem was destroyed. The people, both in Judah and in Babylon stubbornly refused to believe that such a thing could happen. But Jerusalem would fall. God could no longer tolerate their involvement with idolatry and disobedience. But chapters 33-48, spoken after that terrible event had indeed occurred, have a very different tone. Here God was speaking to a broken people who now thought all was lost. Ezekiel assured that although they had been unfaithful to God, yet He was continuing to reach out to them.

God asked Ezekiel to use object lessons and allegories or parables to deliver his messages. Ezekiel had visions of heavenly creatures with many eyes, wings, and wheels and of God on his throne, a rainbow of jewel-tone color all around him. He described detailed plans for the New Temple where God's people would once again worship, and God's glory would once again fill the temple. Many of the images he uses are difficult to understand. He is a prophet who moves backwards and forwards in time speaking of the near future, years ahead, and of eternity.

In Ezekiel's book, God centered his attention on the human heart as the source of his people's weakness and rebellion. God promised through Ezekiel that He would redeem His people through a heart transformation—not transplant—but a totally new heart. *Ezekiel 36:26-27 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you **a heart of flesh**. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.*

One of the best known passages in Ezekiel refers to the **valley of dry bones**. God took Ezekiel to a valley filled with bones which is a metaphor for the apparently hopeless condition of God's people. God asked

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Ezekiel if the bones could come to life again. Ezekiel replied that only God would know that. Then God asked him to preach His word to the bones and to proclaim to them that God could renew and restore life to them. Ezekiel obeyed and began to preach. There was a sound of rattling as the bones began to come together. Flesh covered the bones, but the bodies were not alive. God told Ezekiel to prophesy and preach again so that they would be filled with breath, and they were. An entire army stood before Ezekiel where there had only been a valley of broken bones. *Ezekiel 37:12-14 Therefore prophesy and say to them: This is what the Sovereign LORD says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.*" Ezekiel teaches that it is not enough that we be saved from the consequences of our sins. We must also be filled with God's Holy Spirit so that we can live godly lives. Jesus came so that both of these things may take place in the lives of those who put their trust in Him.

God's warnings and rebuke were stern, yet His desire was to show mercy and to redeem His people. He would once again be their God, and they would be wholeheartedly His people.

### Daniel

The first half of the book of **Daniel** is the historical narrative of Daniel's life in **Babylon**. He was taken captive in the first wave of exiled Judeans, about 20 years before Jerusalem's final fall, and chosen for service in the royal court. Daniel was a man devoted to God, and God blessed him and his friends with knowledge and understanding. Daniel could understand visions and dreams. (1:17)

Daniel's devotion to God brought him the recognition of several kings. He was a man of prayer, faith, and unwavering obedience. Neither he nor his friends would defile themselves in any way even though they were living in a pagan land. Their defiance landed Daniel's friends in a fiery furnace, and Daniel was thrown into a lion's den, but all were miraculously spared. Because of the witness of their lives and the evidence of the power of their God, **King Nebuchadnezzar** testified; *"Now, I Nebuchadnezzar praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble"* (Dan 4:37).

One of the interesting features of the book of Daniel is that it was written in two languages. Chapter 1-2:4 and from chapter 7 to the end of the book were written in **Hebrew**: the language of Israel. From Chapter 2:4 through chapter 6, **Aramaic** was used. It was the language of world commerce at that time. The stories of the Babylonian and Persian courts were written so that anyone of that time would be able to read them. It's almost as if there was a public section and a Judean section. With modern translations, this difference is no longer apparent.

In chapters 7-12, Daniel recorded a series of visions that he received during his life in captivity. He dated them by the year in office of the reigning king: Belshazzar, Darius, and Cyrus. Some of Daniel's visions, as well as some of Ezekiel's, are **apocalyptic**. The end of the world or "the end times" is the theme of apocalyptic literature. Numbers, symbols, unusual creatures, signs in the heavens, and other images are used by the prophet to try and portray massive universal change or the end of this world as it is presently known. Daniel is pointing to the time when the kingdoms of this world will be replaced by the Kingdom of God.

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**The Time of the End** "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. "Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever ( Dan. 12:1-3,NASB).

**Questions for Discussion:**

1. What is a prophet? How were the Old Testament prophets the same as a preacher or evangelist? How were they different?
2. Isaiah had to confess sin before he could respond to God’s call. Jeremiah needed assurance of God’s help because he was young. Share about your call to ministry? Are there any areas of sin, doubt, or fear that you need to bring to God? Take time to pray for one another.
3. Jeremiah was scorned by his own people. Ezekiel was asked to preach to dry bones. Daniel faced death because of his faithfulness to God. What are some of the challenges that you face in your ministry today? What lessons can you learn from the prophets? What do you need to remember about God?
4. What does it mean to have a heart of flesh? What is a heart of stone? What does wholehearted commitment to God look like? What is the condition of your heart? Ask God to search it and show you? What are the conditions of the hearts of the people to whom you are ministering and where you live? Are there specific bondages that your people struggle to let go? What bondages keep them from wholehearted love for God?
5. Read the quote from Daniel. What do you learn about the end times and the return of Jesus Christ from this passage? How brightly are you shining now for Jesus? Are you and people in your church ready for that day?
6. What is the new covenant that Jeremiah refers to? When was the new covenant put into effect? (Hint: Communion; the Last Supper)
7. What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Read Ezekiel 36:26-27. Share some of the ways a Spirit-filled person might be enabled to be especially obedient to God.

<b>Terms to Know</b>	
Aramaic	Babylon
Hebrew	King Nebuchadnezzar
Apocalyptic	Isaiah
Valley of Dry Bones	Ezekiel
Heart of flesh	Daniel
The new covenant	Prophet
The weeping prophet	A man of unclean lips
Jeremiah	Major Prophets



# 5

## The Minor Prophets

### Lesson Purpose

- To give an overview of the authors, central themes, warnings and promises in each of the Minor Prophets.

### Lesson Outcomes

- Students will know and be able to briefly define all of the **terms to know**.
- *These terms are in bold throughout the lesson.*
- Students will be introduced to each prophet and the setting and situation which he was called to address
- Students will learn the theme of each of the prophetic books. These themes appear in bold for each book
- Students will discover God's promises to send a Redeemer for his people
- Students will honestly and thoughtfully interact with and apply the lessons to their ministry settings and to their personal lives.

### Table of Contents

- Hosea
- Joel
- Amos
- Obadiah
- Jonah
- Micah
- Nahum
- Habakkuk
- Zephaniah
- Haggai
- Zechariah
- Malach
- Questions for Discussion

The **Minor Prophets** are minor because they are shorter in length. They contain prophecies that were fulfilled in Jesus, words of hope and faith for those who are suffering, and warnings for those who are walking in disobedience. Even though much of what they had to say was addressed to a particular people and situation, the God for whom they spoke is the same today as He was then. There are many important lessons that present day readers can learn and should consider as they read the stories and prophecies written by these men.

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Hosea	Joel	Amos	Obadiah	Jonah	Micah
Prophet to Israel	Prophet to Judah	Prophet to Israel	Prophecy to Judah about Edom	Prophet to Nineveh	Prophet to Both Kingdoms
Nahum	Habakkuk	Zephaniah	Haggai	Zechariah	Malachi
Prophet to Judah about Nineveh	Prophet to Judah	Prophet to Judah	Prophet to Judah after the exile	Prophet to Judah after the exile	Prophet to Judah after the exile

### Hosea

God called **Hosea** not only to speak on His behalf to Israel, but to serve as a living example of God’s love for His rebellious people. *“When the Lord began to speak through Hosea, the Lord said to him, ‘Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the Lord.’ So he married **Gomer**” (Hosea 1:2-3a).* Gomer was an adulterous woman. She did not remain faithful to Hosea, even though they had given life to three sons. Gomer left Hosea to be with other men, but God told Hosea to go and to love his wife again. Hosea had to buy back his own wife, calling on her to remain with him and refrain from all sexual infidelity.

The kings and people of Israel worshipped other gods and idols. They adopted pagan worship practices that included forms of debauchery, sexual activity, and human sacrifice. They treated the Lord like Gomer treated Hosea. God warned them through Hosea that his judgment would come upon them. Throughout the book of Hosea, God’s relationship to Israel is portrayed as a marriage relationship of husband and wife. Israel’s unfaithfulness was equated with adultery. Yet, God’s love for them compelled Him to wait and to continue to call them to repent and to return to Him, their bridegroom. *“I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the Lord” (Hosea 2:19-20).* **God’s merciful and boundless love is the theme of Hosea.** Tragically Israel never returned to Him and so they were lost.

### Joel

The book of **Joel** proclaimed that the **Day of the Lord** was coming with a vengeance. The judgment and destruction that would occur on that day were compared to armies of locusts ravaging all the land. Darkness, gloom, death, and fear would sweep over the earth. Was Joel referring only to the fall of Judah, to a later day that has come and gone, or to a future day of reckoning that perhaps yet stands before us now? Perhaps all three of these questions have an affirmative answer because the prophets’ visions were not usually seen from the perspective of a time line.

Still, there was and is no need for the people of God to fear. *“Even now, declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.” Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love” (Joel 2:13).* Joel spoke of the great things that God had done, of his power to redeem the damage of the locusts in the lives of His people (2:25), and assured that *“everyone who calls on the name of the Lord*

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will be saved" (2:32).

After the Day of the Lord, there was a promise of blessing. *"I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days"* (Joel 2:28-29). Peter stood before the crowds in Jerusalem on Pentecost and quoted this promise as the explanation for the amazing witness of the many spoken tongues when God's Spirit was poured out on the apostles. Yet, Joel's prophecies continue to speak on beyond even Pentecost to the New Jerusalem. God's redeeming grace and promise of a future time of peace and blessing are themes of Joel. Tragically many have not repented nor have they given their hearts to God. **The theme is: Repent, for the Day of the Lord is near.**

### Amos

The prophet **Amos** also spoke of the Day of the Lord as a Day of Judgment and destruction, but his words were directed primarily to the Kingdom of Israel. The certainty of judgment and the intensity of God's wrath towards Israel is vividly presented in Amos' prophecies.

Amos 2:6-8 (NLT)

This is what the LORD says:

"The people of Israel have sinned again and again,  
and I will not let them go unpunished!

They sell honorable people for silver  
and poor people for a pair of sandals.

They trample helpless people in the dust  
and shove the oppressed out of the way.

Both father and son sleep with the same woman,  
corrupting my holy name.

At their religious festivals,  
they lounge in clothing their debtors put up as security.

In the house of their god,  
they drink wine bought with unjust fines.

Israel was proud and content in their sin. God was ready to act. Judgment came in the form of the Assyrian armies who murdered, ravaged, and emptied the land of God's people. Yet, God was merciful. Amos's final prophecy told of the days that were coming when the land would again be rich in produce, the cities rebuilt, and His people restored to the land. Tragically His mercy was rejected, and Israel was judged. **God's justice and judgment is the theme of Amos**

### Obadiah:

The prophet, **Obadiah**, was given a vision of God's message for **Edom**. Edom was the land east and south of Israel where Esau, the brother of Jacob, had settled hundreds of years earlier. Edom offered no assistance when Judah and Israel were in trouble. *"You should not look down on your brother in the day of his misfortune"* (Obadiah 1:12). In fact, they assisted the Babylonians in the sack of Jerusalem. God promised that they would be punished for their lack of compassion and pride. He would restore the house of Jacob, but the house of Esau would

be left in ruin (verse 18). God's sovereignty over all nations is a theme of Obadiah. Tragically the nation of Edom did not offer help to their relatives in Israel and Judah. The theme is: **Judah's God is Edom's Judge.**

## Jonah

The book of **Jonah** is the historical narrative of the Prophet Jonah's call to **Nineveh**. Nineveh was located north and east of Israel along the Fertile Crescent. It was the chief city of the mighty Assyrian empire that would eventually capture Samaria and destroy Israel, Jonah's home. So Jonah wanted Nineveh destroyed. When God asked Jonah to tell the city that God would destroy them in forty days if they would not repent, Jonah refused to go and tried to run away. Jonah had no compassion for Nineveh. Jonah got onto a boat heading in the opposition direction. But God sent a violent storm that threatened the lives of the sailors. Jonah realized that God was pursuing him through the storm, so he asked to be thrown into the sea where God had prepared a large fish to swallow him alive. Jonah spent three days and nights in the belly of the big fish, repenting of his disobedience.

The fish spat Jonah out on the land, and he went to Nineveh to announce the God's judgment, and just as he feared the people responded with repentance. Even the king cried out for God's mercy, so God spared Nineveh that day.

Jonah was furious. He did not think the city deserved a second chance. God rebuked Jonah for his lack of compassion for those who were lost. **God's concern for the entire world is a theme of Jonah.** Tragically, even a prophet can fail to understand God's mission of mercy to reach all who are spiritually lost. A rebellious prophet spent three days in the belly of a whale; the promised redeemer would spend three days in a grave.

## Micah

The prophet **Micah**, a contemporary of Isaiah, presented God's case against his rebellious people. In particular, Micah addressed the corrupt prophets and spiritual leaders who had lead the people astray and had encouraged their rebellion. Micah prophesied what would happen to the false prophets. *"The sun will set for the prophets and the day will go dark for them. The seers will be ashamed and the diviners disgraced. They will all cover their faces because there is no answer from God"* (Micah 3:6b-7).

Micah reported much that was wrong, but God made it clear to Micah what people were to do to please God. *"He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God"* (Micah 6:8). God did not want religious behavior like prayers or offerings as much as he wanted daily living that reflected the integrity and the love (i.e. the holiness) of his own character

God promised to send a faithful leader, a prophet/priest/king who would redeem them. So Micah was also given several prophecies that pointed to God's redemption of His people, and in particular His plan to redeem them through a messiah. *"But you, **Bethlehem Ephrathah**, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient time."*(Micah 5:2). *"He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth. And he will be their peace"*( Micah 5: 4-5). **God's judgment coupled with His plan to redeem is a theme in Micah.**

## VII. NAHUM

Like Jonah, **Nahum** was also given a judgment on Nineveh. About 100 years after Jonah, Nahum spoke again of God's charges and impending judgment against that wicked city. But this time there would be no repentant response. Nahum concluded his message with the following words to Nineveh: *"Nothing can heal your wound; your injury is fatal. Everyone who hears the news about you claps his hands at your fall, for who has not felt your endless cruelty?"* (Nahum 3:19).

Unlike the warnings that were given to Judah and Israel, there was no promised redemption. The entire book preached warning and destruction for Nineveh with the exception of one verse. *"The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him"* (Nahum 1:7). Nahum's personal testimony about His God stands out against the chaotic and violent scene that would be the reality of a nation who rejected the goodness of God. **The judgment of God against Nineveh is the theme of Nahum.**

## VIII. HABAKKUK

**Habakkuk**, a contemporary of Jeremiah, challenged God's justice, but much like Job, concluded that God is worthy of worship even if he does not explain his ways to us. Habakkuk presented two complaints to God. First, he complained that God was allowing wicked people to prevail over good ones. The leaders of Judah had become corrupt and the people were suffering in an unjust society. God answered that He had chosen the Babylonians as the means to inflict his judgment on Judah. They would invade and ravage the land. Habakkuk raised a second complaint. How could God use the Babylonians, who were more wicked than the Judeans, to bring His judgment on Judah? In God's response He reaffirmed the reasons for his plan to bring judgment, but He also assured Habakkuk that He was sovereign. *"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea"* (Hab. 2:14). *"But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him"* (Hab. 2:20).

Habakkuk finished his prophecy by writing out his prayer to God. He knew that God's judgment was coming upon the land of Judah, and that there would be even greater suffering to come for the people of God. Yet, he took to heart God's assurances that He was sovereign and closed his prayer with the following statement of faith.

*Though the fig tree does not bud and there are not grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce not food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights"* (Hab. 3:17-19). **The theme of the book is: Faith in the sovereign, loving justice of God.**

## IX. ZEPHANIAH

**Zephaniah**, also a contemporary of Jeremiah, prophesied during the reign of King Josiah in Judah. **King Josiah** was the last of the Judean kings who loved God and who led a period of revival in Judah. This revival, which grew out of the re-discovery and teaching of God's laws, was not long-lived, but it had a far-reaching effect by preparing the faithful remnant to protect and study God's word throughout the exile. Because of the rebellion that had persisted in the land, God warned the nation through Zephaniah that the Day of the Lord would come when there would be judgment and suffering. But God's mercy was made known through the following invitation. *"Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, you who do what he commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the Lord's anger"* (Zeph. 2:3).

Judah, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Cush, and Assyria all received warning through Zephaniah. Yet, his prophecy ended with God's promised restoration of Jerusalem. *"The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing"* (Zeph. 3:17). **God is holy and just and also great in mercy and love; this is the theme of Zephaniah.**

## Haggai

There is a gap of about 100 years between the book of Zephaniah and **Haggai**. The context for the book of Haggai was post-exilic Jerusalem. The temple had been essentially left in ruins for over 70 years. The Persian Kings had allowed the Judean exiles to return to their land and had given them both their blessing and resources to re-build the temple. But the work had only started when it was abandoned. So the foundations had stood empty for about 15 years when the Lord directed Haggai to speak to **Zerubbabel**, governor of Judah, to Joshua the high priest, and to the people living in post-exilic Jerusalem. Four times the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai, directing them to begin work on the temple again. The first time, God brought a rebuke to the people. They were busy re-building their own homes while the temple remained in ruins. God called his people to turn their attention to His home and assured them that they would be blessed for their obedience. God then sent word of encouragement. Even though the people had returned to their land, they were a broken people and defenseless against the many new enemies who had settled the land while they were in captivity. God next called them to purity, not only in their lives, but in the care that they were to take in every stone that they would lay in the construction of the temple. Finally, God encouraged Zerubbabel, assuring him of His presence and blessing as the governor for Judah. One phrase of the prophet's message is repeated five times to emphasize the theme of the book. **"Give careful thought to your ways: Is God and what concerns Him your priority?"**

## Zechariah

**Zechariah** was also a prophet for post-exilic Judah. He began his ministry only a few weeks after Haggai began his. Zechariah had a series of visions that spoke of God's blessings on Zerubbabel and Joshua, as well as the restoration of Jerusalem and of his people in the land. God desired his people to live in righteousness before Him and one another. . Zechariah's visions and messages were meant to encourage a discouraged people. God was still the ruler of the world and he intended to use his people, even in different conditions, to be the bearers of the Messiah through whom the world will be judged and saved.

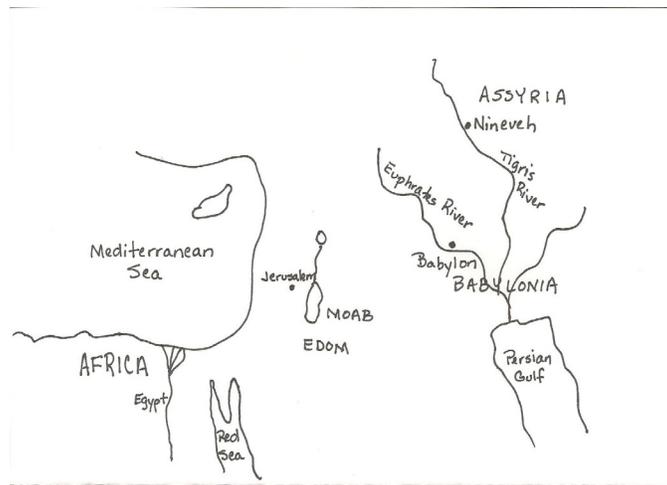
The prophecies extend beyond the return of Judah to promises of the messiah. *"See your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey"* (Zech. 9:9). *"On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity"* (Zech. 13:1). Zechariah's vision extended beyond the time of the messiah to the day when *"the Lord will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one Lord, and his name the only name"* (Zech. 14:9, NIV). That fountain was Jesus' shed blood on the cross. **The Lordship of God is the theme of Zechariah.**

## Malchi

The prophet **Malachi** may have been a contemporary of Ezra and Nehemiah. Many of the conditions he addressed were similar to those they faced. The temple had finally been completed as a result of the ministries of Haggai and Zechariah. But now some 75 years after their work, the city itself had still not been rebuilt. This symbolized the reluctance of the people to give God their sole allegiance. So God called his people to covenant faithfulness. God, through his prophet Malachi, addressed the corruption at the highest level of their society, the priesthood. They dishonored God with unworthy sacrifices, careless observance of the law, stingy offerings, and divided loyalty of their hearts. God affirmed his expectations for them; *“For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction—because he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty”* (Mal. 2:7).

Part of the reason that neither the priests, nor the people, nor the husbands were faithful to their covenants is that they did not feel that God really rewarded the righteous or punished the wicked. In response, God assured them that he himself was coming and that he would set all things right. Interestingly the last two verses in this final book of the Old Testament prepare us for what will come next. *“See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse”* (Mal. 4:5-6). John the Baptist would fulfill this prophecy; God’s promised Messiah would not be long in coming. God cannot be fooled is a message to hear from Malachi.

**The theme of the book is: the God of Justice is Coming.**



The map is not to scale. Notice the location of Nineveh where Jonah was sent. The exiles were led on foot from Jerusalem to Babylon along the route of the Fertile Crescent. Many died in that journey.

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**Questions for Discussion:**

1. The call to repentance is heard throughout the Minor Prophets. Joel specifically mentioned the necessity of wholehearted sincerity. Have you experienced this type of complete repentance personally? In your church? If not, what may be hindering the obedience to that call? Are you preaching it to your people?
2. Read Habakkuk's final prayer. Personalize it. What might be the cost or losses in your context that would most deeply impact you and your community? Would you still be able to place your hope in the Lord?
3. What can you learn from the prophet Jonah? Are you in any way trying to run away from the call of God on your life? Has God sent you to a people that are difficult for you to love? Take time to pray and ask others to intercede for you.
4. Even though the Minor Prophets are filled with words of judgment and destruction, God's promise of redemption is always present. He is a redeemer. What promises of God give you hope for today and tomorrow? What promise are you sharing with the people to whom you minister? Have you learned some things that you should share from your study of the Old Testament in this course?
5. The message of Haggai is to stop and give careful thought to your ways both in your personal life and in the life of the church. Does all that you do bring glory to God? Would there even be one brick that's been laid in your church that would not bring Him glory?
6. Is there a sin pattern in your community that God is calling you to address? Is there any form of idolatry? Are the hearts of the people in the church divided in their loyalties? Are the leaders leading holy lives worthy of imitation?
7. God has promised to write his New Covenant on our hearts (Jer. 31:31). The covenant in the Bible is about giving God exclusive control over our lives and behavior. Is that true in your life? Do you live a Christlike life in every area of your life – finances, family, sexuality, etc.? Why or why not?

<b>Terms to Know</b>		
Hosea	Zephaniah	Bethlehem
Joel	Haggai	Edom
Amos	Zechariah	King Josiah
Obadiah	Malachi	Zerubbabel
Micah	Gomer	Riding on a donkey
Nahum	Day of the	A fountain
Habakkuk	Lord	Nineveh





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# Survey of the New Testament

~ Colleen Fitch



# 1

## The Synoptic Gospels

### Lesson Purpose:

- To give an overview of the three synoptic gospels including an introduction to their authors and distinctive characteristics of each book.

### Lesson Outcome:

- Students will know and be able to briefly define all of the terms to know.  
*These terms are in bold throughout the lesson.*
- Students will be able to give information about each author and list several distinctive features of his gospel.
- Students will have an understanding of the basic structure and narrative flow of each gospel.
- Students will honestly and thoughtfully interact with and apply the lessons to their ministry settings and to their personal lives.

### Table of Contents :

- Matthew
- Mark
- Luke
- Questions for Discussion

The first four books of the New Testament are called The Gospels because "gospel" means "Good News." These books tell the good news about Jesus Christ. They report historical events that occurred in the life of Jesus as well as his conversations, teaching, and sermons. All four authors tell the same story, but each selected and organized his material with a specific audience in mind. Each gospel stands alone in its completeness to powerfully tell the story of Jesus Christ. Yet when studied as a group, they form a rich and complete narrative of Jesus' life and ministry. Their combined work provides Gospel readers a 360° wide-angle lens to see and hear Jesus in action with incredible detail and rich description.

Jesus spent three years teaching, preaching, healing, and training his disciples. While his popularity grew with the masses, the Pharisees became consumed with jealousy and began to plot his death. Intensity builds as the narrative rises to a climax with the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. There are differences between the four gospels in the selection and order of the stories of Jesus' ministry. However, in the final week of Jesus' life, the gospel writers dramatically slow down the pace of their narrative. They focus on the incidents of each day and finally carefully reporting the final twenty-four hours of Jesus' earthly life and the details of the empty tomb.

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The language of the Gospels as well as the entire New Testament is koine Greek or “common Greek”. It was the official language of the Mediterranean world during the time of Christ. Even in Rome, koine Greek was used as frequently as Latin.

“This, then, is the language of the new Testament, a language belonging to the living stream of the historical development of Greek from the ancient Hellenes to the modern Athenians, a language spoken by common and cultured people alike, a language uniquely suited to the propagation of the gospel of Christ when it began to be proclaimed among the nations of the world.”

(Black, David Allen. Learn to Read New Testament Greek. Broadman & Holman Publishers, Nashville, TN, 1994. Page 1)

Matthew, Mark, and Luke structured their gospel accounts in a similar chronological and geographical reporting format. They document Jesus’ travels throughout Israel and Samaria during the three years of his public ministry. For this reason these three gospels are grouped together as the synoptic gospels. Synoptic means “presenting or taking the same common view.” (Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary. G. & C. Merriam Co., Philippines, 1979.)

**Matthew**

The traditional view of authorship for this gospel is that it was written by the Matthew who was one of the twelve disciples. Matthew met Jesus one day while he was sitting at a tax collection booth. Jesus came up to him and said, “Follow me.” Matthew got up and left everything. Matthew was an eyewitness to Jesus’ ministry. He was in the upper room during the last supper. He was with the disciples when Jesus appeared to them after his resurrection, and he was there when they received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

**OUTLINE OF MATTHEW**

<b>Preparation for Ministry</b>	<b>Ministry</b>	<b>Cross &amp; Resurrection</b>
1:1-17 Genealogy 1:18-2:23 Birth 3:1-12 John the Baptist 3:13-4:11 Jesus’ Baptism And 40 Days in Wilderness	Chapters 4:12-25:46 • Ministry of teaching and healing among the crowds. • Ministry of training the disciples. • Growing Opposition from the Pharisees.	26:1-27:66 The cross 28:1-20 Resurrection and Great Commission

CLIMATIC MOVEMENT TOWARD THE CROSS and EMPTY TOMB



Matthew wrote his Gospel with a Jewish audience in mind. In his preparatory section, he began by recording Jesus’ genealogy which proved that Jesus was a direct descendent of King David, and therefore eligible to be the heir of the Davidic covenant. Next he cited seven different Old Testament prophecies within this

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section that were fulfilled through Jesus' birth to the beginning of his ministry. Matthew wanted to firmly establish the fact with his Jewish audience that Jesus was the promised, long-awaited Messiah. He detailed the lifestyle of John the Baptist which would associate him with the Old Testament prophet Elijah, and he quoted Isaiah to confirm that John was a fulfillment of God's promises.

The details of Jesus' early life that Matthew included:

- The story of Joseph's obedience in taking Mary as his wife
- The visit of the magi who followed the star
- The flight of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus to Egypt
- The return to Nazareth
- The baptism of Jesus by John
- The 40 Days of temptation by Satan in the wilderness

Matthew's record of the ministry of Jesus contains teaching passages, accounts of healings, other miracles, and many parables. There are several key themes in Matthew. One is the Kingdom of Heaven, the preferred phrase in Matthew, or less frequently, he refers to it as the Kingdom of God which is the phrase that Mark and Luke predominantly use. John the Baptist called people to repentance because the kingdom of heaven was near. When Jesus began to preach, he did the same. "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Matthew 4:17). A kingdom can be a geographical location under the sovereignty of a ruler, or it can be a sphere of authority which is spiritual and relational rather than geographic. Through Jesus, God was physically entering into our world to reveal Himself, to glorify His Son, and to bring salvation and life for all nations through the death and resurrection of Jesus. The Kingdom of Heaven was present with the first coming of Jesus, and it is future when it will come into its fullness when he returns at the end time. "Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

A few characteristics of the Kingdom:

- It can only be entered by doing the will of the Father who is in heaven (7:21).
- Currently both righteous and evil people live in the Kingdom, but there will be a day when those who are evil will be removed (13:36-43).
- It started small, but will become great (13:31-35).
- The Kingdom of God is more valuable than any other thing (13:44-46).
- Humility, childlike faith, and being poor in spirit are Kingdom values (18:1-4).
- The fullness of the Kingdom will come suddenly; God's people must keep watch and be ready for that day (25:1-13).

Matthew's gospel launched Jesus quickly into his ministry with an expansive summary statement in (4:23-25). He then moved into what is one of the most famous sections of his gospel, The Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew, Jesus' words and teaching are heard before the details and incidents of his ministry are reported. In this message Jesus addressed humanity's relationship and responsibility to the Father, to one another, to the law, to the world, and to Himself.

Jesus also used parables to teach the crowds who did not have the spiritual insight or faith to understand if he spoke to them plainly and directly about the Kingdom of God. A parable is a story that uses objects, people, and scenes from everyday life to illustrate a spiritual truth. One of the parables that is used in all three synoptic gospels is the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-23, Mark 4:1-20, Luke 8:4-15). Jesus told

the story of the sower scattering seeds. The seeds fell on four types of soil. Three of the soil types had problems that negatively affected the seeds or young plants, so they died. The seed flourished abundantly in the fourth soil. Jesus interpreted this parable for his disciples. The Sower is the person who shares the gospel message. The seed is the Word of God. The soils represent different types of human hearts and situations in which people find themselves when they receive the gospel. The application of the parable is left up to the readers.

The story of Jesus, for Matthew, did not come to an end with his resurrection, but was left open-ended as Jesus handed over his earthly ministry to the disciples. These were his closing verses. "Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age'" (Matthew 28:18-20). This is The Great Commission that Jesus gave to his disciples so that the entire world might hear the Gospel—the Good News of Jesus Christ!

## Mark

Mark is the shortest of the Gospels. Many scholars also believe that it was the first Gospel to be written. Traditionally the author of this gospel is considered to be John Mark, the young man who started out to accompany Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey, but who returned home after the first stop (Acts 13:13). Some also wonder if Mark is the young man mentioned in his gospel who ran off unclothed when his robe came off in the chaos in the garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:51). Even though, Mark was not one of the twelve disciples, he had opportunities to listen to and to see Jesus personally.

Mark focused on the actions of Jesus and moved his narrative along at a quick pace with his frequent use of the word "immediately." Mark's attention to details and movement created vivid scenes and an extremely personal and intimate picture of Jesus. It's almost as if he were making a video recording for the readers using words instead of pictures.

- "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed" (1:35).
- Jesus' hand reached out and touched the leper (1:41). The crowds were pressing so much against him that he had to teach standing in a boat at the water's edge (3:9).

Mark noted Jesus' emotions.

- "He had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd" (6:34).
- "He looked around at them in anger and deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts" (3:5).
- "Jesus looked at him and loved him" (10:21).
- "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death" (14:34).

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OUTLINE OF MARK

<b>Preparation for Ministry 1:1-13</b>	<b>Jesus' Public Ministry 1:14-13:37</b>		<b>The Cross and Resurrection 14:1-16:20</b>
-John the Baptist -Jesus' Baptism -40 Days in wilderness	1:14-8:30 -Teaching that amazes -Miracles and crowds  -Messianic Secret	8:31-13:37 -Teaching that amazes -Miracles and crowds  -Openly teaches disciples about his approaching death.	

CLIMATIC MOVEMENT TOWARD THE CROSS and EMPTY TOMB



One feature of Mark's writing is his emphasis on the messianic secret. Mark noted that Jesus often told people he healed, not to tell anyone. Obviously, word got out. But it seemed important to Jesus from the number of times Mark recorded this exhortation that Jesus was trying to keep the excitement of the crowds minimized. The people wanted a political savior, but Jesus had come for the cross.

Another remarkable feature of Mark's gospel was his honest, unflattering portrayal of the disciples. They were slow to understand. Jesus had to repeat lessons. Their lack of faith at times seemed even to weary Jesus who nevertheless patiently continued to teach them day after day. "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hand of sinners" (14:41). Jesus died on the cross for them and for all. His desire, no matter how long it would take, was to redeem their lives so that they could faithfully follow Him.

**Luke**

Luke began his gospel by stating his purpose for writing.

1 Many people have set out to write accounts about the events that have been fulfilled among us. 2 They used the eyewitness reports circulating among us from the early disciples. 3 Having carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I also have decided to write a careful account for you, most honorable Theophilus, 4 so you can be certain of the truth of everything you were taught (Luke 1:1-4 NLT).

Theophilus was probably a real person, but it is interesting to note that the name itself means "friend of God." Luke, who was a Gentile and a medical doctor, also wrote the book of Acts. Luke joined Paul at Troas on his second missionary journey. From that point on in the book of Acts, the narrative always referred to "we" because Luke traveled with Paul all the way to Rome. Paul mentioned Luke as one of his team in several of his letters.

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OUTLINE OF LUKE

<b>Preparation 1:1-4:13</b>	<b>Public Ministry 4:14-21:38</b>	<b>Cross and Resurrection 22:1-24:23</b>
Many details of Jesus' birth and childhood.	Parables, healings, and teaching. Luke includes sections of the Sermon on the Mount throughout his Gospel.	Only Gospel to mention ascension.

CLIMATIC MOVEMENT TOWARD THE CROSS and EMPTY TOMB



Gentiles were Luke's intended audience. Luke wanted everyone to know that this gospel was the fulfillment of God's promise of salvation for all nations and people. He highlighted Jesus' work and attitude towards women, the poor, and sinners. For example, Luke was the only writer to include the confession and salvation of the thief hanging next to Jesus on the cross. This was, and is, good news for everyone. As long as one is alive, it is never too late to believe. The importance of faith as a virtue that pleases God is also a key theme in Luke. For example in chapter seven, Jesus responded with amazement to the faith of a Roman centurion and consequently healed his son. In that same chapter, the faith of a sinful woman brought Jesus' blessing of salvation. Like Matthew he included many parables and intertwined teaching with the report of miracles. Luke also documented the growing opposition of the Pharisees as Jesus moved back and forth from Galilee in the north to Judea in the south during the three years of his public ministry.

These unique features of Luke's gospel are particularly significant considering that Luke never met, heard, or saw Jesus in his lifetime.

- He recorded the greatest amount of information on John the Baptist's family and his birth, the angel's announcement to Mary, the birth of Jesus, his circumcision, the prophecies of Simeon and Anna, and included the story of the boy Jesus in the temple. (Chapters 1-2)
- He included a trilogy of Jesus' parables in chapter 15: the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. These are powerful stories that illustrate God's joy when each individual person is saved and His expectant hope for the return of those who have wandered away from Him.
- He told a post-resurrection story of two men who were walking on the road to Emmaus, saddened and troubled by the crucifixion of Jesus. Then a stranger, Jesus, joined them as they walked and spent several hours with them, teaching, comforting, and finally revealing Himself as the resurrected Lord.
- Luke is the only gospel writer to mention Jesus' ascension to heaven.

Luke finished his gospel by reiterating the fact that the good news is for all nations (24:27). He continued his second book, Acts, from this point.

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**Questions for Discussion**

1. Gospel means “good news.” Good news should be shared. If you have an opportunity to share the good news of Jesus with someone, what do you say? What do you include in your presentation of the gospel? How do you make sure that what you share is true and accurate? What is your plan for studying and learning the message of the gospels?
2. Read the Great Commission. What are you and your church doing to fulfill that commission from Jesus? What evidence of great commission fulfillment in your ministry can you celebrate and give thanks for? What, if anything, do you need to begin, change, or stop so that you can better fulfill that commission?
3. Mark highlighted the slowness of Jesus’ disciples to understand and exercise faith? What can you learn from this as you think about the people in your church? What areas do they continue to struggle with? Obedience? Faith? Knowledge of the Bible?
4. John and Jesus called the people to repent. What does that mean? Why do people need to repent? The call to repent comes before the call to believe. Why is that order important?



Terms to Know
Gospel
Good News
Koine Greek
Synoptic Gospels
Kingdom of Heaven/Kingdom of God
Sermon on the Mount
Parable
Parable of the Sower
The Great Commission
Messianic secret
Theophilus



# 2

## John, Acts, and Epistolary Format

### Lesson Purpose:

- To give an overview of John, Acts, and the epistolary format.

### Lesson Outcome:

- Students will know and be able to briefly define all of the terms to know.
- Students will be able to give information about John and list several distinctive features of his gospel.
- Students will be familiar with several historical events and people in the book of Acts.
- Students will know key characteristics of the epistolary format and the importance of considering the purpose and setting of each particular epistle.
- Students will honestly and thoughtfully interact with and apply the lessons to their ministry settings and to their personal lives.

### Table of Contents :

- John
- Acts
- An Introduction to the Study of the Epistles
- Questions for Discussion

### John

John, as one of the twelve disciples, was an eyewitness of Jesus' life. He, his brother James, and Peter also spent additional time alone with Jesus. John himself gave witness to his special friendship with Jesus when he twice referred to himself in his gospel as "the one Jesus loved" (13:32, 20:2, 21:7). In addition to his gospel, The New Testament also contains three letters and the book of Revelation written by John.

John stated his purpose for writing his gospel near the end of his book.

"Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:30-31). Throughout this gospel, the word "believe" in various forms is repeated more than 80 times. Most of these references come directly from the speeches of Jesus. Speaking of the importance of a second birth, a spiritual birth through the power of God, Jesus told Nicodemus, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

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<b>Prologue and Preparation</b>	<b>The ministry of Jesus 2:1-12:50</b>	<b>The cross and resurrection 13:1-21:25</b>
1:1-18 Prologue 1:19-51 John the Baptist and Gathering of disciples.	Signs Dialogues and Messages  The time had not yet come.	Upper Room Conversation The cross Resurrection Peter is re-affirmed  The time had come

John's gospel is organized around a series of signs, miracles that Jesus did that revealed his identity as the messiah. "Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert (Isaiah 35:5-6). The messianic prophecy was fulfilled in the healing of the invalid and the blind man in chapters 5 and 9. Furthermore, Jesus told the woman at the well that he would give water that would become a spring of water welling up into eternal life (4:14). The abundance, blessing, and authority evidenced in the signs that John included, testify to the fact that Jesus is the promised Son of God.

The fact that Jesus so clearly fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies made the Pharisees' rejection of Jesus much more incredible. The Pharisees were the leading group of religiously devoted Jews who made it their primary task to know and enforce the Old Testament laws. Their spiritual blindness, in the light of their scriptural knowledge, revealed their pride and the profound hardness of their hearts. The Pharisees refused to recognize the signs.

Each sign is set in the context of a lengthy dialogue or message given by Jesus. John emphasized the words of Jesus. His readers are able to "listen" to Jesus' conversations with people from all walks of life. In addition to the signs, John recorded seven "I Am" statements of Jesus. When God identified himself to Moses through the burning bush, he told Moses that his name was "I Am." By using the "I Am" formula, Jesus associated Himself with God, His Father. These are powerful statements of Jesus' identity, authority, power, and purpose in relation to men and women and the world.

The Signs in John are:

1. Turning water to wine at a wedding in Cana (John 2).
2. Healing an official's son with just his word (John 4).
3. Restoring the use of an invalid's legs (John 5).
4. Feeding 5,000 men with 2 fish and 5 small loaves of bread (John 6).
5. Walking on the water during a storm (John 6).
6. Giving sight to a man who had been born blind (John 9).
7. Raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11).
8. Providing an abundance of fish (John 21).

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The "I Am" Statements are:

1. I am the bread of life (6:35).
2. I am the light of the world (8:12).
3. I am the gate for the sheep (10:7, 9).
4. I am the good shepherd (10:11, 14).
5. I am the resurrection and the life (11:45).
6. I am the way, the truth, and the life (14:6).
7. I am the true vine (15:1).

In contrast with the synoptic writers, John began his gospel with an elegant theological prologue that summarizes the essential truths presented in the Gospel. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." This first verse reflects back to Genesis 1:1. God, who created the universe, is the One who has now sent His Son. John is saying that this is the continuation of the redemption story. Also unique to John's gospel is the upper room message and garden prayer of Jesus in chapters 13-17. John tells how Jesus tried to prepare and encourage his disciples for the great sorrow they would soon endure. He promised that they would not be abandoned, but that God would send the Comforter. Both He and His Father would also love them and be with them. One more thing to note is John's use of contrasts: light/dark, day/night, above/below, not yet the hour/the hour had come. John used these contrasts to set the truth of God apart from the faulty perceptions of humanity.

**Acts**

The book of Acts is Luke's continuation of the wonderful story of God's plan of salvation for all nations. "In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day was he taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen" (Acts 1:1-2). The words of Jesus in Acts 1:8, prepare for all that follows in Luke's narrative of the "acts" or "deeds" of Jesus' disciples and the apostle Paul as they carried out the great commission. "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

<b>Preparation Acts 1:1-26</b>	<b>Jerusalem Acts 2:1-7:60</b>	<b>Judea, Samaria, and the Ends of the Earth Acts 8:1-28:31</b>
Ascension of Jesus	Pentecost	Jerusalem believers scattered because of persecution
Waiting, praying, studying the Scriptures	Christian community is developed	Phillip ministers in Samaria and to a man from Ethiopia
Choosing a replacement for Judas Iscariot	Bold preaching accompanied by miracles	Peter sent to the home of Cornelius
	Martyrdom of Stephen	Paul finds Christ and receives call to the Gentiles
		Missionary journeys of Paul

Pentecost was the first major event in Acts. On that day the disciples received the promised Holy Spirit who would empower them as witnesses to the Good News of Jesus Christ, comfort them, and enable them to remember and understand the teachings of Jesus (See John chapters 14 and 16). When Peter stood to boldly preach to the crowd, the message that had begun with John the Baptist and Jesus, was proclaimed again. The context, however, had been radically transformed by the historic reality of the cross, the resurrection, and the promised pouring out of the Spirit on all believers. “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:38-39).

The followers of Jesus Christ began to gather to study the Scriptures, pray together, worship, and care for one another. The disciples testified to the truth of the resurrection and to the fact that Jesus was the risen Son of God. When persecution came, just as Jesus had told them it would, they prayed for greater boldness to proclaim salvation through the name of Jesus. This persecution reached a climax in Jerusalem with the death of Stephen, the first martyr of the church. The believers scattered out into Jerusalem, Samaria, and Judea continuing to testify to their faith in Jesus Christ.

Saul, whose name was later changed to Paul, was one of the most aggressive persecutors of the Christians. While traveling in pursuit of believers who had fled to Damascus, he had a divine encounter with the risen Lord, Jesus Christ, and he was struck blind. Paul continued on to Damascus where he spent three days praying and fasting. Ananias, a believer, received the following affirmation from God: “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name” (Acts 9:15). Ananias went to Paul, laid his hands on him, and confirmed to Paul that he had indeed met Jesus Christ on the road three days earlier. As Ananias prayed, Paul received both his sight and the Holy Spirit. Paul became a follower of Jesus Christ on that day.

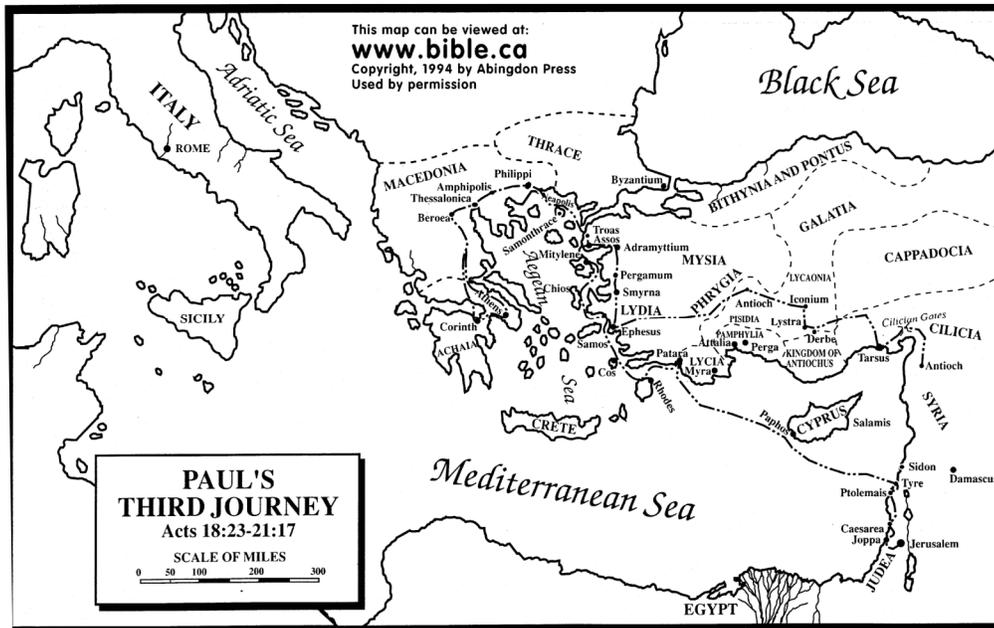
God’s affirmation of Paul’s call to the Gentiles set in motion the fulfillment of the last phrase of Acts 1:8, “And to the ends of the earth.” The gospel was for all people, Jewish and Gentile alike. Yet, the early church, which was Jewish, struggled with the cultural and religious differences between themselves and the Gentiles. One aspect of being “Jewish” was to keep separate in as many ways as possible from pagan people and their practices. The apostle Peter was confronted with this conflict by a vision that prepared him to go to the home of Cornelius—a gentile who had been seeking God. When Peter shared the good news of Jesus Christ with Cornelius, he and his household believed and received the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Council of Acts in chapter 15 also illustrates the church’s struggle and their obedience to seek God’s direction for which Jewish practices could or could not be compromised in the observance of the Word of God and in the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Paul’s ministry in obedience to his call powerfully opened the way for the gospel to reach the nations. Ministry and travel were difficult and dangerous for Paul because he was persecuted by both Gentiles and Jews. Everywhere Paul went, he traveled with at least one other brother in Christ and often with a team. He trained leaders in each location to continue the work after he moved on to a new place of ministry. He attempted to return to the churches that he had established to encourage them and to bring correction if needed. Letter writing was one way he was always able to maintain contact with the churches and pastors. Some of these letters, called epistles, became books in the New Testament.

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Luke recorded Paul's three missionary journeys. He concluded Acts with Paul's trip to Rome to appeal an unjust charge that the Jews had brought against him while he was in Jerusalem. Paul's intention for requesting this trial in Rome was not to defend his innocence, but rather to seek an opportunity to preach Jesus Christ. In the final verse of Acts, Luke wrote, "Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 28:31).

This is a map of Paul's third journey. Locate Rome. This is where Paul was in the final chapter of Acts.



### An Introduction to the Study Of The Epistles:

The literary style of the first four books of the New Testament, the Gospels, is primarily historical narrative. They report the actions and spoken words of Jesus Christ and the impact that his life had on those who were in contact with him. Acts is also a historical narrative. Luke documented the beginning of the church in Jerusalem and the spread of the gospel into the countries bordering on the north shore of the Mediterranean Sea.

The next twenty-one books are epistles. The first thirteen epistles were written by Paul; the following eight by other writers. These letters typically follow a somewhat standard epistolary format:

1. The letter usually begins with a brief introduction that includes the identification of the author, the intended recipients of the letter, and a short blessing.
2. This is often followed by a prayer and personal remarks that the author makes about the recipients or about himself.
3. The body of the letter follows next. It may address a particular situation or question(s). This is a teaching section that explains different doctrinal issues.
4. The instructional section is followed by exhortations that direct the recipients on how they are to live out the truths that have just been explained. A word that often signals the beginning of this application section is "therefore..."

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5. The letter concludes with closing remarks that might include greetings from others who are with the author, the name of the secretary, or amanuensis, to whom the letter was dictated, and a final blessing or word of encouragement.

When studying the epistles, it is important to remember that each letter was directed to a particular audience, in a particular location and culture, and for a particular purpose. For these reasons, each epistle should be studied individually before it is compared with another. In the case of Paul who wrote the majority of the letters, his tone varied from letter to letter depending on the situation or people he was addressing. The arrangement of the material in his epistles varied at times from the standard epistolary form due to the circumstances that were being discussed. Some of the epistles written by the other authors present unique features. Students of the Scriptures need to pay attention to these variations because they are often important clues to fully understand that particular epistle. Knowledge of the geographic locations and cultures of that time period is extremely helpful. In the absence of study tools and resources, the book of Acts can serve as an important resource for information about people and places that are referred to particularly in the letters of Paul.

<b>Paul's Epistles to Churches</b>	<b>Paul's Epistles to Individuals</b>	<b>General Epistles</b>
Romans, I & II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I & II Thessalonians	Pastoral Epistles: I & II Timothy, Titus  Philemon	Hebrews, James, I & II Peter, I & II & III John, Jude
Written to Groups	Written to Individuals	Written to Groups

Although Revelation is a letter, it is not included in the above groups. It will be studied separately because of its apocalyptic format.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. What does it mean to "believe" in Jesus Christ? How is belief in Jesus Christ lived out in a person's life? Is there one particular sign that John chose that might powerfully impact the people in your community? Is there one that might be especially difficult for them to believe?
2. Read through the "I Am" statements of Jesus. What is Jesus saying about Himself in each statement? Essentially they are short parables or object lessons. Do you understand each object and how Jesus is using it to teach us something about himself? When they are studied all together, who is Jesus? Write a sentence or two of praise and worship that lifts up the name of Jesus and who he is. Would there be any of these "I Am" statements that would be particularly meaningful to the people in your community? Are there any that might be difficult for the people of your community to understand or believe?
3. Paul always worked with at least one partner and often with a team. Who are you working with? Who are you training? If God were to move you to a new location, are you preparing your church to be able to continue on?

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4. What evidence do you see of the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life and ministry? Do you tend to pray more for boldness or for protection when it comes to preaching the Gospel?
5. Read through the standard epistolary format. Is there a person or church to which you should send a word of encouragement or exhortation just as Paul did? Choose one doctrinal point or issue that needs to be addressed. Pray before you write. Ask God for guidance and ask Him to fill your heart with love for the people. If your words are hard ones, addressing an area needing correction, love will give your letter a tone of grace rather than condemnation.

Terms to Know:
Believe
Pharisee
"I Am" Statements
Signs
Pentecost
Stephen
Saul/Paul
Ananias
Cornelius
Peter
The Council of Acts
Epistles



# 3

## The Epistles of Paul - Part I

### Lesson Purpose:

To give an overview of Paul's epistles, their recipients, their setting, and the main topics that Paul addressed in each letter.

### Lesson Outcome:

- Students will know and be able to briefly define all of the terms to know.
- Students will be able to give information about each epistle, its recipients, and the topics that Paul addressed.
- Students will consider the issues in Paul's letters and reflect on their application to their churches today.
- Students will honestly and thoughtfully interact with and apply the lessons to their ministry settings and to their personal lives.

### Table of Contents :

- Romans
- I & II Corinthians
- Galatians
- Ephesians
- Philippians
- Colossians
- I & II Thessalonians
- Questions for Discussion

### Romans

Paul wrote this letter to the church in Rome. He had heard of this church's faith, but had not yet personally visited it. This is perhaps his most theologically eloquent letter. He clarifies and defends his position through a series of questions and answers. In the final chapter of the letter, Paul sent personal greetings to many individuals in the church that indicated his familiarity with that congregation. He also mentioned the names of several people who were with him and the city of Cenchrea that was in Greece near Corinth. Together, these final details seem to indicate that he may have been that city when this letter was written.

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<b>Introduction 1:1-15</b>	<b>Body of Letter 1:16-11:36</b>			<b>Exhortations 12:1-15:13</b>	<b>Farewell 15:14-16:27</b>
Greeting  Personal comments to the church	All the world's need for salvation 1:18-3:20	Righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ 3:21-8:39	God's Relationship to the Jews 9:1-11:36	Personal holiness  Christian Community	

Paul begins the body of the letter with a concise statement of his thesis. "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith'" (Romans 1:16-17). Next, he establishes his first point: no one is righteous. He addresses the sinfulness of Gentiles who reject the truth of God that is evident to the world through natural revelation. Then he addresses the Jews who, although they have the law, are incapable of fulfilling the law in their own strength. The answer to the sin dilemma is "the righteousness from God [that] comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus" (3:22-23). Paul points to Abraham as the first model of this faith. The life giving power of Jesus' death and resurrection has nullified the curse of sin and death that came against humanity through Adam. Therefore through faith in Christ the believer is set free from the bondage of sin. Guided and assured by the Holy Spirit, the believer personally knows the love of Christ. Paul was brokenhearted that so many of his own people, the Jews, had rejected Christ. Yet, he remained hopeful of God's faithfulness to his chosen people and longed for the day when they would return to God and acknowledge Jesus as their messiah. Paul then calls the believer to respond to this great gift of salvation. "Therefore I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing will" (12:1-2). Paul encourages individual holiness, but he also discusses the responsibility that believers bear for the lives and faith of one another.

**I & II Corinthians:**

Paul spent over a year and a half preaching the gospel in the city of Corinth, so he was well-acquainted with this church. Paul's tone in both of these letters is extremely stern. There were serious problems in the church that were damaging the unity of the body, tarnishing their witness in the community, and causing tension and misunderstanding in their relationship with Paul.

<b>Introduction</b> 1:1-1:9	<b>Addressing the Problems One by One</b> 1:10-16:4 I Corinthians	<b>Final Greetings</b> 16:5-24
<b>Introduction</b> 1:1-1:11	<b>Addressing Problems and Defending His Ministry</b> 1:12-13:10 II Corinthians	<b>Final Greetings</b> 13:11-14

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There is a variation in the epistolary form in both of these letters. Doctrine is discussed but always immediately applied to practice. Concerns are taken up one by one and thoroughly discussed before moving to the next topic because this was a spiritually immature church. Paul had to deal directly with their jealousy, immoral behavior, and disorderly worship. At the heart of the problem, the people had forgotten the meaning of the cross of Christ. "We preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called...the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1:23-24). Church discipline and practice that Paul addressed:

- Divisions in the church
- Blatant sexual sin
- Lawsuits among believers
- Marriage, singleness, and celibacy
- Dietary practices
- Orderly worship
- Spiritual gifts
- Love
- The resurrection of the body
- Tithing and special offerings
- The ministry of an apostle. In the second letter, Paul shares in great detail about his experiences and about his call.

**Galatians**

This letter was not sent to one particular church, but to the churches in the region of Galatia. Each congregation would have been called to come together for the public reading of Paul's letter. Then the letter carrier would travel to the next town. After finishing his visits, he would return to Paul to report the response of the churches to the letter. Because of the topic he is addressing, the efficacy of the law to save versus the efficacy of faith in Christ, Galatians is considered to be one of Paul's earliest letters. At the center of the controversy, the salvific question was, "Can a Gentile man be saved by faith in Christ alone, or should he also be circumcised according to Jewish law?" Zealous Jews, called Judaizers, were confusing the Gentile Christians by their insistence that they must adhere to the Jewish laws, and in particular, circumcision, in order to be saved. Paul traveled in this region before the Council of Acts that decided that circumcision should not be required for Gentile believers (Acts 15).

<b>Greeting</b> <b>1:1-1:5</b>	<b>Body of Letter</b> <b>1:6-5:15</b>	<b>Exhortations</b> <b>5:16-6:10</b>	<b>Closing Remarks</b> <b>6:11-18</b>
No prayer or positive personal address	Scolding Tone Paul's personal testimony Discussion of the law New relationship through Christ	Live by the Spirit Help each other Live honestly before God	

Faith in Christ, according to Paul, is not only necessary for salvation, but it is through faith in Christ that there is a dramatic change in the believer's life that was not possible through the human act of circumcision. "For I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me" (2:20). This new personal relationship

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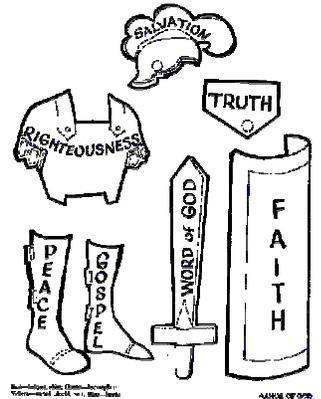
with Jesus sets believers free to serve one another in love. Believers are to live by the Spirit, leading a life of holiness that Paul characterizes in this letter as the Fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. When believers bear this fruit, Paul's exhortations to live in community and honesty before God are fulfilled by a commitment to a person, Jesus Christ, and not to an external code of laws. We obey because we love Jesus and one another.

**Ephesians**

Paul spent two years ministering in this city. It was a cosmopolitan seaport town that had a great pagan temple. The church was composed of both believing Jews and Gentiles. Forming a new, single identity as the body of Christ was difficult because of the great contrasts in their backgrounds. Paul wrote to give assurance to the Gentile believers that they, like the Jews, were now the people of God. "You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundations of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone" (2:20). This transformation is possible for all people because of the grace (unmerited favor) of God. It is a gift He freely gives to all who believe (2:8).

<b>Greeting And Prayer</b> 1:1-1:23	<b>Body of Letter</b> 2:1-3:21	<b>Exhortations</b> 4:1-6:20
Hymn-like Prayer of praise	All saved by grace Unity of the Body of Christ Function of the body is to edify one another	Holiness and Humility in all of life's relationships Armor of God

Paul's first chapter is a lengthy prayer of worship and praise that extols the love of God, the sacrifice of Christ, and the gift of the Spirit. Next he addresses their new identity as the body of Christ and their calling to live in harmony and humility with one another. Knowledge and experience of Jesus' immense love is foundational for the formation of this new community of faith. This leads Paul into a lengthy section of exhortation. Interpersonal relationships, marriage relationships, parent-child relationships, employer-employee relationships are impacted because of the believer's devotion to Christ. Holiness, avoidance of immorality, words that are spoken, what is done in private; every aspect of life must come into the light of Christ. Living together in peace and community is not only a blessing, but a necessity because the people of God do have an enemy, the devil. Paul's final words call the church to put on the full armor of God so that they can stand together in God and in prayer (6:10-18).



**Philippians**

Lydia, the seller of purple cloth, and the jailer who confessed Christ after Paul and Silas' miraculous release from prison were members of the church in Philippi. The affectionate tone of the letter and the references to the Philippians' concern for Paul, show that there was an especially close relationship between Paul and this congregation. Paul was imprisoned in Rome when he wrote the letter. This fact makes his repeated references to joy and rejoicing all the more poignant. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything,

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by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace that passes understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (4:6-7).

<b>Greeting and Prayer</b>	<b>Personal News and Encouragement 1:12-4:9</b>	<b>Thank you and Final Greetings</b>
1:1-1:11	Report on condition in Prison The mind of Christ Personal Testimony Encouragement for the church	4:10-23 Lesson on contentment

This letter varies from the typical epistolary form. Paul does teach and exhort, but the form of the letter is personal and conversational. Everything flows together as Paul reports news and ministers words of assurance to this congregation that also cares deeply for him. Paul has several purposes for writing:

1. He wanted to assure the church that he was well.
2. He wanted to encourage the church to stay strong and to have the mind of Christ.
3. He wanted to give them information about Timothy and Epaphroditus.
4. He wanted to warn them about the Judaizers.
5. He wanted to encourage the church to help two women to end their dispute.
6. He wanted to say "thank you" for a financial gift that they had sent to him.

In the second chapter, Paul included a beautiful hymn-like passage that describes the mind of Christ. "Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped...he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!" (2:6-11).

**Colossians**

Like Romans, Colossians was written to a group of people whom Paul had never personally met. The report of this church and their current struggles had come to him through Epaphras, a Christian worker who had left Colosse to be with Paul. As in Philippians, Paul is imprisoned as he writes the letter. The purpose of the letter is to encourage and strengthen this church to stand against false teachers and to remain single-focused in their devotion to Jesus Christ. "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ" (2:8).

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<b>Greeting And Prayer 1:1-14</b>	<b>Encouragement and Exhortation 1:15-4:6</b>	<b>Final Greetings 4:7-18</b>
Paul's prayers and thanksgiving for this church	Concise theological statement about Jesus Christ Paul's apostolic concern for this church Watch out for deceivers Clothe yourselves with the new gifts of Christ	Like Romans, Paul mentions many individuals by name.

This letter was also meant to be circulated among the churches in the region. Although it is brief, it is a compact letter with a well-formulated Christology (doctrine/theology of Christ). In order to encourage the church to remain steadfast and grounded in its faith, Paul discusses Jesus' relationship to creation and time, his sovereignty, and his work of reconciliation on the cross.

As the letter progresses, the exhortations become more and more practical, addressing various relationships and behaviors. Paul used the image of getting dressed and undressed to illustrate the transformation that Christ makes in believer's lives. This is a transformation that requires personal action. The "new clothes" have been provided, but the believer must put them on.

### **I & II Thessalonians**

These letters come from Paul, Silas and Timothy. They know this congregation and speak fondly of their time of ministry with them. This congregation has suffered for the sake of the gospel and has boldly served as a witness to all the believers in the area. Paul has written to encourage them and to let them know of his love and prayers. But there are also several concerns that Paul must speak to in the letters.

This church is longing for the return of Jesus Christ. Perhaps the persecution that they were suffering made them yearn for the promise of heaven. Some of their members had passed away, and they were deeply upset. They were unsure that those who physically died before the return of Christ would also be resurrected and taken to heaven with him. Paul assures them that those who are dead will be the first to rise. "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words" (I Thessalonians 4:16-18). The timing when this will occur is unknown. Paul urges them to remain "awake," always ready. This is to be done by living a life of holiness, as well as attending to the daily work that each has been given to do.

The second letter follows up on the topic of signs of the end times. Paul mentions that someone has upset the church with false messages concerning the return of the Lord. He reminds them of what he has taught them in the past and clarifies his teaching on the man of lawlessness (2:3-4). More than anything else, Paul assures them that they should not fear. They should not fear what will come, and they do not need to fear that they will miss Jesus.

“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (I Thessalonians 5:16-17)

<b>Greeting/Prayer/ Personal News in I Thessalo- nians</b>	<b>Teaching on the Second Coming with Exhortations for holy living and preparedness</b>	<b>Final Greetings</b>
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**Questions for Discussion**

1. How can believers offer their bodies as living sacrifices? What would be the evidence in someone’s life that they were living in that type of total submission to God? What would that look like in your community? What obstacles are present that might make that difficult or frightening for someone to live with that wholehearted devotion to God? Have you offered all of your own life as a living sacrifice to God?
2. Paul urges believers to be transformed by the renewing of their minds so that they are not pressed into the mold of the world. What thought patterns of the people in your community need to be transformed so that people can rightly discern God’s will? Are there any thought patterns that hold people in bondage? What about your own mind—does God have all of your mind?

3. Read through the list of church discipline and practice that Paul addressed in Corinthians. Is there anything on that list that might be a situation that you are currently facing in your own church? Is there an issue in your church that needs to be addressed? Is there a need for teaching? For discipline? For love? For unity? For a renewed focus on the cross of Christ?

Terms to know
Righteousness Living sacrifice The cross of Christ Judaizers Council of Acts Fruit of the Spirit Grace Full Armor of God Joy and rejoicing Christology Return of Jesus Christ

4. Study the parts of the armor of God. Pantomime putting each piece on. Imagine your congregation dressed as a group in the armor of God. What evils do you have to stand against? Do you put on this God-given armor on every day? Do the people in your church know to put this armor on every day? Do you individually and as a group pray for the protection and strength of God to stand for Him? Notice, it does not stay battle, but stand for Him. God fights for you. Praise and thanks be to Him!
5. What steals your joy? What takes your mind away from Christ? When do you struggle with contentment? Bring your honest answers to these questions to the Lord. Read the exhortation included in your notes from Philippians 4:6-7 and lift these concerns to the Lord.
6. Read through the qualities of the fruit of the Spirit: is there any missing or greatly underdeveloped in your life? Do you see the fullness of this fruit in your church?



# 4

## The Epistles of Paul, Part II

### Lesson Purpose:

To give an overview of Paul's epistles, the recipient, their setting, and the main topics that Paul addressed in each letter.

### Lesson Outcome:

- Students will know and be able to briefly define all of the terms to know.
- Students will be able to give information about each epistle, its recipient, and the topics that Paul addressed.
- Students will reflect on Paul's instructions to pastors and consider the application of those instructions in their lives and ministry.
- Students will honestly and thoughtfully interact with and apply the lessons to their ministry settings and to their personal lives.

### Table of Contents :

- I Timothy
- II Timothy
- Titus
- Philemon
- Questions for Discussion

Paul's last four letters were written to individuals, not churches. Paul's comments are much more personal and specific to the recipient of the letter and to the recipient's situation. Standard epistolary format is still used to give structure to the letter even though it is written to a brother and friend in Christ. The wisdom of those who selected the books for the New Testament is evidenced by their inclusion of both these personal letters as well as Paul's messages to church congregations. There is much that the church can learn from Paul's methods of ministry, instruction, and congregational care through all of his letters in addition to his inspired theological discourses.

Example from Titus of the Standard Epistolary Introduction Format:

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<p>Paul identifies himself as the writer.          In this letter, he includes a statement of his call.</p> <p>The recipient of the letter is Titus. Paul includes a descriptive statement that further identifies his relationship to Titus.</p> <p>He closes the introduction with a blessing.</p>	<p>Titus 1-4 (NLT)</p> <p>1 This letter is from Paul, a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ. I have been sent to proclaim faith to those God has chosen and to teach them to know the truth that shows them how to live godly lives. 2 This truth gives them confidence that they have eternal life, which God—who does not lie—promised them before the world began. 3 And now at just the right time he has revealed this message, which we announce to everyone. It is by the command of God our Savior that I have been entrusted with this work for him.</p> <p>4 I am writing to Titus, my true son in the faith that we share.</p> <p>May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior give you grace and peace.</p>
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Example for Titus of Standard Epistolary Closing Format:

<p>Exchange of personal greetings</p> <p>Closing Blessing. In some letters, this blessing is longer.</p>	<p>Titus 3:15</p> <p>Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith.</p> <p>Grace be with you all.</p>
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The letters written to Timothy and Titus are called the Pastoral Epistles. Paul wrote to these two men to encourage them and to guide them in their ministry as church pastors. These letters serve as a model for discipleship and for mentoring young or less experienced pastors. Paul also discusses the organization and selection of church leadership, problems that must be resolved, and some specific areas of instruction for groups within the church.

**I Timothy**

Paul met Timothy at the beginning of his second missionary journey. “He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek. The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of [Timothy]” (Acts 16:1). Paul invited Timothy to join his team. Timothy traveled with Paul and also traveled for Paul, as his representative, on missions to visit different churches. Timothy was ministering to the church in Ephesus when he received this letter (II Timothy 1:3).

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<b>Opening Greeting 1:1-2</b>	<b>Instructions to Timothy 1:3-6:19</b>	<b>Closing Remarks 6:20-21</b>
	False Teachers (chapter 1) Pray (chapter 2) Church Leadership (chapter 3) Study and Preach the Word (chapter 4) Widows and Various Church Concerns (chapter 5) Christian Attitude Towards Money (chapter 6)	

Paul wrote to advise Timothy how to handle a serious problem in the church. ‘If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain’ (I Timothy 6:3-5). Paul exhorts Timothy to refrain from involvement in meaningless talk and purposeless debate. Timothy needs to be on the look out for those who would try to deceive others through false teaching. He calls these people “hypocritical liars” who have seared consciences (I Timothy 4:2).

Paul encourages Timothy to dedicate himself to the study and preaching of the Word. “Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching....Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them....Watch your life and doctrine closely” (I Timothy 4:13,15-16). Even though Timothy is young, Paul charges him with the responsibility to set an example in:

- Speech
- Life
- Love
- Faith
- Purity

Paul also gives Timothy instructions for the organization and practice of the church.

- The church should pray for everyone, both those inside as well as those outside the church; in particular, intercession should be made for government leaders.
- Church leaders should meet qualifications that testify to their holiness of life at home and in public.
- Timothy, as pastor, should maintain purity in all his relationships: with elders, young men, and women in the church.
- Widows should be cared for and if able, helped to find work.
- Workers should respect their masters.
- Financially wealthy believers should be encouraged to be generous and to put their hope in God, not money.

## II Timothy

In his second letter, Paul continues to encourage Timothy, but there is a greater sense of urgency and perhaps finality. Paul wrote this letter from prison. He mentions having to defend himself without the support of any other believers. He gives thanks that he was spared from the lions, but his trial is not yet over. He asks that Timothy come soon to see him and requests that Timothy bring his coat and parchments. This letter may have been written shortly before Paul's martyrdom. Paul says, "And the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have kept the faith" (4:6b-7). In light of this, Paul's charge to Timothy, in this letter, was more than just another word of encouragement. Paul was passing on the charge to preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

<b>Opening Greeting</b> 1:1-2	<b>Charge to Timothy</b> 1:3-4:8	<b>Closing Remarks</b> 4:9-22
	Series of exhortations Paul's personal remarks Watch out for evil people who try to deceive Charge to Timothy	Paul's shares his situation.

Paul interweaves personal statements of reflection on his own life and call with a series of exhortations to Timothy. These exhortations come out of Paul's life experiences as a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

1. Fan into flame the gift of God which you received (1:6-7).
2. Join me in suffering for the gospel (1:8-9).
3. Maintain a pattern of sound teaching (1:12-13).
4. Guard the deposit that was entrusted to you by God (1:14).
5. Be strong in grace (2:1).
6. Entrust this teaching to reliable leaders who can teach others (2:2).
7. Endure hardship (2:3).
8. Remember Jesus Christ (2:8).
9. Warn others and avoid godless chatter (2:14, 23).
10. Present yourself to God as one approved (2:15).
11. Flee the desires of youth; instead pursue righteousness (2:22).
12. Be kind to everyone to whom you minister—even the difficult people (2:24).

Before Paul gives Timothy his charge to ministry, he reminds Timothy of the importance of the study of the Scriptures. "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correction and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (3:16-17). Another word for "God-breathed" is inspired. The Scriptures are not the arguments and thoughts of men. The Scriptures are the message, stories, truth and very voice of God who directed that His Words be written.

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Paul's charge to Timothy:

*2 Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching. 3 For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will reject the truth and chase after myths. 5 But you should keep a clear mind in every situation. Don't be afraid of suffering for the Lord. Work at telling others the Good News, and fully carry out the ministry God has given you" (II Timothy 4:2-5 NLT).*

**Titus**

Titus was an itinerant member of Paul's team. He was willing to be sent out on missions to encourage churches or to gather information and report back to Paul. Paul mentions him several times in II Corinthians. Titus was serving on the island of Crete when he received this letter (1:5). Paul had asked him to remain there in order to put elders in place in that church. This was necessary so that it would be protected from those who might try to spread confusion and false doctrine.

<b>Introduction</b> 1:1-4	<b>Instructions to Titus</b> 1:5-3:11	<b>Closing Remarks</b> 3:12-15
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Paul gives Titus instructions for the encouragement of specific groups: older men, older women, young men, and slaves. The responsibility of the members of the body for one another is at the core of these instructions. Paul, as he did with Timothy, stresses to Titus the importance of his life example.

This letter is not as personal or as affectionate as Paul's letters to Timothy. His relationship with Titus was professional, but nonetheless caring. Paul's letter would have been a comfort and encouragement to a pastor working on the frontlines of ministry.

An interesting feature of this letter is the concise statements of the gospel. If one has to confront argumentative, talkative deceivers, it would be wise to be ready with a powerful, brief response. Paul gives Titus two to choose from: 2:11-14 and 3:4-7.

*4 But—"When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, 5 he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. 6 He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior. 7 Because of his grace he declared us righteous and gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life" (Titus 3:4-7 NLT).*

**Philemon**

This letter is quite different from all the rest because its purpose is not to teach or exhort, but to personally request that a runaway slave be graciously received back by his former owner. The letter, however, does serve as an example of mercy, of Christian diplomacy, and of the transformation that takes place in relationships when people believe in Jesus Christ.

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<b>Introduction</b> 1-3	<b>Blessing and Prayer</b> 4-7	<b>Request Made to Philemon</b> 8-22	<b>Closing Greeting</b> 23-25
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Onesimus had been a slave in the home of Philemon before he ran away to Rome where he met Paul. Through Paul's ministry, Onesimus became a believer in Christ and began to assist Paul while he was in prison. He shared his story with Paul. Paul insisted that the situation be put in order and that restitution must be made. On behalf of Onesimus, Paul wrote to Philemon asking him to extend grace to Onesimus by receiving him back into his household not only as a slave, but also as a brother in Christ. Paul, himself, offered to make financial restitution for any losses that Philemon had incurred because of Onesimus.

In many of Paul's letters, as in this letter to Philemon, there is a thanksgiving and prayer that follows his opening greeting. In these passages Paul speaks words of blessing, hope, love, and encouragement to the recipients. His repeated mention of intercessory prayer for churches and individuals reveals an aspect of his ministry that is only briefly glimpsed in the written prayers. Paul not only attended to the people with whom he had close physical proximity, he maintained involvement through constant and fervent intercessory prayer. He used his letters to speak a word of blessing and affirmation into the lives of others as he does to Philemon.

*I always thank my God when I pray for you, Philemon, 5 because I keep hearing about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all of God's people. 6 And I am praying that you will put into action the generosity that comes from your faith as you understand and experience all the good things we have in Christ. 7 Your love has given me much joy and comfort, my brother, for your kindness has often refreshed the hearts of God's people (4-7 NLT).*

### Questions for Discussion

1. Do you have a Timothy in your life? Someone who is your disciple? How can you encourage this person in ministry and faith? What circumstances are they facing that you may be able to help them through your experience and knowledge of the Word of God? Have you blessed them as Paul blesses Timothy?
2. What might be areas of meaningless talk or purposeless debate that are tempting for you or your church? What do you need to watch out for? How does this type of meaningless talk enter your community? Through people? Through television? Radio? Or internet?
3. Read the list of areas where Timothy is to set an example. How are you doing in those areas? Is there any one of those areas where you are stumbling? Do you need to find someone who can help you and hold you accountable?
4. Is there any situation in your church or life that requires that type of diplomacy and grace that Paul demonstrates in the book of Philemon? Is there a person who needs to be restored to your community as Onesimus was to the household of Philemon?

5. Read Paul's prayer in Philemon. If you have a Bible, read his prayers in chapter 1 of Philippians and Thessalonians. What does he pray for? What does he affirm in those congregations? What can you learn from these prayers about praying for others, particularly for those to whom you minister? What can you affirm? For what can you give thanks to God? What do you desire for them in the Lord?

Terms to know
Pastoral Epistles Meaningless talk Purposeless debate God-breathed Inspired Onesimus



# 5

## The General Epistles and Revelation

### Lesson Purpose:

- To give an overview of the General Epistles, their recipients, their setting, and key topics in each letter and to understand the unique features and challenges of studying and interpreting the apocalyptic writing in Revelation.

### Lesson Outcome:

- Students will know and be able to briefly define all of the terms to know.
- Students will be able to give information about each general epistle, its author, setting, and the topics addressed.
- Students will learn characteristics of apocalyptic writing and the challenges of interpreting its symbols, time frame, and images.
- Students will honestly and thoughtfully interact with and apply the lessons to their ministry settings and to their personal lives.

### Table of Contents :

- Hebrews
- James
- I & II Peter
- I & II & II John
- Jude
- Revelation
- Questions for Discussion

The last group of letters in the New Testament is referred to as the general or catholic epistles. They are general because they are not directed to a specified recipient or church. The term catholic is also used in its meaning of "universal." These are letters addressed to Christians wherever they might be.

### Hebrews

Traditionally, Paul was considered to be the author of Hebrews, but generally, most biblical scholars agree that it was written by a different author who chose not to be named. Although the closing remarks of this letter seem to be written by Paul, he is never mentioned by name anywhere in the letter. The opening greeting that names the author and recipients that is standard in all of Paul's letters is missing. Paul was an apostle called to work with Gentiles. The author of this letter is writing a masterful apologetic which is targeted at those who had trusted in the Jewish beliefs and practices of the Old Covenant. The author builds a case for the supremacy of Jesus Christ in all things. The focus of this letter is Jesus Christ. The anonymity of the author removes one more distraction from the message of this epistle: Jesus Christ, "the Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he

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had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven” (1:3-4).  
 Jesus is superior to:

1. Angels, ministering spirits, because he is the Son of God (Chapter 1).
2. Moses, a servant, because he is the Son who is over the house of God (Chapter 3).
3. All other high priests, sinful mortal men, because he was appointed by God, was without sin, and is eternal (Chapters 5 & 7). The author presents Jesus throughout this letter as our compassionate and perfect high priest.
4. The Old Covenant, because the New Covenant is founded on better promises (Chapter 8).
5. The earthly Tabernacle, because Jesus entered heaven itself and offered himself as a perfect sacrifice (Chapter 9).
6. The Old Testament sacrifices, because his one sacrifice, the shedding of his blood was all sufficient to cleanse both the sin and conscience of all who believe (Chapter 10).

<b>The supremacy of Jesus Christ 1:1-10:18</b>	<b>Exhortations 10:19-17</b>	<b>Closing Remarks</b>
Pay careful attention so that you do not drift away 2:1 Fix your thoughts on Jesus 3:1 Encourage one another daily 3:13 Hold firmly to the faith we profess 5:14 Let us approach the throne of grace with confidence 5:16 Let us go on to maturity in Christ 6:1 Our hope in Jesus is an anchor for the soul 6:19	At the center of these exhortations: chapter 11 teaches about faith. It includes a list of the biblical heroes whose example of faith should motivate believers to persevere.	10:18-25

In the chart under the heading “the supremacy of Jesus Christ” there is a list of the exhortations that the author inserts in this section. With each step of the argument for Jesus’ supremacy, an additional exhortation is added. The wonderful news of Christ demands a response. Step by step the author builds to the climatic invitation in chapter 10. “Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (10:22-25).

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**James**

Greeting 1:1	Instructions for Wise Living				
	Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5
	Trials Temptations Obedience to the word	Favoritism Relationship between deeds and faith	Taming the tongue True wisdom	Submission to God in all things	Prayer of patience and faith

The author of this epistle identifies himself as “James, a servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:1). He identifies the recipients of this letter as “the twelve tribes scattered among the nations” (1:1). There are several men with the name, “James,” mentioned in the New Testament, but generally it is believed that the James who wrote this letter was the brother of Jesus who gave leadership in the final decision of the Council of Acts (Acts 15:13-21). The twelve scattered tribes were the people who believed in God and in Jesus Christ His Son, Jew and Gentile alike, throughout the entire world. There are many references to trial and persecution, so this letter was written during a time of testing for the Christian community.

The epistle of James has similarities to the wisdom literature in the Old Testament written by Solomon. It contains several short, memorable proverbs, called aphorisms. “Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry” (1:19). “Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness” (3:18). There are longer passages that contain instructions for wise living. James uses story and imagery to illustrate his practical message.

- Trials are opportunities for growth and therefore we can receive them joyfully
- The poor are blessed; wealth has extra burdens and temptations
- Favoritism or preference for the wealthy is never acceptable to God.
- The human tongue is a world of evil and extremely difficult to tame
- Faith must be accompanied by acts of faith. Belief and action go together.
- God is in control of time. We should always remember that.
- We should pray for one another because prayer is effective; God listens and answers.

James does not teach about Jesus, yet neither is his letter particularly Jewish. It is filled with godly wisdom that comes from the fear of God and obedience to His Word. James’ teaching is summed up in this verse: “Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him” (1:12).

**I & II Peter**

These letters were written by Peter, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ. He addresses them to “God’s elect, strangers in the world” (I Peter 1:1) and to “those who through righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours” (II Peter 1:1).

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<b>I Peter</b>		
Introduction and Praise to God 1:1-12	Exhortations to holiness and faithfulness to Christ and the Christian community The suffering of Jesus is our model 1:13-5:11	Final Greetings 5:12-13
<b>II Peter</b>		
Introduction 1:1-2	Exhortations, Warnings, and Assurances	

Peter was writing to a church that was suffering persecution. There are many references to suffering and in particular to unjust suffering for the sake of Jesus Christ. Peter calls the church to:

- remain committed to holiness of heart, mind, and life (I & II Peter).
- live in harmony with one another (I Peter).
- serve as a holy priesthood of believers, giving witness to God (I Peter 2).
- suffer with grace and humility for the sake of Christ (I Peter 2-4).
- beware of false teachers and dangerous imposters (II Peter 2).
- wait expectantly and patiently for the return of the Lord (II Peter 3).

The example of Jesus Christ gives us the model that we are to follow in our suffering on his behalf. Peter's writing in these three passages is deeply moving and powerfully represents his profound understanding of the significance of the cross. (I Peter 1:19-21, 2:21-25, 3:18-22).

*For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you.*

*He is your example, and you must follow in his steps.*

*He never sinned,*

*nor ever deceived anyone.*

*He did not retaliate when he was insulted,  
nor threaten revenge when he suffered.*

*He left his case in the hands of God,  
who always judges fairly.*

*He personally carried our sins  
in his body on the cross*

*so that we can be dead to sin  
and live for what is right.*

*By his wounds  
you are healed.*

*Once you were like sheep  
who wandered away.*

*But now you have turned to your Shepherd,  
the Guardian of your souls (I Peter 2:21-25).*

## I, II & III John

These three letters were written by John, the disciple whom Jesus loved. Letters two and three are brief, written to encourage hospitality to itinerant evangelists, but also to warn the churches to take care in evaluating the message of these speakers. Not all evangelists were godly or reliable witnesses to the truth of God. If speakers were found to be disreputable, they were not to house them or give them permission to speak to the church.

First John is a letter of assurance for new believers. John begins this letter with the assurance that his testimony is true. As an eyewitness of Jesus' ministry, he heard, saw, and touched Jesus. His message is true and reliable. The phrase, "this is how we know," is repeated throughout the letter as John lists the evidence of one's relationship with Christ. Another important theme in this book is the love of God. "God is love" (4:6). Belief in God involves knowing Him and His truth with our minds and it involves knowing Him as our Father with our hearts. This belief then is demonstrated in our lives through obedience to His Word and love for one another. As in his gospel, John uses contrasts in his letters to illustrate and emphasize his teaching points.

This is how we know:

- We obey his commands (2:3)
- We walk as Jesus did (2:6)
- We recognize the presence of antichrists—those who deny the incarnation and divinity of Jesus, the Son of God (2:18)
- We love our brothers and sisters in Christ (3:10, 14, )
- We are willing to lay our lives down for our brothers because Christ laid his life down for us (3:16).
- We love with action and truth (3:18-19)
- We have received the Spirit (3:24, 4:13)
- We recognize false spirits (4:2-3, 6)
- We love God and obey his commands (5:2)
- We do not continue to sin (5:15—and chapter 3)
- We have understanding and know he is true (5:20)

<b>Introduction</b> <b>1:1-4</b>	<b>Evidence for determining who is walking with God and who is not</b> <b>1:5-5:12</b>	<b>Closing remarks</b> <b>5:13-21</b>
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## Jude

Jude identifies himself as "a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James" (1). He was not one of the twelve apostles. He writes a general letter to "those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ" (1). His primary purpose is to warn them to watch out for "godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord" (4). Godless men pose a serious threat. Jude describes them with harsh words. He also makes many references to Old Testament figures and seems to assume that his readers will have an understanding of the

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significance of these figures and knowledge of how they are symbolically used. He closes his brief letter with words of encouragement and exhortation. In the context of this warning, Jude adds a final comment on how to treat those who are wavering. “Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh” (22-23).

<b>Introduction 1-2</b>	<b>Warning 3-16</b>	<b>Closing Words of encouragement 17-25</b>
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**Revelation**

*“This is a revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants the events that must soon take place. He sent an angel to present this revelation to his servant John, who faithfully reported everything he saw. This is his report of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. God blesses the one who reads the words of this prophecy to the church, and he blesses all who listen to its message and obey what it says, for the time is near” (1:1-3).*

<b>John’s vision begins with Jesus</b>	<b>Letters to Churches: A message for that day</b>	<b>A vision of the work in heaven 4:1 - 22:21</b>
1:1-20	2:1-3:22	The Lamb on the Throne Seals/Trumpets/Bowls The woman and the Dragon/The Beast and the Sea The Rider on the White Horse 1000 Years Final Judgment The New Jerusalem

The apostle John received this revelation from the Lord when he was exiled to the island of Patmos. Revelation is apocalyptic literature and addresses the signs and events of the last days. In apocalyptic literature, there are many uses of numbers, descriptions of other-worldly creatures, and catastrophic events in the heavens and on the earth. The interpretation of these images and numbers can be extremely difficult. Some interpreters believe that each image is an allegory for something else, but the difficulty with this position is in determining what that something else is and when in time it is. For example does it represent something in the time period of John, such as Rome? Or is it future? John warns the reader in his final chapter that he or she should not add or take away from anything written in the book (21:18-19). That being the case, the simplest, most straight-forward reading may give the reader the greatest clarity. The images, numbers, and events that seem too large for our minds to comprehend can be humbly submitted in prayer. The Holy Spirit has been given to us by God to help us understand his truth (John 14).

John’s revelation begins with Jesus Christ. John fell at his feet as though dead (1:17). He is the exalted Lord. This revelation comes from Jesus. Next, John records letters directed to seven churches that were in existence at the time of John. While these letters address specific historical situations, many of the same joys, struggles, and problems continue to be present in churches today.

In chapter 5, the vision moves to heaven where the action that impacts all the world takes place. The activity that takes place on the earth follows the progression of signs, trumpets, and bowls. The events described are horrific. God's people are martyred and persecuted. But God's purpose and desire in the midst of this suffering is that people on earth would be humbled and repent. Sadly, many do not and are lost in the destruction. The repeated words to the saints of the church are: "This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus" (14:12).

As John comes to the end of the Revelation, there is promise of a new heaven and earth. The victory is assured, even though the process of coming to that final and glorious day will be one of much suffering as those who are in rebellion against God thrash against their inevitable destruction. Satan will be once and for all defeated. The living and the dead will be judged and either blessed with eternal life or cursed with eternal damnation. Jesus assures John and us that He is coming. "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End" (22:12-13).

Jesus, through this revelation to John, has prepared all believers for that day. There is no need to fear, but we are to be always ready. Let our hearts and lives resound with John's final words: "Amen, Come, Lord Jesus" (22:20).

### Questions for Discussion

1. Are you ready for Jesus' return? Are the people in your church ready? Do they fear that day? If so, what can you do to help them to feel prepared and to practice the "patient endurance" that is called for from the saints?
2. Angels, Moses, Jewish priests—these were stumbling blocks for Jewish Christians. They would put them before or as equals with Christ. Is there anything in your own life over which Christ is not yet Lord? Is there anything in your community, culture, or tradition over which Christ is not supreme? Do you believe and trust that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was totally and completely sufficient to take away all your sin? Is there anything that hinders you from coming boldly and confidently into his presence?
3. James speaks of the difficulty of taming the tongue. How tame is your tongue? What areas still need to come under the control of the Holy Spirit? How about the tongues in your church? Are there tongue problems? Gossip? Criticism? Lies? Profanity?
4. John is clear that if we say we love God, we must also love others. Do all your relationships with your brothers and sisters demonstrate your love for God? Is there any prejudice or judgment that might not reflect the love of God, for He loves the entire world? What should you do if there is a relationship that is out of order? Is there a lack of love in your church for an individual or other community of people?
5. Are you suffering? Are the people in your church suffering? What words of encouragement can you bring to them? Is Jesus your model and hope in this trial? Are you wavering in your obedience to God because of a trial? How can you begin to consider this trial with joy, as a opportunity to grow in Christ?

Terms to know

General Epistles  
Catholic Epistles  
Supremacy of Christ\*  
Aphorisms  
Unjust suffering\*  
"This is how we know"\*  
God is love\*  
Antichrists\*  
Godless men\*  
Apocalyptic literature  
Signs, trumpets, bows\*  
Come, Lord Jesus!\*





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# Doctrine of God

~ Dr Wally Marais



## THE APOSTLES CREED

### INTRODUCTION

**This creed was not formulated by the Apostles themselves but is a summary of what the Apostles proclaimed.**

The origin of the Apostles' Creed is unknown, but the main content of it has been accepted as a confession of faith since the second century AD.

The twelve articles of this creed underscore the basic beliefs of all Christians. The creed is not a lifeless formula which is to be recited. No, it is a confession of faith which makes an impact on one's whole being every time he says, "I believe in God." It is important that Christians know this creed by heart and confess it regularly with their hearts and souls.

### The Apostles Creed

- Art. 1 I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,**
- Art. 2 and in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord;**
- Art. 3 who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,**
- Art. 4 suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried;**  
**He descended into hell;**
- Art. 5 The third day He rose again from the dead;**
- Art. 6 He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the**  
**Father Almighty;**
- Art. 7 From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.**
- Art. 8 I believe in the Holy Spirit,**
- Art. 9 the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints,**
- Art 10 the forgiveness of sins,**
- Art.11 the resurrection of the body,**
- Art.12 and the life everlasting.**



# 1

## Doctrine of God

### Lesson Purpose

- To introduce the student to God as the living and creator God.

### Lesson Outcome

#### The student will:

- Find that he has always felt that there is some power greater than himself,
- Come to knowledge of the living God through faith.
- Realize that God has a plan to recreate him in Jesus Christ.

### Table of Contents

- Introduction – Revelation
- God is self contained
- God reveals Himself through His mighty acts.
- God reveals Himself through His Word
- God reveals Himself through His son
- Trinity was revealed
- The existence of God – the arguments

### Introduction

God reveals Himself to us so that we can know Him.

Genesis 1:1 says, "in the beginning God ....". This is where theology has to begin – with God. God is the source, subject, and end of all theology. Even more importantly, however, this is where our faith really begins. The Bible does not try to prove the existence of God but instead assumes a belief in God. This verse is asking for our faith, and if we do not start here, we cannot know God.

Christian theology is based upon the revelation of God in Christ as given in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. God reveals Himself through His Word. There is also a **general revelation** which God gives of Himself to all men. Men see Him in nature and in themselves. In their minds, they have thoughts of a creator of all things. In the progress of human history, man also senses that there is a "Directing Presence" moving us to an expressed goal in the fullness of time. There is also the revelation of God in conscience. This is a "knowing with oneself." It is the awareness of right and wrong within us, and it is accompanied by a compulsion to want to do right. Through general revelation, we are aware that someone is leading history, and that it does not "just happen." But none of these give us a personal revelation of God. That can only happen when we meet Him personally in Jesus Christ through special revelation.

**Special Revelation** is when God takes the initiative and, working from love, reaches out to make it possible for men to know Him and to be in fellowship with Him. This we see revealed in the saving work of His Son,

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Doctrine of God

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Jesus Christ. The Bible gives us God's Saving History. From Genesis to Revelation, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were always there, finding ways to reveal God's way of salvation. Right in the beginning, after man had fallen away from God and into disobedience, it was our Triune God who immediately drew near to man and promised to save him. God addressed the serpent (satan) in Genesis 3:15, saying "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head and you will bruise his heel"

Acts 17: 24-25 says, "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, seeing He giveth to all life and breath, and all things." God's revelation is a revelation of His essence, His acts and His virtues. His words and attributes, which we encounter in the revelatory event, disclose to us His character. He wants us to experience His love, for that is who He is, and all His dealings with us are initiated by Him so that we may experience His love for us. He is love to us, not condemnation.

John 3:16 says,

**"for God so loved the world that He gave His One and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."**

God reveals His saving Truth in His Son Jesus Christ because He loves us. It is a revelation of who God is as much as it is a revelation of what He has done and wants to do for, and in, and through us. God desires to be reconciled to man, and He makes it possible for all men to respond to Him. This salvation is for whosoever will believe.

God is the source of revelation. It is not something we suddenly understand as a result of human calculation. It is God moving to touch us with love. Revelation is a grace encounter, and as God's Spirit draws us with love, we experience a sense of awe in His presence. But He wants more than just for us to be aware of the fact that there is a "higher power." God wants to enter our spirits by His Spirit and fellowship with us on a personal basis. Through this fellowship, we will cry out from the depths of our spirits to have this quality of love in us. He will fill us with His love and we will start operating on the basis of this love. God has a plan as to how this happens, and we find this love at the foot of the Cross of Jesus. It is there where we start to see who God really is - He is love. We fear and tremble before God because we know we are unclean and sinners deserving His judgment. We may try to change our lives to impress Him, only to realize that we are sinners to the core of our beings and cannot change ourselves. Then God speaks to us and says, "I live in a high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite" (Isaiah 57:17).

As we progress through this lesson, we must not think of God as the sum total of the attributes we know about Him; rather we must realize that we can never know all there is to know about Him. God is so much more than His attributes. By looking at these attributes, however, we learn a few things about Him that help us to meet God on a personal basis and to be reconciled to Him.

### **God is self-contained.**

We call this “aseity” and it means self-subsistence, or the possession of life in Himself which is independent of all other existence. God is infinity, and by this we mean that there are no bounds or limits to the Divine Nature of God. The concept of immensity has to do with God’s mode of existence to the spacial world. Does the universe have boundaries? Or does it go on and on, never ending? This gives an indication of how immense God is. God came to incarnate Himself in Jesus Christ so that we can meet Him and know Him personally. Because of who He is, He chose to reveal Himself to us, in order that we might show forth His glory and His love for us, His highest creation.

### **God reveals Himself through His mighty acts.**

Throughout history, God has given us glimpses of His power. He performed miracles like dividing the Red Sea and the Jordan River to save His people, according to Joshua 4 – 5 and 1 Corinthians 10: 1-6. But most of all, His power was revealed in raising Jesus from the dead, thereby revealing that it is a small thing to recreate us from sinners into disciples of Jesus.

### **God reveals Himself to us through His mighty Word**

Not only has God revealed His love for us and His desire to reconcile us to Himself through His powerful acts, but He has also revealed this through His Word. Again and again, God has revealed His saving will for us through the Prophets. Even through the covenant God made with Abraham to raise up a people of God, we can see His plan. What the prophets foretold came true, proving that they were God’s chosen vessels.

The prophets foretold the coming of Christ. There were about 300 prophecies that Christ fulfilled just as they had foretold. Christ was the seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1 : 20 – 23). The prophets said that He was to come from the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10, Hebrews 7:14), that He would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2, Matthew 2: 6), that He would be sold for thirty pieces of silver (Zechariah 11: 12 – 13, Matthew 26:15), that He was to die by crucifixion (Psalm 22, Isaiah 53, Matthew 27), and that He was to rise from the dead and ascend to heaven (Psalm 16, Psalm 110, Matthew 22: 43 – 45). These are but a few of the prophecies that Jesus fulfilled. Hebrews 14 says that God has revealed Himself to us in the Lord Jesus Christ. When you open your life to Jesus, you meet the Living God and He recreates you by His Spirit, adopting you into His family.

### **God reveals Himself through His Son the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Hebrews 1:1-2 says, “in the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son whom He appointed heir of all things and through whom He made the universe.” As we walk with Jesus Christ through the prophecies in the Old Testament pointing to Him, and as we walk through the New Testament and learn and see Him in action in His humiliation and His exaltation, it is revealed to us by God’s Spirit that our Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is the second person of the Trinity and is of the same essence as the Father and the Holy Spirit, and we accept Him as our God.

**The Trinity (God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit), was revealed step by step to men of faith.**

Jesus came and gave us the full revelation of the Triune God. God reveals Himself to man through His Word and His mighty acts. We meet Him in all the miracles, in the prophecies, in the unique personality of Christ, and in the witness of the Holy Spirit.

**The Existence Of God**

Older theologies still speak of Theism. By this, they mean that God is a personal God, Creator, and Preserver of all things. They stress that God is immanent in creation as well as transcendent, or above, and separate from it.

We know that God alone can reveal Himself to man. The term 'innate' is applied to our primary knowledge of God. Due to much misunderstanding, theologians now use the term **rational intuition**, referring to the power that the mind has of immediate insight into truth. It simply means that man has ability of the soul to receive knowledge independently of the five senses. The Bible does not try to prove the existence of God, for it appeals to the revealed knowledge about God in man.

**The arguments used to prove the existence of God.**

Let me hasten to say that even ability to think about God in these various arguments is given to man by the grace of God. It is really not man's invention but the image in which he was created that make him aware of the higher power. Man has attempted to explain the existence of God through the **Cosmological Argument**, which is the argument that creation arose from a "First Cause" But there still must be a Will, a Person, who thought it out and created it all. Common sense tells us that nothing happens without a cause. The whole structure of science rests upon the category of causality. Also the cause must be wise enough and powerful enough to make it happen. Imagine thinking up the atom structure with its protons and neutrons all spinning around at tremendous speeds but without the control of a higher power. Imagine thinking up gravity and the placing of the planets in the exact position for each to be under the principle of gravity, ensuring that they do not collide, and then doing this for thousands years without an accident you could not correct. Imagine, if you can, this happening by pure accident, or being brought about by some impersonal force. We have to respect that there is a higher knowledge and creator who has all power to make this happen and to keep it going. It could never have been created by blind eternal force, for someone would have had to create that force if there were such a thing. But there isn't. The worlds are all held together by the Word of HIS power.

The **Theological Argument** says that the presence of a design with a purpose proves the existence of a designer. First of all, there had to be someone with the will to make it happen. Then it had to be designed, and then there had to be a purpose for wanting the creation, for it is not a toy world. There had to be a purposeful creator. All of creation had to have life principle, it could not have life of itself. It had to be thought up and designed, and it had to have a purpose for its existence. Nothing just lives; rather it lives for something. There is an ecological balance as well. The food chain, the weather patterns, the seasons, the tides, and every thing else has a divine purpose, and prove that there is a fine balance in this universe. Today this is being taken seriously. Because of the result of pollution in the waters, land and sea, man is upsetting

the order of the ecological balance, and man will bear the consequences of this. None of this could have just happened. It all had to be designed. God has initiated and designed everything and has a special purpose for His highest creation, man.

The **Ontological Argument** says that since we can think of a Perfect Being, it shows that there must be such a Being. But we also think of this Creator Being as being able and perfect and good and beautiful because of the beauty and perfection in this creation. Beauty is a fact; mathematics is a fact; life principle is a fact; gravity is a fact; and because of these facts, we have a Creator who is more than an idea. If we can see these facts, then we also know that we have a purposeful Creator who is a fact. If this were not the case, from where would all these factual things come? God as Creator is a fact, and because we see these facts, we have these ideas about Him.

The **Moral Argument** says that a Creator exists because we have a conscience, and man has this innate knowledge of right and wrong. The fact that we are innately aware that there is Truth, and that there is perfection shows that there is a higher Creator Being. We have been created by Truth, and Jesus claimed to be this truth in John 14:6. The fact that we have been created "right," not "wrong" shows that God has a plan of "right" for us all. The fact that we understand that there is perfection, shows that morality had to come from more than our thinking. We believe God has placed this knowledge within every man. We also know that there is a goodness and a holiness which is what we should aspire to be. Where did this awareness come from if not from our Creator? We have a sense of morality, a moral ought in us. Because only personality is capable of morality, we can conclude that there must be a Supreme Personality who has imparted this to us. We know that we did not invent these ideas or knowledge; rather there has to be a cause, and that cause is God.

We must understand that these revelations were not simply things God wanted men to understand in the era in which He revealed them. Gods revelations are for all time. What was revealed then is also for today. That is the main reason why God inspired His Word to be written and passed on to all generations.

The Word of God is God's progressive revelation of His saving history which was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Hebrews 1:1 says, "in the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son." This is not mere history. It is history that is saving. The Spirit of God makes it real now because Jesus is alive. That is why we speak about the unity of Scripture, for it does not matter whether you are reading something that happened 6000 years ago or in New Testament times or even today. The message is the same. It is all about God's love for His highest creation, MAN, and the Promised Messiah.

### The **Empirical Argument**

Throughout the Bible, we see that God's Message is given to a responding creature – man. God, in His love and mercy, has retained man as redeemable. Man cannot become so bad that he can no longer respond and be saved. God has already built His ability to respond into man, and nothing can remove this gift of grace from him. He can respond for he already has grace and faith to make his choice to be saved. Man can respond to God and choose by grace through faith, he can choose to have a real encounter, a spiritual experience, with His creator. He has the witness of the Spirit which is real. It is like a spiritual sixth sense. Man knows in his self-consciousness that something beyond his ability happened to

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him when he was born again. When he is born again, or sanctified entirely, and it is a real experience for him. No one can take that sense of reality from him, for he experiences Jesus in his heart, mind, feelings, and choices. After salvation, he now has a bias towards the good he knows is God's will, a spiritual ought. We know that God, who is love, created His entire creation in this love. It is for this reason that we appreciate beauty. But man is special. He was created to respond to love, and man cannot live without responding to love. Love is more than a feeling or emotion. It is that something that has happened to us that makes us want to choose to do God's will and to please Him every day of our lives. Because He first loved us and has now put His love in us, and because He is in us, sharing His love with us, our love responds and wants to love Him and His purpose and will for us. The point is that someone loving had to be able to give us this love. It did not come from us, and it did not just come from some impersonal force. This love is person-to-person.

**Class discussion**

Why does the Bible not try to prove the existence of God?

Do you think we can know there is a God?



# 2

## The Names And Attributes Of God

### Lesson Purpose

- The student will be helped to understand the names of God and their meanings and also to know the attributes of God.

### Lesson Outcome

- After this lesson the student will understand how God reveals Himself through His names and His attributes.

### Table of Contents

- God has revealed Himself through the names He has given in His Word
- The divine attributes of God.

### God has revealed Himself through the names He has given us in His Word.

**Elohim** means power. "El" is translated "God." Elohim means God carries all power.

This term "El" occurs in Genesis 1 over 32 times, and it is always connected to God as power. In Genesis, it refers to God as the one who has power to create all things. He has power to do what He wills. As we are going to discover, God reveals something every time He uses a different name. We are not reading about different gods here, like in Hinduism. All these names are the different names of the One God. Each name expresses a different aspect of His being and the different relationships He has with His creation.

The word "El" is translated "God" some 250 times and usually in reference to the God of power. For example, in Numbers 23:2, it was "El" who brought Israel up out of Egypt. It is written that "He hath as it were the strength of an unicorn."

Deuteronomy 10:17 says, "Jehovah your Elohim is God of gods, and Lord of lords, the God [or El] who is great, mighty and dreadful." It means "Almighty God."

It expresses greatness and glory. It carries creative and governing power of omnipotence and sovereignty in its meaning. A striking fact is that Elohim is the plural form of the word. If it were singular, God would have been speaking to Himself when He says in Genesis 1:26, "let us make man..." This is evidence of plurality in unity.

The Father God said the Word; the Word was God the Son who agreed and proceeded from the Father; and they breathed into man the breath of God the Holy Spirit and man became a living soul.

**Yahweh, or Jehovah,** is translated LORD in capitals to distinguish from Adonai, which is also translated Lord, but in the lower case.. It is God expressed as "I Am," or the ever-present One who enters into relationship with man. He is the one who enters into covenant with man and stays to honor the contract. We meet God in this way in Genesis 2:4 when He is called Jehovah – Elohim.

The name Jehovah is derived from the Hebrew verb “to be’ or “being.” It is exactly like the word chavah meaning “to live” or “life.” It shows us that Jehovah has always been a being and the source of life, for He has always been alive.

As Jehovah, He is the personal God who reveals Himself and enters into relationship with man. He desires to impart life and deals with life issues. You will notice that it is always written, “thus says the LORD,” not Elohim. Jesus claimed to be Jehovah incarnate, therefore He could say, “ I AM, I say unto you.”

The name Jehovah is always associated with God’s moral and spiritual attributes. Read the Sermon on the Mount where as King, Jehovah Jesus gives to us the principles of the Kingdom of God. Jehovah is the God who blesses us.

- **El Shaddai** means “God is almighty” or the shedder-forth of blessings. It carries the concepts of nourisher, strength-giver and satisfier.
  - In Genesis 17:1-2, it says, “and when Abram was ninety years old and nine, Jehovah appeared to Abram and said to him, I am God Almighty (El Shaddai) walk before me and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and I will multiply thee exceedingly.” Remember that El speaks of God’s power, and Shaddai means “the one who pours out sustenance and blessing.” The word has connections with the word “breast,” meaning nourisher. It also has connotations of being all-sufficient.
  - Too many of us who feel sufficient in our own strength need to get back to the one who is our all sufficiency, El Shaddai the all-sufficient One. Abraham had to learn that God’s sufficiency is always provided at exactly the right time.
- **Yahweh Sabaoth** – the Lord of Hosts. Isaiah 47:4 It is basically a military team, showing that God is the leader of the heavenly armies. It emphasizes God’s sovereign might and majesty. Some have seen the hosts to mean the stars and planets in the heavenly sphere and would also stress God’s control and majesty and power. Some see the host as all the angels which surround god’s throne, and again it points to everything being under God’s control as King.
- **Adonai** means “Lord” or “Master,” and it expresses possession and sovereign dominion. It is translated in the Greek as “KURIOS” and is a term applied to Christ.
  - It is applied hundreds of times to Jesus in the New Testament. The term “Lords,” can be applied to the trinity.
  - When Paul was in great danger, Luke says, “the Lord stood by him and said, be of good cheer,” In Acts 23:11.
  - 2 Corinthians 12:9 says, “the grace of the Lord is continuously with His servants
  - This what we mean when we say Jesus is Lord in our lives.
- **Jehovah-Jireh** means “see, He provides.”
  - In Genesis 22, we have the account of when Elohim asks Abraham to offer up Isaac. Being obedient to God, Abraham is about to plunge the knife into Isaac’s breast when Jehovah stops him and provides a ram In his place.
  - Abraham named the place Jehovah – Jireh, meaning “the Lord will provide.”

- The word for prophet is roeh and means “to see.” The prophets were called “seers,” and they were “the ones who see beforehand.” Did you notice the similarity between the Hebrew words, jireh and roeh? They both mean “to see,” but they have slightly different meanings based on the different contexts.
- Jehovah – Jireh here means “the Jehovah saw what needed to be provided long before the need arose; you need not have worried for He always provides.”
- **Jehovah – Rophe**
  - Jehovah-Rophe means “the God who heals.”
  - In Exodus 15: 22 – 26, the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea and spent three days in the wilderness, tired and thirsty, but they found no water. They murmured against the Lord. In verse 23, the Word says that “when they came to Marah they could not drink of the waters of Marah for they were bitter.” God showed Moses a certain tree that when cast into the waters made the water sweet. He had already seen the need and given to them His promise. In verse 26, the Word says, “if thou will diligently hearken to the voice of Jehovah the God and do what is right in His sight... I will put none of these diseases on thee that I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am Jehovah that healeth thee.” Rophe appears some seventy times in the Old Testament, always meaning “to restore, to heal, to cure,” or in reference to a physician, not only in a physical sense, but in a moral and spiritual sense as well.
  - The Son of God continues God’s healing ministry throughout the New Testament even until today. He is the same Jesus, the healing God that He always has been.
- **Jehovah Nissi**
  - Jehovah Nissi means “the Lord is my banner.”
  - As the children of Israel journeyed on their way to Canaan, they heard that the Amalekites, descendants of the grandson of Esau, were going to attack them
  - They met for battle and Moses stood on the hill with his rod. While he held up the rod, the Israelites prevailed and eventually Moses got tired and the enemy started to prevail. In his right hand was the rod God had used so often to clear the way for him. It was the rod of Elohim. We already know that this means God’s power was there. This rod was the banner of God under which God brought the victory. Romans 8:37 says, “in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”
  - We do not need a literal rod or banner, for we march under the blood-stained banner of the cross. Jesus is the Mighty Conqueror.
- **Jehovah – M’ Kaddesh**
  - This means that Jehovah alone is the One who sanctifies, and who makes holy.
  - The meaning of this word comes from the book of Leviticus and is a message to a people already redeemed by God. Leviticus is the book on holiness in the Old Testament.
  - The word “sanctify” is not mentioned until Exodus 13:1 – 2, which says, “sanctify unto Me all the first born...of the children of Israel.” This is in reference to the Israel of whom Jehovah had already said “Israel is My son, even My first born” in Exodus 4:22. God asked His people to live holy before Him, and when they obeyed, His presence and power kept them holy and cleansed.
  - God was asking them to separate themselves from all that was unholy and to consecrate themselves devotedly to Him and to continue doing so.

- God is the one alone who can make things and people holy. He sets apart a vessel for holiness, but when dealing with His spiritually alive children, He not only separates them but actually cleanses them morally and spiritually. A simple vessel cannot be cleansed morally and spiritually as it has no spirit or soul. In regard to people, God is asking us to turn from all known sin and to consecrate ourselves entirely to Him so that He can HEAL us from all sin. He expels the darkness in man by coming and filling us spiritually and morally with His light and power. According to 2 Thessalonians 5:23 – 24, “the very God of peace Himself sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The One who calls you is faithful and He will do it.”
- Some want us to merely set ourselves apart as is done with vessels, but here it is clear that God wants to make a person’s body, his spirit, and his soul holy, and if we yield to Him, He will do it.
- What Jehovah was to His people in the Old Testament, the Holy One who sanctifies, the Lord Jesus Christ is to His people in the New Testament times and today.
  
- **Jehovah-Shalom**
  - The name Jehovah- Shalom is found in Judges 6:24, which says, “then Gideon built an altar unto Jehovah and called it Jehovah Shalom meaning Jehovah is peace.”
  - It is the peace of God that comes to the heart and mind when one is at peace with God. It has to do with having a clear conscience and a pure heart, and the peace that comes when things are right and there is no discord. The root of the expression means harmony. It has to do with being in a state of blessedness, knowing that God is blessing you and that you are blessed.
  - God is never out of harmony with His will, His desires, or His judgments. He is in perfect harmony and He wills the same for us, according to Isaiah 26:2-4. “Thou will keep Him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you.” “peace through the blood of His cross”. Colosians 1 :20.
  
- **Jehovah – Tsidkenu**
  - Jehovah-Tsidkenu means “Jehovah our righteousness.” There would be no righteousness if there was no Holy God. The fact that we are aware of right and wrong proves the fact that there is perfect righteousness. Someone started us thinking this way and we read that our God who is righteousness invites us into a right relationship with Him. He will put His Spirit in us which will cause us to hunger and to thirst for His righteousness. We have a longing in our hearts to be free to live right, and He is doing that in us, according to Matthew 5:6.
  - Some want us to believe that God casts the robe of Christ’s righteousness over sinners and hides our sins from God so that when God looks at us He really sees Jesus and His righteousness. Imagine trying to fool God, who knows the very imaginations of a man’s heart. That is a wrong interpretation coming from those who take literally the idea of covering sin on the Day of Atonement, when the blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat. This method of the covering of sin was an Old Testament arrangement with God. It was the way of acceptance in the Old Testament because the blood meant that a life had been given in the place of sinners. There was no magical power in the blood used to cover the stain of sin. So it is with the Blood of Jesus. We are accepted into God’s presence, reconciled to Him, justified, and adopted all in one divine moment by grace through faith in what Jesus did for us 2000 years ago. He made it all right with God and our righteous God did the right thing by making us right. He justified us and cleansed us and we stand before Him now clean and pure and holy, just as if we had never sinned. His Image has been restored in us, and we are forgiven and cleansed, because we are now in Christ and no

longer outside of Christ. We were once in darkness but now we are walking in the light. We are in step with the Holy Spirit, and we have the Son in us so we have life. We are not sinners anymore. We are Christians. WE ARE IN CHRIST. Therefore we are righteous because He has made us so. Where else can we go to be made righteous? We can go only to Him because He is Jehovah-Tsidkenu.

- Ephesians 4:24 says, "and being made free from sin we have become the servants of righteousness."
- **Jehovah – Rohi**
  - Jehovah-Rohi means "Jehovah my Shepherd." Psalm 23 says, "the Lord is MY Shepherd." This means that God knows where the best of everything for us is, and He will lead us there. He is taking us somewhere with Him every day. We must trust Him to guide and sustain us, which He does, for He never fails us. In John 10 :11, Jesus said, "I AM [the] Good Shepherd." There are many other I AM sayings of Jesus, but we know He was saying " I am God and I am taking you to the place I have prepared for You, and I will come again and receive you unto myself" in John 14 :2-3 (paraphrased by the author).
- **Jehovah - Shammah**
  - Ezekiel 48:35 says, "and the name of the city from that day shall be Jehovah Shammah."
  - Jehovah-Shammah means "Jehovah is there."
  - Things could not have been worse when this message that "Jehovah is there" was spoken. It certainly did not look like it. The temple had been destroyed and the Jews had been taken captive by the Babylonians, and they had hung up their harps. Instead of singing they were weeping. After returning from Jerusalem to Babylon Ezekiel came with this message: God is there. Let us not despair; rather let us go back and make ourselves available to Him as His people again.
  - God has never deserted those who put their faith in Him and walk in obedience to His will. He has come in Jesus Christ and He made His abode in the new temple not made with hands. According to Colossians 1:19, "the fullness of God was pleased to dwell In Him." And this concept is tied to Ephesians 2 :21-22 which says, "in Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit".
- **El Eljon**
  - El Eljon means "the Most High."
  - The heathen tribes built altars to the their gods on high places. They were trying to get higher than others to try and show their superiority over other gods. Sometimes they would make their altars bigger than others to show off their power. But the Psalmist laughs at them and says that their gods have ears, but they cannot hear, and they have eyes, but they cannot see. He wants them to know there is only one living God, and He lives and rules from heaven. He is the Most High God. This Most High God is the real living God who speaks to us through His Word and His mighty acts. He is the all powerful one, the Most High.

In these essential names of God which are revealed to us, we see something of God's Being and His Nature.

There are some other names that reveal His essence to us as well.

- **God is Spirit**, indicates that God is self-moving and efficient. God is underived, and He is eternal life.
- **He is also Light**. God is Eternal Reason and He is also self-manifesting.
- **He IS LOVE**. God thinks, feels and acts Love. This is His Essence.

### The Divine Attributes of God:

- **God is Life** – He has life in Himself and He alone gives life (John 1:4, 5-20, 5:26).
- **The Omnipotence of God** – He is all-powerful. He does all things (Luke 1:37).
  - He created the immeasurable universe by His Word. He created the entire universe through and from and for Jesus, and Jesus is to be the Eternal Bridegroom for all believers, who are His Body, the Church (Eph 1: 22 – 23). Remember that the Son was the creator, He was manifest in the flesh and called Jesus Christ, the Saviour. He laid down His life to redeem all mankind and has the power to restore everything that has been created. Being of the same essence as God, He is all-powerful. Raising Jesus from the dead and raising Him to sit at His right hand proves how powerful God is !
- **The Omniscience of God** - 1 John 3:20, Matthew 10:29
  - Just think about the millions of people living on this planet and add to that number the millions who have already died. God knows everything about every one of them, without ever making a mistake.
  - God knows every detail about everything all of the time.
  - He knows every time we pray and every time we slip and fall. Motivated by this powerful love, God comes to our aid every time. Just imagine listening to millions of prayers all at the same time and never making a mistake with one of them. That is how great God's knowledge is.
- **The Omnipresence of God** - Acts 17:24-28
  - God fills heaven and earth. He is everywhere and anywhere. He is not limited to time or space. He has always been there and will always be there. He is aware of the past, the present, and the future. All of these are ever-present with Him. If He chooses for His presence to be absent, then it will be so. We cannot imagine how His mind works.
- **The Glory of God** - Psalm 24:8-10
  - The consciousness of God's presence and power are everywhere.
  - But He is also always at the point of our need. He never deserts us. You are never alone. As we get involved with His great commission, He is ever present. This why and how miracles can happen. It is all about Him (Matthew 18: 19 – 20).
- **God is Eternal** - Psalm 90:2
  - He has always been there and will always be there.
  - We have already noted His eternity and that He never happened or began. He has always been God and will always be God. He is the great "I AM," the ever present one.
  - But eternity also refers to the quality of His life. He is an ever-present quality that will never change. He is eternal.

- The only time He limited Himself in time and space was when He was incarnated (John 1: 4).
- We have eternal life in Jesus Christ, and that is life that will never end in the sense of our understanding of time. It is also quality of ever-present life in Jesus.

### **The Moral Attributes of God:**

- **The Holiness of God-** 1 Peter 1:15-16
  - In God there is no change, sin, or imperfection.
  - He hates and punishes sin, for He is holy.
  - The love and compassion of God are revealed in the Doctrine of the Son.
- **The Righteousness of God-** Rom. 1:17, 18
  - Because He is Righteous, God cannot tolerate evil, and He can do no evil.
  - God created man in His likeness, therefore, He has provided a way for man to be restored to His Image and to be free from all sin (1 John 1:7-9).
- **The Faithfulness of God-** 2 Tim. 2:19
  - God can be fully trusted. He never fails. He keeps all of His promises all of the time. Therefore faith is trusting in His faithfulness.
- **The Love of God-** John 3:16-17
  - Love is God's essence and His nature. He wills only the best all the time for us.
  - 1 John 4:7-11 teaches us that God wants to love His world through us.
  - "Dear friends, let us love one another for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed His love among us ; He sent His only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love ; not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends since God so loved us, we ought to love one another, No one has ever seen God , but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us."
  - Love is not something God does to us or something He just gives us. Love is God living and imparting His love, His light, His purity and His power. This does not make us little gods, but we start becoming Godlike, because we partake of His nature.

We have spent most of our time concentrating on God as Creator and Giver of Life. Let us examine Him as follows;

- **God as Creator**
  - In Genesis 1:1, we read that "In the beginning God created."
  - This is a faith statement. We either believe it or we do not. We can try to prove that God created everything, but our arguments would seem to be our own opinions, for there are many thinkers who think otherwise. They do not accept the Bible as God's Word or as His revelation of Himself. It is like the Trinity, it is a faith statement, you either accept it or reject it.
  - We believe that in the beginning, our God, who has always been there, decided to create the heavens and the earth. He created these as we know them, with all the living creatures, and He

also created Man in His own image.

- This is His will, for He wanted this creation and created it. We have a revealed
- account through inspiration of how it all came about, and it is a beautiful expression to us of how perfect our God is. We see that He is beauty, and He thinks in colours. He gives everything design and precision, as evidenced by the order in this universe.
- But man had something more, for he was connected spiritually to God and communicated with God and understood God's will for Him. We know he failed and God, who is love, brought into operation a saving plan through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, which we will study in another lesson. This is a created world. It is not the result of evolution or chance, and it is not eternal, as God is, for there was a time when God created this world.
- The Bible assures us of another new creation to come, and of a new heavens and a new world. This world is not self-sustaining in that it will go on progressing better and better until it is perfect. It is perfect in the sense that it performs in the manner for which it was created. It was made to sustain life and keep revolving on an axis that keeps the right balance. God has promised a better world to come and He will create it. Revelation 21:1 says, "and I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away"
- **Governor:** God is the governor of all of His creation.
  - This role or office of God reveals to us that He is a responsible God, and He preserves and sustains all of His Creation. God binds Himself according to the invariable rules of both justice and mercy.
- **Providence:** Events do not happen by mere chance or even according to rigid determination.
  - Rather, God uses His own will and initiative to keep the harmony of His entire creation. Not only does He take care of stars and planets, but He also takes care of all seasons and the purposeful interaction of everything. In Christ, God is taking all believers somewhere to fulfill all that He has planned.

**Remember, everything that God IS, Jesus IS.**

- **Theodicy:** God never loses control of anything or any situation.
  - He is controlling all of history and it will come out just as He wills. Jesus founded Christian history and controls it until the day He hands it all back to the control of the Father.
- **The Sovereign Will of God**
  - If we overstress the doctrine of God's sovereign will, we will end up denying that God created man with real choice. If we understress the will of God, we will make man his own god. We have to hold to the balanced view that God created man as a free moral agent and pre-planned for him to live and act and move in Christ. Keep the balance of the first Adam and the second Adam, who is Christ. They both were free moral agents and human beings. The one made sin his master while Christ expelled sin from the human heart. God's sovereignty allowed man to make choices with their subsequent consequences. Nothing was forced upon either of them. They were not controlled by irresistible grace and coerced into some pre-programmed way of responding and living. Rather God's grace was an integral part of His will for man.

**Class Discussion:**

"Why I believe in God."

Why can God not overlook sin?

Why I believe that Jesus is God.



# 3

## God Is Revealed As The Triune God

### Lesson Purpose

- To understand that God has revealed Himself as the Triune God, and that He is One God in Three Persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

### Lesson Outcome

- After studying the Trinity the student:
- Will be strengthened in his faith in the Triune God.
- Will be fully convinced of the teaching of the Trinity in God's Word.
- Will be able to share this truth with others.

### Table of Contents

- Beware of Dispensationalism
- The names of Jesus also prove that He is God
- Divine attributes that apply to Yahweh are applied to the Holy Spirit
- The Three-in-One God

### Beware of Dispensationalism.

We have already been studying about God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. When we study about God in the Old Testament, we tend to think of Him as Father, and we think mostly about God the Son and God the Holy Spirit in the New Testament.

Many scholars speak of the dispensation of the Father, and then the dispensation of the Son, followed by the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. We must beware, though, that we do not believe that only the Father acted in the Old Testament dispensation, and that only the Son acted in the dispensation of the Gospels, and that the rest of the Bible was left to the acts of the Holy Spirit.

We must never forget that it is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit who are all omnipresent. All three persons are present all the time throughout all of history, and the Triune God is active in the world and in us all of the time.

God is Father, God is Jesus the Son of God, and God is the Holy Spirit at work, saving and sanctifying and healing and performing miracles and all the other works ascribed to our Triune God.

As we study, we will begin to see how their different roles work together in perfect harmony. We do not want to fall into the error of ascribing something to only one aspect of the Trinity when they are all to be

given glory for what they are doing. It is part of our worship to give glory to the Triune God. We are not only worshipping God the Spirit in our midst today, nor are we "Jesus only" people, and neither are we like the ancient Jews who worshipped only Jehovah. We do worship Jehovah, the only true God, the great three-in-one, who is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Remember when we speak of the "last days" that we are speaking about the time from the first day to the last day of the "last days." The first day of the "last days" was the day of Pentecost, and the last day of the "last days" is the day of the return of Christ. Peter said in Acts 2:14-21, "this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, 'In the last days God says, I will pour out my Spirit . . .'" Yes, there is still time left until the last day, but the first day of the "last days" started some 2000 years ago. We must look to the future still expecting the coming of the "last days," while we are also currently living in them.

The Trinity is revealed in the ongoing Divine Revelation. For example, we see the Trinity (Triune God) present in the creation record in Genesis. **Elohim** (God) speaks the **Davar** (Word) and the **Ruach** (Spirit) energizes the Word and creates everything, including man. Here we have three persons who are all one essence. God is One God with three personalities who communicate with each other. In Genesis 1:26, it says "then God (Elohim in the plural) said 'Let US make man in OUR own image.'" Certainly this could never mean that God was talking to angels, for we are not created in their image, but in God's image alone. God could not have been one person only for then He would have said "Let Me make man in MY own image." The Bible definitely says "Let Us" and "in OUR image." We believe the Father, Son and Holy Spirit were all present, in one essence, which was God, and they made the decision together.

There are other instances in the Old Testament where all three aspects of God are present (see Isaiah 42:1 and 63:7-10). The Old Testament is full of the teaching that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. We have already learned the names of Elohim and Yahweh, which is the name of God, the Father of Israel. Deuteronomy 32:6 says, "is He not your Father, your creator, who made you and formed you?" Isaiah 63:16 says, "You are our Father."

In the New Testament, Jesus and the Father are one. Jesus is not a creation by the Father, as some want us to believe. Some even call Him a god who was created by Father God. Jesus as the Son of God is coequal with the Father and claimed to be the Great "I Am," a term given in the Old Testament only to Jehovah.

Isaiah, prophesying the coming of the Messiah, writes, "for unto us a child is born and unto us a son is given and the government will be upon His shoulders. And He shall be called Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, of the increase of His government there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this" (Isaiah 9:6-7). The Messiah came and He was the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the prince of Peace. He reigns eternally. No one else could ever have fulfilled this prophecy. Jesus alone was born and is God Incarnate (see John 1:1 – 14 and Luke 1; 31- 33). Remember how the angel told the virgin Mary that she would become pregnant by the Holy Spirit and give birth to the Messiah? He said, "do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son and you are to give Him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, His kingdom will never end."

### **The names of Jesus also prove that He is God.**

Isaiah 7:14 says, "therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son and will call Him Immanuel" **Immanuel** means "God with us," and we know exactly when this miracle birth took place, as we just read in Luke 1: 31 – 33.

### **Alpha and Omega,**

the first and the last, means "only God," as seen in Revelation 1-8 and 22:13.

- Jesus Himself claimed to be God (see 1 John 5:20, 2 Peter 1:1, Romans 9:5, John 1:1 and 20:28, Colossians 2:9, Hebrews 1:7-9, Revelation 5:13, John 8:42, John 14:9 and 17:5, and Matthew 28:19).

### **The Deity of Christ**

Is sustained in those scriptures that refer to His pre- existence, such as John 1:15, 8:58, 6:51,3:13, and 17:5.

- Divine names and titles are applied to Christ. We speak of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. LORD is a term only used of Jehovah in the Old Testament.

### **The Holy Spirit is also God.**

The Holy Spirit is not just some force or power or an influence flowing from God.

- He is a person who is of the same essence as the Father and the Son.
- The doctrine of the Trinity envisions the same Divine Being in the God of Creation, the Jesus in history, and the Spirit within believers.

### **The Holy Spirit is called God in the Book of Acts.**

In Acts 5:3-4, the Holy Spirit is called God, for it says that to lie to the Holy Spirit is to lie to God.

"Then Peter said, ' Ananias, how is it that satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit, and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God."

### **Divine attributes that apply only to Yahweh are applied to the Holy Spirit.**

- Omniscience is ascribed to the Spirit, as we read in 1 Corinthians 2:10-12, which says, "but God has revealed it to us by His Spirit. The Spirit searches all things even the deep things of God. Who among men knows the thought of man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God."
- Omnipresence is also ascribed to the Holy Spirit. Psalm 139: 7 – 10 says, "where can I go from your Spirit, where can I flee from your presence? "
- Omnipotence is also one of His attributes. Acts 15:18-19 says, "I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the

Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit."

- Eternality is also applied to the Holy Spirit in Hebrews 9:14, which says, "how much more then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God."
- The Holy Spirit is one essence with God. 2 Corinthians 3:18 says, "the Lord who is the Spirit." The Apostles' Creed speaks of the third person of the Trinity God as the Holy Spirit.
- Divine works are ascribed to the Holy Spirit. Matthew 12:28 shows that it is by the Spirit that demons were cast out by the Son. Sinners were born again through the Spirit in John 3:3. Sinners entered the Kingdom of God via the Spirit in John 3:5. The Son was raised from the dead by the power of the Spirit in Romans 8:11, which says "and if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through the Spirit who lives in you." Only God can impart life, so the Spirit must be God.

He is Holy in the sense of being eternally Holy as God is eternally Holy, therefore He must be one with God. He is the "Holy Spirit" in Romans 1:4, the Spirit of God In Genesis 1:2, the Spirit of Christ In Romans 8:9, the Spirit of the Lord In Luke 4:18, and the Spirit of our God in 1 Corinthians 6:11. These are but a few instances where the Bible shows that the Holy Spirit is one with the Father and one with the Son.

- Divine worship is offered to the Holy Spirit, Proving that He is God, for God has made it clear that we cannot worship other gods, but He allows us to worship His Holy Spirit. The Spirit's name is placed on equal terms with God in scripture. We read in 2 Corinthians 13:14, "may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."
- The many names ascribed to the Holy Spirit also confirm that He is one with God. Romans 8:15 talks about the spirit of sonship, saying, "but you received the Spirit of sonship." In John 14:16, He is the comforter. He is the Spirit of life in Romans 8:2. He is the Spirit who awakens faith in 2 Corinthians 4:13. He is the Spirit of grace in Hebrews 10:29. He is the Spirit of truth in John 14:17, the Spirit of wisdom in Ephesians 1:17, and the Spirit of holiness in Romans 1:14. He is the Spirit of Jehovah, the God of Hosts, and the God of Israel, in Numbers 11:29, Judges 3:10, Psalm 139:7, and Isaiah 61:1.
- The Holy Spirit is inseparable, distinguishable and co-eternal. The Spirit works, the Son fulfills His ministry, and the Father approves. They are always in harmony. The Spirit enables the access to the Father according to Ephesians 2:18. The Father, who is love, moves toward fallen humanity in their sin in order to send His Son. The Son assumed human nature, suffered and died and was resurrected to save and redeem humanity. The Holy Spirit provides the means by which sinners can appropriate

their full salvation in Christ by grace through faith. Together as One God, they thought out the whole plan. Together, they decided their various offices and means of working, but they did it together as one essence. They are three persons but one God.

### **The Three-in-One God**

There are not three Gods. There is only ONE God, only ONE will of God, and only ONE council of God. God is the essence. The Father is a distinct person in that essence, the Son is a distinct person of the same essence, and the Holy Spirit is a third distinct person, who is also of that same essence.

Collectively, they are one God. That is why we use the term “God” when speaking of the Triune God. They are together. They are one council and share one will. They always agree and decide together how this one will is going to be carried out and by which aspect of the Godhead. They decide together who takes the lead, but they are always present in each other and one is not below the other. They are always ONE. Paul correlates “Spirit”, “Lord” and “God” in Ephesians 4:4-6. A similar correlation appears in the benediction of 2 Corinthians 13:14, and in the baptismal formula, “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” in Matthew 28:19.

They share the following attributes equally: Unity, Spirituality, Eternity, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Omniscience, Immutability, Wisdom, Truth, Justice, Holiness, and Goodness.

Accepting the Trinity helps us to know God the Father as our Creator, God the Son as our Saviour, and God the Holy Spirit as our Sanctifier.

### **Class review**

Explain the Trinity to someone who must act as if they have never heard of the Triune God before.



# 4

## God The Father

### Lesson Purpose

- The knowledge the student has gained has helped him to further understand that God is not part of His own creation. We want him to understand creation against the backdrop of other conceptions of creation. The Father God is the source and creator of everything. This does not mean that the Son and the Spirit were not present. The student must be taught to understand the offices and roles of each one in the trinity.

### Lesson Outcome

The student will:

- Appreciate the greatness of God the Father in His creating role.
- And see why God is not part of His creation.
- understand the Father's involvement with His creations.
- discover that God never wills anything bad for His creations.

### Table of Contents

- The Fatherhood of God
- Father in His Providence
- Cosmology
- He is Father – King

### The Fatherhood of God

Acts 17:28 says that we are God's offspring; therefore He is our Father.

By receiving Christ as our saviour, we have been born into God's family according to John 1:12. He is our Father and we are His children. Malachi asked, "have not all we one Father? Hath not God created us?"

**The Fatherhood of God** is important in our understanding the different roles of each person within the Trinity.

God the Father is the creator and the governor of everything. Nothing happens by chance.

God the Son is the living Word who makes decisions along with the Father and the Spirit. He agrees to make their will, which is always in agreement, happen. He speaks the Truth and it happens. Through Him being and living the Truth, it comes about.

What He says, He does.

God the Spirit is the ever-present power of God that energizes it all and makes it all happen, according to what the Father determined and what the Son said would happen. The Holy Spirit is the third person in

the Trinity, not in rank, but in office. He is not just a force coming out from the Father. Rather, He is God energizing the will and word of God.

**It is also important to understand God's involvement as Father in His Providence.**

We need to examine in detail the revelation given to us about God's Providence. In discussing His Providence, we are looking at His goodness and His power at work in His creation. He preserves, accompanies and directs the universe and all other creations, including man.

We need to differentiate how God deals with the universe and His dealing with men, who are created in His own image.

To be a person with a personality means that man has a soul. He has a spiritual side as well as a physical side. God has a way of communicating with the whole man, and man knows when God is speaking to him. Man also knows that he is a being which thinks, feels, and chooses.

Some theologies treat man as if he were a "something" that God created, but man is a someone. As a result, he has self-consciousness and thinks physically and spiritually, even in his fallen state as a sinner. Naturally, he only has spiritual life when he is connected to God, but he has the capacity to be spiritual. This causes him to search for God, which has resulted in all the religions in the world.

So God treats man differently than He treats the rest of His creations. Man is unique and special to God and the object of His personal love.

Notice how, in the Creation Hymn in Genesis 1 and 2, God spoke and it was. In Genesis 1:3, God says, "let there be light" and there was light. He said, "let there be sky," (verse 9), "let there be land," (verse 11), and "let there be vegetation," (verse 14), and it was so. In verse 14, God said, "let there be a sun and a moon" on the fourth day, and it was so. In verses 20 – 24, God said, "let the water and the earth teem with living creatures and birds," and it was so.

But on the sixth day of creation, as seen in verse 26, God said, "let US make man in Our image, in Our likeness... so God created man in His own image..."

Man was not the result of a decree of God. He was singled out to be created by God's own hands. He was moulded into the shape of a physical body, and then God breathed the spirit of life into man and man became a living soul, according to Genesis 2:2 – 7.

God did not treat man as someone to be pushed around to fit into His plan. Man was given the ability to obey or disobey. He had the freedom to choose, and God, his creator, respected that and worked with him accordingly. God had a plan for man, of course, and He clearly shared it with Adam. But we know Satan deceived man into thinking that he could be like God and know more than God did. Man then decided to trust his own judgment and made the wrong choice and fell into sin.

Immediately, God introduced His saving plan for man and promised to send the redeemer to save him, according to Genesis 3:15.

## The CCP Pastoral Training Course Doctrine of God

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We now have God's revealed plan, which is for man to become reconciled to God through the revealed Word of God, which gives us the truth. The living Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, reveals to us clearly His way of salvation. It is now all in Christ. There is no salvation outside of God's revelation in Christ.

God had preplanned it all before the foundation of the world, and it has been in progress ever since. He never preprogrammed man in any way. Instead, He reaches out to man in love, according to John 3:16-17. Yes, God does preserve all of His creations, but He does it according to His knowledge about His creations. It takes all power and all intelligence to control everything each second, which God does.

But man is so different than the rest of creation that God became a man in order to create a new race of men for a new world. He has no such plan for any of His other creations. Even a new heaven and a new earth cannot replace the special love and grace and mercy that He shows to man.

Nothing operates apart from God's control, and man made a big mistake thinking that he could control things. Men today have gone so far as to say that they are their own gods and will one day control everything. But it will never happen, for the living, feeling, thinking, personal Almighty God is control. God does more than just sustain all of His creations.

God's providential activity includes His work of guiding and steering mankind and history toward a *telos* (an ultimate purpose) which God Himself wills and controls (control here must not be confused with coerce or manipulate). All of history will come out just as God has planned, but He has not preprogrammed man's history. God works within history, but He is taking us somewhere with Him into the future. God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, according to Colossians 1:16.

God invites man to be part of His plan as it is being realized in and through Jesus Christ. His will in our personal lives is being guided by His Spirit. His will is for each of us to arrive where He has planned for us to be. Christ has already cleared and paved the way for us to follow Him, and anyone can. He has already conquered the law of sin and death, and He is already glorified. He is preparing the new world for us, and the next event that God has revealed, which can happen anytime now, is the return of Christ to earth to fetch His own people.

### **Cosmology**

The study of cosmology may embrace the entire universe in its scope, or as it is commonly treated, it may be divided into the following:

Cosmology, which applies to the kingdom of nature apart from man, and Anthropology, which deals with the science of man in his original state. By using the term "world," we are referring to everything that is extrinsic to God.

Ancient people had little conception of the world and generally regarded it as existing by chance or by necessity. They had no single term to express the universe. They spoke of "the heaven and the earth" and later added "the heaven, the earth and the sea." This was also the dominant Greek concept. The Hebrews, the Chaldeans, and the Syrians used the term "aion," which referred especially to the duration or age of the

world rather than its creative aspect. The Greeks later used the word “cosmos,” because of the beauty and orderliness of the world.

But they did not understand creation, and they spoke about how “from nothing, nothing comes.” They could not grasp that the world was created out of nothing.

They thought about God and about self-existent matter, but in their minds, neither was dependent on the other. They believed that when God came into contact with this matter the world was formed. There are other theories of creation as well.

The **mechanical theory** taught that the world was formed in a purely external and formal manner. It expresses the thought of transcendence (the exaltation of God above the universe and His distinctness from it) and wholly disregards His divine immanence (presence of God in the world).

The **physical or materialistic theory** of creation presupposes the eternity of matter. It portrays God only as the fashioner of the world. To those who believe this theory, God is only the universal life of nature.

The **emanation or pantheistic theory** says that the world is to be regarded as an extension of the divine substance.

The theory of **eternal creation** says that this world is not the first that God created. In this theory, there never was a first world and there will not be a last world. This theory tends toward pantheism.

The **theory of natural evolution** teaches that a spontaneous creation of simple life forms have evolved into the creation we now witness. For example, according to this theory, man evolved from the ape family.

The theory of **continuous creation** teaches that creation is a continuous process. People who subscribe to this theory do not believe that there was a creation event in which creation took place.

**God has revealed Himself as the Creator and the Father** of all.

He watches over His creation with love and He governs with power and wisdom.

The Scriptures teach that there was a creation event. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Genesis 1:1.

This declaration shows that the world began out of nothing, solely through the divine will of the Almighty and living God. It was the Spirit that moved upon the face of the waters, so in the creation, we see all three persons acting as one God.

Psalm 33:6 says, “by the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.”

1 Corinthians 8:6 says, “that to us there is but One God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom all things, and we by Him.”

Perhaps the most outstanding feature of the scriptural record of creation is the orderly arrangement in stages and periods known as “creative days.”

Whether these “days” are seen as 24 hour days or whether the word “yom” is interpreted as periods of time, when placed alongside the order of science, there is agreement.

### **The Inorganic Era**

**1 Day** – Cosmological light

**2 Day** – The firmament – water and atmosphere

**3 Day** – Dry land and vegetation

### **The Organic Era**

**4 Day** – The luminaries

**5 Day** - The lower animals, fishes, and birds

**6 Day** - Land animals, creation of man

### **We conclude therefore from scripture that :**

- **God is the Father of all life.** Psalm 36:9 says, “for with you is the fountain of life, in your light we see light.” John 5:26, “For as the Father hath life in Himself so He has granted for the Son to have life in Himself”. Psalm 148:5 says, “let them praise the name of the Lord, for He commanded and they were created,” and “the heavens declare His handiwork,” according to Psalm 19:1.
- God comes and tends for vegetation, according to Psalm 104:14, 16, which says, “He makes grass grow for the cattle [and] the trees of the Lord are well watered.”
- God cares for all nature. Matthew 6:26 and 10:29 say, “look at the birds of the air...your heavenly Father feeds them.” God controls the weather and the seasons. Psalm 135 :6-7 says, “ whatever the Lord pleased, that did He in the heavens and the earth, in the seas, and all deep places. He causes the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth, He maketh lightnings for the rain, He bringeth the wind out of His treasures.”
- Genesis 8:22 says, “while the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.” He tends and cares for the seasons.

### **He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

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- God sent His Son. John 20:21 says, “as the Father hath sent Me so send I you.”
- John 6:57 says, “as the living Father that sent Me beareth witness of Me.”
- Galatians 4:4 says “but when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman.”
- God the Father gave His only Son to die for us, according to John 3:16.
- The Father sent the angels to worship the Son, according to Luke 2:13.
- In John 8:18, the Father bore witness to His Son.
- According to John 12:27-28, the Father glorified the Son.
- Matthew 3:17 says the Father was well pleased with His Son.

- Romans 8:32 says He spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all.
- 1 John 4:9-10 says that God showed His love among us by sending His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him.
- Philippians 2:9-11 says, "therefore God hath exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of the Father."
- Ephesians 1:17 says that Paul prayed that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Glorious Father would give you the wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better."

**He is the Father of the family of believers.**

- Acts 17:24-28 says, "we are His offspring..."
- Rom. 8:29 says, "that He might be the firstborn among many brothers..."
- Ephesians 1:11 says that He thought us up and created us "to the praise of His glory".
- The Father pre-designed our salvation in Christ according to Ephesians 1-4. This plan in Christ was to save all those who believe and to conform them to the image of Christ.
- Wesleyans teach predestination but cannot reconcile double predestination with Scripture. You must understand the difference.
- Wesleyans believe that God pre-designed for all men to be saved and conformed to Jesus Christ and that He offers eternal life to everybody who will accept His invitation by faith He will also make them holy and blameless and conform them into the image of Jesus Christ. You can accept this and be saved from all sin, or you can reject this offer and by so doing take part in the second death, according to Ephesians 1: 3 – 14.
- According to 1 Thessalonians 5:24, God sanctifies believers entirely.
- Matthew 6:1 says He rewards believers. 2 Timothy 4:8 and Romans 8:20 assert that He will glorify all believers.
- Jesus taught us to pray in Matthew 6: 9 – 13 and Luke 11: 2 – 4, saying, "our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done ...." The rest of the prayer is the child asking for food, protection, and sustainability from his parent. God is our Father.
- It is the Father who so cares for His creation, man, that He moves with a Father's heart to bring man back into fellowship with Him.
- Jesus used the parables of the lost son, the lost sheep, and the lost coin to teach about the Fatherheart of God's Fatherhood.

**Luke 1: 15-32 is the parable of the lost son.**

In the story of the lost son, the Father waits for his son to return and when the son does come back, the father stretches out his arms to welcome him home. Our Father God is waiting to welcome us back home, and He rejoices when we return. Nowhere does the Father decide to either give up on the son or force him to return. It is through the love and forgiveness of the father that the son knows he can return. He was not coerced in any way, the son "came to himself" and returned by his own decision, knowing that the father was a graceful person, and he humbled himself, asked for forgiveness, and was reinstated into the family again, with all the rights and privileges of a son. There is a sense in which we are all God's children by creation, but we are not part of His family because of our waywardness. If we do not return, we will die in the pigsty and not at home. That is why Jesus came to call us back home, to where the Father is waiting to receive and to welcome us.

In the parable of the lost sheep, after counting his flock, the shepherd found that one was missing so he went out to find the sheep. He continues until he finds it and brings it back into the fold. This is a picture of our Great Shepherd looking for those who are still lost. The lost coin refers to those who are lost in the home, where they are comfortable and think all is all right, but they need to be part of God's plan and will for them. Many today are lost in the churches they attend every Sunday, and in Christians homes where they were born, but do not know God personally as their heavenly Father. He is searching for them, and they will be found if they call on Him.

The Fatherhood of God teaches us that God foreknew all believers. Romans 8:29 says, "for whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first born among many brethren." Ephesians 1:11 says, "in whom we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Ephesians 1:4 says, "according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love."

God has predestined every single person to be part of His family, and He provided for that to happen in and through His Son Jesus Christ. He knows who will respond to Him and who will reject Him, but His foreknowledge has not changed His will and His plans. He still makes the offer to everyone. He even supplies every man with the ability to choose either to accept His will and plan in Christ or to reject His offer. He will not force one to decide against his free will. This is what we call free grace. Is it not wonderful to know that He loves everyone equally and has the same plan in mind for everybody? Therefore Jesus died for every sinner, not only for those "pre-programmed" to be saved. God always displays a Fatherheart toward every one of His created persons. On the Day of Judgment, He will show those who did not choose Him that Jesus died to save them as well, but they refused to come to Him. When Jesus died and shed His blood, He made salvation available to every single person in the world. The Father does not draw people with irresistible grace, but He draw them with His love, and they either respond to His offer or reject it. This is what grace is. God makes an offer to man that he does not deserve and cannot merit. It comes from God's love and mercy alone, because He loves. That is what He does. How can we say He loves souls if He deliberately chooses to withhold His mercy and grace for no reason at all? All sinners are alike. On what basis would God ever make such a decision? it goes against everything that God has revealed about Himself, especially when we stand at the foot of the cross. The Truth is that " God so loved the world that He gave... that whosoever believeth." The choice is offered to every man to either believe it or do not.

### **He is Father – King**

- Not only is God the Redeemer – King, but He is also the Father – King.
- From earliest times, the Hebrews conceived of God as the King who was promised.
- God had been their King, and then they asked for their own King, and in a wonderful way God brought in His Reign and control through the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Even though they had earthly kings, God was the real King who was in control of their history. It had all been in His mind before the foundation of the world. That is why Jesus acknowledged His Father- King in the Lord's Prayer. It is the way the Trinity agreed to work. Matthew 4:23 says, " Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven"
- Jesus recognized that the Kingdom of God was being realized in a unique way in His time and through His Work. The Father was bringing in His rule through Jesus, His Son, and by His Holy

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Spirit's power. It came to us, and the Kingdom of God is here, now.

- Wherever God is, He is the reigning King of Kings, who governs everything, and
- controls all of history. It will all come out just as He has willed.

**Class discussion**

What is the difference between  
predestination and double predestination?



# 5

## God Is A Personal God

### Lesson Purpose

- The purpose of this lesson is to help that student to know that God is a personal God, who speaks and loves and seeks reconciliation with man.

### Lesson Outcome

Upon completion of this lesson the student will

- Be able to know God personally through His revealed plan of salvation in Christ.
- Be able to speak to God personally.
- Be in constant fellowship with God.

### Table of Contents

- God is pure Spirit
- Steps into the Kingdom of God.

### **Our God is a conversational God. He wants to talk and communicate with you.**

Imagine if you never spoke to the one that you say you love. They would not believe you when you say that you love them. There has to be communication and understanding for real fellowship to take place. All people have the ability to communicate their thoughts and feelings in different ways. Sometimes, your wife cooks you a meal to let you know her love for you. You respond because you love her as well. Likewise, God has given to each one of us the ability to respond to Him. We can talk to God with our mouths but we can also talk to Him from our hearts and minds without actually saying a word. We do not take the initiative to speak to Him. It is God who comes looking for us, and He speaks to us, and, by grace, we are able to respond to Him. We know that we are born as sinners out of fellowship with God, but through the saving work of Jesus on the Cross, we can approach Him and have fellowship with Him. Through the redemptive work of Jesus, we can be reconciled to God and speak to Him. God is one who thinks and feels and chooses, and He has enabled us to be like Him. We too can think and feel and choose. This does not make us little gods. Rather, we are created in the Image of God.

- God speaks in Genesis 1:3.
- God sees in Genesis 11:5.
- God hears in Psalm 94:9.
- God can be angry, as in Deuteronomy 1:37, He can be jealous, as in Exodus 20:5, and He can be compassionate, as in Psalm 111:4.
- Only personal beings can feel such emotions.

Whatever being can say "I" is a person with self-consciousness, intentionality, the will to communicate, and self-determination. Even if I live to an old age and my personality and character change with time, I am still "me." The self-consciousness does not change.

God speaks to ME and I hear Him. Sometimes it is from His Word. Sometimes it is His voice in my mind, and I am hearing Him with spiritual ears. Other times, it is truth flashing across the screen of my mind. Many times, He is just an awareness, and yet I seem to know what He wills without a word being spoken. He speaks through Christian books, movies, television, and even just in conversation. In these ways, and many others, an understanding comes to me. I have lived over 50 years as a Christian, and God talks to me through my past. In it, I see His faithfulness, His guidance, and His sustenance. There is a definite plan that has emerged, and with it is a growing assurance that I am going somewhere for a purpose, with Him, every day. This is not by chance or luck. Faith is simply obeying God's directions and trusting His faithfulness. And that is the way He has planned it all. We have already seen that God has a name. He is not a "something" but a Someone. When we talk of God, we mean God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit. These are distinct persons, not forces.

Pantheism says that God is the world and that there is no difference between the creator and the created.

Polytheism attributes God with human limitations and faults.

Agnostics deny that we can know God personally, but we do know God through Christ. Atheists deny His existence, but just because these people believe the way they do does not in any way alter God. He has always been there and will always be there. He is everywhere and anywhere.

**God is pure Spirit and "the Father of our spirits" according to Hebrews 12:9.** God creates other self-determining and responsible beings, and He has communion with them. He does not only communicate audibly, but He also communicates Spirit-to-spirit as well. As Spirit, He enters our spirits and imparts His life to us. We then come alive and we know it through His Spirit's witness in our consciousness. We became aware of His presence and speak to Him by faith and He hears and acts. He has a way of speaking to us that brings illumination, and we see and hear Him speaking in us. It is a real experience. He speaks to us in our hearts, our minds, our spirits, and our feelings, and we have a sense of awe in His presence.

It is no wonder that so many religions are aware of the something more at work in the world. To those who know Him, He is taking us somewhere simply because God is at work in His world all the time. Everything is being held together by the Word of His power. Many have mistaken His workings, thinking that He is only a force at work. They do not recognize that He is a personal God, ever-present, ever-powerful, and ever-controlling all things by His Word.

He allows His children to see His work and His beauty by His Grace, and step-by-step, He illumines the Truth. Because of their sinful condition, however, they are blind to His overtures, and in many cases, they reject His advances outright. But God keeps calling in many ways.

God is also known by His character. Because He is a good God and will never change, He desires good for all His creations all the time. That is why we can place our faith in Him, and in His Word, and in all that He has spoken through His Son, Jesus Christ. The triune God cannot go back on His word, for it is an expression of

His very character. He is not just “sometimes good.” His essence is Good.

Also, God’s character is shown in His love. Love is who He is. He does not just love us when we are good. He loves us where we are and as we are. While we were yet sinners, Jesus Christ died for the ungodly, according to Romans 5:8. He consists of love that always loves His creations. He has no preferences or favourites. God loves us all the same.

God’s character is also evident in His faithfulness. All history is going to come out just as He has revealed in His Living Word and His written- revealed Word. Faith is trusting God’s faithfulness. When we need to know that He is still in control, all we have to do is commit ourselves to Him, knowing that He will work out His will in our lives not only day-by-day, but even while we are asleep at night. He is always taking us somewhere in His will and plan and we must trust His faithfulness.

God does not only work when we believe. When we respond to Him, He is always already ahead of us, so we can never come up with something that will catch Him unaware. As free moral agents, we can either trust Him and fulfill His will or we can choose our own way and suffer the consequences. He is going to step in and illumine the way before us. Because we respond in love, we will obey Him.

If we sin willfully against God’s light, He will operate in love toward us by allowing us to get into a mess. When we become desperate, we will come to our senses and get back on track with Him. His chastening is always corrective. It is not done for the sake of punishment. See Hosea 3:1 and the Hebrew word used in this verse is *chesed*, which means “God’s unfailing holy love.”

Because God is Holy Love, He will impart this same quality to those with whom He fellowships. Not one of us can make ourselves more and more holy. Holiness is a quality of God Himself that He imparts to those in fellowship with Him.

Christ is the “once – for –all” manifestation of the holy love of God. This is the essence of the triune God, and He loves everyone with this love. He does not love the mass of people called “the world.” He loves every individual person in this world. It is only when we as individuals respond to God with the same love He imparts to us that we know we have been loved. We have more than forgiveness. We have cleansing from all that separated us from God, and we know He loves us. We know this because we love others. That is His love in us reaching out, as He does, to share His Love with someone else.

There are three metaphors that reveal God’s holy love for us.

Romans 16 – 18, and John 2:1 use the **courtroom metaphor**. In this courtroom, there is not the slightest relaxation of the full requirements of the law. The sinner is convicted and the penalty is death. But we see the advocate of sinners, the Son of God, taking the full penalty of the sinner upon Himself. He takes the sinner’s place. In this saving event, the sinner is accepted and received as if he had never sinned, and He is adopted as a son in the family of this Holy Loving God. See also Romans 3:21-31 and 5:18, 1 Corinthians 6:11, 1 John 2:1, 2:3-5, 3:5 .

In **the family metaphor**, God is the caring parent. In this example, the Father takes on the newly adopted child to care for and nurture him and even to discipline him, according to Luke 15:11 – 32.

In the **temple metaphor**, God is pictured as the Holy One who is in the holy place receiving the propitiatory sacrifices being made to satisfy the requirements of divine righteousness. Here He is the Son, the High Priest, who cleanses, purifies, and invites sinners who come to the altar to boldly enter into the presence of the Holy One, as seen in Hebrews 2:17, 3:1, and 7:1. Jesus removes all obstacles between man and God, and fellowship is restored. It is here where sinners are made pure, clean, and holy by God's presence in them. This is a real experience. It is more than just believing it. Rather it is Jesus now living and acting in and through us.

**The Blessedness of God** refers to the fact that it is God's nature to bless everything and everyone that He touches. People are blessed by King Jesus. They know it through their lives, and through the fact that they are being blessed all the time. Living a blessed life is part of being in fellowship with God. I have always said that Psalm 1 is expanded and defines the remaining 149 Psalms when it says, "blessed is the man," and the King picked up the same theme when He gave the laws of the Kingdom of Heaven in Matthew 5: 1- 11. You are blessed when you walk and talk with the Lord. You are being blessed all the time by God Himself. To be blessed by God is much greater than just being happy. It is God sharing His life, His love, His light, His power, His love, and His holy quality of life with you. It is you connecting to what you were originally created to be, and it is blessed.

God is a personal God who blesses those who follow the King. These are the Kingdom laws of blessing. God, in His providence, has planned them so, but He does not force the laws upon anybody. If you walk through the blessed life promised by King Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, you will discover personally that He loves you and wants you to be part of His plan. This is His Kingdom, and there is only one way in. Jesus said, in John 3:5, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the Kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit" In John 3:3, He says, "no one can see the Kingdom of God unless he is born again."

The Kingdom life is the BLESSED life, according to Matthew 5 :1ff. But you can never know that until you are part of the Kingdom of God, and there is only one way into the Kingdom of God. That way is via a miracle of spiritual re – birth.

As we have seen, because man unplugged himself from God, his source of spiritual life and power, he has been plunged into the darkness of sin. He is separated from God and is no longer part of God's Kingdom. Instead, he is part of the kingdom of darkness, and he cannot save himself out of this condition. God, as Creator, has to recreate him and change him from a sinner to a saint. Someone had to pay for his sin, however, because the wages of sin is death, according to Romans 6:23.

That is why God gave His Son Jesus to die in our place and pay with His life for our sin. He died and was buried and suffered in our place. By so doing, Jesus the God/Man was able to satisfy sin's demand for death. He was also able to satisfy the righteousness of God the Father, the Holy Governor of all things.

Jesus rose from the dead, having cleared the way to God for us by removing our debt and guilt of sin, and also by being willing to share His powerful resurrected life with us. Being God, He is able to recreate us if we come to Him and invite Him and the Holy Spirit into our lives. We can do this because, by grace, He gives us the ability to respond to Him, and with His power in us, we can follow and obey Him.

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We then become disciples of Jesus, and we start to learn and grow in grace that God has willed for us. We start the journey He has mapped out for us, and we also receive the witness of His Spirit that we are doing right, believing right, and living right. Even more than that, He assures us of our final destination, the new world where we will live with Him forever. That is what believing in God as creator is all about. Why believe in Him if you do not allow Him to perform His will, which is re-creation, in your life? That is His plan for you right now. The following principles of the Kingdom are revealed to us by God our King In Matthew 5: 3 – 10.

- Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.
- Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted.
- Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth.
- Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they will be filled.
- Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.
- Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God.
- Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called sons of God.
- Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Matthew was a Jew and would therefore not write the name God, so he does not say “the Kingdom of God,” but “the Kingdom of Heaven.” It is also important to remember that the word “blessed” does not mean “happy.” It has a depth of meaning that far exceeds happiness. It is blessedness. It is a quality of life that only Kingdom people know anything about.

You can be blessed by God when you are suffering extreme persecution from the devil and his demons, and the same goes for when you are being persecuted by people. The blessed life is the kind of life Christians and sinners alike know we should be living, but it can only be found within the Kingdom of God. It is that life of perfect harmony that we sense when we are alone with God in nature, or when we are watching the heavens at night. It is that sense of awe at His creation. It is the same sense we get when we see a beautiful painting or hear real music, and when we are aware of His presence and His majesty. It is that sense of a higher person with us, comforting us. It is the sense of knowing spiritually that you are going somewhere safe with Him. It is the light that shines through every dark situation and removes our fear. He is the sense of love at its best. It is being aware of another Person. In Him, you find yourself praying and worshipping, and you are one with His presence. Your mind is alive with His promises, and His truth is so real to you. You are in communion with God. You speak to Him as Father and as Your friend Jesus, and you sense His Spirit in your spirit. You feel that you can almost reach out and touch Him. In that blessedness, He is so real to you.

### **The following are steps into the Kingdom of God and Kingdom attitudes that must remain with us.**

Jesus tells us we attain the Kingdom of Heaven when we are poor in spirit, when we are willing to acknowledge our own spiritual bankruptcy without Him in our lives.

We enter the Kingdom when we are repentant for our sin. As we confess, we sense His forgiveness.

When we become meek, open and broken before Him, we become teachable, allowing His Spirit to enter us and to guide us.

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We find ourselves hungering and thirsting after what He says is right, and when we listen to Him as He goes through His sermon, He writes every one of God's commandments upon our hearts. We then know His right ways to live, and we do, for we are filled all the time with His Spirit.

As we tarry in His presence, God scans our hearts and minds and motives and shows us what has to be put right and what attitudes have to be changed. He wants us to be clean from all sin, and we want to be clean. His mercy to us makes us merciful toward others and we know what has to be done and we do it. That is what it means to be walking in His light. There is no condemnation here and He fills us with His love and mercy, and we want to do the same to others.

How good it is to sense that one's heart is pure before God, not by anything we have done, but by what He has revealed, and what He has removed, and the love that is now filling us and motivating us. In all of this, we see Him. We know we have met and seen God, for a miracle has happened to us. We have been reconciled to Him and we are being filled with His love, and we want to live right lives for Him. It is not long before we see God and understand that He is taking us somewhere with Him. There we feel safe. Some call it feeling "saved." But knowing that you have been born again is assurance to you. Jesus is now real to you and you see that Jesus is God in you.

You become a peacemaker, and people know you are changed. You leave a trail of His peace wherever you go and with everyone you meet. You are discovering that the peace and power of His Kingdom are ever-present wherever He is being acknowledged as King. You are a son of God, you are part of His family because you invited God to be King in your heart and in your life.

You have discovered that God is in control of your life as much as He is in control of His entire creation. He is faithful in taking care of everything all the time. He keeps it under control and He sustains everything without failing even once. Suddenly you realize this same God is in your life and you are obeying the principles of blessing. You feel so secure and blessed because you are part of the blessed life.

Now when you are persecuted, you will turn those moments into moments of worship. You will give Him "worth-ship," by trusting Him to work it all out according to His plan so you can get on with living the blessed life.

Listen to the living God who created everything, including you. He has a plan for you to be part of His saving history as revealed in His Son Jesus Christ

Romans 8:28-31 says, "and we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him and who have been called according to His purpose. For those He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those He predestined He also called, those He called He also justified, and those He justified He also glorified. What shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?"

God is waiting to meet you person-to-person.

**Class Discussion and participation.**

Have a discussion on ways that God speaks to us, and also how we speak to God.  
Allow time for each student to speak personally to God.

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# Christology

~ Dr Wally Marais



# 1

## Jesus is revealed as the God-Man

### Lesson Purpose

- The purpose of this lesson is to enable the student to understand the importance of knowing the Lord Jesus as his/her personal Saviour, thereby realizing the full meaning of His coming to earth as the God-Man.

### Lesson Outcome

- Once having completed this lesson, the student will understand the priestly, prophetic, and kingly roles of Jesus. He will understand the role of Jesus the God-Man. If he is already a believer, he will understand how to bring others to Christ.

### Table of Contents

- Jesus the God-Man
- The state of His humiliation
- Jesus as our great Prophet
- Jesus as our great High Priest
- Jesus as our eternal King

### Jesus the God-Man

We want to start by making it absolutely clear that Jesus is the God-Man and not merely God with skin on, or simply man divinized. No, as the creed says, everything that God is, Jesus is, and everything that man is, Jesus is. He is fully God and fully man, and we must keep these two sides of His nature absolutely clear. Jesus is God and Man at the same time.

Let us take a moment to say that although the God-Man became Jesus our Saviour, the God-Man, Jesus was not preexistent as the God-Man Jesus. John 3:16-17 says, "for God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through Him."

The Son of God was always with the Father and is eternal in the essence of the Godhead. He has existed eternally with the Father, and is known in the Old Testament as the Messiah, and in the New Testament as the Christos. He has always been the Anointed One in the Trinity to perform His saving role as the God-Man when He came to earth.

We need to see what the Bible teaches about this coming Messiah who would become the suffering servant of Jehovah, take on Himself the form of a man, and carry out the saving plan of God. The name "Jesus" means "Saviour" and that is why He was born, lived and died, rose again, and returned to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Matthew 1:21 emphasizes this purpose in declaring that "He shall save His people from their sin".

Acts 4:12 states that salvation comes through Jesus alone, and Jesus of Nazareth, in John 14:6, says "I am the way, the truth and the life, and no man cometh to the Father but by me." If God had not become flesh, there could not have been salvation for man. His official title is Jesus Christ. It means the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Deliverer. Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6-7 predicted His coming and John announced His coming "behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." John 1:29. Jesus had to become a man to fulfill the offices assigned to the Messiah. The first Adam was endowed to be prophet, priest, and king, but we know how he failed. Now the second Adam, Jesus, comes to restore these ministries to us as Christians. He does this by becoming our Prophet, Priest, and King. Naturally, it is Christ in us and through us who fulfills these ministries, not us in ourselves. Furthermore, we see that Jesus was not just God, but He was also man, and when He acts He acts as the God-Man.

These offices of Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King are not only to be applied to Him in His role as God, but also in His role as the God-Man. Neither can these acts just be the works of Jesus the man. Too many errors have resulted from presuming that either only Jesus as God or only Jesus as man is at work. The reality is that both aspects of Jesus are always present and are working together.

Before we move into discussing these offices, it would do us well to see what the Bible says about the manhood of Jesus. John 1:14 says that "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," and according to Hebrews 2:14, "as children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same." Jesus possessed a human body and a human soul, and as we will see, in His humiliation, Jesus was fully human.

He was also sinless, because He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and not of a sinful human father.

### **THE STATE OF HIS HUMILIATION**

Philippians 2:5-8 states, "let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." In these verses, we see the following:

1. A self-renunciation. Jesus never held onto His right to be God; rather, He chose to become a man.
2. A self-emptying, or kenosis. Jesus made Himself of no reputation; rather He emptied Himself of the Glory of God and limited Himself to God's will on earth. He never ceased to be God but chose to function as the God-Man.
3. Jesus took upon Himself the form of a servant. He was made in the likeness of man, and He carried His own cross to Calvary. Here we see a perfection of the humiliation of Jesus as He became the representative of sinners, even to the point of death on a cross.

The kenosis, or humiliation, of Jesus was not simply to become a man, but in becoming the God-Man.

It was always God's plan that the God-Man function as our Prophet, Priest, and King.

**Jesus as our great Prophet** is able to say "I say unto you." The Old Testament prophets could only say "thus says the Lord..." In John 10:1,7 Jesus said, "**I am** telling you the truth". This is why all truth must be measured by what Jesus taught. The Old Testament prophets pointed to the coming Christ, Jesus, in whom all prophecies were fulfilled.

What is a prophet?

- He is one who calls to men on behalf of God.
- He is one who is called by God.
- He is one who calls men to God.
- He is one who calls to God on behalf of men.
- Jesus faithfully fulfilled all of these roles as God's Great Prophet.

Our understanding of a prophet can be seen in the relationship between Moses and Aaron. Moses complained that he was not a speaker, so God appointed Aaron to be the spokesman. He took on the role of the prophet in delivering God's message to the Pharaoh.

Christ fulfilled the role of a prophet in revealing the saving message of God to us by His Word and His Spirit. Jesus never just spoke the message, but He also communicated it to us through His acting out of the will of God as recorded in the Gospels. In John 1: 1-3, Jesus the Logos, the Living Word of God, always announced or prophesied what He would do and then He personally did it.

Jesus the eternal Son has always functioned as the spokesman for the Godhead.

He was God's spokesman at creation, for we see that when God said, "let there be..." God the Son was the WORD being spoken, and all things came into being. What He says happens! When God spoke His word through the Old Testament prophets, that Word that they spoke was God's WORD. It was Jesus speaking and making things happen, and it always happened as it was prophesied. 1 Peter 1:10 -11 says "concerning this salvation, the prophets who spoke by the grace that was come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when He predicted the suffering of Christ and the glories that would follow." The prophets were not simply speaking what was in their minds. No, it was the Spirit of Christ present in them, and there at that moment, speaking through them.

The Incarnation (the fleshly embodiment of the WORD) was the greatest prophetic work of the Son of God. As was promised, Jesus came and made it possible to see what God was really like, and what He could do. Miracles happened, and a virgin brought forth the Son of God, which was one of the greatest miracles of all time.

When people looked on Jesus they were seeing God. Jesus had not become God; rather He was God who became man. In John 5: 17-20, Jesus made it plain that the works that He was doing were the Father's works. The work of the God-Man Jesus was what God Himself was doing through the Living Word. That which had been spoken about and promised was now being done by the Great I AM. Jesus was not a hired servant. He

was God stooping to wash our feet!!

Jesus spoke with God's authority because He was the WORD of God, and when He spoke, demons were cast out, people were healed, and sinners were born again. One of these days, He will speak again with power and authority and we will all be changed and taken to the new world He has prepared for us. (John 14.)

Wherever God's Word is preached today, His Presence and Power are present, according to Matthew 28: 18-20. It is HIM, the Living Word, who is speaking and acting, and when people respond and obey, miracles happen, just as they always did when Jesus was present in body. The book of Acts is a testimony to the continuing ministry of the living Jesus. The Living Word is acting out and continuing His ministry through His Church. The acts of the apostles are really the ACTS OF JESUS through His Holy Spirit. So then the Scriptures are Christ's WORDS. They are not just words on their own, but they are the Living Jesus Christ speaking to us today. He steps out of His Word and speaks and works every time we, as prophets, deliver His message.

So then Jesus Christ is Almighty God.

- He did things that only God could do, because He is GOD, the ONLY TRUE and LIVING GOD.
- Some Christians think of Jesus as being less than the Father and not as powerful as God's Spirit. No!
- He is God the Son, of the same essence as the Father and the Holy Spirit.
- In John 10: 30-33, Jesus, the Living Word, says He is God. He showed He was equal with God. Why did the Jews want to kill Him when He said this? It is because they understood Him to be saying that He is God.
- In John 8:58, Jesus shows He was more important than Abraham because He is the I AM, the Ever-Present One. Again, He was speaking to them as God.
- In John 5:23-24, Jesus says that He should be honoured just as the Father is honoured.
- In John 8:19, He said to know Him is to know the Father.
- In John 14:1, He tells us we must believe in Him.
- In John 14:9, He declares that to see Him was to see the Father.
- In Matthew 8:2, 14:33, and 28:17, they worshipped Him. This would have been blasphemy, yet because He is God, He received their worship.
- Paul taught that Jesus is God in Philippians 2:9-11 and Titus 2:13.
- John the Baptist declared the same in Luke 3:22.
- In Matthew 16:15-17, Peter used the title, "Son of the Living God," knowing its meaning, and that Jesus was one with God.
- Thomas confessed openly, "My Lord and my GOD," in John 20:26-29.
- Jesus, as God, forgave sins in Mark 2:5 and Luke 7:48.
- Jesus claimed to be "LIFE," meaning eternal life, in John 14:6.
- Only God can Judge His creations, and Jesus claimed to be the Great Judge spoken about in Joel 3:12 and John 5:27.
- God is the Great Shepherd of His sheep (Psalm 23), and Jesus claimed that same title in John 10:11 to reveal that He is the Great Shepherd, and always has been.
- Jesus is our Eternal Jehovah, our God. He is Emmanuel – which means GOD WITH US.
- As the Great Prophet, Jesus did not merely claim to be GOD. He proved Himself to be the Living

God. His coming, His death, His resurrection, and His ascension all prove that He is the One He claimed to be, and on His visible return, every eye shall see Him and confess this truth. A prophet is only a true prophet if his prophecies come true, and everything Jesus prophesied about His redemption proved true, from the time of Genesis 3:15, when He said, "and I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers, He will crush your head and you will strike His heel," right up to the time when He died and rose again. He spoke this prophesy through His Spirit predicting the Cross event, and He has proved to be a true prophet, for it has all come true.

In Matthew chapters 5-7 and chapter 24, Jesus spoke as the Royal Prophet. As King, He gave us the principles of His Kingdom, and the Kingdom that He had prophesied had arrived in Him.

Jesus prophesied a Kingdom of God's blessings to His followers. He prophesied that they would be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, that they would love their enemies and give to the needy, and that they would live clean and holy lives. He then went on to show that the Power of His Kingdom was already here. He healed and forgave sins, He stilled the storm, and He even raised the dead.

In chapter 24, He shows that He is in control of all history, and that nothing was just happening by chance. He knew what He was going to do and He did it.

But not everyone acknowledged that He was The Prophet, for in His own hometown, He could not do many miracles because of the lack of their faith in His Words. (Matt. 13: 57-58) We do not have time in this lecture to document all the predictions Jesus has made about His second coming, but the one I love is in Revelation 1:7 where it says, "look He is coming with the clouds and every eye shall see Him." Every eye shall see Him doing what? Revelation 19:11-16 says "Worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice He judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire and on His head are many crowns. He has a name written on Him that no one knows but Himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood and His name is the Word of God on His robe and on His thigh He has this name written: KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS."

**Jesus is also our great High Priest.** It would not have been enough for Jesus to offer sacrifices as a holy man, but the sacrifice itself also had to be Holy. It had to be able to forgive and cleanse from all sin, and that is why our Great High Priest is the God-Man Jesus.

Just as we no longer need a prophet's message, for we have the very words of the greatest of all prophets, so we no longer need any other priest. Only Jesus can forgive, deliver, and cleanse from all sin. He gave His own precious blood to atone for our sins and for all sin. All the other priests and sacrifices only pointed to the coming of the Lamb of God and to Jesus the great High Priest. Hebrews 9 12,14 says, "He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves but He entered the Most Holy Place once for all by His own blood....How much more then will the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself unblemished to God, cleanse our conscience from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God. For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance – now that He has died as a ransom to set them free from sins committed

under the first covenant." Verse 26 says "but now He hath appeared once for all, at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself".

John 17 is known as the High Priestly Prayer of Jesus. It breathes the air of the Priest about to take the sacrificial blood into the holiest of all. It is the picture of a High Priest consecrating Himself to perform the work of Atonement. It is Holy ground. Hebrews 10:20-22 tells us about this event: "By a new and living way opened for us through the curtain that is His body and since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."

In John 17:1-5, Jesus prays to the Father for Himself. He acknowledges the authority the Father has given Him to impart eternal life. He knew that His Glory and the Glory of the Father and of The Holy Spirit's Glory was going to break through. The sin problem would be solved once and for all. Jesus would be Resurrected and Glorified in His ascension and, taking control at the right hand of the Father, there must have been great excitement for the moment. After all, God had been waiting from the time of Gen 3:15 for it to become a reality. No wonder the Word speaks about the Joy that was set before Jesus in Hebrews 12:2. This section in John is a very intimate prayer with His Father, and what they agreed upon is now happening. All authority has been handed over to Jesus as the Great High Priest.

In verses 6-19, Jesus prays for His disciples.

When a High Priest was consecrated, His hands were filled with gifts as offerings of thanks which He was to carry and give to God on behalf of the people. The people consecrated the High Priest by filling His hands, so now God the Father is consecrating Jesus as High Priest by filling His hands with His disciples as offerings. Jesus makes it clear that they belong to both the Father and Himself, that both He and the Father were involved in this High Priestly work. Jesus prays that His disciples would be protected by the Father, for they both knew what these disciples were to face. Only Judas had chosen to go His own way; the others, despite all their failings, were staying with Him through to the end.

Now Jesus the Son asks God the Father "to sanctify them by the truth," saying, "Your Word is Truth...for them, I sanctify myself that that they too may be sanctified." The Greek verb *hagiazō*, an aorist imperative, means "consecrate, dedicate, sanctify, treat with holy reverence, purify." Its cognate adjective means "holy." The plural substantive form *hoi hagioi* is translated as "the saints". This indicates that Jesus was asking the Father to sanctify them in a moment of crisis. It is a definite act to be performed in them by the Father. In Acts 15: 8-9, Peter said that all the believer's hearts were purified in a moment by faith.

It was an experience that could only be wrought by the power of God. Man cannot sanctify himself. Sanctification was made possible by the Truth. Jesus is this Truth, so what He promised them happened. John also prophesied this about the coming of Jesus in Luke 3:16 when he says, "but one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." This was the Truth that had been prophesied. The disciples would be empowered, but also refined and cleansed from all sin, and they would be made Holy by the work of God. We do not grow out of sin and into sanctification, and that is the focus of this High Priestly Prayer.

By sanctifying Himself, Jesus was declaring Himself as the one who has always been holy. By dying in place of sinners, He made it possible for them to share in His Holiness, endowing them with His quality of eternal life. This needed to be done before they went out into the world, for although He had already commissioned them, He later told them to wait until they were endued with Power from on High. This prayer was answered on the day of Pentecost.

Jesus also prayed for all believers in John 17: 20-24. He prayed that all believers would be one, just as the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are One. God wants us to share everything that Jesus is to us - eternal life, eternal love, eternal light and power, and also eternal purity. Naturally we will share this not in the same measure as He is, for we will never be little gods, but we will share this in quality, in our hearts, for we will be clean and pure and walking in His light and continually cleansed by His blood. 1 Peter 1:15 says, "just as He who has called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written; 'Be ye holy for I am Holy. None of us can escape this command of our Holy God. It is no use trying to argue this away because He has sanctified Himself so that we may be sanctified. Jesus does not say grow into Holiness; He says be Holy, because it is by grace through faith that we can be Holy, and then when we are Holy we can grow in Holiness. Holy people grow in their consecration and in a Holy lifestyle. Those under the power of the sinful nature cannot be Holy, because the Bible says in Romans 8:7-8 that "the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God."

**Jesus Christ is our Eternal King.** John 18:37, Revelation 17:14, and Jesus' preaching in the Gospels announced the coming of the Kingdom of God to us through the coming of our King. In Matthew 5-7, Jesus gave us the laws of His Kingdom, and in John 3:3, He told us how to become Kingdom citizens through being born from above. Notice that the Kingdom is announced by Jesus as the God-Man, not just Jesus the man. And when Jesus was resurrected, He was resurrected as the eternal God-Man. Jesus comes to live and reign in our hearts and lives now. We become co-heirs with Him and share His holy quality of eternal life now. We announce His Kingdom and point to the final consummation of His Kingdom at His second return. Our role as disciples of Jesus is to prophetically announce His coming, to sacrifice ourselves in His service, and in the Name and Power of our King, to resist the enemy and to enter into war with the devil and win.

Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God who became man to pay the price for your sin?

This is your grace moment, your opportunity to believe in Jesus and to be born from above. According to 2 Corinthians 5:17 you will be recreated by Jesus from a sinner into a disciple. You will have the power of the Holy Spirit to live for Him and to follow Him. You will not only be forgiven, but the power of sin will be broken in your life and the Holy Spirit will fill your life, thereby expelling the darkness of the sinful nature. He will become Lord (Kurios) of your life, and you will become His servant and disciple. Read Philippians 2:9-11. We are now His Kuriake – His Church, and His Body, and He will continue to build His Church and thereby extend His rule and His Kingdom through us.

### **The Messiah**

Christos was associated with Jesus as a proper name. He is the Lord Jesus Christ. This means that He is the Anointed one, the Mighty Deliverer.

### **The Son of Man**

Jesus used this title for Himself, showing His humanity as well as the possibility of His having to suffer. Many want to say that Jesus had a sinful body because, like Augustine and some theologians who have followed him, they confuse the sinful nature with the human nature. The fact that Jesus was sinless and yet human shows that the problem does not lie with being human.

### **Jesus is Lord**

This was the first confession by the early Christians. It was a term used only for Jehovah in the Old Testament, but it was now being used in association with Jesus Christ, showing His divinity. Because the early Christians felt free to worship Jesus, He became their LORD, and they thought of Him as being One with Jehovah. Later, they believed in and defended His Divinity.

### **The Son of God**

This was a title given to Israel, but now it was given to Jesus to show that He had come as the head of a new Israel. It also meant that the Father and Son were one essence – God. Jesus had come to be the first sample of a new quality of God’s people. They were to be Holy people, so He sanctified every age level in order that men might live holy lives. Even more than that, He now imparts that same quality of new Holy life to His new People, Christians, who are the New Community of God.

### **I AM**

Jesus used this title for Himself many times, showing that He is the eternal God.

This title was only applied to Jehovah and it would have been blasphemous to apply it to anyone else. By using the term “I AM,” Jesus was claiming that through the Logos (Gr) or Davar (Heb), He was always present “face to face” with God. Study John 1:1.

### **THE ALPHA and OMEGA**

Read Isaiah 41:4 and Revelation 1:8

Alpha and Omega are the first and the last letters of the Greek Alphabet respectively, and they symbolize the beginning and the end. When Jesus applied these terms to Himself, He meant that He is the beginning without a beginning and the endless ending. All things are from Him and For Him. The Bible tells us that Jesus is the One who is, and who was, and who is to come, for He is the Eternal One with no beginning and no ending.

#### **Discussion**

Jesus is now my Saviour, my Lord, my Sanctifier, and my God.



# 2

## The Nature of Jesus - His Humanity

### Lesson Purpose

- The student will be taught about the humanity of Christ and follow His steps through His Humiliation.

### Lesson Outcome

- The student will experience the love of God for him through study of the different phases which marked the life of Jesus Christ. He will respond by faith and find that his service and love for Jesus are growing.

### Table of Contents

- The Humiliation of Jesus
- Jesus the Perfect Man
- The Christ – the Mighty deliverer
- The Servant of the eternal One
- The stages of His Humiliation

### His Humiliation

The first phase that marked the Son of God was His Humiliation. This involved leaving heaven and the glory He shared with the Father and being born as a human being. It also includes His suffering and His death on the Cross as a substitute for our sin, even going so far as to descend into hell on our behalf.

### Jesus the Perfect Man

#### Luke 1:26-35

We have already looked at the miraculous birth of Jesus, so we will move on from there.

We ask the question,

Why the Virgin Birth?

Read Isaiah 7:14.

The virgin birth was absolutely essential to our Christian belief and doctrine. Jesus had to be free from all sin to become our substitute. If He had been born of a human father He would have been born spiritually dead, and would have inherited the sinful nature from the evil one, and that was a role that He would only take upon Himself once He had sanctified every age level of human living by living out a victorious and holy life. We know He was tempted and could have failed, but the devil underestimated Him. The Father of Jesus was God the Spirit so Jesus was born with eternal and sinless life. He was therefore in a position to offer Himself as our substitute and suffer in our place, thereby reconciling us to God. Jesus had everything to offer and gave His sinless, holy life as the offering upon the altar of God as atonement for our sin. No one else had the ability to do that, because apart from Adam, no one else has been born sinless.

As 1 Timothy 3:16 says, in Jesus, God was manifest in the flesh.

According to 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, Jesus came to introduce a new creation and all those who believe in Him become new creations. Men do not just receive passports to heaven when they come to Christ; rather He changes them completely. He imparts His Life, His love, His power, and His purity and makes them supernaturally natural people. They are a new race of people. They are no longer sinners but are people connected to God, sharing in His nature. Their very bodies are going to be changed to be like His glorious body and they will go to live with Jesus forever in the new world that He is preparing for them. They are now Jesus' people, the people of God. He came to show us what the "New Man" is like and to make it possible for us to become like Him.

Remember, Jesus did not simply die; He was separated from the Father and the Holy Spirit. He died physically and spiritually and was prepared to spend eternity with the devil and his angels (demons) in hell, to save you.

When man sinned, he was disconnected from God and plunged himself into all the consequences of sin. Not only did his spirit die, but his body and his soul also died. Even more than that, however, he brought his life under the control of the spirit of Satan who entered him and controlled him at that moment. He died to all holiness and fellowship with God, but it never destroyed the grace of God which continued to operate in his life. It was this grace that put limitations on how bad he would become, and prevented man from becoming unredeemable. Man also could not prevent God's love from operating in his life which made it possible for him to still feel conviction and turn to Christ as his Saviour.

More than that he was still a human being while a sinner, naturally under the control of the sin nature, the Satan nature in him, but even though the devil tried he could not dehumanize man and make him an animal. God by His prevenient grace (the prevenient grace is that grace that goes before a man is saved also known as the preventing grace) preserved the image of Himself in man, and restores it when man is born again in Christ. God planned all of this for man before he fell, and this is what Christ did through His work on the cross and His resurrection from the dead.

Can you imagine what would have happened to man if Christ was not able to undo all that the devil has done to him? But **He is the Christ, the mighty deliverer**. It was the mighty power of our creating God that raised Jesus from the dead. The Son of God had to become human and suffer as a sinner for our sins. He came to die in our place. Coming in human flesh showed us that human nature is not sinful, for man was created holy but allowed the sinful nature to enter his spirit by yielding to the devil's plan. By coming as a baby and living through youth to manhood, Jesus sanctified every age level, and proved that man can live holy and obedient at every stage in life. Jesus had no sinful nature because He was not born of Adam's sin. He was not born in sin or shaped in iniquity as all men are, thereby proving to us that sin is foreign to man. In His suffering, Jesus had to show forth God's glory for mankind, and this He did. He also had to meet the demands of the Law, which requires death for sin, and he had to satisfy the requirements of God as Governor. You must understand that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. Jesus was not acting on His own. The Triune God was in full agreement with the actions of Christ, and He was motivated by love, or, in other words, He was a living example of grace in action! Another purpose of Jesus' life on earth was to crush the power of the devil as promised in Genesis 3:15, to forgive man's guilt, to justify him before God, and then to make him holy and righteous before God.

This He accomplished by paying the price His own death, therefore satisfying God's requirements, and rising from the dead to take complete control of all saving history. It is important here to remember that a man, hanging and dying on a cross, was dying under the curse of God. Jesus was willing to die and be cursed so that we could be free from all sin. As a result, we are now blessed when we believe because the curse has

been removed and we are free! The Nicene Creed says that Jesus descended into hell. There is a reason they recorded this; because they believed it! I am one who believes that Jesus went to suffer to the full extent for us. As we have seen, Jesus is the Son of God and had to go through all of this humiliation that led to death, and He willingly did so.

### **The Servant of the Eternal One**

Isaiah 49 :1-57:21

I will not write out these passages but they must be read in class and discussed if the student is to understand the prophetic description of the Messiah as the Suffering Servant of Jehovah, which was later fulfilled by Jesus.

In this passage, the Messiah is introduced by Isaiah as One who is the speaking servant of God. Isaiah speaks here as the missionary of the eternal God and he is addressing all nations. Israel was once the servant of God with the responsibility of reaching all people, both near and far, with the Word of God, but they had failed miserably in this task. Isaiah is prophesying so much more than he knows, for to him the portrait of Jesus is so clear. Isaiah speaks of Jesus as called from the womb. Verse 1 is prophesying the miraculous birth of the coming Son of God. Isaiah says in verse 2 that the Messiah's mouth is like a sharp sword with speech that both wounds and heals.

#### The Eternal's Promised Deliverance

Isaiah 51:1-23 - These passages depict for us the breaking forth of salvation and the removal of God's wrath.

Isaiah 52:7-10 - Here is what God thinks of all evangelists. They are beautiful people.

Moffatt translates Isaiah 52:11-12 as follows: "Nor need you hurry forth, flying like fugitives for the Eternal goes in front of you, and your rear guard is Israel's God."

These are some of the greatest passages of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah. This is the gospel in the Old Testament. This is who Jesus, the Son of God, was as revealed by His Spirit through Isaiah.

Here Jesus is pictured as Priest, vicariously suffering for the sins of others. He is both the One making the offering and the Sacrifice. He is announced as plainly as if the reporter is standing beneath the Cross of Jesus.

This portion should be acted out in class to get its full impact.

Let someone read the portions where God speaks "Behold my servant-----"

(52:13). Next have someone act as the people speaking and responding to God. "The awakened conscience cries out" who has believed our report----- (53:1-3) surely He has borne our sorrows, (sicknesses) -----"

(53:4-6). Next the prophet speaks out and enumerates the circumstances of His death (53 :7-10).

God again speaks (53:11-12)

Now read John 13 where Jesus washes His disciples' feet. He humbles Himself and takes on the role of a slave. Jesus puts the slave's apron around Himself and stoops to wash the filthy feet of His disciples. Just imagine this if you can: Here is the creator God kneeling before His creation, while they are busy seeking recognition and position, and Judas is getting ready to betray Him, and He kneels down to wash their feet. Don't be too quick to judge them for that is exactly what Jesus does for every sinner. He serves them with His cleansing power when they deserve His condemnation. Jesus always operates from love and mercy. He wanted His disciples to know that He was the God-Man, yet they still only thought of Him as the Messiah who would set up the national Jewish Kingdom and rule from Jerusalem.

How can Christians carry around in their hearts a rebellious nature that is not subject to God's will when Jesus is stooping to wash us clean from all sin through His precious blood? Jesus prayed for our sanctification and here He demonstrates how the sin problem will be removed from our lives. Then He went to Calvary and did it. For whom? Jesus not only did this in obedience to the Father but because the Triune God loves you. Can you respond to that?

The bottom line in all this is simply the question: Do we love Jesus enough to allow Him to wash us clean and then place the slave towel around us, so that we may be His servants and serve our sinful, needy and lost world? No one with a principle of sin in them can do that. First, the big "I am Number 1" principle must first be crucified once and for all.

**Let us now follow Him through His Humiliation to become the God-Man.**

1. From the Divine to the Human.
2. From the glory of created manhood to the ignominy of the cross - we have already spoken of His renunciation of self followed by a self emptying of the Glory of God.
3. Taking on the form of a servant - God came to carry a cross to save sinners!

Jesus demonstrated a choosing of God's will, when He said, "not My will but Thine be done." Who wants to choose a cross at age thirty? Jesus renounced all rights to himself and humbled Himself, to become a man who was going to save the world.

He chose self-subordination and became obedient even unto death.

Finally, His Humiliation was perfected when He hung as the representative of sinners on a cursed cross.

Even as the God-Man, Jesus chose to suffer as a man. He was not born in a house but in a stinking manger. He sanctified every form of employment at His birth, because shepherds, Kings, and inn keepers all came to Him.

He was circumcised on the eighth day in the Temple at Jerusalem, showing that He fulfilled all the requirements of the Law, even as a child.

Jesus' baptism showed that He willing to identify with sinners and by coming out of the water, He showed that He was going to come out of the grave and give newness of Life.

Jesus, having been filled with the Spirit, showed the way for us to live a victorious life, for He performed His miracles through the Power of the Holy Spirit.

His temptation showed that Jesus was sanctifying everything we might face in life. The life He lived was holy, and this is His plan for His new creations.

Jesus was hungry, thirsty, and weary on many occasions, but He never stooped to abuse any of His human desires. Instead, He controlled them, pointing out to us the need for self-control.

In His times of agony, Jesus always trusted the Father to see Him through and to lead and guide and empower Him. We are encouraged to do the same, to not question, but to accept in faith what is revealed as the will of God.

Jesus' human soul revealed that being troubled in our soul sometimes is part of being human and is not sinful. He Himself was troubled on many occasions, as seen in John 12 :27 and Matthew 26:38. Too many people see everything as sin, but Jesus understood our humanity better than we do. Then Jesus was betrayed by Judas. This too was part of His humiliation, for He had to know what a broken heart felt like. Jesus had to feel the agony of Peter's denial, and the pain of the desertion of His disciples in His hour of

need.

In addition to this, Jesus had to face false accusations at His trials, lying and scheming, scoffing and whipping, and condemnation, along with all the agony that accompanied crucifixion.

In His dying hours, Jesus was not thinking of Himself. It was during this time that the thief is given eternal life, and Jesus' mother is given into the care of John. It was then that He experienced the final feeling of total aloneness, for it had to be so if He was to die in our place. Imagine what went through His mind in those last moments. Against all odds, Jesus' life ends with the words, "Father into Thy hands I commend My spirit." That was a statement of faith, leaving us a pattern to follow when we are also at the end of our tether. Jesus died and His body was buried in a tomb. The soldiers were instructed to seal up the tomb, for the High Priest had heard something about Jesus being raised from the dead.

This was His Kenosis and He paid it to the full.

Class Participation.

Ask some of the students to share how they were filled with the Holy Spirit and how they knew that they were filled?



# 3

## The Nature of Jesus - His Deity

### Lesson Purpose

- To enable the student to understand the stages of exaltation and to convey a clearer understanding of the Atonement.

### Lesson Outcome

- The student will realize the love of God in action and respond by faith.
- the life of Jesus Christ. He will respond by faith and find that his service and love for Jesus are growing.

### Table of Contents

- The Risen Christ
- The exaltation of Jesus Christ
- The stages of His Exaltation
- The Atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ

### The Risen Christ

The resurrection of Jesus is a fact. He was seen by over 500 witnesses at one time. Look at how changed His disciples were once they had seen Him in His resurrected state. They were ecstatic. It was a Sunday when He rose again and this is why Christians have made it a day of worship and celebration.

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead proves that He is the source of life and that He can give eternal life to all believers (1 Corinthians 15:14-20).

As already noted, God the Father was fully satisfied with the atoning work of Jesus on the Cross and with His resurrection and ascension. It is truly finished!

Jesus ascended to heaven with His glorified human body and on His return, we will be changed and glorified like He is now. He now reigns as King over His Kingdom, sitting at God's right hand, the place of authority and power. Jesus He has now commissioned us to tell the world about His good news.

Jesus will come again to judge the living and the dead. At His return, there will be a separation between the holy and the unholy, and He will usher in the new world, where He will reign for eternity.

### The Exaltation of Jesus Christ.

Remember we are talking here about Jesus the God-Man. We are not just talking about God in a person called Jesus, but we are talking about a unique God-Man named Jesus Christ.

This is our moment of grace. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Jesus was not merely raised as the Son of God. He was raised as the truly glorified God-Man, the first sample of the new race of God's people who would share a new world with Him. We must realize that Jesus has recreated us, and that we are new creations. Old things have passed away; behold all things are new. You are now a child of God and no longer a child of the devil. You must answer this question once and for all: who are YOU? Don't resort to hiding behind a theology that tells you that you are still a sinner and will be a sinner until the day of Christ's return when He will change you into a Christian. That would simply mean that you have not accepted by grace what He has made available for you to experience now.

If God has said, "be Holy," who is to blame if you still say, "I am not holy. I am still a sinner, but I will be made holy by Him at His return?" Remember, if God says "BE," it is because you can BE. Do not listen to those who say you cannot BE, for God enables that which He commands. You will do and live what you believe, so if you are believing incorrectly, you are going to live a struggling and sinful life.

Listen to this passage of scripture written by Peter in 1 Peter 2:9-11.

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us."

When He ascended to heaven, Jesus went to take control of all history, as we see in the Book of Revelation. He will return as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

He will then bring His eternal Kingdom to earth, according to Revelation 21:1-4.

### **Let us look then at the stages of His Exaltation.**

Here we follow Jesus the God-Man through the stages of His ascent to the position of King of Kings. The God-Man sits on the Throne of God.

1. The Descensus or descent into Hades.
2. The Resurrection
3. The Ascension.
4. The Session

1. The Descent into Hades.

The creeds of the early church say Jesus descended into Hell. You will have to draw your own conclusions here as to what you believe.

Did Jesus just go to Hades the place of the dead and intermediate state, or did He go to the place of torments?

Acts 2:27 quotes David in the Psalms, saying "Thou will not leave my soul in hell, neither will thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" Verse 31 goes on to say that David, "seeing this before spoke of the resurrection

of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption.”

1 Peter 3:19-20 says, “He went and preached unto the spirits in prison, who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah”

Most scholars say Jesus did not suffer any torment. I honestly do not know. All I can say is that Jesus would not have shirked whatever was included in the price of suffering. He finished everything He needed to do and at that moment, His exaltation began.

## 2. His Resurrection.

This was the crowning event of the earthly ministry of Jesus, for soon after this He ascended to Heaven, according to Acts 1:9 –11.

We know that Jesus was seen by over 500 people at one time. He also appeared to Mary Magdalene, to His disciples, to Thomas, and to the two on their way to Emmaus. We are therefore not going to spend much time proving His resurrection for it is a known fact. The ascension is also a testimony that Jesus will come in like manner. Jesus presented Himself many times to verify His resurrection. He was alive and spoke and acted not as some spirit, but as a living and real person. His new Humanity proves that He was not the same as before, that He was changed. He was not limited by gravity or time or space. He could appear in a locked room, He could transport Himself from place to place as He desired, and He could ascend at will. Jesus was a clothed in a new Humanity and made of a new kind of substance. Although His flesh felt like ordinary flesh, it was indestructible, and it had been glorified. Jesus was also proving that matter is not evil, for He was sinless before He took on our sin, and after His resurrection, He was still Holy, even though He was made of new matter.

Jesus was now an eternal Priest, and an eternal King. We might also add that His prophecies are going to come true, and that he is returning as He promised in John 14: 1- 4. The promise He made about the coming of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost, just as He prophesied. Now He, as the eternal King, prophesies His physical return to earth, and promises to usher in a new people with a new Heaven and a new Earth. All of this is possible because He did what he promised; He rose from the dead.

The promise Jesus made regarding the new eternal people of God was made possible by His Glorification. “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature...and He is head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the firstborn of the dead, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all the fullness dwell” (Colossians 1:15, 18-19).

Jesus the God-Man is going to remain the God-Man throughout eternity, and we shall be like Him. We will not be part of God, but rather fully glorified human beings. Through Jesus we will be connected to His Humanity, and through His Divinity, we will always be in fellowship and contact with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

3. His Ascension.

Jesus is already in Heaven, and He is associated with His eternal Highly Priestly Office ever interceding for us, and we are connected to Him by His Holy Spirit which is living in us. Remember, also, from when we studied the Trinity, that all three persons of God are always present.

4. The Session.

This speaks of the place occupied by the resurrected and glorified God-Man who is now sitting on the Throne of God and controlling all history. As the prophetic work of the God-Man on earth was merged with His priestly office through His death and resurrection, so now His Priestly Office as the Glorified God-Man is merged into His Kingship through the ascension and session. Jesus becoming the Glorified God-Man marked the beginning of His supreme authority which shall end only when He hath put all enemies under His feet. From this session, our Lord will return to earth a second time, without sin and unto salvation according to Hebrews 9:28. He will return in the same way He went. That is the world's next Great Event, and it could be today.

**The Atoning Work of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

The word ATONEMENT is used frequently in the Old Testament. It means "to reconcile, to cover, to hide," and when used as a noun, it means "covering."

In theology, it is used to express the idea of "satisfaction or expiation."

In English, it covers a wide range of thought:

1. It denotes bringing estranged people to Atonement, or to being of the same mind.
2. It also means reconciliation.
3. It is sometimes used in the sense of an apology.
4. It is most commonly used in the sense of a substitute for a penalty.
5. In the Old Testament, it applies to anything that covers or veils man's sin from God.
6. In the New Testament, it is used to signify the propitiatory suffering of Christ as our substitute, making it possible for us to be reconciled to God.
7. It is bringing two parties "At-One-Ment."

**What do we need to understand about the Atoning Work of Christ?**

We need to see that Jesus provided a "better" Atonement than that the old agreement did.

The Day of Atonement.

Remember that on the Day of Atonement, two lambs were brought. One was named the scapegoat, and the other was the sacrificial Lamb.

The sins of all the people were confessed and were transferred to the scapegoat when the High Priest's hands were laid on the animal's head. The scapegoat was then driven to its death. This signified that the people's sins were removed until the next Day of Atonement, when the whole process would have to be repeated.

The sacrificial Lamb was then slaughtered, and its blood was taken by the High Priest into the Holiest of All and sprinkled on the Mercy Seat as an atonement for all the sins of the people. The people believed that all their guilt for past sins was removed through the scapegoat and that the blood of the slain animal covered their sin before God on the Mercy Seat. The lambs were given in the place of the sinners. The lambs died to pay for the sins of the people. It was acceptable to God, but temporary, for Jesus came and fulfilled the atoning role of the two lambs, as was prophesied. He was both the scapegoat which took away our sins, and the sacrificial lamb who substituted His life for ours. This was the New Covenant Jesus made with God and it was fully acceptable.

**Jesus did what the blood of animals could never do.**

He did not merely cover our sin as the blood of animals did, but He cleansed us from all sin with His Blood. The work of Jesus is an ever-present work which cleansed us from sin once and for all according to 1 John 1:7. Jesus did not merely cover our sin as the lambs did in the Old Testament; rather, He became the scapegoat who separated our sins from us once and for all. Then He went to the core of our sin problem and cleansed us from the sinful nature itself. This justifies and sanctifies us before God. Romans 6:6 says, "for we know that our old self was crucified with Him, SO THAT the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin..." According to Galatians 6:22, "now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life." Romans 8:2 says that "through Christ Jesus the Law of the Spirit of Life, set me free from the Law of Sin and Death."

**Acquired Depravity**, the defilement attached through actual sin, is removed by the Atoning Work of Christ. The defilement attached to us by **Inherited Depravity** is removed by the Blood of Christ and by ongoing grace and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

When He died in our place, Jesus removed all the consequences of sin and made the way plain and clear for us to approach God. This further cleanses us from our depraved, sinful nature, thereby restoring His Image in us. This was impossible under the old agreement. Unlike the Old Testament believers who had to act AS IF they had been forgiven and cleansed, we are actually forgiven and cleansed by the Atoning Blood of Jesus Christ.

They were depraved because they were deprived of the presence of God's Spirit, but we are no longer deprived, so we are no longer depraved. We now have The Spirit of Jesus living in us and imparting to us moment by moment the same quality of the life that He has.

Wesleyans believe that we are redeemed from the guilt of sin, delivered from the reigning power of sin, and cleansed from the inbeing of sin, because we are now IN CHRIST. Sin is man's big problem, and it is the reason Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil in us. We cannot educate sin, and we cannot suppress it. It just keeps popping up. We cannot ignore it, for it has a death principle attached to it that starts to spread its disease throughout our beings, and our condition just gets worse and worse. This is why a person who smokes finds himself under the control of the cigarette; he becomes the slave. The one who drinks alcohol believes that he will always be able to control his alcohol use, but slowly it is taking control of his thirst and eventually, he becomes addicted. So it is with those who take drugs; they become slaves. Even people

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taking drugs under prescription have been known to become addicted. But the sin principle is far worse than all these addictions because it controls not only our human desires, but our very spirits. It warps us and makes us weak in character. We can try and try to get rid of the sin nature, but our efforts are to no avail. So we say, "I am a Christian, but I still have a sin nature that is too big to control on my own." So we must ask the Holy Spirit to give us power to counteract or suppress this evil nature. Because of His mercy, there is a measure of success in our lives, but the struggle goes on, and we know in our spirits that we are not free from that sin nature.

It is this sin nature that makes us believe that the sin nature itself is part of our nature and therefore a part of us from which we can only be freed through death. But we can be free from the sin nature through the Law of the Spirit in Christ Jesus. The triune God will set us free from the law of sin and the law of death. But as unsanctified Christians, we know that the law of sin is still holding us back and we are becoming enslaved to the law of sin in us. In Romans 7:25, Paul found that the way out from underneath this law of sin is "through Jesus Christ."

Even as Christians, if we do not allow God to expel this sin principle from our hearts, it is going to get stronger and stronger and we will become its slaves. Romans 6:13 says, "do not offer the parts of your body as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and offer the parts of your body as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not have dominion over you, because you are not under law but under grace." Romans 6:2 says, "but now that you have been set free from sin and become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness and the result is eternal life."

Class Discussion.

Discuss the difference between being saved and being entirely sanctified.



# 4

## Jesus Christ our Redeemer

### Lesson Purpose

- The purpose of this lesson is to teach the student that ONLY through JESUS can we find Redemption.

### Lesson Outcome

- Upon completion of this lesson the student will:
- Understand what it cost Jesus our Saviour to redeem us.
- Respond to Christ's offer if he has not yet done so.
- Be able to share with others how Jesus died to pay for our sins.
- Be encouraged to commit fully to being a disciple of Jesus.

### Table of Contents

- Jesus' self testimony
- Son of Man
- Son of God
- I AM
- Jesus and Prevenient Grace

Before we go any further in this lecture we need to examine Jesus' Self -Testimony.

It is wonderful for us to make a list of the attributes and names of Jesus and to come to the conclusion that because the Bible teaches that Jesus is the God-Man, He is therefore our Saviour and Redeemer, Christ the Lord, but we also need to be able to show what Jesus testified about Himself.

We need to realize that Jesus did not come to deliver a ready-made doctrine of Himself, rather He came to perform a Redemptive Deed. His purpose was experiential – to bring man and God together in reconciliation.

We have just completed a study of His humiliation and His exaltation and these are necessary studies, but it is the saving deed itself that makes our salvation possible. Merely saying "I believe it" is not enough. It requires my whole commitment to the Jesus Christ who did all of these things. The virgin birth, the teachings and miracles of Jesus, His death on the cross, and His resurrection and ascension ARE the "saving deed."

### Son of Man

Jesus never directly claimed this title for Himself. He does not say "I am the Son of Man." Instead, He uses the third person in an impersonal manner, such as when "and He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things" in Mark 8:31. The only exception is found in John 9:35-37 where Jesus asks blind man, "do

you believe in the Son of Man?"

Jesus had something special in mind about Himself when He used the term Son of Man. Many renowned scholars see Jesus as pouring the meaning of the Suffering Servant into the title Son of Man, based on Matthew 12:18-2 and Luke 4:16-21.

It seems that Jesus understood Himself to be the fulfillment of Daniel 7 17-27, which says, "I saw in the night visions, and behold with clouds of heaven there came one like a Son of Man, and He came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him." Later on, a group of persons called "saints of the Most High" also received and possessed the kingdom. Jesus saw Himself as the Son of Man and He created the saints of the most high, who are the sons of God.

As the Son of Man, Jesus is the personal embodiment of human nature at its best. He was the perfect representative of the human race and the realization of the divine ideal in man. But He is more than that, for here He was openly using a Title that pointed to Him as the eternal Son. He is the exalted Son, and He was claiming to open the door of the Kingdom to whosoever believes.

### **Son of God**

We know that on many occasions, the disciples openly confessed that Jesus was the Son of God, but we need to hear Jesus claiming the title "Son of God" for Himself. He did this in John 10: 36, where He said, "do you say of Him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, "You are blaspheming," because I said, "I am the Son of God?" Jesus understood fully that He was the Son of God, not merely a Messiah and mighty deliverer, as the Jews thought Him to be. In fact, it was when the Jews began to realize His real claims that they wanted to kill Him.

### **I AM**

In John 8:58, Jesus said, "before Abraham was, I AM." The Jews all knew that in saying this, Jesus was claiming to be the same one who said to Moses at the burning bush experience, "I Am who I Am" (Exodus 3:14).

John's gospel is full of these claims spoken by Jesus Himself, and they meant that Jesus was claiming to be equal with God.

- "I am the bread of life" John 6:35, 48.
- "I am the living Bread" John 6:51
- "I am the light of the world" John 8:12
- "I am the gate, whoever enters by me will be saved" John 10:7
- "I am the resurrection and the life" John 11:25
- "I am the way, the truth and the life" John 14:6
- "I am the true vine" John 15:1 Jesus did not come to make these things available to us.

He is the I AM in all of these statements. This is who He is, and each of these statements is a divine revelation of Himself.

Jesus comes to us as the Life in which we can share, as the living bread of whom we can partake, as the light in which we can walk, as the door through which we can enter His Kingdom, as the new birth and resurrection, as the way of Holiness, and as the offer to be part of the new people of God.

### **Prevenient Grace**

The fact that Jesus comes to us and seeks us is GRACE.

Grace comes to us. We cannot earn grace, we do not deserve grace, and we cannot presume on His grace. Instead, we exercise the faith He imparts to us to allow Him to be all of these statements, and more, in our lives. Every one of us is given this grace and this power to respond which we respond by believing. The choice is ours. You already have faith and you are using it everyday. Now is the time to turn your faith toward Jesus Christ, for He has directed all of these statements at you.

It will be good for us to understand something about the Grace of God.

The Old Testament frequently uses two words in the Hebrew to describe God's grace: *Hen* and *Hesed*. The former means "underserved favour," whereas *Hesed* translates to mean "loving kindness or mercy."

The most common New Testament word for grace is *charis*. It combines the concept of underserved or unmerited favour with loving kindness. It shows our Loving God acting toward all men, not only Christians. In His loving kindness and mercy, He extends grace to every sinner. It is His love in action, and it is what He is to us, for He is love.

What then is meant by prevenient grace, and how is it different from this "common usage" of the term "grace?"

It is grace that is not different in quality in any way, but the difference is in our understanding of His Grace toward us. Of course, prevenient grace springs from the love, mercy and kindness of God, and from our side, it is totally underserved because we are born in rebellion to His will. Prevenient grace certainly can never be merited or earned, because all our good works are like filthy rags in God's eyesight. We are born sinners and cannot do holy things or save ourselves in any way.

We must understand that God is love. This means that He does not just love us, but He is the LOVE that seeks us. That is who He is, and that is what He does. He made the way for us to come into His presence not because He felt sorry for us, but because that is always what He wanted for us. We are the ones who have rejected Him; He has never rejected us. What God does to save us is love us. This is why He came to planet earth, made Himself flesh in His Son, Jesus, and died in our place so that we can go free and be reconciled to Him. He did this because He desires to love us and for us to love Him, according to John 3:16-17. God's love never condemned anyone; rather His love is merciful and full of loving kindness. God loves the world, not just en masse, but individuality, for if you were the only sinner in the world, Jesus would have died for you. Love, then, is Grace in action, and It asks for a response, for love must have a response.

God loves us, but He hates what the devil has done to us, so He sent His Son to come and to destroy the works of the devil in us once and for all. Jesus willingly came because He is also love. He is on our side all the time. Even when some are against Him, there is nothing they can do to Him to make Him love them less or love them more. Jesus is love toward all men everywhere. When men respond to His offer of love, He immediately does what He came to do: He saves them from all sin and from the works of the devil and He binds them to God's love, and reconciles them to God. This grace comes to us in Jesus Christ as seen in

John1:17.

Regarding prevenient grace, there are two ways of seeing this grace of God:

The “pre” means that this grace that comes before we are saved. Romans 5:8 states that while we were yet sinners Jesus Christ died for us. It is God who took the initiative to bring about His plan of salvation. It never came from man, but it was God’s love that was willing to give, not man’s. That is God’s grace in action toward all of us. Even before most of us had ever heard the Good News of salvation, God was already wooing us in love. He has a thousand ways of reaching us and speaking to us, and it is all prompted by His love in action towards us, His prevenient grace.

There are some who carry this idea too far and say that God draws us by irresistible grace and no matter what we do, we will be saved because He decrees it so. But this could never be, for love reaches out and seeks and shows mercy and acts in kindness until it gets our attention and our personal response. God’s grace also provided us with the ability to be able to respond to His love in Christ. His Spirit makes Jesus alive to us in our spirits, and we sense an urge to respond. When we do respond, He enters by His Spirit and His love embraces us. His blood immediately cleanses us from sin, and He recreates us, making us spiritually alive. This is done through the impartation of His eternal quality of life to our dead spirits thereby giving us the same quality of life that He lives. It is all a work of His and nothing comes from us. It all happens by grace, through faith.

We must keep in mind that grace was working in us from our birth, and by His grace God never allowed man to become unredeemable or unsaveable. This means that no one was ever preprogrammed to die spiritually and to go to hell. God’s grace has kept us in a place where we are able to be saved and has given us the ability to respond. This is what we mean when we say that salvation comes by free grace, through faith. We can do nothing to save or change ourselves. We are sinners by nature and by choice, but God’s grace imparts to sinners the ability to do what God has made possible for them to do, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and to be saved. God did it, for with man it is impossible, but with God all things are possible.

Free grace means that God is free to use His grace how and when He chooses, and He has given us His free grace to choose Him. By His grace, He planned for our coming Redeemer, the Prince of Peace, the Mighty God, the Wonderful Counselor, the Christ prophesied over thousands of years, to come to our rescue. He did it all because He loved us. So the second person of the Trinity, God the Son, was born of a human virgin in a humble stable 2000 years ago, in order to come and save us, who are sinners. Jesus’ mission was to buy us back with the price of His own life, to make a way for us to be reconciled with the Father, and to become sons of God of which He was the first example. We would be the new Israel, the people of God. When He died, Jesus wrote a new testament, a new agreement with God, by which we could be reconciled on the grounds of His shed Blood. So He replaced the whole sacrificial and saving system of the Old Testament, as it had been prophesied that He would.

More than that, Jesus not only satisfied all the requirements of a Holy and just God, but He also fulfilled all the demands of the Holy Law of God. He then wrote the Laws of the Kingdom of God onto the hearts of all His disciples, thereby enabling them to fulfill all the law’s requirements for a holy life.

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In Roman days, a wealthy and childless father could adopt a slave youth as his son and assign to him all the privileges of a son and full heir.

That is what Jesus did for us. Sin demanded the wages of death to be paid. We could not pay for our sin, so Jesus died in our place, and the demands of sin were fully and finally settled. We owe the devil nothing, but we owe Jesus our lives.

The word redeem means to “buy back.” It is like losing something and then seeing it for sale by someone who found it. You must pay the price for it to become yours again. As we have seen, it cost Jesus His Humiliation even unto death, but He overcame all that was demanded. By His grace, we can open our hearts and lives to Him in gratitude and thanks for His love for us. All sinners live under the wrath of God in this life and will face judgment when they die. But Jesus also took all that upon Himself when He died in our place. He suffered the curse, and we are now free from that curse. The curse of sin causes the world to get worse and worse, but it is God’s wrath at work against all evil. The process has been reversed by Jesus on the Cross, however, and now we are blessed by God as we live for Him.

Jesus has come to deliver us from the power and presence of sin and the sinful nature in us. When we trust Him to save and deliver us, we can be certain that He does so, for the devil who could not keep Him in the grave is the same devil whose nature is expelled by the presence of the Son of God in you.

Class Discussion

Write out your definition of sin and compare with other students in the class. What basis did you use when finding this definition?

Ask yourself, is it scriptural or did it merely come from some theology?



# 5

## Free Grace and the Decrees

### Lesson Purpose

- To discover the difference between Predestination and double predestination

### Lesson Outcome

- The student will learn the difference between predestination and double predestination
- Know the steps to receive Jesus as Lord and Saviour

### Table of Contents

- Differences between Predestination and Double Predestination
- Steps to receive Jesus as Saviour and Lord.
- A double problem needs a double cure.

### Free Grace and the Decrees of God.

#### Differences between Predestination and Double Predestination.

Some theologians look toward a system of decrees which, they say, God uses to control man's destiny. Many of them go so far as to teach that God has pre-chosen or elected who will go to heaven and who will go to hell. They even say that men should love God for sending them to hell, for it proves that He thought about them, and that, as created creatures, they should never question God's will. They teach that God did not allow man to choose freely, but that He decreed or predestined for man to sin so that He could predestine man's salvation. They teach that this salvation, however, came only by the decree of God, which meant that Jesus only died and paid the price for those predetermined by God to be saved. According to this theology, God used Jesus to fulfill what He had decreed. Not only does this make God the direct author of sin, but it also makes Jesus His last-minute tool to be used.

These theologians further teach that when God decrees to elect some, He also decrees that these poor souls be given grace, faith, and repentance to be saved. They say this because it has to be all done by God and nothing can be done by man. They see the ability to respond and believe as works, unacceptable to God. That is why they call it irresistible grace. They teach that man is a sinner and will always be a sinner, but that the grace given to him makes him a sinner saved by grace. Many leading theologians go so far as to say that Christ has already forgiven all sins of the past, the present, and the future, and that sin no longer has any power to separate the redeemed one from God, no matter how much he willfully sins. Wesleyans, however, do not accept this teaching of decrees.

Some theologians also go so far as to say that God is merely the creator of free moral beings who, themselves, are the authors of sin.

This theology eliminates the concept of free choice, for to decree a person to be lost means that he never had a real choice.

The Bible teaches that all are sinners by nature and by choice. "All have sinned," according to Romans 3:23, and Jesus died for all sinners. This means *everybody*. Romans 3:21 shows that the offer is to "all" who believe. Again, John 3:16 states that "whosoever believeth" shall receive eternal life. This indicates that it is not just for some who have been decreed to be elected by God to be saved. Jesus died to pay the price for every sinner, from the beginning of time until the last trumpet sounds. It is "full grace" and "free grace" given by God to "everybody."

There are also those who call what they teach "predestination, but what they are really teaching is **"double predestination,"** for they say God elects some to be saved and the rest to be lost. Rather, as Wesleyans see it, predestination means that God chose everybody to be saved by grace through faith in Christ. God chose Christ as the Saviour and Christ chooses every one of us. Ephesians 1:4-5 says, "even as He chose us **in Him** before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before Him in love, having foreordained us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." It never leaves the impression that God only chose some. God has planned for all of us to be recreated in Christ. He is the Sovereign Creator and still performs miracles.

We don't have to wait for irresistible grace to force us to get saved; rather we can act on the full grace which we sense is urging us to ask for forgiveness and cleansing. We can trust the living Lord Jesus Christ to save us now, because He chose Him to save us. God, by grace, gives you the opportunity to respond to Jesus Christ. You can either accept or reject Christ. If you accept Him into your life, He will save you and put His Spirit in you, thereby imparting eternal life to you. You will be born anew from above, according to John 3:3. We do not believe that God has preprogrammed everything and that all of His creations have been decreed to act a certain way, as if they are all a lot of robots.

In Ephesians 1:4, it was the Son of God, the Christ, who was willing to come and die as our substitute. He was not preprogrammed by the Father and the Spirit to do so. He operated from a basis of love and couldn't wait to come and solve our sin problems and restore us into fellowship with the Father again, so that God's full purposes could be accomplished in us. Jesus was willing to become the first member of the New Race of God's eternal people. This means that Jesus is going to change us to live with Him in the new world, and He makes this offer to everyone. God chose us to be Holy and Blameless in Christ, but it is impossible outside of Christ. You and I have been chosen by God to be Holy and Blameless, which means we are to BE Holy and Blameless. We are not simply to act as if we are holy in Christ. No, when we are in Christ, we are Holy. God planned to adopt these who are Holy and Blameless into His family, and to make them co-heirs with His Son Jesus Christ. Who are these whom God has planned to adopt? Anyone who will come and allow Christ to take Him in, so that he too can be In Christ. Because you responded, you, "having believed," put your faith IN CHRIST, so now you are IN. You have been sealed, and stamped with a sign which is the mark that you now are in Christ, and no longer outside of Christ.

Imagine if you were to get to the entrance of heaven one day and an angel were to say to you, "sorry but you cannot come in because you were not chosen to go to heaven. God preprogrammed you to go to hell." Then when you appeared before God on Judgment Day, you pleaded because you really had faith in Jesus to save you, and you obediently followed His teachings. But you are told that Jesus only died for the chosen

ones. Only forty-four million have been named and chosen and you are number forty-four-million- one. This illustration may seem far-fetched, but that is what a lot of theologies are teaching in the church today.

If you reject Jesus' offer for salvation, you will remain dead spiritually. You will die physically and eternally. This was not forced upon you. There is a grace moment offered by God to you wherein you have the opportunity to accept Jesus. If, however, you die without having asked Jesus into your life, you will die in your sin. You will appear before God who is your judge, given a fair trial, and then you will be condemned to the second death, according to Revelation 20:14.

The moment you choose to believe in Christ, your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. If you reject Him, your name will not be there. God gives everyone this right to choose either Jesus as Saviour or eternity in the second death. No one will be able to blame God. God chose you to be saved, so respond now.

### **Here then are the steps that anyone can use to receive Jesus as his Saviour and Lord.**

#### **Believe that:**

God loves you as you are. John 3:16 says, "for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." Put your name in the blank and then read the following: God so loved \_\_\_\_\_ that He gave His only Son that *whosoever* believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Say it from your heart, and tell yourself that you believe in Him. This means you believe that He died as your substitute and paid the price for your sin. In your innermost self, talk to yourself and be honest and say to yourself, "I want Jesus to come into my life and save me and change me. I really want to die and go to heaven, but more than that, I want to be recreated now. I want to be a brand new person." If you mean it inside of you, you will want to come to God, and You can, for it is really Him drawing You to Himself. Don't stop now. Turn to Him in prayer now and ask Him to receive you right now. Confess to God that you are a sinner, just as the Bible says in Romans 3:23, "for all have sinned and come far short of His Glory." Tell Him you are so sorry for sinning and that you are willing to turn your back on all you know to be wrong. Then follow God's remedy for sin: Ask Him to forgive you for all your sins. Tell Him that you want eternal life and that you believe Jesus can save you now. Romans 6:23 says, "for the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Open your heart and ask Jesus in Tell God that you believe His Word in John 1:12, which says, "but as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name."

Revelation 3:20 says, "behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him."

As best as you know how, simply ask Jesus to come into your heart and believe you are opening your heart, and He will come in.

Now thank Him for coming into your heart and life and tell Him that you love Him and will serve Him from now on.

Next openly testify to someone that you have repented and invited Jesus into your heart and life.

I ask all these things in Jesus Name.

Romans 10:9-10 says "that if you confess with your mouth that *Jesus is Lord*, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved," and

Romans 10:13 says, "for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

**Example of the “sinner’s prayer.”**

“I confess to God that I am a sinner, and that I cannot save myself.  
I believe that You, Lord Jesus Christ, died to pay the price for my sins and cleanse me from all sin on the cross.  
I believe You rose from the dead for my justification and sanctification.  
I do now confess You as my Saviour and my Lord.  
Please, Lord Jesus, come into my heart now. I invite You Jesus to become my own personal Saviour.  
Thank You for forgiving me and cleansing me and coming to live in my life now  
I ask this in Jesus’ Name.”

**Your Assurance**

How do you know if Jesus has really saved you and come into your heart?

Let me help you at this point.

Remember that you asked Jesus to come into your heart. Did He come In?

You might answer that you feel, good, or different, or excited, or clean. Enjoy the feeling, but know that this is not your assurance. Your assurance is your faith. By that I mean that you believed that Jesus did what He said He would do.

What did Jesus say He would do if you opened the door?

He said He would come in.

Did He come in?

Your answer is yes, because He said He would, and He cannot lie, for Jesus is truth.

So where is He now? Is He in you or not in you?

What is your answer?

1 John 5:13 says, “these things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may *know* that ye have eternal life, and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

**A Double Problem needs a Double Cure**

Naturally we know that the Holy Spirit is faithful and He does what He wills in our hearts and minds. Because so many are not taught to seek cleansing from the sinful nature and the infilling of the Holy Spirit, however, it is important to share with the seekers the need for this subsequent work of God in them.

The seeker needs to know that he has been forgiven of all his sins, and also that God has promised to cleanse him from the sinful nature. Some today are preaching that God forgives you now from all the sins of the past, as well as your present sins and all the sins you are yet going to commit. Jesus has totally forgiven you, but when you willingly and knowingly commit an act of sin, it still can bring death in so many ways. If you persist in this sin, it can bring spiritual death.

Some say that once born again, you cannot be unborn, but that is not helpful. We need to remind ourselves constantly that the power of sin and the devil do not change simply because we are new creatures in Christ. Adam chose to sin and died, so beware that you do not play around with sin, for it carries the sting of death. It happened to Lucifer as well and both he and Adam paid the consequences of disobedience. Rather be sure, and yield yourself completely to the LORD. Let Him fill you with His Spirit and keep filling you as follow Him. It is the safest way to live spiritually. You can be certain that you will never die as long as the Spirit of Christ Jesus in you is giving you life. He is our Saviour, not some doctrine, and He that hath the Son hath Life. Never allow anything or anyone to cause you to resist or quench His Spirit in your heart. Keep walking in the light as 1 John 1:5-7 exhorts.

**PRAYER.**

Dear Lord Jesus, You know that I love You and want to be obedient to You. That is why I ask now that You cleanse me from this sinful nature in me.

Fill my whole life with Your Holy Spirit and expel the darkness of the carnal spirit from me.

I believe You are doing the sanctifying work in my spirit and heart at this moment and I thank You for filling me with Your Spirit.

**I pray in Jesus' Name.**

**Open Confession of Jesus as Saviour and Sanctifier.**

Do not wait until you feel saved or sanctified. Go to someone whom you know will rejoice with you and encourage you in your walk with the Lord, and testify to them about what you have asked the Lord to do for you.

Do not try to force shy people to testify before the whole church as some do in a meeting. Ask their permission and if they say yes, then give them a platform to testify. You might hurt a shy person by forcing them to be what they are not normally.

Encourage them by asking them to share a testimony with you or a worker they know. This will break the ice for them and enable them to share more openly.

Do not plunge the new believer into the deep end of testifying and sharing. Rather, let him learn how to witness first, because some of them will end up giving long histories of their past life and boring people. Also, new believers have to learn to be diplomatic in sharing with others and not "thump" people with Bible texts, etc. The more you disciple and prepare a new believer, the more effective his witness is going to be. It will also be easier for a new believer to witness when the opportunity presents itself, which it will, for the Holy Spirit goes before and prepares the way. Teach this to new converts and newly sanctified Christians. After having testified openly about being saved or sanctified, the Christian will be given the assurance that he is saved, and that Jesus has filled his life. He must not doubt, however, if he does not sense this immediately. He must continue testifying and believing and developing a witnessing lifestyle.

The moment of witness will come to him through the Holy Spirit. Some speak of a moment of realization; others speak of being overwhelmed by His love.

Mine came after three months, when I was riding home in a train late one night after night school. I was all alone, but I sensed God's presence, and I just knew that everything had been settled and that I was empowered by His presence.

Finney and others tell of feeling as if electricity was flowing through them; others just did not want to move, sensing His presence with them as a warm glow.

This is not given as an evidence because the Holy Spirit fills our lives regardless of how we feel. He is faithful to His promises, and even when the moment of special awareness passes, He is still filling us with Himself. It is wrong to demand that certain signs must follow the Infilling of the Holy Spirit. Instead, there will be a new lifestyle that will follow. There will be a growth in Christlikeness, and greater intention to live a holy life, accompanied by a motivating love to spread the gospel. Do not stop there. Join a fellowship and church where you can grow in your faith and in your ministry. But do not become a "pew warmer." Get involved in some outreach ministry.

Go through a spiritual gifts workshop and experiment with your gifts in ministry, but do it under the authority of a pastor or assigned mentor.

Get involved in Bible Study and learn to pray and witness. Never become complacent. Keep your heart open to the leadings of the Holy Spirit and always obey Him. He might want you in full time work. Tell Him you

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are available and fellowship with Christian workers and missionaries, Let Him know you are committed and then just be supernaturally natural, for at the right time, He will open doors for you, and He will continue His ministry through you.

Welcome to an exciting and meaningful life walking with and following the Lord Jesus Christ!

Class Discussion.

Share with each other in class how the assurance of the Holy Spirit came when you were filled with the Holy Spirit.

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