

# SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

VOLUME 25

*"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39).*



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*From the Pastor's desk . . . selected*

**BECOMING AN EVANGELISM  
PACE-SETTER...Part 2**

**W**hat was to be the content of the message? That “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Roman 3:23). Like a boy that fell into a deep well cannot rescue himself, a sinner cannot save himself. To be rescued, he will need a helping hand from outside the well. It is like a man that fell into the sea. He needs the help of a diver to save him from drowning in the sea. A sinner needs Jesus Christ, the holy One, to be saved from sin. The message which the church is expected to take to the dying world does not go beyond these facts: First, you cannot save yourself. Second, whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved and whosoever cometh to Him He will not cast away. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away; and behold all things are become new. You need to understand that except a man is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. Again, understand that today is the day of salvation. Today is the acceptable time. This is the core message all true believers are expected to take to the outside world.

A true, church exists for no other reason than this. A church that is only interested in executing programs that have nothing to do with evangelism will find itself bereft of the power and the presence of God. How did the early church escape such a fate? **“They went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following”** (Mark 16:20).

Jesus said, “Go and, they “went.” He said: “preach. “And, they preached. “To be part of the true church you must carry out the commandment of the Lord; you

must do what He asked you to do. See what followed the disciples' obedience to the Great Commission: "the Lord (worked) with them... confirming (their) word with signs." When we do what God expects of us, His power sustains and supports us.

**"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you"** (John 20:21).

The Lord made evangelism His main focus. He gave it a priority. He preached the gospel every time and everywhere (in the villages, in the cities) and to everybody (to families and individuals, old and young, Jews and Gentiles). The zeal with which he preached the gospel ought to compel and commission every true believer into the work. Since the days of the early church the clarion call has become louder. The early church operated, much in the zeal of the Lord on evangelism. They did it every day and every time. It was their priority. Everybody knew them by no other activity than evangelism. They preached the word so much they were accused of subversive activities. **"And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, those that have turned the world upside down are come hither also"** (Act 17:6).

Obviously, the church reached every community with the gospel. You hardly could find a place in the then known world where they were not known. Otherwise, how do you account for the reference to them as **"those that have turned the world upside down."** Evidently, it came as surprise to the inhabitants when also they found their way into Thessalonica. If the Thessalonians thought that the apostles would be contented with the work they had done thence far, they were mistaken. A true believer should be possessed by no less a consuming zeal.

## **THE PRESSING DUTY OF A REAL CHRISTIAN**

A real Christian should have the mind, the compassion of Christ and the love of God. He is always conscious of the inestimable value of a soul. If you are a real Christian

who knows Christ and loves Him you will love to proclaim Him before the needy world. You will want to do anything to save the souls around you. You will be eager to manifest a Christ - like compassion towards sinners.

**“But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd”** (Matthew 9:36).

If you are a real Christian you should have compassion also when you see the unsaved in their cars, on the streets, in the offices and as they walk about without the life of God. You should have some pity on people who have mansions here on earth but do not have one in heaven. They are rich materially; but they are poor spiritually. They look beautiful physically; but they are ugly spiritually. They have connections, they know people here on earth but they do not know God. You need to have a burden for such people. You need some compassion to compel you to preach the gospel to them.

**“Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous but the laborers are few”** ( verse 37 ) . Sinners are very many. The people we need to bring to the Lord are very many. The people who are dying in sin are very many. Ignorant people that go to hell, the people that the devil has blindfolded are very many, but the laborers are few. Isn't it surprising to see so few laborers amidst many professing born-again Christians today? No. Many people only go to church. They do not publicize Christ. Many people who attend Christian retreats, do not talk about Christ. But great will be the result when every believer shares the same vision about preaching the gospel. **“Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest”**. You will need to be awakened; you will need to begin to preach the gospel. And then you pray that every believer should become a soul winner. The fact that some people are perishing should leave a burden in your heart.

Jesus had a burden; he felt the pressing duty of preaching the gospel. Hence he said: **“I must work the**

**works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4)**

This ought to be your own decision too. That is the spirit in which you need to take on the work of evangelism. As long as there is opportunity, we are to rise up and do the work. Wherever there is a sinner that is still willing to listen to the gospel. We are to rise up and preach to him. We are to talk to sinners in bus, in the neighborhoods, everywhere. Many people die almost every day. If not in accident, then from sickness. If not from disaster, then through satanic affliction. How we need then to seize every opportunity to preach the gospel to people we meet because we may never see them again. In the market and in the office, we must talk to people about their souls, about God’s love and about faith in Christ. How many believers have missed opportunities of speaking to people with whom they shared the same seat in the bus? How many people were alive at the beginning of the year that have now gone into eternity without Christ! How many people did you see last time you travelled to your country home, that have now died and you can never see them anymore! How many people did you discuss with that are dead and never will you see them again! Therefore, let there be a burden within you. Determined, like Christ, to do the work of evangelism while there is the opportunity, while it is day.

**“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel” (1 Corinthians 9:16).**

The Apostle Paul’s statement is typical of burdened soul winners. Your relatives, friends, co-workers, acquaintances are there, are they born again? If you are a real Christian, a message as this ought to spring up the zeal in you and activate your sense of compassion. It ought to make you as determined as the Lord or Paul the apostle. Your thought ought to be: “I must evangelize, I must win a soul for the Lord. “ What did Paul the apostle mean when he pronounced woe on himself if he did not preach the gospel? He was saying that abstinence from

preaching the gospel would attract God's judgment upon the believer. Besides, you will lose a lot – peace, intimate relationship with the Lord and the joy of the Lord – if you do not preach the gospel. Your life will not overflow with the blessing of the Lord if you do not make evangelism your life-style. It is the only thing that can help sustain the power and presence of the Lord in a believer's life. "Woe is unto me, if preach not the gospel:"

Such a spirit is characteristic not only of Paul the apostle but also of the early church. And, if you desire God's presence, power, goodness, miracles, and promises to be fulfilled in your life then you have no choice than to preach the gospel. If the Lord must attend to your prayers, if He must assist and guide you in all your ways, then you need to make evangelism your life-style. But to fold your hands and do nothing while people die in their sins and go to hell would be woeful. This is why you must rise up and preach the gospel.

But when do you do it? Immediately. The moment you are sure that God has forgiven you, that you are born again, then you should start preaching the gospel. Has he touched, healed, delivered or answered your prayers? Then begin to preach the gospel. And real preaching is not a time-bound or fair-weather activity. You preach the gospel anytime, when you feel like and when you do not feel like; when response in invigorating, and when it is not. You preach it every time.

## **PERSEVERANCE IN THE GREAT COMMISSION**

The Great Commission demands some perseverance from every believer. It is not something to shuffle into the plans for tomorrow. You do not drag procrastination into it. You just do it .Now!

Why? By the time you are ready some of the people you ought to reach with the gospel might have been plucked away by the cold hands of death. Thousands of people die every day; hence you cannot delay the preaching of the gospel. Not to preach the gospel is not to have the love of God, the mind of Christ .A believer with the mind of Christ

will want to preach the gospel. You will do it when it is convenient and when it is not convenient.

You will do it whether you have a job or not; whether people like it or not. You will persevere in the preaching of the gospel.

**Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine... Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.** (II Timothy 4: 3, 5).

The preaching of the gospel may sometimes attract persecutions and difficulties. But you will need to preach the word irrespective of situations and circumstances. Whether things are alright or not; whether things are working out as you expected or not, preach the word. Sometimes people may misunderstand you and spread dirty news about you. Still stay at your duty-post. Keep on preaching! Even if you come under intense criticism, from close acquaintances still keep preaching the gospel. Whatever the situation, you must not fail to talk to people about their souls.

Paul the apostle, in writing to Timothy, talks of affliction and evangelism. This means that evangelism, sometimes, may attract persecution or criticism from people even very close to you, perhaps your husband or your wife. A decision not to partake in local festivities or backbiting could elicit the disfavor of some people. But you are to **“endure afflictions and do the work of an evangelist.”**

**“And to him they agreed; and when they had called the apostle, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name”** ( Acts 5 : 40 , 14 ) .

Following the healing of the cripple at the “Beautiful gate, and subsequently of others with different kinds of ailments, (Acts 5: 12-16), the apostles had intensified the preaching of the gospel. And this led to their arrest by



Jewish religious council. But their trial was discontinued as “Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, intervened and dissuaded the authorities from going on with their plans to kill them. Thus, the apostle was released with strict instruction not to preach in the name of Jesus. Did that stop evangelism? No. **“Daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ”** (verse 42) .Surely, the apostles were persecuted. But that did not stop them from preaching the gospel. They persevered because they were determined to fulfill the Great Commission. Nothing should stop you too from fulfilling the Great Commission.

Perseverance in the preaching of the gospel was the hallmark of the early church. Not even when the wind of great persecution swept by, scattering **“throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria.”** the church which was at Jerusalem. Rather, **“they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word”**(Acts 8: 4).

If the Lord has blessed you, revived your soul and awakened your conscience then tell others the good things the Lord has done.

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# THE BEGINNING OF OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES

## 313 Lesson

## THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

**MEMORY VERSE:** “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Hebrews 9:24).

### **TEXT: Leviticus 16:1-34**

Shortly after the untimely death of Nadab and Abihu, on account of their offering strange fire before the Lord, God instructed Aaron through Moses on the service of the great day of atonement. This was a special day in the Jewish religious calendar, an annual event which took place on the 10th day of the 7th month (Tishri, according to the calendar of the Jews but which corresponds approximately to our September).

On the day of atonement, the sins of the entire nation was atoned for by sacrifice and shedding the blood of prescribed animals. The tabernacle was also purified from the defilement of sin and the whole nation of Israel obtained a new lease of life for another one year.

The special sacrifice and the entire program of the day of atonement give us insight into the divine transactions and the intricacies of what it takes God to expiate or cover the sins of humanity. It reveals how God appoints the way of escape from sin, provides the Substitute that takes the place of guilty man, and how man is expected to cooperate with God by identifying himself with the plan of redemption.

The sacrifices on the day of atonement represented a climax of all the daily offerings, the appointed festive sacrifices and personal offerings which were made by the Jews annually. As it were, the service of the day of atonement was appointed to deal with any error or sin of the people which were not adequately covered

by any of the other sacrifices during the year.

**Question 1: Why was it necessary for God to institute the Day of Atonement in addition to the daily sacrifices?**

By instituting the Day of Atonement, we learn (1) how serious and terrible sin is. The malady of sin is so pervasive that the daily sacrifices and all the repeated offerings of the people were not sufficient to deal with it. Hence, God had to appoint another special day for atonement. (2) That the provision of God to cover the sin of mankind is full and very comprehensive indeed. Not a single sin was omitted in the process of atonement and, as such, God made adequate plan to cover every kind of sin that His people could have committed either as individuals or as a nation. (3) That the typical levitical system was weak when compared with the perfect sacrifice of Jesus. Under the levitical system, the sacrifices had to be often repeated, one offering supplementing the other in almost an endless way. The daily sacrifice supplemented the sacrifice of the day of atonement. Then, there were those sacrifices offered on special feast days as well as personal or congregational offerings for ceremonial cleansing. But in contrast, Jesus offered Himself once and for all not only for the Jewish nation but also for the sins of the whole world; and with that single offering, never to be repeated or supplemented in any way, He obtained eternal redemption for us. Now we can enjoy the benefits of salvation in Christ who has delivered us both from the guilt of sin as well as its power.

**PUNISHMENT FOR SIN** (Leviticus 16:1,2; Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 3:23; Acts 5:1-11)

Reference to the death of Nadab and Abihu in our text reveals and confirms the justice of God. Though He does not delight in judgement, He judges sin so others can turn from their evil ways and live righteous lifestyle. The wages of sin is death – death of the sinner. The problem of sin with its consequences is so great that human imagination cannot fathom appropriate solution to it. It is only God's way and on His own terms that man's sins can be expiated.

Charting a new course or way of approaching God (as in the case of Nadab and Abihu) is sin. So also is drawing back from God. The dilemma is resolved by learning how to draw near to Him in lifestyle, worship and service. Believers must approach God's presence with reverential fear and honour for Him. The need for reverential fear for God underpinned a set of instructions He gave to the high priest concerning infrequent entry into the holy of holies and his general conduct during service in the temple. God reaffirmed that death would be the consequence of not taking heed to His Word. Atonement through animal sacrifice to cover the sin of the whole Jewish nation was necessary to bring them into favour and fellowship with God. Since atonement through the blood of sacrificed animal foreshadowed Christ's singular and final sacrifice, not only for the nation of Israel but for the whole world, the sinner's only hope of redemption is through His death and resurrection.

### **THE PROCEDURE AND EFFECTS OF ATONEMENT** (Leviticus 16:3-28; 23:26-32; Exodus 30:10; Numbers 29:7-11).

The procedure of the sacrifice on the day of atonement was somewhat different from the normal daily sacrifices done by the priests. On the day of atonement, the high priest alone officiated in the sanctuary and for most of the time he had to put off his distinguished robe of glory and honour, being clad only in pure white linen garment like the ordinary priests. Special offerings were also made in addition to the normal daily sacrifices. The special sacrifices include (1) a young bullock for a sin offering for Aaron and his family (2) two goats for a sin offering for the people of Israel (3) a ram for a burnt offering for Aaron and his family (4) a ram for a burnt offering for the children of Israel.

<b>Question 2: Outline the procedure of the service of atonement</b>
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The service on the day of atonement took several stages. One, Aaron the high priest had to bathe himself in water and put on the special sacred linen garments. Two, he presented the sacrificial animals before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle. Three,

he cast lots on the two goats of the sin offering for the people so as to determine which one to kill and which to send away into the wilderness as a scapegoat.

Four, the sin offerings were made. First Aaron killed the young bullock for his own sin offering and collected the blood. Then he entered the holy of holies taking in one hand a censer full of live coals, which he had taken from the brazen altar, and in the other hand sweet incense beaten small. As soon as he entered the holy of holies, Aaron poured the incense upon the live coals in order to produce a cloud of sweet incense which covered the mercy seat. In this way, Aaron would not look directly on the mercy seat. Next, Aaron would then go out and bring in the blood of the slain bull into the most holy place. Then he would sprinkle with his finger the blood on the eastern side of the mercy seat and then in front of it seven times. After this, the sin offering for the people was sacrificed. That means Aaron would go out of the most holy place and kill the goat which was chosen for the Lord by lot. Then he would carry the blood into the holy of holies and repeat the sprinkling as he did for his own bull.

Five, Aaron made atonement for the holy place by staining the horns of the golden altar seven times with the blood of the bull and of the goat. The remaining blood he poured at the base of the brazen altar in order to make atonement for the outer court of the tabernacle. Six, the scapegoat was taken and Aaron laid both his hands upon its head, confessing over it all the sins of the children of Israel. Then the scapegoat, bearing upon it the sins of the people, was sent away to the wilderness.

Seven, the next stage involved the sacrificing of the burnt offerings. For this Aaron went into the holy place, removed the linen garments in which he ministered, bathe himself and put on his priest's robes before coming out into the outer court to kill the burnt offerings. He offered a ram as a burnt offering for himself and his family and also a ram for the people of Israel. Next, Aaron burnt the fat of the sin offering upon the altar. The flesh and entrails of the sin offerings were carried outside the camp and

burnt. Afterwards, the person who led the scapegoat into the wilderness as well as the person who carried the flesh of the sin offerings for burning would wash their clothes and bathe themselves before returning to the camp.

**Question 3: What attitude characterized the children of Israel on the day of atonement and what lesson does this teach modern believers?**

While Aaron made atonement for the people, God commanded that the entire children of Israel maintain an attitude of penitence and sobriety. The day of atonement was observed as a special Sabbath and the children of Israel were required to spend it in self examination, humility, fasting and genuine sorrow for their sin. This implies that atonement by sacrifice must be complemented with penitence before a person can receive pardon (Leviticus 23:27-30).

This is food for thought to those who feel that repentance is just to mention your sins to God, whether you feel sorry or not, and to simply claim the benefits of Christ's redemptive work by faith. While we cannot undermine the place of simple faith in obtaining salvation, God expects every penitent sinner to be truly sorry and turn away from his/her sins. David said, "**For I will declare mine iniquity, I will be sorry for my sin**" (Psalm 38:18). Paul also spoke of making the Corinthians sorry for their permissiveness (2 Corinthians 2:2; 7:8-10). Such godly sorrow leads to repentance: it cannot be separated from true penitence.

As a result of the sacrifices on the day of atonement, God forgave all the sins of the children of Israel. All their trespasses and shortcomings of the previous year were covered by the blood of atonement, and as such, they could start with God on a fresh note. To emphasize this idea of a new beginning for the people of God, the trumpet of jubilee was blown on the day of atonement. "**Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all**

**your land**” (Leviticus 25:9). This is an indication that our liberty and release from the bondage of sin is a function of Christ’s atonement.

### **THE MEANING AND PURPOSE OF ATONEMENT** (Leviticus 16:6, 16-19, 29-34; Exodus 30:10; Psalm 32:1).

The word atonement is from the Hebrew word ‘kippur’ and it means to cover over, expiate or make payment – particularly for a wrong doing. Atonement is God’s provision whereby sinful man could be redeemed, justified and made fit to have fellowship with God. Atonement becomes necessary because of the fall of man. When man sinned, he became guilt-laden and estranged from God. On one hand, God’s holiness and justice demanded that man be punished for his sins. This means he should share a similar fate in hell with Satan and his demons who had also sinned against God. But on the other hand, God’s attributes of mercy, kindness and grace yearned to pardon man and restore him to favour and fellowship with Himself. Therefore, God found a solution to this dilemma by making provision for atonement. This involves the transfer of the sinners’ guilt upon an acceptable substitute who can bear the lawful punishment, as demanded by divine justice, so that God can then express His kindness and grace to sinful man without any hindrance.

Without any doubt, the whole service of the day of atonement pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ and His great work of redemption. He is the perfect Substitute who took away our sins. On account of His great work of atonement, God can now justify sinners who repent and exercise faith in Christ. On the basis of Christ’s atonement for our sins, God is described as **“him that justifieth the ungodly... that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus”** (Romans 4:5; 3:26). Now we can come to God, no matter how deep in sin we have been and He will justify us if we have faith in Christ.

**Question 4: State the purpose of atonement.**

From all we have learnt so far, we can summarize



the purpose of atonement. (1) It was for expiation. To cover over man's sin and provide a way for him to receive pardon. (2) To make due payment for sin. "**The wages of sin is death**" and so the sacrificial Lamb had to die. (3) To satisfy the demand of God's moral character which required due punishment for every offender. (4) To pave way for the expression of God's attributes of mercy, grace and kindness without infringing on His Holiness. (5) To restore the penitent man to fellowship with God. (6) To cleanse the holy tabernacle from the defilement of sin. This became necessary because sinful men had stained it with their imperfections as they ministered or worshipped there.

### **PECULIARITIES OF THE DAY OF ATONEMENT AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE** (Leviticus 16:29-31; Psalm 103:12; Isaiah 53:6,12; Hebrews 13:11-13)

Certain features were peculiar to the day of atonement and they are of great significance to believers in Christ. One, regardless of the day of the week it fell, the day of the atonement was to be a special Sabbath and solemn assembly (Leviticus 16:29-31). This was an early indication that God's true Sabbath was not limited to a particular day but to the atonement of Christ. Having our sins atoned for and reaping its benefits is Sabbath indeed. Two, the offerings were peculiar. The ram that was slain represented Christ dying for our sins. The scapegoat represented Him bearing our sins and removing them far from us (Psalm 103:12; Isaiah 53:6, 12). Sprinkling blood by the mercy seat typifies Jesus' entry into heaven with His blood to atone for us. Burning the flesh of the sin offerings outside the gate symbolized Christ's suffering without the gate so that we can be sanctified (Hebrews 13:11-13).

Three, this was the only day in which the high priest was permitted to enter the holy of holies. This was an indication that the people under the Old Testament had limited access to God. Aaron was warned "**to come not at all times into the holy place within the veil before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not**" (verse 2). But under the New Covenant, Jesus has torn the veil that barred our

access to God. Now we are commanded to draw near and come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

Four, no one was permitted to be in the holy sanctuary while Aaron made atonement for it. This pointed to Christ who trod the winepress alone (Isaiah 63:3) and He is the only One qualified to make atonement for mankind. Five, on the day of atonement the high priest entered the holy of holies clad in special white linen garments rather than his normal high priest's robes. The white robe symbolized the purity and absolute perfection of Jesus our great High Priest. The laying aside of Aaron's robe of honour and glory while making atonement also pointed to the self-emptying of Christ during His incarnation when He laid aside His glory in order to atone for our sins. But like Aaron put on the garments after the sin offerings were made, Jesus entered back into His glory after His resurrection. When He comes back to earth, we shall see Him in glory and not in humiliation (John 17:5; Philippians 2:5-11; I John 3:2).

**Question 5: Point out the benefits that believers enjoy as a result of Christ's atoning sacrifice.**

The sacrifice on the day of atonement procured forgiveness and favour with God for the children of Israel. But this was only a shadow of the reality in Christ. Jesus Christ has fulfilled all the details of what the day of atonement prefigured. His sacrifice has procured for us both temporal and eternal blessings. In Him we have redemption, forgiveness of sins through His blood, nearness and access to God by faith, deliverance from the bondage of sin and Satan, assurance of getting to heaven to be with the Lord eternally (Romans 5:1,2; 8:1,2; Ephesians 1:7; 2:13; Colossians 1:13-14). But just as the Israelites could enjoy the benefits of atonement only if they were penitent and humble, we also shall enjoy these benefits only if we repent of sin, humble ourselves before the Lord and follow Him to the end.

## DAILY BIBLE READING

	<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	1 Cor	15-16	Numbers	17-18
TUE	„	1-3	„	19-20
WED	„	4-5	„	21-22
THUR	„	6-7	„	23-24
FRI	„	8-9	„	25-26
SAT	„	10-11	„	27-28
SUN	„	12-13	„	29-30

# 314 Lesson

## LAWS ABOUT SPECIAL SACRIFICES

**MEMORY VERSE:** “For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul” (Leviticus 17:11).

### **TEXT: Leviticus 17:1-16**

After setting forth the way and manner of gaining access to God through sacrifices, priestly mediation and the day of atonement, God instructed the children of Israel on how to maintain a close walk with Him. God wanted His people to know that it is not enough to have access to Him but that they must walk with Him for the rest of their lives.

Whereas Leviticus chapters 1 to 16 deal with the subjects of atonement and access to God, chapters 17 to 26 center on the subject of holiness and how to remain free from sin. In these chapters, God pointed out both the prohibitions – things Israel must avoid, and practical duties – things they must do in order to maintain fellowship with Him. Chapter 17 which we are studying emphasizes two major points. One, that life belongs to God and so it must be regarded as sacred. And two, that blood is the life of an animal and it is for atonement.

**Question 1: State the purpose of several injunctions that God gave to the Israelites and the lesson that believers can learn from it.**

The instructions that God gave to the children of Israel were intended to make them a peculiar people, distinct from pagan nations around them. The Lord wanted them to be set apart and holy unto Himself without any stain of idolatry or any sin whatever. In the same way, God expects believers in Christ to be peculiar and free from sinful imitations of the world. We are called to separation from sin and the evil that prevails in our society.

**THE PROHIBITION OF PRESUMPTUOUS SACRIFICES** (Leviticus 17:1-9; Numbers 15:30; Deuteronomy 12:5-7,13-15,21; 32:17; 2 Chronicles 11:15; I Corinthians 10:20).

God gave instructions on how the children of Israel should offer their sacrifices. The responsibility of making sacrifices was given to Aaron and his sons only. Therefore no one apart from the sons of Aaron was permitted to offer sacrifices on the brazen altar. In addition to this command, God told the children of Israel not to offer their sacrifices just anywhere but at the door of the tabernacle. Those who violate the command were to be cut off.

**Question 2: Point out the reasons why the children of Israel were commanded to bring their sacrifices to the tabernacle.**

Whenever God gives us command we should obey, whether we know all the reasons behind the command or not. Many times God tells His people the reason why He makes a particular demand from them, but at other times, He does not explain or give reasons at all. This is because as Elihu rightly said, **“God is greater than man, why dost thou strive against him? For he giveth not account of any of his matters”** (Job 33:13).

In prohibiting indiscriminate sacrifices among the children of Israel God gave the reason for His command. **“To the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices, which they offer in the open field, even that they may bring them unto the LORD, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest, and offer them for peace offerings unto the LORD. And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring...”** (Leviticus 17:5,7a).

We may summarize the reasons why the children of Israel were commanded to bring their sacrifices to the tabernacle as follows: (1) to offer the sacrifices to God and make provision for the priests who ministered at the altar. (2) To avoid idolatrous imitations among the people. For instance, the children of Israel had been

much influenced by their long stay in Egypt and they had copied the idea of making sacrifices to goat-like idols which were common among the Egyptians. (3) To ensure that the sacrifices were made according to God's specifications under the direct supervision of the priest. The priests would certify that the sacrificial animal was acceptable and free from blemish. (4) To sanctify the sacrifice by tying it to the horns of the altar. (5) To preserve the dignity and honour of God's tabernacle and its ministering priests. (6) To instil in the mind of the people a regard and respect for the sacrifices so that holy things would not appear cheap and lose their significance were they to be offered just anywhere, anyhow and by everyone. (7) To ensure that no Israelite forsook the tabernacle or carry on a private religion. Rather, the command gave an occasion for fellowship, unity and cooperation in the congregation.

Deuteronomy 12:13-16 gave further instructions on sacrifices and on how the Israelites may kill and eat animals not meant for sacrifice. In the New Testament however, so long as the slaughtering of an animal is not connected with idolatrous practices, it is alright to eat it (Mark 7:14-23; Acts 15:28,29; I Timothy 4:3).

The purpose of offering sacrifices to God in the Old Testament was to make atonement and appease God. Christ is the Lamb of God and the final sacrifice for the sins of humanity. Even in the Old Testament, worship of Satan through sacrifices was forbidden for God's people. This still applies today. Besides, offering any kind of animal sacrifices in the New Testament is also unscriptural and a direct rejection of Christ's sacrifice at Calvary. Through His death, He has established a new way of worship of the true God. And the power of His sacrifice far exceeds that of animal sacrifices. Thus, forgiveness of sin and cleansing in the shed blood of Christ is available for the repentant sinner and backslider. Sanctification, healing, protection, deliverance, etc. are the blessings Christ's blood has procured for every believer. But we need to pray and exercise faith in God to possess them.

**THE PRESCRIPTIONS CONCERNING BLOOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT** (Leviticus 17:10-16; 3:17; 7:26,27; Genesis 9:3-6; Deuteronomy 12:16, 23-25; 15:23)

For the sake of emphasis, God repeated the law which prohibited the eating of blood. This law had been given to Israel and reiterated on several occasions (Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 3:17; 7:26). The children of Israel were commanded not to eat blood because (1) it is the life of the animal and it belongs to God. (2) The blood is exclusively reserved for atonement. (3) Idolaters were fond of drinking or eating the blood of their sacrifices. Therefore, God did not want His worship to have a hint or semblance of idolatry. (4) God wants His people to have deep respect for life, whether of man or any living creature. Life belongs to God and it must not be cheapened or devalued in any way. (5) God wanted His people to learn that every aspect of their lives, including what to eat or not to eat, must be subject to His will. No one can be in true fellowship with God without some measure of restraint on his or her appetite. (6) The blood of those sacrificial animals in the Old Testament prefigured the blood of Jesus which should be shed to atone the sins of mankind. Therefore, it must be held as sacred.

**Question 3: Give reasons why the Israelites were commanded not to eat blood.**

God commanded the children of Israel to show their regard for life in many ways. One way is that they should not eat blood either as a delicacy on its own or along with the carcass of the animal. Rather they should drain out the blood of any animal before eating it. Another way to portray the sanctity of blood is to bury or cover with soil the blood of animals caught in hunting. They were also to avoid eating animals that were torn by beasts or that died of itself, because the blood was not drained.

God emphasized that the life of an animal is in its blood. This is the reason why an animal dies the moment its blood is drained out or poisoned. Life is in the blood. It is the fluid that keeps the bodily organs

fresh and moist. It supplies the cells of the body with nourishment and oxygen, and also removes unwanted toxic by-products from the body systems. The blood protects the body against dangerous organisms and it also provides the proper medium for carrying out all life processes in the body. Under the Old Testament, the sacrifices centered on blood. By collecting the blood of the animal victim in a bowl and presenting it to God, the priests acknowledged that the life of the sacrificial animal was being brought in exchange for the life of the sinner. This fulfils the justice of God: since the wages of sin is death. In effect, the sinner did not have to give his life for his sin because the life of an acceptable substitute has been sacrificed for him. This makes more lucid the substitutionary death of Christ for mankind. A song writer re-echoed this spiritual deal for the sinner's freedom this way:

Christ our Redeemer died on the cross,  
Died for the sinner, paid all his due;  
All who receive Him need never fear,  
Yes, He will pass, will pass over you.

When I see the blood,  
When I see the blood,  
When I see the blood,  
I will pass, I will pass over you.

Many are however ignorant of this truth in God's word, and so, they are still living in sin. Believers must spread this good news so others can be saved from sin and its consequences.

<p><b>Question 4: What punishment awaits those who deliberately disobey God's command?</b></p>
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However, we should take note of the drastic punishment prescribed for those who ate blood presumptuously. God said He would set His face against such a person and cut him off from the congregation (verse 10). This implied that the benefits of atonement by blood were reserved only for those who obeyed God and keep His commandments. Eating blood was tantamount



to refusal to present a substitute for one's life. It amounted to a claim of self-sufficiency and flagrant rejection of God's provision for atonement.

For those who ignorantly ate an animal that died by itself or got torn by beasts, God made provision for ceremonial cleansing. They were required to wash their clothes, be separated from the camp for a day and after that they were regarded as clean. But again, those who wilfully reject this provision shall bear their iniquity. This means they would not be pardoned but punished by God. As always, disobedience to divine injunction brings guilt and defilement. In this state, the sinner or backslider is separated from the family of God until he prays and receives forgiveness and cleansing in the blood of Christ.

**THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF BLOOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT** (Matthew 26:28; Romans 3:25; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14,20; Hebrews 9:14,22; I Peter 1:2; 1 John 1:7; Revelation 1:5).

The importance that God attached to blood in the Old Testament was in view of the fact that it typified the precious blood of Jesus Christ. The sacrificial animals represented Jesus as our perfect Substitute who gave His life on our behalf so that we can escape God's wrath.

**Question 5: Point out how the law of special sacrifices apply to believers in the New Testament.**

Under the New Testament dispensation, sacrifice to God no longer consists of slaughtering animals and sprinkling their blood. This is because Jesus has fulfilled what those rites symbolized. Our sacrifices are now of a spiritual nature (I Peter 2:5; Hebrews 13:16). We are to bring the spiritual sacrifices of faith, holy living, continual praise and devoted service to God. We can also bring our tithes and offerings to the house of God, the church. Two, in offering spiritual sacrifices, believers in Christ are no longer confined to a particular place. Rather, we can now call upon the Lord in every place (John 4:21-24; I Timothy 2:8). Three, Jesus is our Priest, Sacrifice and Altar. Just as the Israelites were expected to bring

their sacrifices to the altar, now we are commanded to offer our sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ (Hebrews 13:15). For, the blood of Jesus has atoned for our sins and each person should avail himself of the cleansing through His blood. By shedding His blood on the cross, Jesus substituted His life for us. His blood far surpasses the blood of goats and bulls in worth and efficacy. Now all who accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour can find perfect salvation in Him.

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	1 Cor 15-16	Numbers	17-18
TUE	„ 1-3	„	19-20
WED	„ 4-5	„	21-22
THUR	„ 6-7	„	23-24
FRI	„ 8-9	„	25-26
SAT	„ 10-11	„	27-28
SUN	„ 12-13	„	29-30

# 315 Lesson

## LAWS CONCERNING IMMORAL RELATIONSHIPS

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the Lord”  
(Leviticus 18:5)

**TEXT: Leviticus 18:1-30.**

**O**ur study focuses on God’s command against worldly imitation, immoral sexual relationships and idolatry among His people. The study is a build up on the previous ones in which God demanded total separation from the world and holiness of life as prerequisites to walking with Him. God often spelt out in clear terms to the children of Israel those things they must avoid as they lived in the midst of other nations who did not know Him. These people had their own set of customs and values, most of which contradict the original purpose of God for His people. Their beliefs and practices had become ordinances, either written or unwritten, and they expected everyone around them to conform without question. But God commanded His people to reject such practices and ordinances because they are contrary to His will.

As believers in the world, we are also surrounded by social values and ideas which are in opposition to the word of God. In many cases, such practices have become very popular and so widely accepted that it may seem difficult to challenge or oppose them. Yet, we are expected to keep to God’s word and stand against the pressure that may come from the society. We must obey God rather than men and we must always live by scriptural standard in every area of our lives.

**COMMAND AGAINST COMPROMISE AND SINFUL IMITATION** (Leviticus 18:1-5; 11:44; Proverbs 4:14; Jeremiah 10:2,3; Romans 12:2; 2 Timothy 2:4; I Peter 4:1-4).

God commanded the children of Israel not to imitate or conform to the standard of life of the heathen

nations among whom they dwelt. They were required to live a separated life in complete devotion to God. To this end, they were warned not to retain the idolatrous practices of Egypt, where they came out from, and not to learn the incestuous and wicked traditions of the Canaanites, among whom they were about to enter. This warning became necessary because men are apt to be influenced either by what they have learnt in the past or what they see around them.

**Question 1: Why did God command His people to live a separated life?**

God commands His people to live a separated life in any society they find themselves because the customs and traditions of most nations are founded on idolatrous or humanistic principles. Such traditions and practices are often popular because they have been in vogue for a long time and majority of the people conform to them without question. However, a wrong behaviour or practice does not become right simply because the majority are doing it or for the mere fact that it has been practised for a long time. We must stand against any principle or practice that contradicts the word of God in any way.

In commanding the Israelites to live a separated life, God kept telling them, “**I am the LORD your God**”. We see this refrain in verses 2,4,5,6,21,30. This expression reminded Israel of God’s covenant name and its repetition emphasized to them that they had a covenant relationship with God. As a result they could not live the way they liked but they must maintain their allegiance unto the Lord, their covenant partner. Beside this, God knew that people might question Israel’s authority for taking a non-conformist stand against the cultural practices of the nations around them. To such an inquiry they were to answer ‘the Lord our God commanded us’. Even if the Egyptians or Canaanites accused them of being proud, extremists, narrow-minded, anti-social, etc. they were to remember that God said, “**I am the LORD your God**”.

The obvious meaning of this is that the motivation for their conduct should not be based on opinion of

the majority or merely for fear of repercussion, but rather they were to do what God commanded simply because they want to please and honour Him (Malachi 1:6). To honour God is to obey His commands and do His will. He is the Creator and He has the right of ownership over us. He deserves our allegiance because He is the Lord over us. Also, He is sovereign Ruler over the universe and as such, He has the right to legislate and enact laws to govern His people.

**Question 2: Mention some specific areas in which we are called to be separated unto God.**

After our conversion to Christ, we should no longer hold on to unscriptural traditions or superstitions which characterized our past lives. We are to deliberately jettison such customs and practices which have no foundation in the word of God, and then learn to conform to scriptural precepts and examples. No matter how popular, attractive or enjoyable a practice or concept, it must be rejected if it contradicts or undermines the word of God. In every matter concerning conduct or belief, the word of God must be our rule for decision-making. **“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them”** (Isaiah 8:20).

There are several areas in which we are called to be different and separated unto God. These include, one, worship. We must avoid false worship, idolatry etc. (Deuteronomy 12:30). Two, in marriage relationships: believers should not marry unbelievers (Leviticus 18:6-20) Three, our physical appearance, dressing and comportment should conform to God’s Word, not to the world’s standard (1 Timothy 2:9, 10). Four, in ceremonies and celebrations such as naming, burial, etc. In all these things the ungodly people lean towards ostentation, pride and vain glory but we must be different (Philippians 2:3-11). Five, in general lifestyle and principles of living (Leviticus 18:3; Psalm 1:1; Exodus 23:2a). Six, in ambition and attitude towards the future. We are to live in faith and hope in God rather than being anxious or superstitious (Jeremiah 10:2, 3).

**PROHIBITION OF UNLAWFUL MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIPS AND IDOLATRY** (Leviticus 18:6-23, 20:10-21; Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18; 22:30; 23:17; 27:20-26; Romans 1:26,27; I Corinthians 6:9; Hebrews 13:4).

Two major areas where the Egyptians and Canaanites had negatively influenced the children of Israel were the marriage relationship and ungodly worship. Those nations were permissive, promiscuous, licentious and idolatrous in their beliefs and practices. Sexual perversions of all sorts characterized their religious and social lives. They freely practiced incest, homosexuality (sodomy or lesbianism), bestiality, sacrificing their seed to Molech, etc. These practices were carried out in Egypt and Canaan during some idolatrous celebrations and also for the sake of personal pleasure. But God commanded the children of Israel not to copy them or even desire to be like them in any of these ways.

**Question 3: Point out some unlawful relationships that God prohibits in Leviticus 18.**

Our text contains a long list of immoral relationships that God outlawed among His people. These include: (1) incest. This is any form of sexual relationship or marriage between close relations. Such will include marrying a parent, sibling, half brother or half sister, step-mother or father, grand children, aunt, uncle and in-laws. (2) Adultery. This includes any sexual relationship or marriage to another person's spouse. Regardless of whether the spouse is living with his or her partner, divorced or separated, we are forbidden from having any sexual relationship with him or her. (3) Sexual relationship with a menstruating woman. It is said that this practice was connected with some idolatrous rituals. (4) Homosexuality. This could be in form of sodomy (a man having sexual relations with another man) or lesbianism (a woman having sexual relationship with another woman). God says it is abomination regardless of what people and nations say about it. Even though some religious leaders and countries in the world today choose to legalize homosexuality, a Bible-believing Christian would

rather stand on the side of God's Word. (5) Bestiality. This is the practice of a human being having sexual relations with an animal. Some people do so for money-making rituals; others do it for the sake of pornography or as a result of sexual perversion. God says it is confusion.

**Question 4: Mention some effects of incestuous marriage relationships.**

All these relationships, which God prohibited, can undermine the institution of marriage. Incest would result in a conflict of roles between those who are engaged in it. For instance, should a daughter marry her father then she would have a double role as a wife and daughter to the same man at the same time. Her own children will also share the same father with her! Besides, incest is a form of in-breeding that has the tendency to weaken the genetic material. It encourages the propagation of hereditary disorders and narrows the scope of social tie and brotherhood among people.

Other forms of sexual perversion also pose a challenge to God's original plan for marriage. It is God's intention that husband and wife should no longer be twain but that they become one flesh. But, those who approve homosexuality will have a hard time explaining how two sodomites can become one flesh with one another since the rib bone taken from man was used to form a woman and not another man. This is the same for lesbians. They are two rib bones of different women married together in unholy wedlock. They cannot be one flesh and they are really incomplete. The bestial person is even more absurd – a man or woman being one flesh with an animal. What an abomination!

Before the enactment of these laws there is no doubt that some of these practices went on among the children of Israel. For instance, Jacob married two sisters, Rachel and Leah (Genesis 29:16-30); Abraham married his half sister (Genesis 20:12); Reuben slept with his step-mother, that is, his father's wife (Genesis 35:22) and not without a curse. But

after the Lord had given these laws such practices became abominable among them.

God also forbade the children of Israel from the common idolatrous practice of making their children to pass through the fire. The scriptures mention the idol Molech in connection with this practice which Bible commentators describe in various shocking forms. God prescribed the death penalty for those who engaged in such wicked practices. Believers are to steer clear of all shades of idolatrous practices. Idolatry is a rude challenge to God's sovereignty and authority. In the New Testament, we are exhorted to avoid not only literal idols but also things sacrificed to idols and subtle idolatry, such as covetousness (Ephesians 5:3-5; 1 John 5:21). Anything we set our hearts upon so much that it takes over our devotion has become an idol and must be avoided.

**WARNING AGAINST DISOBEDIENCE AND PROMISES FOR THE OBEDIENT** (Leviticus 18:24-30; Deuteronomy 28:15 Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1-3; Isaiah 1:19; I John 2:17).

After giving the laws to the people, God warned them not to be disobedient. He pointed to the calamity which befell the Canaanites because of their wicked practices, and used it as warning to Israel. If they follow the wicked examples of those Canaanites whom God dispossessed of their land and gave to Israel, the same fate would befall them. There is no respect of persons with God and there is nothing like unconditional security of believers. The Canaanites sinned and God judged them. If Israel also sin, God would judge them too.

**Question 5: What lessons can we learn from the warnings that God gave to the children of Israel at the end of our text?**

We should learn from the calamity and mistakes of other people. The children of Israel had the Canaanites as an example of divine wrath against sin. But unfortunately they did not learn their lesson. They sinned against God and they became examples and warning to us who are under the New Testament (1 Corinthians 10:11,12; Romans



11:17-22). However, God did not only warn against disobedience, He also promised eternal life to those who keep His commandments. He said, **“Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD”** (Leviticus 18:5). Both under the Old and New Testaments, obedience to God’s Word is the condition for blessing. If we disobey the word of God we shall be punished but if we keep God’s commands we shall have eternal life.

<b>DAILY BIBLE READING</b>				
	<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Galations	1-2	Numbers	31
TUE	„	3-4	„	32
WED	„	5-6	„	33
THUR	Ephesians	1-2	„	34-35
FRI	„	3-4	„	36
SAT	„	5-6	Deut	2
SUN	Phillipians	1-2	„	2-3

# 316 Lesson

## LAWS OF PERSONAL CONDUCT

**MEMORY VERSE:** “And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy” (Leviticus 19:1, 2).

### **TEXT: Leviticus 19:1-37**

The laws of personal conduct which are contained in our text have been given to the children of Israel before the institution of the priesthood and the sacrifices. But it became necessary to repeat these laws lest the people feel that because God had made provision for atonement they could therefore abdicate their responsibility to keep the commandments. God would have them realize that the sacrifices and the priestly mediation cannot replace continuous obedience to His laws. To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

**Question 1: Why are the laws of personal conduct important to believers today?**

This is a significant lesson for believers under the New Testament. The fact that Jesus has given Himself as the final and perfect sacrifice for our sins does not absolve us of the responsibility to obey the commandments of God. The sacrifice of Jesus was necessary because of man's moral weakness and ability to keep God's holy commands. But now that Christ has been sacrificed for us, the fruit of that atonement is that we who claim identification with Christ should no longer live in moral weakness and defeat. We cannot continue in sin and expect the grace of God to abound in our lives. Rather we are to show that Christ's sacrifice is efficacious in our lives by living victoriously above sin and in constant obedience to God. We should demonstrate the possibility of grace to keep a man from wallowing in the mires of sin.

**DIVINE COMMAND AND CALL TO HOLINESS** (Leviticus 19:1,2; 11:44,45; 20:7,26; 21:8; Exodus 19:6; 22:31; Isaiah 6:3; Amos 3:3; Matthew 5:48; 2 Corinthians 6:14-16; 7:1; Hebrews 12:14; Revelation 21:27).

God directed Moses to tell the children of Israel, “**Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy**”. This was a command and a call to holy living directed to the entire congregation not just to a few leaders. God wants every one of His people to experience personal holiness.

It should be noted that the keynote of the book of Leviticus, and indeed the entire Bible, is holiness. All the commandments that God gave to His people are aimed at making them a special people, wholly devoted to God. Another reason He commanded His people to be holy is because “**I the LORD your God am holy.**” God is pure in His nature and essence. He is absolutely perfect and He wants His people to be like Him. The original purpose of God in creating man was for man to be like Him. “**And God said let us make man in our image, after our likeness.**” God planned that mankind should both belong to Him and be like Him. But as a result of the fall, man lost the likeness of God and took on the nature of Satan. However, God’s plan of redemption in sending Christ to die for us was aimed at restoring man to God’s likeness.

The call to holiness was not limited to the Old Testament. It received renewed emphasis in the New Testament as well. “**But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy**” (1 Peter 1:15,16). Believers must be free from all forms of pollutions and must be totally separated from all sources of defilement, and be perfect even as God our Father is perfect.

**Question 2: State the reasons why believers must be holy and point out how this can be achieved.**

There are many reasons why believers must be holy. First, because God commanded it. He said “**be ye holy**”. Second, God is holy and if we want to

walk with Him we must be holy (Amos 3:3). Third, holiness is the most impeccable evidence of a genuine salvation and a convincing proof that we truly love God (John 14:15,21, 23). Fourth, without holiness no man shall see the Lord. It is the passport to heaven because God has said, **“there shall in no wise enter into (heaven) anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life”** (Revelation 21:27). Fifth, it is God’s will that we should be holy. This is the reason for which Christ died and rose again (1 Thessalonians 4:3; Titus 2:14; Hebrews 13:12). Sixth, our comfort and happiness both now and in eternity depend on holy living. Iniquity in our hearts will make our prayers not to be answered and as such our joy cannot be full (Psalm 66:18; John 16:24). The whole essence of our election is to be holy, for we are **“elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit”** (1 Peter 1:2); predestined to be conformed to the image of God’s Son (Romans 8:29); chosen to be holy (Ephesians 1:4); called with a holy calling (1 Timothy 1:9). The purpose of all the discipline we encounter in our Christian walk is that we might be partakers of God’s holiness (Hebrews 12:10). The chief aim of God’s dealings with us is to make us holy and ready for heaven.

In order to make us holy, God made adequate provision through Christ. Not only did Christ pray for our sanctification or holiness, He actually sacrificed His life for it (John 17:15-19; Hebrews 13:12). Then having laid the foundation for holiness, God expects every believer to be holy. To be holy a person must be genuinely saved by repenting of his sins and trusting Christ as Lord and Saviour of his life. Two, he or she must believe, desire and accept God’s provision for holiness. Therefore no one should attempt to substitute the genuine holiness which God gives freely to His people with sanctimony or mere human goodness. Three, the believer must pray earnestly in faith to be made holy. Four, he should take definite steps to keep away from sources of defilement. Five, he should follow the steps of Christ and imitate Him from day to day (1 Peter 2:21; 1 John 2:6).

The evidence of genuine holiness is freedom from sin and consistency in doing the will of God. The life of a holy person will be devoid of the depravity that the ungodly people manifest. Much more than that, the fruit of the Spirit- love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, humility and selflessness will manifest in his life.

**DEFINITE INSTRUCTIONS TO REGULATE PERSONAL CONDUCT** (Leviticus 19:3-8, 11,12,16-31; 22:19,29; 26:1; Exodus 20:3-5,8-17; 22:21; 23:32; Deuteronomy 5:16-19, 18:10-12; 24:14-21; 27:18; Isaiah 8:19; 1 Timothy 4:1-4; I John 5:21).

After commanding the children of Israel to be holy, God pointed out particular and definite areas where they were expected to manifest holiness. It is not enough to know about holiness but we must demonstrate it by practical obedience to God's commandments. In our text, God pointed out some of the commandments that His people were obliged to keep. These commands, which are being repeated, had been given to them before and they pertained to their moral, social and religious lives. Some of the commands were designed to restrain human depravity while some others show forth the tenderness and care of God to His people, especially those who are underprivileged or handicapped.

**Question 3: Mention some of the practices that God prohibited among the children of Israel.**

In the first category of commandments, we have the following: (1) command for filial reverence and Sabbath observance (verse 3, 30, 32). (2) Prohibition of idolatry, spiritism and occultism (verses 4, 31). (3) Law against coercion and self-will in religion (verses 5-8). (4) Laws against theft, fraud and lying (verse 11). (5) Prohibition of rash vows, swearing and irreverence for God's name. For example, the widespread practice of using God's name to back up falsehood or pretence (verse 12, 30). (6) Command to avoid talebearing and hatred (verses 16-18). (7) Religious laws of segregation and first fruit of trees (verse 19, 23-25). (8) Injustice in judgment and business (verse 35, 36).

God commanded the children of Israel to have nothing to do with idolatry or occultism. The Egyptians and the Canaanites were deeply involved in these practices and they carried it out in several ways. Many of the injunctions that are contained in our text border on this twin evil. The command not to eat blood nor practice enchantment was given to prevent the Israelites from getting involved in the idolatrous practice of divination because God wants His people to avoid undue prying into the future. Therefore, we should not dabble into fortune-telling, star-gazing, horoscope, spurious prophecies and so-called revelations of pseudo-prophets. Rather than being anxious to know what the future holds for us, we should have faith in God and live in hope that the future will be good.

Another important area where God demanded that His people be different concerned the practice of mourning for the dead. Practices such as rounding the corners of the head, cutting corners of the beard, cuttings on the flesh for the dead and printing marks on the body were common practices of idolatrous nations. In our present day, we must avoid similar practices which people do for the sake of fashion or decoration. The trend of weird hair cuts, tattoo marks on the body and the like should be avoided. Our bodies belong to God and we must not misuse or disfigure it in any way. **“If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are”** (1 Corinthians 3:17). Ceremonial rites that have idolatrous backgrounds must be resisted and avoided especially during marriage, naming and burial ceremonies, etc.

God also prohibited the practice of making daughters to become prostitutes. In ancient times, some people compelled their daughters to go into prostitution in order to raise money for their idols. Others simply dedicated their daughter to become shrine prostitutes before their idols. God is against such an immoral practice. Parents must be careful not to induce their daughters into prostitution either by directly sponsoring them or through sheer negligence. Some unscrupulous parents, out of desire to get hard currency, sponsor their daughters to undertake

prostitution abroad. Others fail to give sufficient care to their daughters until they become so frustrated that they fall into the temptation to prostitute their bodies. Though such girls have no excuse for their sinful decision before God, yet the negligent parents will not be guiltless either.

Apart from practices that had to do with idolatry and spiritism, God also forbade any act capable of hurting our neighbour. The neighbour refers to anyone we have contact with in our journey through life. We must not be involved in talebearing, gossip and character assassination. The Hebrew word “Rachil” translated talebearing actually implies a ‘trader or peddler’ of tales. Therefore a talebearer is a person who obtains information about the secrets of others and retails or spreads them through gossip. No believer should be a talebearer. We must not hate our neighbour or harbour ill feelings towards them. If they have done any wrong we should frankly rebuke them and avoid every form of backbiting. Tale-bearing, hatred and such unbecoming conducts can break the fellowship of believers. They undermine unity and cooperation in the church.

**DIVINE CONCERN AND PROVISION FOR THE UNDER-PRIVILEGED** (Leviticus 19:9, 10, 13-15, 32-37; 23:22; Exodus 23:11; Deuteronomy 24:10-15, 19-22; 27:18; Isaiah 58:7; Jeremiah 22:13; Malachi 3:15; Luke 12:33; Acts 4:34-37; 20:33-35; James 5:4)

While commanding the children of Israel, God showed His loving concern and consideration for the less-privileged and the aged people in the land. Specific instructions were given to protect the right and comfort of the poor, the handicapped, strangers, the aged, the bondmaid and the hardworking labourer or employee. In comparison to the laws of men, God’s law is opposed to selfishness and indifference to the plight of others who are less fortunate. No human law makes a man guilty for not giving to relieve the poor and the needy but the law of God does.

In consideration for the welfare of the poor, God put in place the law of gleaning. After an Israelite had finished the main harvest he must not go over the

field again in attempt to gather the leftovers. Rather the poor, the orphans, the strangers and the destitute were permitted to collect those leftovers for their living. This precept, in addition to making provision for the less-privileged in the community, enhanced the spirit of brotherhood and love among the people.

The law of gleaning underscores the responsibility of the rich towards the poor in the church. Those who are rich in material wealth should make deliberate effort and plans to help those who are not so privileged. But at the same time, the poor and the needy are not expected to be idle and expect to be spoon-fed by the rich. According to the law of gleaning, they were expected to go into the field and gather the leftovers which God had graciously provided for them.

**Question 4: Explain the law of gleaning as it applies to believers today?**

We see this precept in practice when Ruth gleaned in the field of Boaz (Ruth 2:1-10). Even when Boaz wanted to show extra benevolence to Ruth, he did not directly give Ruth the wheat; rather he commanded the reapers to drop some for her on purpose. But Ruth had to work hard in order to gather them and as a result she had a sense of satisfaction in the profit of her own labour and also felt indebted to God, rather than man for His gracious provisions. Yes, the poor should labour and work. The rich should endeavour to help and make their labour more rewarding and less frustrating.

God also made adequate provision for the hardworking labourer. He must not be defrauded of his lawful wages or hire. God hates oppression of others and He has commanded that the wages of those who work for us must not be denied or delayed. A man who labours to earn a meagre income would feel greatly disappointed if he is not paid at the appointed time. The ripple effect of such delayed or denied wages will not only be on him but on his wife, children and other dependent relatives. Therefore, employers must make the welfare of their employees a top priority. We must avoid the wicked practice of



unjust deductions of wages and the short-changing of our workers.

God prohibited taking undue advantage of the handicapped, such as the blind, deaf, dumb, etc. God wants us to be kind and tender towards such people and not add to their pain. We must not curse or abuse the deaf; neither should we put a stumbling block before the blind nor lead him astray. God's welfare program takes cognisance of the suffering and struggling people. So we must be careful to treat them with kindness. We must reverence and take care of the aged, especially when they manifest senile tendencies. We should not despise or abandon them. God also commands that strangers should not be oppressed, denied their rights or cheated in any way. Rather, they should be made to feel at home and loved.

God's love and care is all encompassing. He is considerate and concerned for His people. As children of God, we should manifest the same love and concern for the welfare of others, especially those who are less-privileged. True believers must not join the ungodly in their habitual neglect and abuse of the poor and the needy. God commands that His people should be peculiarly different by being holy. While avoiding depraved tendencies, they should manifest love, tenderness and care towards others. The holy man or woman will always desire more of God as he or she pants and prays: "Oh! To be like you, blessed Redeemer."

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Phillippians	3-4	Deut 4
TUE	Colossians	1-2	„ 5-6
WED	„	3-4	„ 7-8
THUR	I Thesis.	1-3	„ 9-10
FRI	„	4-5	„ 11-12
SAT	II Thesis	1-3	„ 13-14
SUN	I Timothy	1-2	„ 15-16

# 317 Lesson

## PENALTIES FOR COMMITTING SIN

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

**TEXT: Leviticus 20:1-27.**

In Chapters 17-19 of the book of Leviticus, God had pointed out to the children of Israel the necessity of holiness in their walk with Him. He gave them a detailed list of prohibitions and practical duties which they were expected to comply with. But in our present chapter of study, God stated the penalties that would be applied to those who flout His commandments. These penalties were intended to be a warning and deterrent against sin among the Israelites.

God is both merciful and just. In mercy, He forgives a penitent sinner who truly feels sorry and turns away from His iniquity. But in justice and severity, He punishes everyone who sins with impunity and fails to repent.

**PUNISHMENT FOR IDOLATRY AND SPIRITISM**  
(Leviticus 20:1-6, 22-27; Deuteronomy 13:10-11; 17:2-5; I Chronicles 10:13,14; Ezekiel 5:11).

God stipulated capital punishment (death) for idolatry and the practice of occultism. Idolaters, particularly those who gave their children to Molech as well as those who support or cover them up were to be stoned to death. God said that if the people refused to execute the culprits, He would do it Himself and cut such people from the congregation of Israel. This is a great warning to those who do wrong and connive with others to cover it up. Even if a person escapes the judgment of men, he or she cannot escape the judgment of God. God warned that the family members of the idolater would be punished also because they did not expose their leader for his sin or dissociate themselves from the evil. As believers we must not cover sin nor take part in the sins of other people.

**Question 1: Why are idolatry and occultism considered a very serious sin punishable by death?**

Those who get involved in occultism were condemned to death. This is because occultism is a great affront to the supremacy of God and a challenge to His sovereignty. It entails a recognition or acknowledgement of a rival deity besides the true God, from whom knowledge or benevolence may be obtained. That is why occultism is inseparably linked with idolatry and the punishment for both is death. God said He would set His face against those who go into spiritism and cut them off from the congregation.

**Question 2: How do people practice spiritism and witchcraft in our present day society?**

Consulting with familiar spirits and involvement in witchcraft is a grievous sin in the sight of God. This is spiritual adultery and giving honour that is due to God to the devil. There are many ways people get involved in those practices unawares. For instance, when people go to those who use diabolical means to get information about lost items or about the dead, they are inadvertently getting involved in occultism. Other practices that border on this devilish practice include: the use of talisman, consulting horoscopes, astrologers, crystal ball, tarot cards, taking part in séances, astral projection, fortune telling, clairvoyance, palmistry, star gazing, prognostication, ouija boards, etc. As believers, we must avoid these and several other traditional practices that may link a person to Satan and his kingdom. Saul the king of Israel was judged by God because of his dabbling into spiritism (I Chronicles 10:13,14).

**GOD'S DEMAND FOR SANCTIFICATION AND OBEDIENCE** (Leviticus 20:7,8,25,26; 11:44; 18:4,5; 19:2,37; Matthew 5:19; 7:24; John 13:17; Romans 12:1,2; Ephesians 1:4; Philippians 2:12,13; Colossians 3:12; I Thessalonians 4:3,7; James 1:22).

God repeated the command that the children of Israel be holy and separated unto Him. The mark of holiness that God expected from them is that they

should be different from sinners and avoid those specific things which God had pointed out to them. God said, **“sanctify yourselves therefore and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God”** (verse 7). Holiness is the nature of God, and as such, His command to be holy is strongly binding upon Christians. God cannot give a command without adequate provisions to fulfil it. He has given His Son, Jesus Christ as an offering to set us free from outward and inward sins.

**Question 3: Explain the two-fold meaning of sanctification.**

God’s demand for sanctification is one of the cardinal doctrines of the word of God. The word “sanctify” is used in three ways in the Bible; one in relation to God and the other two in relation to His creation. In relation to God, the word ‘sanctify’ is used in Ezekiel 36:23; 38:16; 39:27; 20:41; 28:22; I Peter 3:15. In all these scriptures, the obvious meaning of the word ‘sanctify’ is that God reveals Himself as holy. The word conveys the revelation of God’s holiness and righteousness so that everyone will know that He is holy. To sanctify the Lord means to reverence Him as holy and never attribute any wrong doing to Him.

In relation to man and other creation, the word ‘sanctify’ could mean one, to separate or set apart unto God for a holy use. This carries the idea of consecration, being hallowed and dedicated to God’s use. This is the thought expressed in Leviticus 27:14,16; Numbers 8:17; 2 Chronicles 7:16; Jeremiah 1:5; Matthew 23:17; John 10:36; 17:19. Two, to cleanse from moral defilement, to remove the cause of pollution, the adamic nature or root of sin. This is the meaning in passages such as Leviticus 11:44; 20:7; Exodus 19:20-22; I Chronicles 15:12,14; I Thessalonians 4:3; 5:22,23; Hebrews 9:13,14. The two meanings of sanctification are mutually dependent, that is, you cannot have one without the other. If you consecrate anything to God, then it must be free from defilement. In our text, God demanded that His people be consecrated to Him and be cleansed from every pollution of idolatry, spiritism and immorality. We are to avoid all moral defilement, because we are God’s own possession, separated from other people, and holy unto Him.

**Question 4: How can a person experience genuine sanctification?**

There are two sides to the steps that lead to sanctification: the human and the divine. In order to experience sanctification, a person must be genuinely saved and separated unto God. Such a person must pray in faith and persevere until the Lord does His own part by removing the root of sin from his or her heart. We see this two-sided nature of sanctification in our text. In verse 7, God says to the people, “sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy”. That is the external, human side. The person who wants to get sanctified must set himself apart unto God by separating from all forms of defilements. Then in verse 8 God says, **“And ye shall keep my statutes and do them: I am the LORD which sanctify you”**. This is the internal, divine part. After a person has set himself apart unto God, then God cleanses and purifies his heart so that he is able to love Him perfectly with all his heart, soul and body. God will not do our part for us neither can we by any means do God’s part. We must, after cleaning ourselves, wait on God in earnest prayer to cleanse us by His power.

The Trinity is involved in the work of sanctification. The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are united in sanctifying the believer (John 17:27; I Thessalonians 5:23; Ephesians 5:25,26; Hebrews 13:12; Galatians 5:16-23; I Peter 1:2). In a similar way, sanctification affects the total man. The whole spirit, soul and body are made holy by God and preserved blameless (I Thessalonians 5:23).

The evidence of genuine sanctification is the ability to love God and fellowmen perfectly. In other words, the sanctified person has a pure heart and is free from inner depravity. Now he is able to keep the statutes of the Lord and do them. Such a person is morally perfect and upright both in the sight of God and men.

**SUNDRY OFFENCES AND THEIR RESPECTIVE PUNISHMENTS** (Leviticus 20:9-24; Exodus 20:12; 21:17; Deuteronomy 22:22-24; 23:17; 27:16-26; 2 Samuel 12:5-13; Proverbs 20:20; 30:11,17; Matthew 15:4; Mark 7:10; John 8:4,5).

Capital punishment was stipulated for cursing father or mother, adultery, incest, homosexuality, bestiality and sexual relationship with a menstruous woman. This is because those who indulge in such acts do so in flagrant disobedience to the word of God, and as such, their deliberate disobedience must attract definite destruction.

The person who curses his father or mother is guilty of filial irreverence, and has breached the fifth commandment. In the early verses of our text, parents were to be put to death for abusing their children in the detestable worship of Molech, but now in verse 9, God commanded the execution of children who abuse their parents. Cursing or abusing parents includes physical or verbal abuse, contempt, disrespect, evil speaking and slander of parents. God views such acts of ingratitude and disrespect to parents with great displeasure and has appointed that **“the eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it”** (Proverbs 30:17). The Lord Jesus re-emphasized the gravity of this offence in Matthew 15:4 while rebuking the Pharisees for setting up traditions which undermined obedience to the law of filial honour.

For sexual immorality and perversion, God commanded that the culprits be stoned to death. If this law were to be applied to the letter in our present day, one wonders how many people will remain alive in our big cities and villages. The evil of immorality is so prevalent and wide-spread that most people no longer regard it as an abomination. As a matter of fact, some nations and even church denominations now approve and ordain what God categorically calls an abomination. In our days, God’s absolute and unequivocal standard of morality is being challenged and subjected to legislative debate by men who will one day give account to God. Yet, if people do not judge or discipline the immoral person, God does.

**Question 5: What is the fate of those who indulge in immorality without repentance?**

There is the judgment of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) such as gonorrhoea, syphilis, HIV/AIDS, etc. Those who engage in immorality reap the fruit of marital sorrow, broken homes, guilty conscience and untimely death. They also stand the risk of spending eternity in the lake of fire if they fail to repent before they die.

Believers must avoid all shades of immorality. There should be no hint of this wicked sin in our midst. The immoral person has no part in the kingdom of God because even if he had a genuine experience of salvation before going into immorality, he is thenceforth counted as unclean. He is cut off from the Lord and needs to be reconciled to Christ again (Romans 11:21-23). The only option left for those who have fallen into immorality is to confess their sin and sincerely repent before the Lord. God promises to pardon the penitent but for those who cover their sin, it is written that **“they shall not prosper”** (Proverbs 28:13) in this life and in eternity.

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

	<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	I Timothy	3-4	Deut.	17-18
TUE	,,	5-6	,,	19-20
WED	II Timothy	1-2	,,	21-22
THUR	,,	3-4	,,	23-24
FRI	Titus	1-2	,,	25-26
SAT	,,	3	,,	27
SUN	Hebrews	1-2	,,	28

**THE END OF OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES**

# BEGINNING OF NEW TESTAMMENT STUDIES

## 318 Lesson

## THE LORD'S SUPPER INSTITUTED

**MEMORY VERSE:** "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Corinthians 11:26).

**TEXT: Luke 22:1-38**

As Christ's ministry drew to a close, He repeatedly affirmed in the preceding chapter, the certainty of His Second Coming. To be accounted worthy to partake of His coming kingdom, He not only admonished His disciples to watch and pray but also instituted the Lord's Supper to keep them in constant remembrance of His death and His Second Coming.

The certainty of the Lord's return to take His redeemed souls with Him to heaven all through eternity is the hope of all Christians the world over. This hope brings comfort in times of sorrow and strengthens believers who are suffering for righteousness' sake. Without it, life will be a needless harvest of miseries for the Christian who maintains uncompromising godly principles in a corrupt world.

**THE PLOT TO BETRAY CHRIST** (Luke 22:1-6; Mark 14:1,2,10,11; John 12:2-7; John 8:44; 10:10; 1 Timothy 6:9-11)

**Question 1: What lessons does the believer learn from the plot to kill the Lord?**

Christ's crucifixion is a culmination of a series of events. Our text begins with the plot by "**the chief priests and scribes**" to eliminate Him. They were inspired by their spiritual father (John 8:44). He uses men, animals, events and circumstances to achieve his evil purposes. Here he finds the chief priests and scribes useful instruments to accomplish his murderous tendency against Christ. From the time of Christ's birth, Satan has never relented in his schemes to eliminate Him, and thus thwart the plan



of redemption. But the all-wise, and omnipotent God had always aborted his schemes that will affect His divine program. Nonetheless, God would allow his evil plan against Christ to be fulfilled at this time of the feast because it aligns with His divine program for our redemption and prophecies concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. Ironically, this orchestrated act of the enemy resulted in his eternal defeat.

The religious leaders could not carry out their sinister act because they feared the people in Christ's company. This is one good purpose fellowship with God's people serves. Satan's plan could not easily be carried out in the midst of the children of God. His purposes are constantly aborted through the preaching of God's word, prayer, fellowship, counselling, etc. Therefore, we should not forsake "the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is" (Hebrews 10:25) but remain steadfast to the end.

**Question 2: Give reasons why believers backslide as did Judas Iscariot.**

Having failed in his plot to kill Christ on this occasion, **"then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve"** (Luke 22:3). Judas Iscariot became an agent of the devil and yielded himself an instrument of unrighteousness to betray an innocent life. He allowed the love of money to blind his sense of right and led to the loss of his place among the privileged twelve. Peter, commenting later of his woeful end and in the course of finding a replacement for him in ministry, said: **"he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry... [but] his bishoprick let another take"** (Acts 1:17, 18, 20). For thirty pieces of silver, he made a shipwreck of his faith. The love of money is truly the root of all evil, **"which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows"** (1 Timothy 6:10). The believer should watch over his drive to get money. He should avoid the rat-race for material acquisition to the detriment of his soul.

Judas had tasted of eternal life, had intimate fellowship with Christ, participated in soul-winning missions and had the special privilege of overseeing the team's "bag" (John 12:6; 13:29). But gradually, he became covetous and began to steal from the purse. Bereft of God's grace, Satan took control of his life and found him a willing instrument of betrayal. What a warning to Christians that our salvation is not without conditions. The moment we fall from grace and begin to dine with the enemies of the Cross, we lose our place in the kingdom of God.

Backsliding displeases God. He grieves when a previously dynamic and fervent child of His turns from the way of righteousness back into sin. **"If any man draw back",** He says, **"my soul shall have no pleasure in him"** (Hebrews 10:38). God's enemies rejoice when a saint falls from grace like Judas. **"And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude"** (Luke 22:5,6). To enter into a covenant with unbelievers and seek opportunity to betray a fellow Christian for pecuniary reasons signals the depth of backsliding.

The fact that Christ was being betrayed did not discourage Him from preparing for the Passover. In the same vein, prophecy concerning imprisonment in Jerusalem did not make Paul cringe or bemoan his fate in the gospel. He declared his readiness to suffer or die for the cause of Christ. Christians must not shy away from suffering for the cause of the gospel. To recant or deny the faith for fear of suffering or death is to be unfaithful to the cause of Christ. Christians who suffer affliction or are faced with trials should rejoice that they are counted worthy to suffer shame for His name (Acts 5:41).

**PREPARATION FOR THE PASSOVER** (Luke 22:7-13; Matthew 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16)

**Question 3: How and why did Christ prepare for the Passover?**

The feast of unleavened bread is significant in Jewish history. It was a memorial of their great

deliverance from bondage in Egypt. Unleavened bread formed part of the meal they ate in haste while the blood of the animal killed was applied to their doorposts the night God smote the firstborn of the Egyptians. They kept the Passover a number of times as recorded in the Old Testament in obedience to God's command (Exodus 12:24) and the practice continued till the time of Christ.

That Christ also prepared to observe the Passover showed His reverence for divine ordinances. Thus, He instructed Peter and John to prepare a place for the ceremony. He gave specific description of the "goodman" whose "guestchamber" was to be prepared. With foreknowledge and confidence in the goodman's virtuous dispositions, Christ told His disciples: **"he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready"** (Luke 22:12). This is worthy of note to Christians who feel reluctant to surrender their houses for Christian fellowship and activities. Recognition of Christ as our Master makes us submit and give whatever He demands of us for the advancement of His kingdom. Christian workers and missionaries must also learn that God has prepared people and places for the gospel work and all we need do is depend on Him for guidance, like the disciples of Christ. If we trust and obey, we will find His words to be true. **"And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover"** (Luke 22:13).

Our redemption is reminiscent of the Old Testament deliverance of Israel from Egyptian captivity. In God's plan, the sinless Lamb of God was sacrificed for man's redemption. Then, it was the blood of animals that was shed but now it is the blood of Christ. Then, the Passover was divinely instituted; now, it is the Lord's Supper. In fact, it is this great redemption of humanity that the Passover foreshadowed. Thus, at the Last Supper, Christ instituted the Lord's Supper.

**CHRIST INSTITUTES THE LORD'S SUPPER** (Luke 22:14-20; Matthew 26:20, 26-29; Mark 14:17, 22-25)

<p><b>Question 4: Why did Christ replace the Passover with the Lord's Supper?</b></p>
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Following the preparation of a furnished upper room, Christ sat down with His twelve disciples (Judas inclusive) to take the last supper. He expressed His passion to eat the Passover with them before His suffering and death for the sin of the world. Thus, the Jewish Passover which had been a shadow would be fulfilled in the crucifixion of Christ, the real Passover Lamb. That which is for a race and a limited number of people would give way to that which is universal in scope. The major activities of the feast were to “eat” the unleavened bread and “drink” the fruit of the vine, which Christ indicated He would no longer physically partake of until the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. **“And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you”** (Luke 22:19, 20).

The unleavened bread symbolizes the body of Christ that was broken at Calvary while the fruit of the vine represents the blood He shed for our redemption. The body and blood of Jesus are pure; everyone who seeks to partake of the Lord’s Supper must be pure in life and character. Trivialising the ordinance and partaking unworthily attracts divine judgement which manifests in weakness, sickness or death of the guilty. In order not to be guilty of the Lord’s body, every believer must examine himself and repent of his sins before receiving the emblems. **“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth”** (1 Corinthians 5:7,8).

Christians observe the Lord’s Supper in remembrance of the Lord to show His death till He comes (1 Corinthians 11:26; John 14:1-3). Christ’s death and resurrection form the hub around which the Lord’s Supper revolves. Obedience to this divine injunction brings great blessings to the individual believer as well as the body of Christ.

Christ instituted the second ordinance – water baptism - after His resurrection. He commands that every born again Christian should be baptized by immersion, once in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19) as a mark of our identification with His death, burial and resurrection.

**CHRIST PREDICTS HIS BETRAYAL** (Luke 22:21-23; Matthew 26:21-25; Mark 14:18-21; John 13:21-30)

Though it was God’s will and foreordained plan for Christ to be betrayed (Acts 2:23; 4:28), as prophesied in Scripture, there was no identity of a particular person who should fulfil it, save that He cautioned: “**Behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table**” (verse 21). Judas was so close to Christ physically but very far in heart and purpose. He had backslidden and crossed the boundary of grace and seared his conscience with a hot iron. Leaders must remain unbroken in communion with Christ lest they lose their fellowship with the Spirit of God.

Judas had the chance to repent and retrace his steps but he would not. Believers should watch and pray so that negative prophecies would not be fulfilled in their lives.

**TRUE SPIRITUAL GREATNESS** (Luke 22:24-30; 9:46-48; Matthew 20:20-28; Mark 10:35-45).

The enormity of the revelations of Christ’s betrayal, suffering and death did not make the disciples sober. They appear not to bother that their dearly beloved Lord and Master was going to die a cruel death. Instead, they were concerned with who occupies the highest chair after His departure. How indifferent some believers could be today because they neglect the important and eternally significant commission and work of the Lord to pursue mundane things of this world. They shift their focus from the heartbeat of God in pursuit of that which will soon perish with the world. Such bloated self-worth veils the spiritual eyes of believers from the truth of God’s word and reduces the impact of spiritual truths on the heart.

Christ points to the system of leadership in the world as one characterized by strife and competition. But in

the kingdom of God it is not to be so. Struggling or seeking leadership position through manoeuvrings, deception and running others down is not acceptable to God. Absalom tried it and failed. Employing worldly methods of assuming position of leadership in the church of God is dangerous. In God's economy, humility, faithfulness and diligence in service to the Lord and our fellow men results in promotion and exaltation.

**Question 5: What are the pathways to true spiritual greatness?**

The way Christ corrected the attitude of His disciples to positions of leadership among the brethren presents the believer with some useful lessons. One, there should be humility in the heart of those who are chief among the brethren. Two, humility should translate into serving others. Three, exemplary leadership should be directed at ministering to the needs of others. Though He is Lord, He served the disciples when they sat at table to eat. Four, Christ frowns at employing worldly methods in leadership in His church.

Understandably, this incident happened before Christ was crucified on the cross. Now His blood is available to sanctify and purify every Christian from depraved ambitions and the self-life. Instead of struggling for position of leadership, the believer should constantly seek the things that are above where Christ has prepared a place for him in His Father's Kingdom.

Luke records this future privilege Christ promises His followers for a number of reasons: One, to focus their attention on the coming kingdom. Two, to encourage them to serve the Lord in spite of the opposition of the Jews. Three, to assure them of the reality of reward for their labour. Such hope will help them propagate the Christian faith and serve the Lord with all their heart and might. Four, thrones and crowns await them and they shall reign with Christ for ever. Innumerable promises await those that endure to the end.

**THE POWER OF CHRIST'S INTERCESSION** (Luke 22:31-38; Matthew 26:33-35; Mark 14:29-31; 1

Corinthians 10:12, 13; Romans 8:34-39; Hebrews 7:25)

**Questions 6: How can the believer make a successful pilgrimage to heaven?**

Satan's purpose was not only to kill the Lord but also to sift the grace of God from Peter's life. Judas had fallen to him already and he wished he overcomes other disciples one after the other. But Christ's foreknowledge brought his evil plan against Peter to limelight. **"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren"** (Luke 22:31,32).

It is comforting to learn that Christ is praying for us. The sustenance of our faith till the end depends on the power of His continued intercession (Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:32). This does not mean that Christians should relapse into spiritual indolence and prayerlessness. We are **"to pray and not to faint"**. If through prayer Christ was able to recover Peter from total backsliding, we can also preserve converts and fellow believers through intercessory prayers.

One major pitfall we must avoid if we want to make successful pilgrimage to heaven is overconfidence. When God reveals our poor spiritual state to us, we must not lean on our own strength or religious activities as grounds for our invincibility. Rather, we should examine our lives and spend time to seek God for strength and help to overcome temptations and the tempter. If Peter was the target of Satan, Christian leaders should beware; they must watch and pray. Satan's ploy to "sift" the grace of God from the believer is still real today. No believer has grown to a level where he cannot fall. We must depend upon the Lord rather than our spiritual potentials and credentials. Our adversary is seeking who to devour (1 Peter 5:8).

Peter's exuberant insistence on suffering imprisonment and death with Christ was thoughtless, as none else can suffer exactly the same way Christ suffered. Christ reaffirmed that Peter was going to

deny knowledge of Him. Many, like Peter, who profess to be Christ’s disciples are still denying Him in lifestyle, profession and ministry today. Frightening also is the increasing rate of backsliding being witnessed in the body of Christ. The antidote to slipping away from God’s kingdom is steadfastness in faith and service to the Lord.

The path to future glory and reign with Christ is doted with suffering. Obviously, there has to be pain before pleasure; cross before the crown. We must continue to labour for the Lord by rescuing the perishing in the ever-expanding gospel work. The scope of the gospel work which was once localised would after His death, become universal. And to travel across the jungles of the heathen world requires a missionary purse for sustenance. The Israelites in their domain are extremely generous as one could enter his neighbour’s field to eat corn as against what obtains in other lands.

Such missionary trip also requires carrying of “sword” mentioned in our text (verse 38). The sword is necessary to ward off animal predators that might attack them. If swords were to be used for humans, Christ would not heal the ear of the servant of the High Priest sliced off by Peter. Christ cannot give instruction to kill human beings He came to save with the sword, and for which He also commissions every believer to win through gospel preaching. However, New Testament believers must be active in using the “...**the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God**” (Ephesians 6:17) in prayer to win spiritual warfare and in preaching to win souls for God.

<b>DAILY BIBLE READING</b>				
	<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Hebrews	3-4	Deut.	29-30
TUE	„	5-6	„	31
WED	„	7-8	„	32
THUR	„	9-10	„	33-34
FRI	„	11	Joshua	1-2
SAT	„	12-13	„	3-4
SUN	James	1-2	„	5-6



# 319 Lesson

## CHRIST'S AGONY AND PETER'S DENIAL

**MEMORY VERSE:** "And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke. 22:44).

**TEXT:** Luke 22:39-71

**O**ur subject this week is central and fundamental to the Christian faith. As the crucifixion of Jesus drew near, He partook of the Passover where He instituted the Lord's Supper and predicted His betrayal by Judas and denial by Peter. Shortly after these predictions, Jesus and His disciples came to the Mount of Olives where, in the full awareness of approaching death and under the most oppressive, heavy load of the world's sin that He bore, He painfully agonized in prayer at Gethsemane.

**Question 1:** What do you understand by the word agony? What was the primary purpose behind the agony that Christ went through?

The word agony means anguish, torture, distress; it means to suffer intensely and painfully in mind and body. Christ went through such suffering, struggle, sorrow and conflict in order to obtain salvation for lost humanity. His agony was not for Himself because He was sinless. "**The just (suffered) for the unjust**" (1 Peter 3:18) primarily to reconcile every willing sinner back to God. This is the central aim of Christ's agony in Gethsemane.

**CHRIST'S PRAYER OF AGONY IN GETHSEMANE**  
(Luke 22:39-46; Matthew 26:36-44; Mark 14:32-39; Hebrew 5:7; 12:3,4; I Thessalonians 5:17; Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12; 11:1; 18:1).

**"And He came out, and went, as he was wont, to the Mount of Olives ..."** (Luke 22:39). Here, Jesus was not learning to pray. Withdrawing to a solitary place to pray a concentrated prayer was always part of Him. He did not only preach on prayer but He practised praying in season and out of season. No wonder He conquered all visible and invisible forces

against Him. Many believers today remember to pray only when they find themselves in difficult situations. How unlike Christ they are! We must, like Christ, pray without ceasing if we are to overcome in the battles of life and make heaven at last. He “...**said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation**” (Luke 22:40).

**Question 2: What is the relationship between prayer and victory over temptation?**

Victory over temptation cannot be separated from consistent life of prayer. Careless, indulgent and prayerless believers often get entrapped in diverse temptations, love of the world, fear of man, fear of temporary sufferings, etc., and they quickly lose sight of the eternal weight of glory that awaits all victorious saints of God.

No sooner that the Lord gave them the solemn charge to watch and pray than the weak and weary disciples of Jesus Christ, including the self-confident Peter fell into deep sleep. Physical sleep is good but if we sleep at the wrong time, the enemy will steal from us some great virtues of eternal consequence. “**But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way**” (Matthew 13:25). It was the time king Saul of Israel was asleep that David cut the edge of his skirt. He could have killed him if not for his forgiving spirit. Christians should not allow physical weariness to hinder their effective quiet time and tarrying with God to overcome. Always strive to rise above the rate of common Christians, as it was the goal of David Brainerd. Jesus’ burden and passion for the dying world at this time were such that He could not remain in the same place with the shallow, superficial, discouraged and prayerless believers. He withdrew from them “**about a stone’s cast, and kneeled down, and prayed**” (verse 4). Grief seized His soul. He groaned and poured out His heart to God. The intensity with which He prayed was visibly evident in drops of sweat like dripping coagulating blood. We learn useful lessons from Christ’s agonizing prayer at Gethsemane.

One, Christ's foreknowledge of His suffering did not replace prayer. He knew it was the will of God to suffer the agony and reproach of men. But to fulfil God's will and bring glory to Him can only be accomplished through the power of importunate praying. Two, He underscored the potency of prayer in His instruction to His disciples to pray to be able to overcome. They were rather overcome with spiritual slumber and this gave the enemy opportunity to cause Peter to deny his Lord. Suffice us to say, that no believer can live a victorious Christian life and do the will of God without the weapon of prayer.

Three, when we are faced with great challenges in ministry higher than our abilities or the enemy is threatening and the wind of life is boisterous, His counsel and instruction to us is, **"pray that ye enter not into temptation"**. The battles we face in life can be a stepping stone to triumph and victory if we resort to the place of prayer. Four, He did not only instruct believers to pray, he equally prayed. If, as the God-man He relied on divine support through prayer, believers who toy with the subject of prayer are unnecessarily risking their chances of enjoying breakthroughs in life. We must not only teach others but practise the art of praying because therein lies our victory. Five, Christ's posture and disposition reveal humility that is a basic characteristic of every answered prayer (2 Chronicles 7:14).

**Question 3: Explain the contents of Christ's agonizing prayer and point out some lessons we learn from it.**

Six, we see His love and insistence on the will of God in His prayer at a critical time in His life. The prayer that God answers must be patterned after God's will and desire (Matthew 6:10; James 4:2,3; John 4:34; 5:30). Seven, the expression of His request in a persevering and importunate repetition is challenging (Matthew 26:44). Accordingly, it is not the logical sequence or well coordinated grammatical presentation of our request but the sincerity of purpose in the prayer that is honoured by God. Eight, the increasing earnestness with which He prayed is worth emulating. **"Being in agony he prayed more earnestly..."** He did not so much dread the physical torture of the cross but the

spiritual agony of separation from the Father. Even on the cross He did not protest the physical suffering but He lamented the separation from the Father. **“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”** (Matthew 27:46). Christ treasured the presence of the Father; but the sin of the world and its death penalty was about to bring a temporary separation between them. It was a terrifying experience. Moses in His case said, **“if your presence go not with me, carry us not up hence”** (Exodus 33:15). To this end, the most agonizing situation in a man’s life is a time when the presence of God is withdrawn either on a temporary basis as a result of sin or permanently because of backsliding. How illustrative it is for us believers to value the presence of God above every other thing in life.

Nine, God is alive and He answers prayer. In answer to His prayer, God dispatched an angel who strengthened Him to endure His agony (Luke 22:43). Those who wait upon the Lord will have their strength renewed indeed. In our weakness, if we pray for divine strength, God will always come to our aid at the right time. Ten, believers must constantly engage in spiritual warfare against the adversary to be able to rescue souls from sin. They must agonize in prayer like Christ did. The Greek word for agony is “agonia” which means struggle and conflict. It was clear that Christ was engaged in spiritual battle to save the souls of lost men in the garden of Gethsemane. He prayed in pain, bitterness and grief of His soul. It was a toilsome moment as the battle was not an ordinary one.

**THE PRETENCE AND HYPOCRISY OF JUDAS ISCARIOT** (Luke 22:47-53; John 18:3; Matthew 26:14-17, 47-49; 23:27,28,33; Luke 22:3-6).

As Christ engaged in a heart-rending prayer, Judas was thinking of how to successfully hatch his plans of handing over the innocent and sinless Son of God to be killed by Jewish leaders. He manifested a very high level of pretence and hypocrisy by betraying Jesus Christ with a kiss, calling Him Master when His heart was no more with the Master. It was treacherous,

malicious and deceitful. Judas committed the most condemnable act in history. Jesus said it were better for the man who betrayed Him never to have been born at all. Many people manifest pretence and hypocrisy by displaying a good number of external acts of righteousness while their hearts and actions are wicked.

**Question 4: Describe the lifestyles of pretenders and hypocrites in private and in the public.**

Some pretend to be angels before their leaders in the church but back at home, in their offices and school, they fight, quarrel, backbite, steal, fornicate, smoke, drink, speak evil of those same leaders in the church and even betray their pastors and their church before others. Hypocrisy is bad, evil and deadly. The church may not be able to detect all hypocrites now in this life, but there will be many surprises on the great judgment day. Everything shall come to light and the righteous Judge who is not a respecter of anybody shall give His final verdict (Acts 17:31; Romans 2:16; I Corinthians 4:5). Hypocrites who fail to repent of their sin will suffer eternal damnation. What a fearful thought to know that the same Jesus that Judas betrayed with just thirty pieces of silver (the price of a slave) is the One that will judge him on the last day.

**“But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?”** (Luke 22:48). His words to Judas were still full of compassion and love. Though He loved him, Judas’ mind was made up. His love for money was more than the love he had for his Master. What more? No one can serve two masters: he will love one and hate the other. We, however learn from the calm disposition of Christ during betrayal that we should not lose the grace of God in our lives through uncontrolled temper like Peter did (Luke 22:49,50; John 18:10,11). Vindictive and retaliatory attitudes are unbecoming of Christians.

Obviously, Peter’s prayerlessness and consequent weakness of character began to dawn on him. If he had remembered he was faltering for failing to heed the Master’s counsel to pray and taken immediate prayer action, perhaps he would not have denied

Christ. Believers should beware of self-management: it leads to backsliding. For Peter, events began to unfold in quick succession that thoughts of praying in order to avoid a greater danger did not come through before he denied the Lord. Dear Christian, pause and pray lest you fall away!

**PETER'S DENIAL OF CHRIST** (Luke 22:54-62; Matthew 26:69-75; 10:33; 2 Timothy 4:10; I Corinthians 10:12; Psalm 73: 25-28)

What Peter never dreamed of in life happened to him. **“Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed, lest he fall.”** The beginning of Peter’s fall was following Christ **“afar off”** contrary to his earlier promise to follow Him both into prison and unto death (Luke 22:33). How are you following the Saviour now? Are you far from Christ and His kingdom? Are you drawing back from fellowship with Christ and His people? God says, **“...if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him”** (Hebrews 10:38). So, return to Him in repentance and faith, and He will receive you. Many who started with Christ several years back have denied Him when trials and temptations came their ways. It is a fearful thought to see Peter boldly telling lies and denying that he ever knew Christ.

**Question 5: Mention five ways people deny Christ today.**

There are several ways people deny Christ today. (1) When the will of God in marriage is delayed, some go to marry unbelievers in spite of their earlier consecration to God on this area. (2) In times of economic hardship, some go into dubious businesses and others give bribes to get jobs. (3) Some yield to temptation to commit immorality. They are not like Joseph in a strange land of Egypt. (4) In the face of intense persecution from parents, husbands, working places or from other religions, some believers give up their faith and surrender to the devil. (5) Many students who claim to be Christians today indulge in examination malpractice even though they had vowed not to. (6) Others are ashamed of the gospel before men and neighbours. This is also a way of not identifying with Christ. Beware of denying Christ at

any moment of your life. Christ has done so much for you that it is now too late to deny Him. He has never denied you neither is He planning to do so if only you can abide in Him to the end.

**“And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly”** (Luke 22:61, 62). Jesus turned and looked at Peter with a distinct look that brought unto him a painful memory of what Jesus warned him about. Peter had a broken spirit and a contrite heart. His remorse, repentance and bitter tears went straight into the heart of the Master and Peter was pardoned. A backslider who lingers in his way of backsliding shall obtain no favour and pardon from God. But if a backslider can remember where he was and how he has fallen, repent, confess and forsake his evil ways and come back into fellowship with his God, there will be pardon. Avoid all forms of pride and self-deception, turn from your backslidden state and the Lord will pardon and restore you back to His fellowship again (Revelation 2:5; Jeremiah 3:14,15; Ezekiel 18: 21). The same Peter became a pillar and a great leader in the early church. If you can fully make amends regarding the past, the future is still bright for you. In Peter’s own case, the cock crew immediately, and there was still opportunity of repentance for him. But who knows in your own case, whether the rapture will happen immediately after you deny the Lord, or even death. Beware! Take heed to yourself!

**THE PEOPLE’S HUMILIATION OF CHRIST** (Luke 22:63-71; Matthew 26:67,68; Isaiah 53:3).

The Prince of peace and the King of kings was mocked, smitten, despised, reviled and humiliated by the elders of the people, the chief priests and the scribes for the iniquity of the whole world. He suffered for the offence He never committed in order to deliver the world from eternal suffering of hell fire. In the midst of such shame and humiliation, our Lord Jesus Christ had some motivating factors that made Him not to give up.

**Question 6: Mention some of the factors that motivated Christ not to give up in the hour of humiliation by men.**

One, He set His mind on the glory above. **“Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God”** (Luke 22:69; Hebrews 12:2). If you set your affection on the glory above, every affliction here is a momentary light affliction (2 Corinthians 4:17,18). Two, He set His mind on the will of God which must be done. He must drink the cup that the Father had given unto Him. Three, He set His mind on the salvation of humanity. Passion for souls will propel the faithful to overlook all temporary difficulties while serving God.

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

**MORNING**

**EVENING**

MON	James	3-4	Joshua	7
TUE	„	5	„	8-9
WED	I Peter	1-2	„	10
THUR	„	3	„	11-12
FRI	„	4-5	„	13-14
SAT	II Peter	1-2	„	15
SUN	„	3	„	16-17



# 320 Lesson

## CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION

**MEMORY VERSE:** "And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left" (Luke 23:33).

### **TEXT: Luke 23: 1-56**

In the preceding study, Jesus prayed in agony, struggle and conflict in the garden of Gethsemane. Betrayed by Judas and denied by Peter, He was literally alone in His suffering, as other disciples have also scampered for safety in the wake of His arrest. He was mocked, smitten and humiliated by the elders of the people, the chief priests and the scribes. His crucifixion, the most cruel, barbarous and brutal kind as we shall see in this study, changed the course of history, however.

**CHRIST CHARGED WITH TREASON** (Luke 23:1-11; Matthew 27:11-14; Mark 14:55-59; 15:1-5; Exodus 23:1; Proverbs 12:17; Jeremiah 9:3,5; Galatians 5:19,20; Matthew 5:11; Colossians 3:19)

Following His arrest, Jesus was brought before Pilate to be tried by the same "multitude" that hailed Him as the Messiah and sang His praise during His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The judicial system was so weak to the point that the people manipulated the course of justice, even when their false accusations against Christ did not count (Luke 23:2).

**Question 1: Which of the accusations levelled against Christ is true?**

Referring to Christ in a most demeaning term – "this fellow" – they charged Him with treasonable offences all in an attempt to defame and assassinate His character before the law. They alleged that Christ was the one perverting the nation whereas He is the Prince of peace. Two, forbidding people to give tribute to Caesar whereas He had earlier taught to render to

Caesar the things that were Caesar's (Luke 20:25); three, claiming to be King instead of Caesar when He had however taught that His kingdom was not of this world and once refrained from being made king, and four, inciting rebellion and sedition to disturb the peace. Christ had been previously accused of keeping bad company, gluttony and intemperance, blasphemy, insanity, demonic possession, breaking the Sabbath, etc. (Matthew 9:11; 11:19; 26:65; Mark 3:21; John 7:20; 10:20; 9:16). Satan, the accuser of the brethren and the chief liar inspired the people to cook up baseless accusations against Him. The Jewish leaders used false witnesses against Stephen and subsequently stoned him to death (Acts 6:11, 13). The devil still uses falsehood to fight against believers today. Believers who are suffering unjustly should understand that Christ had suffered similar fate. They must learn to be Christ-like in suffering. Wrongly accused by his master's wife, Joseph was imprisoned but God delivered him. God will always deliver the faithful. To hire, be hired or willingly bear false witness is evil that requires repentance and restitution on the part of those concerned (Luke 3:14; 19:8). Law enforcement agents and judges should perform their functions in the fear of God, Who is the Judge of all men.

Though Pilate declared Him innocent by saying, "...**I find no fault in this man**" (Luke 23:4), their hatred for Christ had assumed a murderous dimension that a declaration of His innocence fell on their deaf ears. For hate, Cain killed his brother, Abel and Hitler destroyed about six million Jews. To harbour hatred against another is sin. As a work of the flesh, it begets murder (1 John 3:15). We are commanded to love our fellow men as ourselves and as Christ loves us. It is only the conversion experience that fills us with love for others. Christ still loves His accusers and despite their outrage was bent on giving His life a ransom for them. As His accusers became fiercer in their demand for His condemnation, Pilate sent Him to Herod for trial.

Meanwhile, Herod was initially "**exceeding glad**" to see Jesus "**for he was desirous to see Him of a**

**long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracles done by him”** (Luke 23:8). Herod was not desirous to see Jesus so that he could repent and surrender his life to Him. But he was only seeking for a sign.

**Question 2: Mention some reasons that bring many so-called believers and mixed multitudes to the church today.**

Many so-called believers and mixed multitudes in the church today are like Herod. They are not in church for the purpose of genuine repentance so as to serve the Lord. They come to church to seek for temporal benefits of the gospel such as healing, deliverance, protection and provision. If their expectations regarding mundane things are not immediately met, they change church in their pursuit of signs and wonders. It is a very dangerous and deceptive trend. Such people do not keep any moral standard. Herod, on his part, quickly turned against Christ, mobilized his men to humiliate, torture and mock Him, and after that, Jesus was sent back to Pilate again.

Interestingly however, Christ’s case reconciled two sworn enemies, Pilate and Herod. His innocence and silence while suffering broke the barriers between them. **“And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves”** (Luke 23:12). Great things happen when believers prayerfully endure trials with gracious attitudes. For instance, Paul the apostle got converted while persecuting the early church. The church did not in any way retaliate but prayerfully endured it while they remained committed to the ministry of reconciliation.

**THE CONDEMNATION OF CHRIST AND THE RELEASE OF BARABBAS** (Luke 23:13-31; Matthew 27:15-32; Mark 14:60-65; 15:7-21; Matthew 10:38; 16:24; Mark 10:21).

As the cross-examination of Christ continued, Pilate, for the second time, declared Christ to be innocent, as he **“found no fault in this man”**. In spite of this faultlessness, the whole multitude of people

whom He came to this benighted earth to save, cried out, “**crucify him, crucify him**”. Though He was innocent, Pilate scourged Him having been cowed by the voices of the majority of wrong-doers. That the chief priests – religious leaders of the day – were at the forefront of the crusade to crucify the Saviour is sickening. They callously opted for Barabbas, a criminal and murderer, to be released unto them instead of Jesus Christ the pure, holy, innocent and sinless Lord. Jesus was condemned while Barabbas was discharged and acquitted. By their action, they have rejected and despised the One that left His glory above to come to this sinful world to suffer shame, pain and incredible agony for their salvation.

**Question 3: Briefly explain how Christ suffered to redeem us from sin and how you should respond to His love.**

In the same way, the world still prefers ‘Barabbas’ to Christ today. Nonetheless, uncompromising stance against evil should be the lifestyle of believers in leadership positions. Unlike Pilate, believers should avoid taking sides with evil doers in the society. We must not treat Christ with disrespect, contempt and disdain like the people of the world.

As Jesus went through all the rigour of standing trial before Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate and Herod and Pilate again and with all the scourging and torture, He became exhausted. Within a period of about twelve hours, the judgement and condemnation of Christ was hastily concluded under Pilate and He was to be crucified on the cross. He suffered for our sins. “**I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting**” (Isaiah 50:6). As a result of the bruises He suffered from the scourging, beating, buffeting and cruel forcing of a thorny crown to His head, He became weak and could not bear His cross, as condemned criminals were expected to. A man called Simon, from Cyrene, capital of the province of Libya, North Africa, was compelled to carry the cross after Jesus (Luke 23:26).

**Question 4: Why is it necessary for every believer to bear his cross and follow Christ?**

Unlike Simon who was compelled to carry the cross, the believer must bear his cross as a mark of discipleship of Christ. The cross will always be heavy and humiliating. Cross-bearing is a must for every Christian. Sympathizers should not talk us into dropping the cross we bear. We must endure its shame, pains and inconveniences because following Christ is not a journey on the bed of roses. The Lord promises divine strength for believers who gallantly bear them in obedience to His call to do so.

Christ's response to those who bewail His maltreatment is **"weep not for me, but weep for yourselves"**. He further reiterated the great suffering everyone born of a woman will go through for rejecting Him. His response reveals that the depraved state of a sinner and his eternal doom is more a cause to weep than the death of a saint. This is because many of those who bewailed Christ did not believe on Him. Today, when the story of Christ's sufferings is passionately narrated, many still wail and weep but do not take practical steps to turn from sin, believe in Him and receive Him as their Saviour.

We must not equate the death of Christ with that of a common person whose calamity we pity. His death was a peculiar type meant for our deliverance from sin and purchase of eternal life for us. Therefore, let us weep, not for Him, but for our own sins and those of our children for whom He died. And we must weep for fear of the miseries and eternal punishment of hell fire we shall bring upon ourselves if we slight His love and reject His grace, as the Jewish nation did. How shall sinners escape this impending judgement of God upon them? The only way of escape is repentance from sin and faith in the atoning blood of Christ at Calvary. If we are saved from sin, the death of our loved ones in Christ should not bring much sorrow to our hearts (1 Thessalonians 4:13-16). They have left all the trials and troubles of this life and have entered into eternal rest and joy. However, we must think of ourselves who are left behind in a world of sin, sorrow

and snares, and prayerfully watch to make successful pilgrimage to heaven.

**THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST** (Luke 23:32-38; Matthew 27:33-44; Mark 15:22-32; John 19:16-27; Psalm 22:16-18; Isaiah 53:1-12; Galatians 2:20; 1 Peter 4:13; Hebrews 12:2).

**Question 5: Why was the guiltless Christ crucified?**

Christ was finally led to Calvary (the place of a skull, called in Hebrews as Golgotha) located outside the city walls of Jerusalem to be crucified (John 19:20; Hebrew 13:12). It was an ignominious, contemptible, debased and dishonourable place for the King of kings to be brought. This was to add to His reproach and sufferings. **“Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none”** (Psalm 69:20). Death by crucifixion was a very cruel way of execution. His hands and feet were nailed to the cross as it lay upon the ground and it was then lifted up, and fastened into the earth, or into some socket made to receive it. This was a painful and shameful death above any other.

He was crucified in the midst between two criminals, as if He had been the worst of the three. Thus, He was not only treated as a transgressor but also numbered with them, the worst of them. He was still derided and mocked even while in unbearable pains on the cross. The Jewish sardists ridiculed His divinity: that if He was the Son of God, He should prophesy or come down from the cross. But it is interesting to know that all these things happened in fulfilment of prophecies (Isaiah 52:14; 53:1-12; Mark 15:28).

Jesus Christ prayed for His persecutors while He was passing through unimaginable pain and suffering on the cross. He said, **“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do...”** (Luke 23:34). We are called upon to do the same thing. We must forgive our persecutors and enemies, bless when we are cursed

and reviled, and pray for those who spitefully use us (Matthew 5:43-48; Mark 11:25,26; Romans 12:14,17-21). We have examples in the Bible of those who forgave their enemies from the heart. Stephen forgave his persecutors and killers (Acts 7:59,60); Joseph forgave his persecutors who sold him as a slave into Egypt (Genesis 45:1-5); Paul and Silas forgave those who imprisoned them (Acts 16:23-34). If Christ loved and forgave such terrible enemies who murdered Him, we must do the same as children of God.

**THE CONVICTION AND CONVERSION OF THE PENITENT THIEF ON THE CROSS** (Luke 23:39-43; Matthew 27:44; Mark 15:32; Luke 18:13,14; Romans 10:9,10; Psalm 34:18; 51:17 Isaiah 57:15; 66:2).

Two criminals had the opportunity to be by Christ at the dying moment of their lives. What a golden opportunity for both of them to get saved and then be expressly transported to eternal heaven as they closed their eyes in death. But unfortunately, **“one of the malefactors”** (evil doer, criminal and villain) **“which were hanged railed on Him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us”** (Luke 23:39). This thief left the very side of Christ and went straight to hell. What a loss of precious opportunity! Like him, many proud people who are privileged to come in contact with sound Bible teaching, holy men and women of God, and spiritual materials that should have taken them to heaven, still lose these opportunities and miss heaven. But the other humble thief with a broken spirit and contrite heart rebuked the impenitent fellow for his hardness of heart and lack of godly fear. **“And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom”** (Luke 22:42).

**Question 6: Why was one of the two thieves on the cross saved from sin and the other lost?**

The Lord pardoned the penitent thief for fulfilling certain conditions every sinner who desires entry into God’s kingdom will find useful. (1) The penitent thief had the fear of God as he rebuked his fellow thief for not fearing God (verse 40). (2) He acknowledged his own condemnation and helpless state (verse 40).

(3) He acknowledged justice for crimes committed (verse 41). (4) He confessed faith in the innocence of Christ who was justified but condemned for envy and hatred of the Jews (verse 41). (5) He confessed Jesus as Lord (verse 42). (6) He confessed faith in the eventual triumph of Christ's kingdom (verse 42). And (7) he asked for mercy and forgiveness of Jesus Christ (verse 42). Based on these conditions, Jesus Christ pardoned the penitent thief and promised to take him to paradise that same day. **“And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise”** (Luke 23:43). Conviction and imprisonment for crimes committed should not blind your eyes to the path of escape from eternal damnation. Fulfilling these same conditions like the thief did will bring forgiveness from Christ, present joy and eternal happiness with Him in heaven. By divine intervention, freedom from physical imprisonment is also a possibility.

**CHRIST'S DEATH AND BURIAL** (Luke 23:44-56; Matthew 27:45-60; Mark 15:33-42; John 19:28-40)

While hanging on the cross, His blood dripping down and His life gradually expiring, His pains grew increasingly to a climax. The pain of separation from the Father in death for sin was great. For this, other gospels has it that He cried for being 'forsaken' by the Father at the cross to bleed to death. The Father who had spoken of the Sonship of Christ repeatedly before now is of a purer eyes than to behold iniquity – the iniquity of the world He was bearing. Sin brings separation indeed - separation of the sinner from God and of Christ from God on behalf of the sinner so he can be reconciled to God. Judgement for our sins has come upon Christ. Before He died, there was darkness over all the earth from about the sixth hour (i.e. 12 noon) until the ninth hour (i.e. 3:00pm). The sun was darkened and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. Here, the supernatural God, whose supernatural Son was crucified, was demonstrating His supernatural acts, which brought supernatural conviction upon the hearts of the witnesses. They testified that He was righteous. The rending of the



veil of the temple signified the taking away of the ceremonial law (which was a wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles) and of all other difficulties in our approaching to God, so that we may come boldly to the throne of grace.

**“And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost”** (Luke 23:46). Thus, Christ made His soul an offering for our sins and gave His life through the eternal Spirit a ransom for many (Isaiah 53:10; Matthew 20:28; Hebrews 9:14). Here the price for our sins was paid in order to redeem us from the slave market of sin, because without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. Human race could have been eternally lost but for this great and final sacrifice of the Son of God for the sins of the whole world.

**Question 7: Point out Christ-like attitudes Christians should imbibe as well as manifest during trials.**

During His sufferings, Christ practised what He preached (Matthew 5:11,39-41,44), leaving a challenge and pattern for gospel ministers to follow. He did not fret or yield to evil provocations to defend self. When reviled, He did not retaliate. His words were few especially in our text, consisting mainly of affirmation of scriptural truths about His deity (verse 3), correction of wrong attitudes to His suffering and a revelation of who to weep for and why (verse 28-31), prayer of forgiveness for His persecutors' spiritual ignorance (verse 34), assurance of forgiveness and promise of eternal life in His kingdom for the penitent thief, and prayer of confidence and committal of His Spirit to the Father. Christ, rather than proclaim His innocence, allowed the law and others to discover it (verses 4,14,15,22,41,47), having triumphed earlier in prayer for the will of God to be done. Above all, He kept silent as baseless and false accusations were being hurled at Him. He spoke only when the truth must be told. Believers must pray for grace to demonstrate Christ-like attitudes during persecution and suffering for His name, and remain steadfast till the end. He was sinless; yet, He was condemned and crucified to save humanity from sin and its

consequent eternal damnation.

When Jesus gave up the ghost, one of His disciples, a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, went and begged Pilate to remove the body of Christ for burial. Jesus was buried by this good man, a not-so-popular, secret disciple who was expecting the kingdom of God (Luke 23:50-53). Along with Joseph of Arimathaea was Nicodemus who came to Jesus by night. He, with Joseph buried our Lord Jesus Christ in Joseph's own new tomb, hewn out in the rock, where no man before had been laid (John 19:38-40). Some women also followed and saw where He was buried.

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

	<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	I John	1-2	Joshua	18
TUE	„	3-4	„	19
WED	„	5	„	20-21
THUR	II John & III John		„	22
FRI	Jude	1	„	23-24
SAT	Revelation	1-2	Judges	1
SUN	„	3-4	„	2-3

# 321 Lesson

## CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

**MEMORY VERSE:** "He is not here, but is risen, remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee" (Luke 24:6).

**Text: Luke 24:1-45**

The truth of Christ's resurrection is of utmost importance in the Scripture, as it constitutes the basic pivot around which the Christian faith revolves. For **"if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished"** (1 Corinthians 15:17,18). The four gospels record the event because of its significance to the Christian faith. While it took Christ's vicarious death on the cross to pay our sin-debt, it took His bodily resurrection to make apparent the seal of God's approval of the redemptive work.

In our text, we have three women - Mary Magdalene, (out of whom went out seven devils (Luke 8:2), Salome (the mother of Zebedees children) and another Mary (the mother of James) and certain others - among those who witness the great event. These, as soon as ever they could, immediately after the Sabbath, had come **"unto the sepulchre... very early in the morning,"** to embalm His body and scatter spices around it as a mark of love for their Lord.

**Question 1: What lessons can we learn from the attitude of these women?**

They were driven by zeal and uncommon affection for Him whom they loved and cherished so much, both in life and now in death. Love gave them inner drive against the seeming obstacles of the guard of soldiers and the large stone with which the sepulchre had been sealed. Both obstacles were removed as the women thought not of any impossibility on the pathway of duty to their Lord and Master. From this, we learn that giant-looking difficulties vanish as we diligently and affectionately serve the Lord. They were

eventually rewarded with the privilege of being the first to have knowledge of this eternally significant event and of being the pioneer heralds of the best news of all times.

**Question 2: What was the discovery and experience of the women who first arrived at the sepulchre?**

If we show the same level of zeal, love and undeterred affection for Christ without minding seeming obstacles around us, we shall have the privilege of being privy to divine revelations which may be hidden from others.

In their perplexity, **“two men stood by them in shining garments and said unto them... He is not here, but is risen...”** (Luke 24:4-6). The sight of these heavenly personalities, though amazing and terrifying, was also at the same time soothing as a result of the heart-gladdening message that “He is risen”. Jesus is alive!

**DIVINE PREDICTIONS OF CHRIST’S RESURRECTION** (Luke 9:21, 22; Mark 9:30-32; Matthew 16:21-23; 17:22,23; 20:17-19; John 2:18-22).

In addition to several prophecies on His resurrection, Christ Himself predicted His arrest, crucifixion, burial and eventual resurrection on the third day. At the early part of His earthly ministry, He said, **“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up”** (John 2:19). Also, the parable He told of the king’s son in (Matthew 21:33-39; Mark 12:1-19; Luke 20:9-16) was an allusion to His death. After Peter’s confession at Caesarea Philippi, He spoke more expressly of this reality and went ahead to rebuke Peter for opposing God’s plan for Him to go to the cross (Matthew 16:21-23). Moreover, He regularly assured His followers of the certainty of His resurrection as a way of making them understand that His death and burial was not meant to signal an end in itself, but a divine arrangement to fulfil the redemption of man.

**Question 3: Why was the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus very important?**

Christ's death on the cross was only a necessary 'set back' divinely designed to set an eternal seal on the redemption of mankind and put an end to the reign of sin and the devil. It was a divine arrangement that He should voluntarily lay down His life "**a ransom for many**" and take it again the third day. By this development, His crucifixion, death and burial are not to be viewed as victory of evil over good but as a necessary catalyst for the determined victory over Satan (Genesis 3:15) and as prelude to His eventual resurrection on which the very foundation of our Christian faith is laid.

### **DEFINITE PROOFS OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION**

(Luke 24:1-8,30,31,40-45; Mark 16:5-7,9-11 Matthew 28:9,10; John 20:26-31; 1 Corinthians 15:1-7)

**Question 4: How can you prove from scriptures that Jesus is alive?**

Many infallible proofs are recorded in the scriptures to authenticate Christ's resurrection. First, the confession of the chief priests and Pharisees and the arrangement they made to 'secure' the tomb (Matthew 27:62-66). Second, the report of the guards at the sepulchre and the reaction of the council to conceal the truth that a spectacular event actually took place. They knew that it was not a concocted story and spent heavily in an attempt to stop the news from spreading (Matthew 28:11-15). Third, the empty tomb proved that Jesus actually rose (Luke 24:3-6; Mark 16:5-7). Fourth, the testimony of the angels to the women at the sepulchre. Fifth, the comforting appearance to Mary Magdalene and other disciples at different times (John 20:11-13; Mark 16:9-11; Luke 24:13-15, 30, 31). A harmonized record of our Lord's post-resurrection appearances shows ten distinctive occasions (1) to Mary Magdalene; (2) the other women (Matthew 28:9,10); (3) Peter (Luke 24:33-35; 1 Corinthians 15:5); (4) to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus (Mark 16:12,13; Luke 24:13-32); (5) to the ten apostles and others (Thomas absent) (Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-25). All these happened on the day He rose from the dead, otherwise called Easter Sunday. He also appeared to them between the eight and fortieth day (when He ascended to

glory). He appeared again to (6) the eleven (Thomas now present) (John 20:26-31; 1Corinthians 15:5); (7) the two disciples and five apostles at the sea of Tiberias (John 21:1-25); (8) the apostles and **“above five hundred brethren”** in Galilee (Matthew 28:16-20; 1Corinthians 15:6); (9) James, His brother in the flesh (1 Corinthians 15:7), and (10) to the apostles (Luke 24:44-53; Acts 1:1-12).

The fifth proof that Jesus rose from the dead is the testimony of the early Apostles after the Holy Spirit descended on them. Speaking to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, Peter said, **“This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses”** (Acts 2:32). And nobody rose up to challenge this testimony. Sixth, the uniform testimony and writings in the New Testament by men who hazarded their lives for the gospel. These saints would not have testified to a false event if Jesus only died without resurrecting (1 Corinthians 15:1-8, 12-19). Seventh, millions of people from every race, language, colour and culture throughout the world who have come to experience the power of Christ’s resurrection in their own hearts and lives; the presence of Jesus as the “Daystar” arising in their hearts proves that He is alive.

**Question 5: What salient facts does the resurrection of Christ establish about Himself and believers?**

On these infallible proofs rest our Christian faith and conviction. The resurrection establish the fact that Jesus is truly the Son of God, the Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world and soon-coming King (John 1:29; Acts 1:9; Revelation 1:7). To believers, first, because Christ fulfilled His word that **“the Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again”** (Matthew 17:22, 23), we believe surely that He will keep all His promises to us. Second, it gives us a definite assurance that all our toils, travails and trials for His cause shall not be in vain. There is hope behind the veil of time. Third, death is not the end of life for man: there is hope of a bodily resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:23). Fourth, we are assured that we belong to a King who lives forever (Romans 6:9,10).

## **DOUBT AND PERPLEXITY THROUGH GRIEF** (Luke 24:9-45; Mark 16: 10-13)

**Question 6: What negative effects can unbelief have on our Christian lives if permitted?**

When the news of Christ's resurrection reached the disciples, they were astonished and could not believe. They seem to have forgotten all that the Lord told them on the subject when He was physically present with them. The whole story was to them an idle tale. Neither did they believe Mary Magdalene, the first disciple to witness the event (Luke 24:11) nor the two who Jesus accosted on their way to Emmaus (Mark 16:12, 13). Utter doubt, sorrow and dejection blindfolded their minds to the reality of Christ's resurrection. Had doubts and unbelief not filled their minds, the crucifixion would have elicited hope, joy and gladness in their hearts.

Unlike the disciples, believers today should understand the unfolding events of these last days as a pointer to the second coming of the Lord. It should fill us not only with the understanding of the times but also with hope and expectation as we look forward to sharing in the glory of Christ's resurrection.

**Question 7: What solemn duty does Christ's resurrection bequeath on the individual believers today?**

The disciples however did not continue long in their despair and unbelief as the proof of Christ's resurrection by those who saw Him and by His personal appearances diffused their doubts and strengthened their faith. To the two on their way to Emmaus, dining with the Lord "**as he sat at meat with them**" opened up their spiritual sight "**and their eyes were opened, and they knew him**" (Verse 31, 45). How we need the touch of the Lord so our eyes can be opened to spiritual things which are hidden from the natural man because they are spiritually discerned (1 Corinthians 2:14).

The conviction that Christ indeed is risen as He has said energized the disciples and "**they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working**

**with them, and confirming the word with signs following”** (Mark 16:20). Our faith in the risen Lord should similarly be reflected in our unwavering commitment to His Word and to the Great commission (Matthew 28:18-20).

**Question 8: What present and future hope can we derive from Christ’s resurrection in view of our present challenges?**

In summary, we discover that although Friday, the day of Christ’s crucifixion, was marked by intense suffering and agony, Sunday, the day of His resurrection, was marked by victory, joy and glory. Friday was the day of manifestation of Satan’s power, Sunday was the day of the demonstration of God’s supernatural power. Friday was the day of humiliation, Sunday was the day of glorification. In Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection lie timeless lessons for the believer that: **“Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning”** (Psalm 30:5). Looking at the crucifixion, it would appear the enemy was having the last laugh but in reality he was having the last nail driven into his coffin. Divine power appear most weakened when it was most operative (1 Peter 3:18-22; Ephesians 4:7-13).

There is in this a sobering lesson for the believer not to mistake divine silence in prayers for divine indifference. Miracle delayed is by no means miracle denied. God works behind our failures, setbacks, trials, tests and lacks to perform His wonders. Whatever our present situation, whether we are looking for life-partners, children, jobs, academic success, financial prosperity, healing and miracle, etc, we should not **“seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?”** (Isaiah 8:19).

Sunday is coming; hold on to God’s unfailing promises. Your darkest moments shall be turned into your brightest and most joyous. The miracle of Christ’s resurrection assures the believer of present and permanent victory over sin, sickness and Satan.



## DAILY BIBLE READING

	<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Revelation	5-6	Judges	4-5
TUE	„	7-8	„	6
WED	„	9-10	„	7-8
THUR	„	11-12	„	9
FRI	„	13-14	„	10-11
SAT	„	15-16	„	12-13
SUN	„	17-18	„	14-15

# 322 Lesson

## CHRIST'S PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

**MEMORY VERSE:** "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Corinthians 2:4).

### **TEXT: LUKE 24:46-53**

Our text covers St. Luke's account of the last post-resurrection appearance of Christ to His disciples. Significantly, Christ used this last occasion to prepare the minds of the disciples for the task ahead of them. He dwelt on the nature, the content and the means of the Gospel message which would thenceforth occupy the disciples. Firstly, it was a message that, they should emphasize, has its roots firmly in the Holy Scripture for its details "**were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me**" (verse 44). Christ implied that, because it has been so written in the scripture, "**it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day**" since the scripture cannot be broken (verse 46).

Secondly, the apostles were to stress the pivotal place of genuine repentance in God's plan of salvation, as a prelude to the gracious privilege of remission of sin. Thirdly, the Lord declared that for the effective delivery of the all-important message of the Gospel to a world long alienated from God by wicked works, the apostles would need the supernatural enablement of the Holy Spirit. He (the Holy Spirit) has a role in the ministry of the Gospel which neither earthly learning and scholarship nor human wisdom alone can fill. Though the need for the dissemination of the good news was urgent, yet they must not venture into it until they "**be endued with power from on high**" (verse 49).

**THE SCRIPTURAL BASIS OF THE GOSPEL MESSAGE** (Luke 24:46; Isaiah 34:16; Matthew 22:23-29; 2 Peter 1:19-21; Matthew 12:1-5)

**“And said unto them, thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day”.** Here, Christ’s confirmation and affirmation of scripture is brought to the fore. Throughout His earthly ministry, the Lord referred to the authority and veracity of the Holy writ. Christ was, in other words, telling the disciples that by their pointing out to their hearers, how the Old Testament Prophecies were fulfilled in Christ, a seal of truth is fixed on the claims of Christ as the Messiah, and on the Gospel as the message of salvation.

**Question 1: What does Christ’s reference to the scripture as the basis of the Gospel teach us about the Bible?**

Firstly, Christ implied that the truth of every claim or profession is to be gauged by its accordance with the scripture (Isaiah 8:20).

Secondly, by his declaration, the Lord teaches us that whatever is written in the Holy Scripture must be fulfilled. **“Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of these shall fail...”** (Isaiah 34:16). On all occasions, when Christ sought to prove the truth of His assertions or the rightness of His actions, He did so by showing how those assertions or actions agreed with the Bible. For example, to the Sadducees who sought to disprove the doctrine of resurrection by showing its perceived incongruence with the present life’s reality in a case of multiple marriage, Christ declared, **“Ye do err not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God”** (Matthew 22:29). To the unbelieving and contentious Jews the Lord exhorted, **“had ye believed [the scripture written by] Moses, ye would have believed me for he wrote of me”** (John 5:46). Justifying the action of His disciples against the accusation of the fault-finding Pharisees, Christ relied on the scripture: **“Have ye not read (in the scripture) what David did when he was an hungered and they that were with him?”** In countering each temptation by Satan, Christ resorted to the truth of the scripture to expose Satan’s lies, and thereby overcame. The same reliance on the infallible Word of God was also true of the Apostles in the early church.

**Question 2: Based on Christ's demonstrated confidence in the Scripture, what is the place and use of the Bible in the daily life of a true believer?**

Christ's confidence in and reliance upon the scripture shows how we can, by comparing every claim and doctrine with the Word of God prove its truth or falsehood.

**THE PRIMACY OF REPENTANCE BEFORE SALVATION** (Luke 24:47,48, John 10:11; Psalm 50:16; Acts 2:38; Matthew 3:2; Hebrew 9:22; Colossians 1:14)

**“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things.”** When the Lord asserted that the disciples were witnesses of these things (the fulfilment of scriptures in Christ, including His death, resurrection and the transforming power of faith in Him), He cast upon the disciples and believers of all dispensations the duty of giving evidence to this truth as witnesses. They must not only show to the world how the scriptures prove that Jesus is Christ indeed, but also tell them what Christ suffered and why. They must tell the world how Christ as **“the good shepherd [gave] his life for the sheep”** (John 10:11). They were to constantly affirm these truths with the force and fervency of vital witnesses in the on-going judicial battle for truth, in which the forces of falsehood and deception contend (for the souls of men) with the Gospel of salvation in Christ.

**Question 3: What should be the response of every believer to the Lord's declaration, “And ye are witnesses of these things”?**

The disciples must not only show why the Saviour had to shed His blood but also portray the transforming power of that blood by their lifestyle. Christ's statement also implies that only those who are truly witnesses by personal experience of the saving power of the shed blood can represent and preach Him to the world of sinners. **“But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or**

**that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?”** (Psalm 50:16)

In preaching, the disciples were to press upon their hearers, the duty of repentance. Christ commanded that **“repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations.”** Sorrow for and consequent forsaking of sin indicate repentance. It is significant that in this commission, Christ placed both repentance and remission of sins together. Accordingly, when Peter preached to the crowd on the Pentecost day, he enjoined the people to **“repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...”** (Acts 2:38). Similarly, John the Baptist preached saying **“repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”** (Matthew 3:2). The implication of the call to repentance is that the sinner is living in opposition to God and in breach of His holy laws. By so doing, he is acting against his own best interest and heading to unspeakable misery and torment in time and eternity.

Repentance results in a total change of mind toward God and reversal of life’s direction and conduct to please and obey Him. Repentance is preceded by sorrow for sins committed. It is important therefore that the sinner be made aware of and be convicted of his sins by reference not to the standards of the society but to the standard of God’s commandment. **“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of.”** The state of sorrow for sin compels the sinner to seek the way out of danger to his soul. Apostle Peter’s audience cried out, **“men and brethren, what shall we do?”** (Acts 2:37). Likewise the Philippian jailor inquired, trembling before Paul and Silas, **“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”** This is the sorrow and attitude that beget genuine repentance.

A repentant sinner is not only desperate for the way out of the danger of sin but is expectedly eager to make right his ways. Driven by sincere contrition, the sinner cries unto God for mercy and pardon. Moreover, there is a newfound desire to make amends as much as possible for the wrong done to other people. This takes the form of sincere apology and

request for forgiveness. Not only that, he willingly and soberly restores to their rightful owners things stolen or misappropriated. The willingness to make appropriate restitutions and a dramatic change of attitude and lifestyle are the unmistakable fruits and evidence of repentance.

**Question 4: Why is it important to show the sinner the error of his ways from the Scriptures while preaching?**

When the Lord commanded that “**repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name**”, He was no doubt referring to work of atonement for the sins of the world which He had accomplished for all men by His sacrificial death on the cross, for “**without shedding of blood is no remission**” (Hebrews 9:22). His death having satisfied the demands of God’s justice makes the remission of man’s sins by a just God possible. Such remission of sin is however available to genuinely repentant sinners who put their faith in Christ as “**the lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world**”. Repentance can only be preached in His name “**in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sin**” (Colossians 1:14).

**THE SPIRIT’S INDISPENSABLE ROLE IN THE GOSPEL** (Luke 24:49; Exodus 31:3; Matthew 3:11; Joel 2:28; Isaiah 44:3,4)

Repentance and remission of sins is the only hope of mankind in every place and culture. This experience precedes holiness experience and Spirit baptism which Christ promised His disciples. In the Old Testament dispensation, we see God endowing people with the Holy Spirit for specially important and specific assignments such as the construction of the tabernacle and the ark for which God filled Bezaleel “**with the Spirit of God in wisdom and understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship**” (Exodus 31:3). The outpouring of the Holy Spirit in a baptismal measure for the ministry of the Gospel of God’s kingdom and salvation was such an important watershed that before Christ appeared on the scene, his forerunner,

John the Baptist, had harped on it as one of the great blessings and distinctive of the coming Messiah (Matthew 3:11). Much earlier, in the Old Testament dispensation, God had in His promise of mercy to a repentant Israel said, **“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions”** (Joel 2:28).

From the foregoing, we can begin to appreciate the importance of the promise of the Father now about to be fulfilled. It is clear that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is one of the greatest blessings God reserved for the latter days and in particular for the effectiveness of the gospel of man’s reconciliation with God.

**Question 5: What are the roles of the Holy Ghost in carrying out the Great Commission?**

The enduement with the power of the Holy Ghost is important in the evangelisation of the world for which Christ suffered, died and resurrected. First, the Holy Spirit helps true disciples by constantly comforting their spirits, especially in view of the resistance, opposition and persecution which the message of the gospel provokes. Secondly, the Holy Spirit helps to bring to remembrance all that Christ had told us, thereby preserving the truth and integrity of our message (John 14:26). Thirdly, the Holy Spirit empowers the preaching in the hearts of the hearers causing them to be convicted of their sinfulness, to believe and be saved (I Corinthians 12:3). The Holy Spirit enables us to perform miracles as confirmation of the divine approval of the message and for the benefit of those who would otherwise not believe (Acts 6:6,7).

**Question 6a: Why does the present day believer need to be baptized in the Holy Spirit?**

**Question 6b: What steps must he take to receive the experience?**

The church today has great need of this great promise

of the Father in order to fulfil its urgent role. Every believer therefore needs to understand and benefit from the outpouring of the Spirit. Every believer has a measure of the Holy Spirit imparted to him at salvation (Romans 8:9). However, the full power of the Spirit comes when the sanctified believer, consecrates, thirst and pray for this baptismal experience. The benefit of the Spirit's baptism are multi-faceted. The words of Christ Himself gives an understanding of the indispensability of the experience of the Holy Spirit's fulness in the life and ministry of the believer: "... **it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you... Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come**" (John 16:7,12,13).

**CHRIST ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN** (Luke 24:50-53; Mark 16:19,20; Psalm 68:18; Acts 1:9-11)

Having commissioned the Apostles, the Lord led them to Bethany to be eye witnesses of His ascension back to heaven from whence He came to do the work of redemption. The Lord blessed the apostles and by extension all who would believe in Him through their preaching. Obediently, the disciples returned to Jerusalem and continued in acts of devotion and prayer while awaiting the promise of the Father. They teach us that while we await God's promised blessings, we must continue in His service and in our devotions, filled with His joy and faith in His faithfulness.

When Christ told the apostles that He must leave them, sorrow filled their hearts; but now that they see Him go, they are filled with joy being convinced that it was expedient for them and for the Church that He should go away so as to send the promised Comforter. Note that the glory of Christ is the joy of all true believers, even while we are here in this world; how much more will it be when we go to the New Jerusalem, and find Him there in His glory.

**Question 7: Why was Christ ascension expedient?**



Without the ascension of Christ, the promise of sending us a Comforter which quickens and energises the believer for the Kingdom service would have been in vain. His ascension procured freedom for the captive. Christ ascension was a proof of God's power as He defied the science of gravity. More importantly, we are comforted by the fact that He is coming again to receive us to Himself. This blessed hope of His coming should spur every true believer into action despite the shame and suffering we encounter in our various service posts.

While we are waiting for God's promises and the eventual return of His son (Jesus Christ), we must occupy in the work that He has committed in our hands knowing fully well that He will return any moment from now to reward us of our labour. Finally, we must never cease praising the name of our God as nothing better prepares the mind for receiving the Holy Ghost. Jesus' sitting at God's right hand signifies the completion of His work, His authority as God, and His coronation as King.

### **DAILY BIBLE READING**

<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Revelation	19-20	Judges 16
TUE	„	21-22	„ 17-18
WED	Matthew	1-2	„ 19
THUR	„	3-4	„ 20
FRI	„	5	„ 21
SAT	„	6-7	Ruth 1-2
SUN	„	8-9	„ 3-4

## **END OF NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES**

## BEGINNING OF SPECIAL STUDIES

# 323 Lesson

## REPENTANCE AND RESTITUTION

**Memory Verse:** “And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold” (Luke 19:8).

**TEXT: Luke 19:1-10; Genesis 20:1-18**

Salvation, the greatest miracle that can ever take place in the life of a sinner, is wholly by grace. It is a gift which he could never have earned were he to work for it. Self-righteousness or goodness cannot earn the sinner forgiveness, divine favour, salvation or acceptance in the presence of God. Identifying with popular church or observing religious rites does not solve the problem of sin. It has been discovered that one can be an active member of a renowned, large congregation without possessing a renewed nature. There is need for God’s power to bring about a definite, drastic change in the life of a sinner before he can have fellowship with God. **“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God”** (Ephesians 2:8). In spite of whatever civilization, culture or refinement a person may attain, the word of God has concluded that, **“all have sinned”**. Until a sinner repents, he is outside the kingdom of God because the entrance into the kingdom requires repentance. He must come, therefore, throwing himself upon the unfailing mercy and love of Christ who paid the price of His redemption. He must place his hope of salvation on the finished work at Calvary, stand upon His word and accept the gift of His love and pardon. He needs to believe in the Lord Jesus, renounce his sins by confessing them and surrendering totally to the Lord.

The Christian life is not a game of chance. The Bible has given us enough light on how to live an acceptable life before God and make heaven ultimately. There is

no hope of salvation for anyone who blindly follows religion without taking heed to the doctrines of the Bible. Mere interest in the doctrines of the Bible is not enough. There must be a definite day or time when a man has consciously decided to forsake his sins and follow the Saviour.

**Question 1: Enumerate some religious activities carried out by churchgoers without repentance.**

**REPENTANCE: THE GATEWAY TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD** (Mark 1:14,15; Acts 3:19,26; 2:38; 8:22; 17:30,31; 20:21).

The natural man is estranged from God. He lives in rebellion and self-will. He is dead in sin and trespasses. On his own he can never please God. He needs a fundamental change of direction. He must repent to have worthwhile dealings with God. Sincere repentance and godly sorrow for sin are important prerequisites for salvation. Repentance is the deep inward sorrow which makes a sinner turn from sin unto God. True repentance always results in confession of sin (Psalm 38:18; 1 John 1:9; Luke 15:21; Mark 1:5; Luke 5:8); forsaking them (Isaiah 55:7; Proverbs 28:13) and turning to God (1 Thessalonians 1:9; Acts 26:18). True repentance makes the sinner see sin as God sees it. This is possible only through the agency of the Holy Spirit who produces conviction in the heart of the sinner.

**Question 2: What is repentance?**

Biblical repentance is different from remorse. Remorse or regret deals only with the embarrassment or painful consequences of sin. Sorrow on the other hand is associated with repentance; the sinner is brought face to face with the reality that he has wronged God. The full weight of this sorrow makes the sinner to abhor and hate sins. It leads the sinner to turn away from sin wholeheartedly. **“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death”** (2 Corinthians 7:10).

Repentance occupies a central place in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (Mark 1:14,15). The message

of salvation is the same for all people irrespective of country, continent, race, culture, tribe, class or status.

The pillars of the first century church emphasized repentance. Peter in his second epistle, stressed, **“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”** (2 Peter 3:9). Paul, the apostle, preaching to the Athenians stated that God **“... commandeth all men every where to repent”** (Acts 17:30). In his messages to the Jews and Gentiles, the apostle also emphasized **“repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ”** (Acts 20:21).

**Question 3: Describe the changes that take place in a person after repentance.**

**RESTITUTION: EVIDENCE OF GENUINE REPENTANCE** (Matthew 3:8; Acts 24:16; Luke 19:8).

Having repented from sin, God requires that the believer make right every wrong perpetrated against others. This is called restitution. The doctrine of restitution is one of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. Restitution is an act of making amends for wrongs done against our fellowmen; restoring stolen or misappropriated things, properties or persons to their rightful owners; paying back just debts; giving back where one has defrauded, uncovering crimes committed and confessing lies told, making confessions to the offended and apologizing to those slandered. It is done whether the person injured knew it or not (Hebrews 4:13). God forgives when we repent but He requires us to make amends to any person we may have injured or wronged. Repentance towards God necessitates restoration to man of all property gained by fraud, lying or pretence of whatever kind.

**Question 4: What is restitution?**

Restitution must be done with deep contrition and sobriety. It must be done in obedience to God, not as if we were doing the injured person a favour. It should be carried out with the objective of having a conscience devoid of offence toward God and men (Acts 24:16). However, acts of restitution which would implicate

others or bring injury or harm to others needs care and God's wisdom. In such cases, it is essential to seek counselling from faithful, experienced, competent and mature Christian believers, teachers or preachers.

Some people consider restitution as unnecessary. They argue that repentance is all that God requires. But they err, forgetting that most sins committed by men are offences against God as well as their fellow men. And the only way to obtain a conscience void of offence towards God and man is the reparation of all losses and damages. Whereas repentance is between God and man, restitution is between human beings. Repentance is private – before God, restitution is public – we go to the offended people to straighten out every rough edge. Repentance removes sin from the heart, restitution removes objects we gained sinfully from our house. Repentance is very important for our relationship with God; restitution is necessary to ascertain the genuineness of our repentance. Thus, with restitution you make your ways right before men and with repentance you come into right relationship with God. There is need for genuine repentance and immediate restitution. This is the Bible way.

<b>Question 5: Why is restitution necessary?</b>
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**BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF RESTITUTION** (Luke 19:8; Acts 23:1-5; Genesis 20:1-14).

One of our texts introduces us to the chief collector of customs for the district of Jericho. His name is Zacchaeus. Like all publicans, he had become very rich by oppressing the Jews and extorting money from them. Zacchaeus heard about Jesus' passage through Jericho. **“And he sought to see Jesus who He was.”** Quite obviously, something more than mere curiosity prompted Zacchaeus to climb the sycamore tree. It was a sure conviction of sin though he was not fully aware of his motives.

Thus Zacchaeus **“ran before Jesus, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him: for he was to pass that way.”** But Jesus had His eyes on Zacchaeus as truly as the latter had his eyes on the Lord. Jesus always sees inquiring souls. He always reveals

Himself to sincere seekers. It is significant to note that Zacchaeus received Jesus joyfully. And in that single act, he repented of his sins, received salvation and was additionally blessed with a visit from the Lord. But the Jews murmured because Jesus visited a publican. Zacchaeus probably anticipated the murmuring, as well as the negative and uncomplimentary comments of the Jews. He knew he had always been unfair to the people. Perhaps he saw the incisive glare of those he had extorted in the past. God had forgiven him; Jesus had received him. But the people still had something against him.

He then stood up and spoke. He said, **“Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor”**. This did not refer to his past life but to the present. He went further and said **“if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.”** Zacchaeus showed that repentance is more than shedding tears. Such is not godly sorrow unless it straightens crooked ways. Restitution requires restoring anything – money, books, car, house, ill-gotten wealth, clothing or even a woman or a man – to its rightful owner.

**Question 6: Apart from Zacchaeus, name other Bible characters that did restitution.**

**SCRIPTURAL BASIS FOR THE PRACTICE OF RESTITUTION** (Genesis 20:1-8,14-18; Exodus 22:1-7; Leviticus 6:1-7; Numbers 5:6-8; 2 Samuel 12:1-6; Proverbs 6:30,31; Ezekiel 33:14-16; Matthew 5:23,24; Luke 19:8,9; Acts 23:1-5; 24:16; James 4:17).

The Bible doctrine on restitution, in practice and precept, spans virtually all the dispensations of God’s dealings with men till present day. The revelation of God’s will and word before the Mosaic laws demands that we make restitution (Romans 1:19,20). Therefore, the law cannot abolish this teaching or doctrine of God’s word, which had been established many years before the law. Restitution is part of the moral law.

If God told Abimelech to restore Sarah to her rightful husband, He is telling you the same today. If God demanded that stolen goods be restored, He demands

the same from you today. There is “**no variableness nor shadow of turning**” with Him (God). Repentance and restitution form the gateway into total freedom and liberty in Bible days. It is the same today. The rules of righteous living in the New Testament are just as high, if not higher than what obtained in the Old Testament.

Similarly, the doctrine and practice of restitution is upheld in the New Testament. The Lord Jesus Christ commanded and taught the doctrine, the Apostles in the early church practised and taught it and, in fact, the whole church of God lived by the teaching (Matthew 28:19,20; John 14:26; Acts 2:42; 16:4,5; Philemon 7-21).

**Question 7: Why do you think that the doctrine of restitution is biblical?**

Restitution must be a product of repentance for it to be acceptable unto God. Restitution without repentance from sin and faith in Christ is a filthy rag before God. Whatever is done without the grace of God working in the heart is the mere morality of men. If an unbeliever puts away all his extra wives, restores all stolen goods and says sorry to all those he offended without consciously accepting his guilt of sin before God and turning away from sin, having a changed attitude and disposition to sin, he is yet dead in sin and trespasses. **“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”** (John 3:3).

<b>DAILY BIBLE READING</b>				
<b>MORNING</b>			<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Matthew	10-11	I Samuel	1
TUE	„	12	„	2
WED	„	13	„	3-4
THUR	„	14-15	„	5-6
FRI	„	16-17	„	7-8
SAT	„	18-19	„	9-10
SUN	„	20-21	„	11-12

# 324 Lesson

## DIVINE HEALING AND HEALTH

**MEMORY VERSE:** “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses” (Matthew 8:17).

**TEXT:** Matthew 8:1-17; Exodus 15:26; 1 Peter 2:24; 3 John 2

The scriptural doctrine of divine healing and health has been viewed from different angles by believers of different ages. This has always been as a result of their perception of the ‘limit’ of God’s power, mercy and love. However, from time immemorial, believers have always been receivers while sceptics have received nothing. Similarly, if we believe today, all divine blessings including healing and health can be ours (John 11:40; 2 Peter 1:3). A survey of the length and breadth of the chequered history of God’s dealing with man, reveals that healing is God’s will. God is a good God and it is His will that His children live in good health as well as enjoy divine healing throughout their days on earth. This thought is unequivocally stated by John the beloved in his epistle: “**Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth**” (3 John 2). It is not the will of God that any of His children should remain in sickness, oppression or diseases.

There are one hundred and forty-five occurrences of the words heal, healed, healer, healeth, healing, healings and health in the Bible, which is an indication of the divine plan concerning our healing and health. Since Old Testament days, healing has always been an integral part of God’s covenant with His people; God has always included it as a part of His blessings upon those who are obedient to His word (Exodus 15:26; 23:25,26; Deuteronomy 7:12-15).

**Question 1:** How do you prove that healing and health are integral parts of God’s covenant with His people?



**INCIDENCES OF HEALING IN THE OLD AND NEW COVENANTS** (2 Kings 5:1-14; Exodus 15:26; Numbers 21:4-9; Psalm 103:1-3; 2 Kings 20:1-7; 1 Samuel 1:9-20; Matthew 15:26-28; 8:16; 4:23,24; Acts 28:1-9).

Healing was easy in the old covenant but it is even much easier in the New Testament. This is because God had revealed Himself as **“the God that healeth”**. It was so easy that Naaman almost lost the opportunity of being healed. He did not expect getting healed to be so easy. He was told by the prophet Elisha to just go to Jordan, dip himself seven times into the water and he would be healed. That was not to take that much time. As he went and dipped himself in the water **“according to the saying of the man of God”** he came out clean. The instruction was simple but his healing was complete. He was healed, not by river Jordan, but by the power and authority in the Word of God through His ordained servant. Healing and obedience to the instructions of God and His ordained servants are inseparable. While venomous snakes were biting the children of Israel and many of them were dying, they were told to obey a simple instruction: look up and be healed. This same principle applies also in the New Testament. We are to look up to Jesus Christ who died on the cross (John 3:14).

**Question 2: How does the brazen serpent typify the Lord Jesus Christ?**

Hannah who, because of her barrenness, was in bitterness of soul had her situation changed for life as a result of just an eighteen-word pronouncement of Eli the man of God. **“Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him”** (1 Samuel 1:17). It was that simple. If you are barren, the Lord can heal and make you fruitful if you can believe the words of God and stop fretting yourself.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus healed people in cities and villages of His days. As there were no hospitals as we have them today, they lived in primitive conditions that there were a lot of sicknesses and diseases among the people. In His characteristic

style, Jesus would teach in their synagogue, preach the kingdom of God and heal those who were sick among them. This was His three-piece method: teaching, preaching and then healing. As the people came to listen to His teaching and preaching, they applied what they were taught to their lives and it generated faith in them (Romans 10:17) and then were healed.

**HEALING: THE CHILDREN'S BREAD** (Matthew 15:26-28; 4:24; 8:16; 9:35; 4:23,24; 15:21-28; 7:9).

A clear understanding of what the Bible teaches on healing and health ensures a continuous state of soundness for the believer. Healing and health belong to the children of God. A careful study of God's words deepens the truth in the believer's hearts and helps him to apply it in his life. This, in turn, generates and increases faith in his heart (Romans 10:17). Healing is not needed in heaven, as there is no sickness there. It is for God's children on earth and they should expect to be healed any time they are sick. Just as whenever children are hungry, parents always make bread available so also, whenever a child of God is sick, God always makes healing available for him. If you are sick, God can heal you. Every morning, children ask bread of their parents without doubting. They believe that their parents are able to provide for them so they are not afraid. Believers are to come to God for healing with that same confidence. They should realize that healing is their bread and it is available for them.

The healing and health that unbelievers enjoy are crumbs that fall from the children's bread. It is worthwhile to remember that after Jesus had fed the five thousand, there were still twelve baskets remaining. For every crumb of healing and health that unbelievers enjoy from God, there is abundant provision for His children to enjoy.

However, believers should also bear in mind that there are others that are sick who need healing. By praying for those who are sick, believers can share their health with them. **“And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast**

**out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover”** (Mark 16:17,18). This healing bread should be shared with one another. If you see other people that are sick in your office or school, pray for them and they will be healed in Jesus’ name.

**Question 3:What are the believer’s responsibilities towards enjoying continuous divine health today?**

The believer does not rest his hope on medical science for his healing and health. He trusts God for perfect health from day to day. When he is sick, he depends on the armour of prayer and faith (1 John 5:14,15; Matthew 7:7). However, it is not sin to receive help from the practice of medicine that has nothing to do with invocation of evil powers. Besides, certain cases like child delivery, caesarean section, orthopaedic surgery, etc, require the skill of trained medical personnel in hospitals, maternity and clinics. We should afford ourselves of all God-provided opportunities for health and longevity. God has made every provision for our healing and health. And we should live daily in the realisation of His provisions.

With all the provisions that God has made for the believer to enjoy healing and health, it is still necessary for him to adequately look after himself. This is the part he has to play if he is to continue to enjoy good health. He should, as a matter of duty, ensure that his feeding habit is proper and his diet balanced. He should also maintain good personal hygiene and environmental cleanliness, appropriate physical exercise, and total avoidance of harmful habits that are capable of damaging his health. Right intakes of fruits, fibres and other nutritious foods promote good health while wrong feeding such as intakes of junk food only clog the system without commensurate nutritional values. The good thing about our heavenly Father is that He has made these things. Fruits and vegetables are not only available all year round but are also affordable to as many as are willing to utilize them, so that there is no room for excuses. If the money wasted on junk food is thoughtfully expended

on what will build up body immunity against illness, we will be saving our family and the church the agony of running from one hospital to another. Let us be wise.

Sin and sickness are close pals, so are holiness and health. Without doubt, God has an unfailing healing and health plan for mankind but there are millions of people who, by virtue of the fact that they have not come into covenant relationship with God, do not know the blessedness of enjoying these provisions. A close look at biblical history shows that people who obey God are made and kept healthy by Him. The contrary goes for children of disobedience. Theirs is a life of turmoil, pestilence and disease. Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, Jesus Christ, Peter and John are names that do not go hand in hand with sickness. Biblical records of sickness often go with such names as Abimelech, Manasseh, Naaman and Elymas, the sorcerer, to mention a few. Hard-hearted Egyptians had a good toll of plagues and pestilence, while the children of Israel had divine prosperity and health according to God's promise.

**Question 4: What is the connection between Christ's sacrifice and the believer's healing and health?**

Sickness came as a result of the curse of the law for disobedience to God's command. On the contrary, God entrenched healing as an integral part of what Jesus procured for us on the cross of Calvary (1 Peter 2:24). **"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us"** (Galatians 3:13a). Therefore, if you are lost in sin, He is waiting to save and to change you. All you need to do is to take the initiative and come to the Lord and be saved. He forgives sin and saves sinners. He changes sinners and gives them power to live as the very sons of God. He restores the invalid to health and strength. He cures the incurable and delivers the oppressed.

**GOD'S HEALING POWER AVAILABLE BY FAITH** (Exodus 15:26; Matthew 7:7; Romans 10:17; Hebrew 11:6.

There is no doubt whatsoever as to the power

and willingness of God to heal all who are sick and turn to Him for help. The cases of Abimelech, Miriam, Naaman and many others are testimonies of God's willingness to **"save the sick"** when He is called upon with simple faith. It was a common phenomenon with Israel of old that diseases and evil characterized rebellious times (Deuteronomy 28:15-29,58-61) but after repentance, obedient times became healthy times! (Exodus 23:25,26).

**Question 5: What is the place of God's Word, power and will in our healing today?**

It is clear from God's Word that all can be healed and kept healthy today. Diligent meditation on God's Word will assure our heart of the possibility of sound health **"all the days of our life"**. God's Word is a word of power and has an innate potency for the miraculous (Romans 1:16; Psalm 107:20). Besides, the power of God is unlimited. Generally, the Bible highlights two types of power – the dynamic power and the legal power (in Greek: "dunamis" and "exousia" respectively). The first connotes ability, energy and strength, the second, authority, right and attorney. The Father gave both to the Son. The Son has, in turn, given them to the believers (Luke 9:1; 10:19-21). **"Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?"** (Acts 26:8). The same power that God had since eternity is still at work today for the believer. But only those who would dare believe receive. God's will is clear on healing and health, and it is His will that you enjoy them. He has made ample provision for this (3 John 2; Matthew 6:10; Isaiah 33:24; Deuteronomy 7:15).

**Question 6: Which of God's redemptive names signify that He is our Great Physician?**

God's name, love and mercy all make us to know also, that we need not remain under the curse of the law today. God's revealed redemptive names are seven in number: and they are: Jehovah Shamma (Ezekiel 48:35), Jehovah Shalom (Judges 6:23,24), Jehovah Ra-ah (Psalm 23:1), Jehovah Jireh (Genesis 22:14), Jehovah Nissi (Exodus 17:15), Jehovah Tsidkenu (Jeremiah 23:6), Jehovah Rapha (Exodus 15:26)

signifying presence, peace, shepherding, provision, banner, righteousness and healer respectively. Nothing sets forth the validity of God’s willingness and ability to heal His people and keep them healthy more aptly than the last on the list of his redemptive names, namely, Jehovah Rapha or Jehovah Ropheka: **“I am the LORD that healeth thee”** or **“I am the LORD thy healer”** (Exodus 15:26; Isaiah 53:4,5; Matthew 8:16,17; 1 Peter 2:24). As if that was not enough, He **“anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil”** (Acts 10:38). Of course, this was to declare that healing and health are His will and to show His readiness to do His people good. Love gives to the needy and relieves the suffering while mercy withholds suffering from those who rightly merit it. God is all loving and merciful. Sickneses and diseases are therefore definitely not from Him. They are from the devil (John 10:10; 1 John 3:8b).

The Spirit of God indwells the believer (Romans 8:14). This is the same Spirit through whose agency He made the world and everything that is therein, at the completion of which everything was very good (Genesis 1:31). It will give no credit to the Lord for the third Person in the Godhead to co-habit the same temple (our bodies) with Satan’s agents such as sickness and diseases. For this cause also, the child of God can and should remain healthy.

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Matthew	22	I Samuel 13
TUE	,,	23	,, 14
WED	,,	24	,, 15
THUR	,,	25	,, 16
FRI	,,	26	,, 17
SAT	,,	27	,, 18-19
SUN	,,	28	,, 20

# 325 Lesson

## SANCTIFICATION: A DEFINITE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

**MEMORY VERSE:** “And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live” (Deuteronomy 30:6).

**TEXT:** 1 Thessalonians 4:3,4,7,8; 5:23,24; 1 Peter 1:14-16;

The experience of sanctification is pivotal to the Christian faith. It is clearly taught in Scriptures as God’s gracious work in the heart of the believer. It is necessary for every Christian assembly to give time to study this indispensable experience and ensure that every member becomes a possessor of the blessing.

**MEANING AND MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT SANCTIFICATION** (Numbers 8:17,18; 2 Chronicles 29:5,15-19; 7:16; Isaiah 43:21; Leviticus 21:1-15; 20:7,8,24-26; 1 Thessalonians 4:3,4; Romans 6:20,22).

Sanctification is a definite work of grace, subsequent to salvation. Sanctification means to make sacred or holy; to be set apart for a holy or religious use; to make free from sin or to cleanse from moral corruption and pollution. As a Christian experience, it is the act of God’s grace by which the affections of men are purified to love God supremely above everything else.

Sanctification also means to be totally cleansed from moral defilement. Man is born with moral pollution, and as such, he needs to be cleansed from depraved passions. The believer, though saved and called (1 Peter 1:14,15), needs to be cleansed from inbred sin. To this end, we can also define sanctification as the “**circumcision of the heart**”. It also means purity of heart (Matthew 5:8).

**Question 1: Mention some misconceptions that people have today about the subject of sanctification and state the proper views.**

Though important in man's relationship with God, it is one of the most misunderstood and misrepresented Bible teachings. Some common misconceptions are: one, that sanctification or holiness is not possible: they say that man cannot be holy. This is wrong because God cannot require from us that which is unobtainable and impossible. God commanded that believers should be holy because He is holy (1 Peter 1:15,16). For man to walk with the holy God, he must be holy. God still gives this gift and grace to everyone who desires to be Christ-like like He gave to saints of old. Enoch, Abraham, Joseph, Daniel, Job, Zechariah, Paul, etc. are examples of people who received the grace and lived holy and morally upright lives in a corrupt world. If holiness is not possible, Jesus would not have said, "**Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect**" (Matthew 5:48). Jesus also prayed for it on behalf of His disciples and all believers. Acting on the truth and possibility of living a sanctified life will surely bring answers to Christ and the believer's prayer to pass (John 17:17,19).

Two, others believe that sanctification is a gradual, rather than a spontaneous Christian experience. They believe that we grow into sanctification. This is not true. As salvation and baptism in the Holy Ghost are instantaneous Christian experiences, so is sanctification. We do not grow into sanctification but we grow in the experience after we are sanctified.

Three, there are people who believe that sanctification is by works. But the truth is that we cannot work for our sanctification just as we cannot work for our salvation. Christ has already finished the work for our salvation and sanctification on the Cross at Calvary. Now, it is a gift to be received by the willing believer. If it is of works, then it is no more of grace. It is a work of grace done by God in sincere, seeking believers.

Four, others there are who believe that it is only after death that one can be sanctified in purgatory. We need to know that there is no place like purgatory where



people go to after death to be purged and perfected before being sent to heaven. After death, the Bible says that the next thing that follows is judgement.

Five, some others teach that salvation and sanctification are the same thing. They believe that both of them take place as an individual gets born again. Though a believer is made morally clean with salvation experience, sanctification is a different work of grace, distinct and different from salvation. It is consequent upon salvation. It is an experience that can only be obtained by those who are already born again.

**THE NECESSITY OF SANCTIFICATION** (Matthew 20:20-24; Jonah 3:4-10; 4:1-11; John 17:17; 1 Peter 1:14-16; Genesis 17:1; Leviticus 11:43-45; 19:2; 20:7,25,26; Deuteronomy 30:6; Hebrews 12:14).

At conversion, righteousness is imputed as the sinner repents of sin and places his faith in the precious blood of Jesus that was shed for the remission of all his sins. But not long after, the new believer, filled with the joy of salvation, begins to notice some inclinations in thought and desire toward the things of the world. He begins to grow cold towards spiritual things. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life begin to overlap his pure spiritual desires. This shows the presence of the adamic nature or the inbred sin. At salvation, the branches and leaves of sin are cut off. But the root or stump still remains. Unless this is uprooted by the supernatural power of God, it has the capability of bringing the believer back to the bondage of sin. This is where sanctification comes in.

**Question 2: Why is sanctification an indispensable Christian experience for every believer?**

Sanctification is necessary then because (1) God commands it (Leviticus 20:7,24-26; 1 Peter 1:14-16), (2) God demands it (Genesis 17:1). (3) It is the nature of God (Leviticus 19:2), (4) it is difficult to maintain a consistent walk with God without it (Amos 3:3; Leviticus 11:43-45), (5) without it, it is impossible to love God supremely (Deuteronomy 30:6), (6) it helps

us to obey God and keep His word with a proper motive (Deuteronomy 10:16). (7) In character and conduct, it makes us holy like our heavenly Father (Matthew 5:48). (8) It sets us apart as peculiar children of God, (9) it brings us into perfect bond of unity with other believers (John 17:17,21; Jeremiah 32:39), and (10) it makes us qualified for heaven (Hebrews 12:14).

**Question 3: Mention some Bible characters that showed traits of unsanctified life and the challenges their lives pose to the present-day believer.**

Abraham's twenty-four-year walk with God was characterized by inconsistencies. God then called him to perfection. When we discover inconsistencies in our Christian lives, it is a sign that we need the second touch of God. Perfection is not possible without circumcision of heart. Although the children of Israel were already God's people, they were required to have their foreskins circumcised before they could enter the Promised Land (Joshua 5:1-15). In like manner, if believers are going to enter the Promised Land (heaven), they will need to have their hearts circumcised.

Jonah showed displeasure at God's decision to spare the lives of the repentant Ninevites. Though he was a prophet of God, it showed the deplorable state of his heart. Jonah needed a new heart of love. If today, you notice this trait of being angry at God's acts of mercy to others, the cure is sanctification. Christ's disciples also manifested carnal tendencies at different times. Obviously, they were born again: Christ declared that their names were written in the book of life (Luke 10:20). These disciples, though saved, had certain blemishes in their lives that made them different from the perfect Son of God they had as their leader. They were selfish, high-minded, self-exalting and ambitious (Matthew 20:20-24; Luke 22:24-27). The needs of others did not arouse a deep concern in their hearts (Matthew 15:22,23). They showed a critical, judgemental and censorious spirit as they grudged Christ-honouring suppliant (Matthew 26:7-12). They were impatient and vindictive (Luke

9:51-56). Moreover, their love for Christ was limited though they professed high-sounding affection (Mark 14:46-50).

These traits of the old man that were present in the disciples can be found in many believers today who are yet to possess sanctification experience. God allows these manifestations to show us our need of sanctification. Without the experience, we will see things only as they affect us and defend ourselves at the slightest reproof. We will never accept responsibility for wrongs done by us but always blame others for our faults. We will not be happy when we are not commended on occasions when we felt we have done something well. The unsanctified always wants to be noticed. The manifestation of these traits in His disciples made Christ to pray for the sanctification of believers of all ages.

**THE PROVISION FOR AND POSSESSION OF SANCTIFICATION** (Hebrews 13:12,13; Ezekiel 36:26; Ephesians 5:25-27; Deuteronomy 30:6; 1 Peter 1:2; Matthew 5:6; Romans 12:1; 6:19; Matthew 21:22; James 1:6; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8).

God has made adequate provision for the sanctification of believers. These include: (1) the blood of Jesus. Jesus shed His blood for our sanctification. (2) The word of God (John 15:3) and (3) the Spirit of God (1 Peter 1:2).

**Question 4: What conditions does the believer need to meet before he or she can be sanctified?**

Recognising that God has made provision for this blessing, we must be ready to possess it. How then does a believer become a possessor? (1) He must be sure of his salvation experience – sanctification is for believers, not sinners. A sinner must first pray for salvation and be sure of his conversion experience before thinking of sanctification. (2) He must ensure that he separates himself from the world and its practices (2 Corinthians 6:17). (3) He must consecrate himself and all that he has unto God. His body, soul and spirit must be laid on the altar of sacrifice. He brings all of his past, present and future – personality,

possessions, wisdom, talent, intellect, money, ambition, influence, position, etc. – and willingly bind them to the altar. He must be so consecrated that the world and self will hold no attraction for him. (4) He must hunger and thirst for sanctification experience in true humility of heart (Matthew 5:6), (5) He must pray in faith, and (6) believe and receive the experience (1 Thessalonians 5:23,24). Sanctification is a possibility and it is God’s will for every believer. All those who sincerely consecrate their lives to God, and ask for the experience with unwavering faith will be sanctified.

**PROOFS OF SANCTIFICATION AND POSSIBILITIES OF LOSING IT** (Deuteronomy 30:6; 1 Corinthians 13:1-7; John 17:21-23).

**Question 5: Mention some proofs of a sanctified life.**

When we are sanctified, the experience will produce changes in our lives. We will know and others will know. (1) There will be the witness of the Spirit in our hearts (2) The inner peace of God that passes all understanding will permeate our hearts (3) We will begin to do things out of pure motive; we will be guided by sincere and pure motive in all that we do or say (Philippians 2:13-15); this makes us free from murmuring and self-will. (4) There will be supreme love for God (Deuteronomy 30:6). When we love God supremely, we will serve Him joyfully. We cannot claim to have surrendered all and still complain about God’s demands on us. Sanctification makes us willing and ready to do anything for God. (5) It fills us with pure and sacrificial love for the brethren and sinners (1 Corinthians 13:4-8). (6) We will be entirely yielded unto the Lord – our response to God always will be “yes, Lord, let Thy will be done.” (7) Our affections will be set on things above and not on things on the earth (Psalm 73:25; Colossians 3:1,2). (8) We will be sensitive to the Spirit’s leading and prodding. (9) We will manifest Christ-like humility (Philippians 2:5-8). (10) We will be totally united with Christ and His church (John 17:21-23). Sanctification, not ecumenism, is the only basis for true unity among believers.

However, seekers and possessors must realize that it is possible to lose this experience. How? If we become

spoil the vine (Song of Solomon 2:15). Compromise, excuse-making, censorious and critical tendencies, touchiness, insensitivity, lust, if allowed, will make us to slip into self-management and lose the experience of sanctification.

**Question 6: How does the believer keep sanctified?**

To keep the sanctification experience, we must (1) be vigilant and sober always, (2) avoid the company of anybody that can make us to be frivolous, (3) study the word of God always and be filled with it, (4) maintain a regular devotional life (Joshua 1:8), (6) listen to His leading always (1 Thessalonians 5:19), and (7) maintain fellowship with people of like precious faith and renew our consecration from time to time.

Sanctification is not optional but an indispensable experience for all who want to live abundant, victorious Christian life on earth and spend eternity in heaven. Christ says heaven is for holy believers. **“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God”** (Matthew 5:8). Pray, possess and preserve the holiness experience to be able to enter heaven.

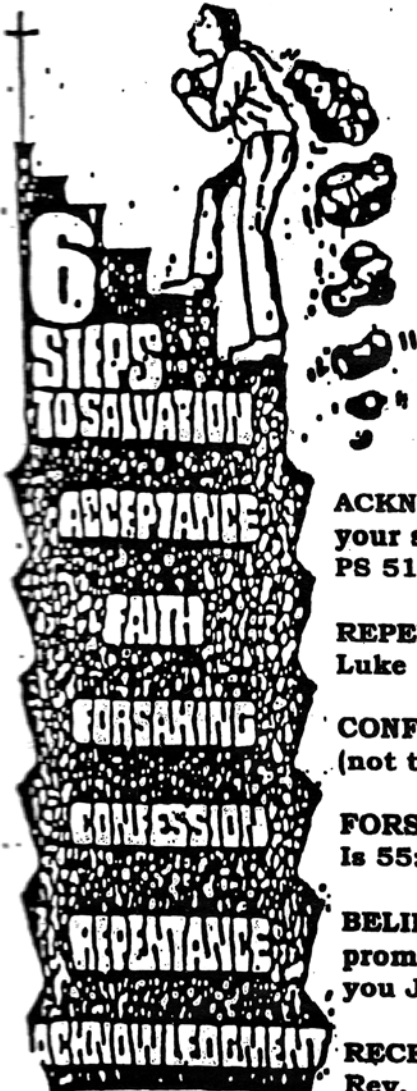
<b>DAILY BIBLE READING</b>				
<b>MORNING</b>			<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Mark	1	I Samuel	21-22
TUE	„	2-3	„	23-24
WED	„	4-5	„	25
THUR	„	6	„	26-27
FRI	„	7-8	„	28-29
SAT	„	9	„	30-31
SUN	„	10	„	1-2

**THIS IS THE END OF THE SPECIAL STUDIES**

**THE END OF THE STUDIES, BUT BE ADVISED THE  
WORD OF GOD IS TIMELESS (DOES NOT BECOME  
OBSOLETE AT ANY TIME). THEREFORE, ENDEAVOR  
TO KEEP THIS BOOK HANDY.**

# DISTRICT CHURCHES DIRECTORY

1. Bronx: 213 E. 144th Street (718) 292-7883
2. Brooklyn: 140 Saratoga Avenue (718) 919-1166
3. Queens: 103-19 to 23 Merrick Blvd (718) 206-3961
4. New Jersey: 23-39 South 20 Street, Irvington (973) 202-3989
5. Staten Island: 330 Heberton Avenue (718) 815-6613
6. Nanuet, N.Y.: 27 North Middletown Road  
Suite #6 (845) 709-6058



**ACKNOWLEDGE**  
your sinfulness  
PS 51:3-5

**REPENT OF YOUR SIN**  
LUKE 13:3, ACTS 3:19

**CONFESS** them to God  
(not to Priest) 1 JOHN 1:9

**FORSAKE** all known sin  
Is 55:7

**BELIEVE** that GOD is true to his  
promise to forgive and clean  
you Jn: 6:37 1 Jn 1:9

**RECEIVE JESUS** into your heart  
Rev. 3:20 Jn 3:17



## **DEEPER CHRISTIAN LIFE MINISTRY, USA**

[www.dclm.org](http://www.dclm.org)

### **DEEPER LIFE BIBLE CHURCH WEEKLY FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITIES**

#### **SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE**

New Jersey	9:00 AM
Bronx/Brooklyn/Queens/Staten Island	9:00 AM
Rockland County	10:30 AM

#### **TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY**

Bronx/Queens/New Jersey/Rockland/Co-op City and Staten Island	7:00 PM
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#### **WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY**

Brooklyn	7:00 PM
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#### **FRIDAY (REVIVAL SERVICE) FAITH CLINIC**

All the Church Locations	7:00 PM
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#### **ALL NIGHT PRAYER VIGILS**

Bronx – First Friday of Every Month	7:00 PM
Brooklyn – Last Friday of Every Month	1:00 PM
Queens – First Friday & Third Friday of Every Month	11:00 PM
New Jersey – Third Friday of Every Month	11:00 PM

**Pastor W.F. Kumuyi – General Superintendent**  
**Your Spiritual Welfare is our Concern**