

# SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

VOLUME 42

*"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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## OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES

# 534 Lesson

## GOD SPEAKS TO MOSES

**MEMORY VERSE:** “And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims: and he spake unto him” (Numbers 7:89).

### **TEXT: Deuteronomy 31:14-30**

**M**oses had repeatedly warned the children of Israel against departing from God who had led them from the land of Egypt to Jordan. The Israelites now at the verge of entering the Promised Land, he saw the expediency of rehearsing God’s faithfulness and mercies to the nation. He had laboured for forty years among them and was now near the end of his ministry, yet he would not fail in his duty as leader, prophet and captain of the people of God.

**Question 1: What peculiar quality of Joshua endeared him to God as a choice for Moses’ replacement?**

In the text of our study, God spoke to Moses instructing him to present himself together with Joshua in the tabernacle. God appeared to them at the tabernacle in His glory in a pillar of cloud.

Transition of leadership from Moses to Joshua did not come as a surprise. The two ministers had worked closely together from Egypt till now. Both were away on divine assignment when the children of Israel descended into idolatry and worship of the golden calf. After the ten spies presented their evil report, Joshua was on the Lord’s side with Moses when the people attempted to stone them.

The peculiar quality of Joshua that endeared him to God was his implicit faith in the God of Israel. He believed (with Caleb) in the ability of God to conquer Canaan and give it to Israel (Numbers 31:1-14:30), Encouraged earlier

by Moses (Deuteronomy 31:7), he faced the difficult task of leading the children of Israel into the Promised Land, caring for them, resolving their disputes and leading them in battles against their enemies. Joshua was strong and courageous because he had faith in God whom he knew personally and followed wholly.

**DEATH OF MOSES RESTATED** (Deuteronomy 31:14-16; Ecclesiastes 9:10, 3:1, 2; Psalms 90:1,2,10,12; 9:4; Hebrews 13:14; 4:9-11; 2 Peter 1: 12-14).

Because the children of Israel **“strove with the LORD”** at the waters of Meribah, as a result of which Moses flouted divine directive, the Lord had declared that he would not enter the Land of promise (Numbers 20:10-13). Now his time drew nearer **“And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thy days approach that thou must die: call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give him a charge. And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation”** (Deuteronomy 31: 14).

Without doubt, Moses had been very faithful to God (Numbers 12:6). He was an outstanding leader in Israel. After his initial hesitation to lead the people, he accepted and continued with a great sense of responsibility, humility and sacrifice. The secret of his successful and glorious ministry was the presence of God with him (Exodus 33: 14; Joshua 1:5) because he lived a life of holiness, walked in the pathway of implicit obedience to the commandments of God, spent much time in God’s presence and was faithful in service.

<p><b>Question 2: What conditions are necessary for ministers to enjoy God’s presence in their ministry?</b></p>
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God spoke of the death of Moses as **“sleep”**. The death of a believer is indeed sleep because he only transits from this world to wake up in the bosom of our Father in heaven. Jesus spoke of Lazarus’ death as **“our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep”**. (John 11: 11). Paul exhorted the Thessalonian

brethren not to be ignorant **“concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope”** (1 Thessalonians 4: 13). So, the believer should have hope that death will usher him into the glorious presence of the Lord. For the unbeliever, however, death is extremely dreadful because it brings one into a place of agony throughout eternity. In order to escape the wrath of God, sinners should, as a matter of utmost urgency, repent, confess and forsake their sins and believe on the Lord Jesus as the only Saviour. They should realize that once death comes there is no more opportunity to repent.

### **DANGER OF APOSTACY AND BACKSLIDING**

(Deuteronomy 31: 17-22; Genesis 18: 16-20; Isaiah 42:9; Proverbs 1:30; Daniel 2:28; Hosea 8:3).

The omniscient God knows **“the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done ...”** (Isaiah 46:10). Though He has not fore-ordained any person for perdition and damnation. He knows all about our future. He knew that Abraham would train his children to be godly; He foresaw that the descendants of David would break the covenant of promise; hence, His foreknowledge revealed what would happen **“in the latter times”**.

The history of the children of Israel has been one of repeated backslidings. This necessitated a clear warning at this time when the exit of Moses was imminent. **“Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise”**- (Deuteronomy 12:30).

<p><b>Question 3: How did God describe the gradual sliding of Israel and its consequences?</b></p>
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God clearly stated that their evil heart would ensnare them to go a whoring after other gods of the heathen; that is to say, they would descend into spiritual prostitution, forsake the God of their fathers, and break God’s covenant of peace, protection and provision. These would in turn lead them to untold sufferings and troubles. Consequently,

God would forsake them (2 Chronicles 15:2); they would pray for help but God would hide his face from them. Two, Israel shall be devoured by the land because of famine and destitution. Three, enemy nations would plunder them leading to suffering, affliction and pestilence. This is the lot of those who forsake God and make themselves prey to their enemies.

Prophecy of the fate of Israel after Moses is also true of the church of God in every generation. The scripture teems with warnings against backsliding and forsaking the Lord, Christ forewarns His disciples that the love of many shall wax cold because iniquity shall abound (Matthew 24: 12), Paul the apostle warned the Ephesian Christians to beware of “grievous wolves” that would “draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29-31). Still, “the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (1 Timothy 4: 1). It behoves believers therefore to watch against the spirit of backsliding and apostasy because of the terrible consequences of forsaking the Lord.

<b>Question 4: What is idolatry and why does God frown at it?</b>
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The Lord warned Israel that their slide into idolatry would grow out of their prosperity and seeming complacency. The blessings would make them forget the Lord who is the Source of all true riches (Deuteronomy 8.18). Here lies the danger inherent in prosperity when people shift their attention and faith in God to trust in “uncertain riches”. Unfortunately, this prophesy came to pass against Israel; they slid into idolatry and were eventually carried away into captivity (2 Chronicles 28: 1- 5).

Idolatry in scripture is not only viewed as worship of creatures, representations of creatures, deities or objects (Exodus 20:3-5; 34:13, 14); God forbids all attempts to represent Him in any visible form (Deuteronomy 4: 16-19; Nehemiah 9: 18). In a broad sense, idolatry consists in the preference of, and devotion to something or persons other than or above God (Ezekiel 14:3). Whoever loves this world or pursues wealth, honour, ambition and forgets God is an idolater and cannot escape God’s judgment.

The choice God made for Moses to write a reminder for Israel in the form of songs shows the Lord's simple teaching style which would be accessible to both old and young. Moses was not only to write but to also teach Israel the song as well as charge them to teach it from generation to generation. The song Moses wrote is recorded in the next chapter.

God's purpose for this writing was to infuse a reminder and witness against them when dire consequences of their transgressions come upon them. As a loving Father, the Lord would not leave Himself without a witness but would forewarn His people of danger for failure to keep His commandments.

The Lord also chose to keep this testimonial in songs because they are easy to remember: adults, children, natives and strangers can learn them; songs prompt questions on issues, past and present and melody of songs make them attractive to all.

**DIVINE CHARGE AND ASSURANCE FOR JOSHUA**  
(Deuteronomy 31:23-30; Joshua 1:6,7; 1 Chronicles 28:20; Psalm 31:24; Matthew 28:20; 2 Timothy 4: 1,2).

**“And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I sware unto them: and I will be with thee”** (Deuteronomy 31:23).

Here, the Lord saddled Joshua with the mantle of leadership as soon as Moses was gone. He needed this formal charge because the task of taking Israel to Canaan was going to be daunting and would require guts and determination. Two, Joshua had been closely related with Moses and knew the challenges of leadership. Three, he must have remembered that the children of Israel were no easy folks to lead except through the strength of the Lord. Four, Israel's enemies would not yield their land without tough conflicts against them.



As God charged and encouraged Joshua to assume leadership of Israel, He reassures all His servants and ministers today of His ever-abiding presence. God is ever faithful to His word. He will not send anyone into ministry without all necessary support, guidance and counsel. He says: **“My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest”** (Exodus 33:14). He will always prove His presence in our lives and ministries if we obey Him. No matter the challenges that befall us in the course of doing His will and service, He will be with us; He will defend us against the devices of our enemies.

**Question 5: What assurance did God give to Joshua?**

The way and manner Moses encouraged Joshua teaches Christian leaders today to help younger ministers to depend on God. Joshua must have learned to pray throughout the period he went with Moses to be with God. Also, the battles of the Lord that Joshua fought became training opportunities for him. Christian ministers are to give special spiritual assignments to ministers under them. They are to intercede for them while they perform such assigned duties. Subordinate ministers are, on the other hand, expected to emulate the exemplary spiritual virtues they find in their leaders. Paul encouraged Timothy to do all that he saw in him. Our Master and Lord Jesus Christ equally taught His disciples to pray and witness as He did.

**Question 6: What are our responsibilities as Christ’s servants and ministers?**

The task for Joshua was properly defined. This is a lesson for contemporary leaders. When new leaders are appointed, they should be charged with clear responsibilities. Leadership in the household of faith is for service as there is no room for idleness in God’s service. Whatever service is rendered for God should be guided by His word. Every servant of God like Moses must be diligent in keeping God’s word. Nothing should be taken out nor added to it (Revelation 22:18).

Like a faithful watchman over God’s people, Moses gathered the elders, officers and entire congregation and

repeated his fears of possible national apostasy, even calling heaven and earth to be witness. If some did not reckon with previous warning, they must get it this time. In like manner, leaders and ministers, as watchmen must not fail to warn the flock of God against the danger of disobedience, backsliding and activities of false teachers and prophets (Ezekiel 33:1-7). Only then can they and the church which Christ purchased with His own blood enter the heavenly Canaan and attain to full and final salvation.

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

	MORNING		EVENING	
MON	Ephes.	5-6	Ezra	7
TUE	Philipp	1-2	“	8
WED	“	3-4	“	9-10
THUR	Coloss	1-2	Nehem.	1-2
FRI	“	3-4	“	3-4
SAT	1 Thessa	1-2	“	5-6
SUN	“	3-4	“	7

# 535 Lesson

## THE SONG OF MOSES

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel” (Deuteronomy 31:19).

**TEXT: Deuteronomy 32:1-52**

In the previous chapter, God had revealed to Moses that after his death, Israel would go into idolatry and consequently expose the nation to many ills. And, rather than acknowledge their backsliding and repent so as to regain favor with God, they would blame Him for their calamities (Deuteronomy 31:17). God therefore gave Moses a song to teach Israel - a song that shall not be forgotten that would be a witness to testify against them. This was a noble idea and an ingenious way of impressing the word of God on the minds of the people, and to spur them to repentance when troubles come.

**Question 1: What was the primary purpose of the song of Moses and what can we learn as believers?**

The reason Moses presented God’s word in form of a song to Israel was to make it easier for the people to personalize as well as internalize the message. By the sweet and flowing sound of rhythm, the main facts of God’s word would be kept vividly alive in their minds. Besides, the composition of the word of God into a song was for the preservation and transmission of its message to succeeding generations of Israel. A song is usually memorized in form of oral tradition and naturally transmits through generations (Deuteronomy 31:10-21). This is obvious from the fact that there was no printing at that time. This challenges us on the need to be creative and innovative in presenting the Gospel message in these modern days without compromising its basic content. God saw the possibility of Israel’s future backsliding and put a measure in place to solve it. Believers must be proactive in the business of the Kingdom. This great song which Moses received from the

Lord forms the focus of this lesson. The piece contains the exaltation of God and His mighty works towards Israel; the prediction of the rebellion and perversion of the children of Israel; the prediction of divine judgment on backslidden Israel; and the promise of mercy to Israel and destruction of their enemies and oppressors.

**PROLOGUE TO A UNIVERSAL SPIRITUAL SONG**  
(Deuteronomy 32:1-7; Acts 22:1, 2; Ecclesiastes 12:9-11; Habakkuk 2:20; Deuteronomy 31:12, 13; Joshua 4:4-8; Colossians 3:16).

Moses was given this song containing sound doctrines by God to teach the children of Israel. It was necessary that he presents this great message, which will serve generations to come, in a manner that will be easily accepted, understood and retained by an average Israelite. Verses 1 and 2 of the text serve as the preface to the Song of Moses. The preface is a summon to the heavens and the earth to pay attention to the words and message of the magnificent song about to be declared. **“Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth”** (Deuteronomy 32:1). The wide-ranging attention demanded in this preface gives credence to the universal and eternal importance of the moral and spiritual truth the song conveys. The aim was also to motivate his audience to give the deserved attention and respect to God’s words by removing all frivolities in His presence (Ecclesiastes 5:1; Habakkuk 2:20; James 1:21). The relevance of this song of Moses is not limited to that time as Paul the Apostle quoted a part of it in Romans 15:10.1 1: **“And again he saith, Rejoice ye Gentiles with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people”**. Interestingly too, this same song of Moses will be sung with the Song of the Lamb in heaven by redeemed saints (Revelation 15:3, 4). Thus, New Testament believers have much to learn from this song whose relevance outlives us. If anything, the song will have life-giving and reviving impact as rain and dew have on tender herb and grass. **“My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass”** (Deuteronomy 32:2).

**Question 2: What challenge does the presentation of doctrines as song pose to believers today?**

The subject of this song is called doctrine. Moses had earlier in Exodus 15 given them a song of praise and thanksgiving, but this is a song of instruction, caution and rebuke. From the doctrinal content of the song, we learn that spiritual songs are not only for the purpose of adoration but also for admonition and teaching. **“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord”** (Colossians 3:16). It is no wonder then that many of David’s Psalms are titled ‘Maschil’ which means ‘to give instruction’. Members of the choir, composers of Gospel songs and all Christian worshippers should aim at passing across basic truths and doctrines of the word of God through songs and not just to entertain and arouse emotions. This is to affect the heart and conscience of our hearers and to transform lives. God’s desire and purpose is always that His doctrine, through preaching or song, will be pure, refreshing, energizing and nurturing to the soul like the rain that comes upon the tender herb. The word of God preached is likely to profit when it comes gently, and sweetly impresses itself into the hearts of the hearers. Though the content of the doctrine is partly a rebuke and prediction of bitter judgment for Israel, melodious musical mode of presentation made it attractive and memorable. This shows that the effectiveness of the gospel message depends partly on the Christian minister’s mode of presentation of the message.

**Question 3: What attributes of God are declared in the Song of Moses as depicting His great name?**

In this brief but brilliant introduction, Moses celebrated the great name of the Lord and eulogized His attributes of strength, dependability, perfection, justice, truth and holiness. He said, **“... I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he”** (verses 3, 4). The challenge for us as believers is that

though Moses was under divine discipline, He still exalted the Lord for who He is. Obviously, Moses realized that he was wrong and must be responsible for his indiscretion.

**BOUNTIFUL CARE FOR ISRAEL** (Deuteronomy 32:7-14; Isaiah 5.1.2; Hosea 11:1; Psalms 103:1-14; 37:19; 81:16; Jeremiah 17:5-8; 1 Peter 5:7; Philippians 4:19).

After the convincing presentation of God's attributes to the children of Israel, Moses proceeded to remind them of particular instances of God's kindness and care for them. **"Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee"** (Deuteronomy 32:7). The reason some people cannot wholeheartedly praise and worship God is because they fail to remember what and who they were in the past and how they became what and who they are now. The cure for this according to a song writer is to **'Count your blessings, name them one by one, And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.**

**Question 4: Point out particular instances of God's kindness and care for Israel.**

God's people, Israel, had enjoyed special privileges from the Lord. Three things are here emphasized as instances of God's kindness and care towards Israel. The first is the designation of the land of Canaan for their inheritance. When the earth was divided among the sons of men - **"the sons of Adam"** - God had Israel in His thoughts and Canaan was ordained of old to be for them (verses 8,9). The second is the formation of Israel into a people so that they might be fit to enter into their inheritance. For the children of Israel, a great deal was done to model them, cast them into some shape, and to fit them for the great things designed for them in the land of promise. They were found in a desert land and in the waste howling wilderness, led and instructed and kept as the apple of God's eye with all the care and tenderness possible. They were trained like the eagle does for her eaglets (verses 10-12). The third is the settling of Israel in a good land with plenty of all good things (verses 13, 14). God's dealings

with them in bringing them from the slavery of Egypt to the promised land is a figure of how God saves a sinner and leads him through trials and tribulations, establishes him in the faith with abundant blessing and sustaining grace until he finally gets into heaven (Colossians 1:13,14; Acts 14:22). The way God cared for Israel is the same way He cares for believers, the Israel of God today.

**BACKSLIDING, PUNISHMENT AND RESTORATION OF ISRAEL** (Deuteronomy 32:5,6,15-43; 31:16-21; 28:15-68; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 2:3; 25:15-38; 63:10-14; Hebrews 6:7,8; Luke 15:11-32; Isaiah 49:7; 43:15; Psalm 80:1).

Moses predicted that the children of Israel would backslid. Their character and attitude would not resemble those of His children whom He bought from slavery in Egypt, a people made for His glory and a people He established. Their disposition and propensity to do evil is clearly described in verses 5 and 6; **“They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation. Do ye thus requite the LORD, O foolish people and unwise? Is not he thy father that hath bought thee? Hath he not made thee, and established thee?”** He impressed on them that their descent into sin would be the most foolish thing to do because God was their Father.

Thus, Israel became careless, lukewarm and insensitive to His commandments. They indulged in all manner of luxury and gratification of their appetites. **“Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou’ art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation”** (Deuteronomy 32: 15). Jeshurun, a symbolic name for Israel that means an upright people was mentioned to remind them of their former glorious state from which they turned to begin to bear thorns, briars and wild fruits. It was disappointing to God that His care for them made, **“Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked...”** thus, fulfilling the truth of the Scripture that, **“the prosperity of fools shall destroy them”** (Proverbs 1:32). Israel’s unguarded revelling also made them proud and insolent.

Consequently, they **“lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation”** (Deuteronomy 32:5).

**Question 5: What is the secret of remaining spiritually sensitive and fervent while enjoying the fullness of the blessings of the Lord?**

Backsliding begins when believers fix their affection and attention on the gift and not the giver. When the Lord faithfully fulfils His promises of prosperity in our lives, we must be careful to remain detached from our blessings and give the glory to God. Our riches should be wisely deployed to finance the evangelistic projects of the church and meet the felt needs of brethren, especially in the household of faith (Psalm 62:10; Deuteronomy 8:7,17,18; Mark 4:19; Luke 21:34; Proverbs 30:8; 1 Timothy 6:17-19; Galatians 6: 10).

Worse still, Israel’s disregard for God led them farther into the heinous sin of idolatry. **“They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger”** (Deuteronomy 32: 16). This was disobedience against the very first of the Ten Commandments **“Thou shalt have no other gods before me”** (Exodus 20:3). They **“...worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator...”** and **“... sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not”** (Romans 1:25; Deuteronomy 32: 17).

The root cause of their slide into idolatry was that they were unmindful of the Rock that begat them and forgot the God that formed them (verse 18). Forgetting God is the root of many sinful practices and indulgences which draw the soul steadily and imperceptibly to hell (Psalm 9:17). A sure antidote against forgetting the LORD is to study, believe, obey, teach and preach the word of God (Deuteronomy 6:10-12; 8:10, 11; James 1:17). Israel however took no heed to obey the Lord. God therefore threatened to punish them for their ingratitude. **“And when the LORD saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters. And he said, I will hide my face from them ....”** **“I will heap mischiefs upon them;**



**I will spend mine arrows upon them. They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction: I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them with the poison of serpents of the dust...**” (Deuteronomy 32: 19, 20, 23-26). Sin is deadly and devastating. Some of the terrible consequences of sin and backsliding treated in our text are: (1) heaps or deluge of mischief or trouble; (2) burning with hunger or famine; (3) devouring with burning heat or drought; (4) bitter destruction of men and women of all ages; (5) attack by ravening beasts and poisonous serpents; (6) war without and terror within; (7) scattering or dispersion into obscure corners of the earth (verses 23-26). It is obvious that the punishment for sin far outweighs the momentary pleasure it gives. It commences on earth and continues unto the damnation of the soul in hell, if there is no repentance.

After a timely threatening of divine wrath and vengeance which Israel deserved, God then promised them His undeserved mercy. **“O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end’** (Deuteronomy 32:29). It is clear that many people continue to live in sin today because they do not consider their latter end; they do not consider where they would spend eternity. This lamentation of the Omniscient God calls everyone to be wise, to understand and consider that he has a never-dying soul that will end up in either hell or heaven. Such sincere consideration will make the sinner repent of his sin and be saved. This reveals the depth of God’s mercy towards His children and the purpose of His chastisements. **“For the LORD shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left** (Deuteronomy 32:36).

**Question 6: What is the purpose of the chastisements of the Lord?**

When Israel despised the favour and forbearance of God, He allowed His judgments to fall on them so that they would be forced to learn righteousness for their own profit (Isaiah 26:9, 10; Hebrews 12: 10). Thus, God chastises His children to purify and perfect them. In the case of Israel, the scourges of the enemy nations were to make them

mourn, consider their ways and repent (Haggai 1:5-15). They were expected to realize that the gods of other nations could neither help them nor protect them and penitently acknowledge the incontestable supremacy, absolute sovereignty and irresistible power of God (Deuteronomy 32:38; Exodus 3:14; Ecclesiastes 8:4; Isaiah 43:10,11; 45:7; Lamentation 3:37,38; Daniel 4:35). Though God used those wicked nations to chastise His people, they would be punished if they do not repent of their wickedness (verses 39-42). This is part of God's favour for His restored people. **“Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people”** (Deuteronomy 32:43). It is a mark of 'great joy, hope and comfort that God reserves the judgment of His people in His own hand. The ruling motive and ultimate intent of God's dealings are love and mercy. This realization underscored David's decision to: **“... let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man”** (2 Samuel 24: 14).

After speaking the words of the song to them, Moses renewed his plea and emphasis on their obedience to God's words saying, **“set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day”** (verse 46). They were to take seriously the laws and the promises, the threatening and encouragements, the blessings and curses which together constitute the word of God. He also charged them to faithfully transmit those words to their children and succeeding generations.

The very day Moses, the great servant of God, finished his testimony, God ordered him to go up to Mount Nebo to die, having done His work faithfully. The major purpose for living as believers is to serve God on earth by winning the lost back to Him. Our craving for life must be to fulfill this singular purpose. God will also keep and preserve us until we finish our ministry on earth (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

## DAILY BIBLE READING

	<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	1 Thess.	5	Nehemiah	8
TUE	2 Thess.	1-2	"	9
WED	"	3	"	10
THUR	1 Tim.	1-2	"	11
FRI	"	3-4	"	12
SAT	"	5-6	"	13
SUN	2 Tim.	1-2	Esther	1-2

# 536 Lesson

## MOSES BLESSES ISRAEL

**MEMORY VERSE:** “The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he added no sorrow with it” (Proverbs 10:22).

### **TEXT: Deuteronomy 33:1-29**

**T**he parting words of true servants of God are very significant as revealed in scriptures. It was a common practice for aged fathers to bless their children especially when they perceive their imminent departure from the earth. Moses, the lawgiver and prophet of Israel also showed his love, care and concern for the Israelites by the last words which he spoke to them before his demise. Our Lord Jesus Christ, before He left this world, also blessed His disciples. **“And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them”** (Luke 24:50).

Before pronouncing blessings on Israel, Moses had reminded them of God’s purpose of giving them the law and its significance. **“Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words”** (Deuteronomy 33:3). God’s purpose of giving us His law is to prove His love for us and also show us that our relationship with Him is anchored on our receiving and obeying His word **“...If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him”** (John 14:23). We cannot expect God to bless us when we do not pay attention to His word. Unfortunately today, many so-called believers are selective when it comes to obeying God’s word. While they accept those part of the scripture that make them feel comfortable and secure, they jettison any part that is against their stubborn will. This explains why the blessing of God has remained elusive to many families. When we hear God’s word, absolute obedience is what He demands from us.

**Question 1: What is the primary condition for receiving God's blessings?**

**THE CONCEPT OF BLESSING** (Deuteronomy 33: 1; Numbers 6:22, 23; 1 Chronicles 23: 13; Ephesians 4:29; James 3:8-12).

The word **'bless'** has several applications depending on the context. But two of these are of concern to us in this study: (a) to wish somebody or something well, (b) to thank somebody. The first meaning relates to what transpired between Moses and the Israelites as he, on the eve of his departure, wished them the very best of divine succour in all their future endeavours. Similarly, Melchizedek, King of Salem, blessed Abraham as he was returning after rescuing Lot from captivity (Genesis 14:18- 19). Isaac blessed Jacob (Genesis 27:25~29); Jacob also blessed Pharaoh (Genesis 47:7, 10).

**Question 2: How can you explain the application of the word 'bless' and how can a believer express gratitude to God?**

The second meaning relates, in a sense, to what is found in several scripture passages where people **'bless the Lord'** in appreciation of His goodness (Psalms 16:7; 26: 12; Judges 5:9). The word, **'bless'** in this context, usually refers to the lesser (mankind) appreciating, thanking or praising the greater (God). Irrespective of the situation we find ourselves, there is need for us to always bless the name of the Lord. It is painful today that many believers find it difficult to appreciate God for His goodness upon their lives. Such people think all they have acquired - education, wealth, sound health, fame etc. - is through their hard-work and intelligence. Unless we repent today by giving God the honour that is due to Him, we may be threading on a dangerous ground.

**MOSES BLESSES EACH TRIBE** (Deuteronomy 33:6-24; Genesis 49:3-4; Joshua 19:1-9; Numbers 27:15-17).

Although Moses blessed Judah and without any mention of Simeon, passed on to the next tribe, the scriptures clearly declare, **"Out of the portion of the children of Judah was the inheritance of the children of Simeon:**

**for the part of the children of Judah was too much for them: therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of them”** (Joshua 19:9). Thus, we understand that the mention of Judah, in effect includes Simeon. Moses prayed that the enemy would never prevail against them. Besides, in his usual selfless and compassionate manner, Moses could not have omitted Simeon when he prayed for the survival and multiplication of Reuben who forfeited his birthright as a consequence of his sin of immorality.

**Question 3: What lesson can believers learn from the blessing of the tribe of Levi?**

Levi was a peculiar tribe to God. They were separated from their brethren unto God. Moses blessed them with priestly blessings. The Urim and Thummim, the means of communing with God were committed into their hands. They were to teach Jacob God’s judgments and to continually place burnt sacrifices upon the altar. In our text, Moses recalls the selfless and prompt response of Levi to God’s commandments: “... **neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant”** (Deuteronomy 33:9). The same passage alludes to the selfless action of the Levites who obeyed the commandment of God to “...**slay every man his brother”** (Exodus 32:25-28). Their prompt obedience to this command attracted God’s favour and halted the consequences of Israel’s sin. Phinehas, a Levite, manifested similar zeal against unrighteousness in the camp of Israel and received a covenant of everlasting priesthood (Numbers 25:5-13). As believers we must be bold in rebuking sin in the light of God’s word. Our familiarity with sinners and backsliders should not deprive us of our responsibility of presenting the gospel to them. We must not compromise our faith by partaking in their sin. Rather, the Lord expects us to expose them so that His presence will continuously be felt among His people. This is the only way we can prove our love and zeal for the Lord and receive His blessing in return.

**Question 4: What lesson can we learn from the manifold blessings bestowed upon Joseph?**

The blessings of Joseph, through Ephraim and Manasseh, were great. While most of the other tribes received fewer blessings, Joseph was lavishly bequeathed with numerous blessings, having received a double portion in Ephraim and Manasseh. This teaches us several lessons. First, the Lord seems to have rewarded him for the Persecution he suffered in the hands of his brethren and his own generous and godly attitude of taking care of them several years after (Genesis 50:21). Second, believers should not toy with parental blessings because of their futuristic effects. God properly equips us before He lays any responsibility upon us. Third, grace is never equally distributed but only according to divine prerogative and the responsibility we bear in the house of God. This principle was demonstrated when available resources were distributed to the Levites (Numbers 7:5), as commanded by the Lord.

Zebulun and Issachar were to rejoice; Gad was to have victory over their enemies. Moses referred to Benjamin as a place where the beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety, referring to Mount Moriah where the temple was situated, which also belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. Dan shall leap from Bashan; they eventually went far north to enlarge their portion which was insufficient. Naphtali was to be satisfied with favour and full with the blessing of the Lord while Asher would be blessed with children.

It is instructive for believers to note the difference in the blessings God gave each tribe. For the fact that an individual enjoys a particular blessing does not mean that God loves him more than others. The Lord blesses us with different gifts to perfect His plan. Hence, we should not be envious of the gifts of others. Instead, we should look for the gifts God has given us and resolve to do the tasks He has uniquely qualified us to do.

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MOSES' BLESSINGS**  
(Deuteronomy 33:25-29; Ephesians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 1:20; Psalms 34:9, 10; 84: 11).

After blessing Israel tribe by tribe, Moses blessed them generally (Deuteronomy. 33:26-29). In the same manner,

there are general blessings for God's people today and there are particular blessings for every child of God. The lesson for us here is that though heaven is the general reward awaiting every faithful believer, still the scripture reveals that **"...one star different from another star in glory"** (I Corinthians 15:41). Hence, we should strive to go the extra mile in our service for the Master as **"...every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour"** (I Corinthians 3:8).

**Question 5: Mention some blessings Moses pronounced on Israel which are applicable to believers today.**

Moses blessings on Israel include: strength all the days of their lives; help from trouble and protection from their enemies; joy and happiness as a nation and unlimited prosperity. These blessings are still applicable to believers today provided we remain steadfast with God. Divine blessings are only accessible by true children of God who are in constant relationship with Him. Israel as a direct descendant of Abraham was a friend of God. And since Abraham had a covenant relationship with God, Israel, His descendant was qualified to receive the blessings from Moses, the servant of God. To receive and enjoy God's unique blessings, we must keep His commandments and pattern our lives according to His will (Deuteronomy 28: 113; 1 John 3:22; Psalms 84:11; 91:1-16; Revelation 3:7, 8).

Also worthy of note is Moses' song as he was done with blessing Israel, tribe by tribe. His song shows that God is our refuge, our only true security. At a time like this when money, career, lifelong dream etc. cannot guarantee our safety, we need to acknowledge the fact that our true refuge is the eternal God. He always holds out His arms to support us. Living for God in this world may be challenging but we have the assurance that no storm can destroy us when we take refuge in Him. Because God is our refuge, we can dare to be bold in proclaiming His goodness to others around us.



## DAILY BIBLE READING

	<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	2 Timothy	3-4	Esther	3-4
TUE	Titus	1-3	“	5-6
WED	Philemon		“	7-8
THUR	Hebrews	1-2	“	9-10
FRI	“	3-4	Job	1-2
SAT	“	5-6	“	3-4
SUN	“	7-8	“	5-6

# 537 Lesson

## THE DEATH OF MOSES

**MEMORY VERSE:** “So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD” (Deuteronomy 34:5).

### **TEXT: Deuteronomy 34:1-12**

**T**he last chapter of the book of Deuteronomy records the death of Israel’s greatest and most respected prophet and leader, the man Moses. Before ascending mount Nebo to take a view of the land he was not permitted to enter, he, in the previous chapter bade farewell to the Israelites he had so long guided and led and pronounced blessings on each of the tribes. Through Moses God gave the law which distinguished Israel from other nations. Indeed, the history of that nation cannot be complete without this great leader. In this study, we discover the great privilege given to Moses to view Canaan, his death and burial and how Joshua succeeded him. The chapter also showed the unparalleled greatness of the man Moses, **“And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face”** (Deuteronomy 34: 10).

**Question 1: Why was Moses taken to Mount Pisgah view the Promised Land?**

**MOSES VIEWS THE PROMISED LAND** (Deuteronomy 34:1-4; 32:48-52; Numbers 27.12-14; Romans 2:11 Hebrews 12: 11).

In obedience to God’s earlier command (Deuteronomy 32:10, 11), **“Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the LORD shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan...”** “from where he viewed the whole land of Canaan (Deuteronomy 34: 1).

Pisgah, being the highest peak of the mount gave Moses vantage position to view the dimension of the entire land of Canaan. The choice of the peak of mount Nebo was divine

such that the man of God had the best view of Canaan. The Lord Himself showed Moses the Promised Land from north to south, east to west as well as the district on the east of Jordan. For contemporary believers, climbing the peak of Pisgah may be likened to growing and attaining greater spiritual heights for better insight and clearer view of our eternal home. Our vision of eternity should be getting clearer and clearer as we get closer to the Lord's coming. We are to keep ascending daily in our Christian experiences so that we might come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13). As Moses saw the land at a distance, so should believers have glimpse of the glory that shall be revealed. Christians should strive to reach the heights that the Lord has designed for them, whatever the challenges of this present time.

It should be noted that Moses' inability to enter into the Promised Land was not a sign of his rejection by God, but was a disciplinary measure for his disobedience.

**Question 2: What does God's disciplinary action on Moses teach leaders and believers?**

God is no respecter of persons and would punish anyone for disobedience and transgression. Personal greatness does not prevent one from being disciplined by the Lord when the need arises. Church leaders, therefore, should be able to discipline erring subordinates to maintain the standard and deter others from going into sin. This must be done regardless of the abilities and potentials of such erring believers. Moreover, whenever believers are disciplined, they should not respond in anger or resentment. Like Moses, they should accept it graciously in response towards a loving father whose desire is to make his children better spiritually. **“Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby** (Hebrews 12:11).

An outstanding quality in Moses worthy of emulation is that though his action of disobedience was caused by the attitude of the children of Israel, he did not try

to apportion blame. Rather, he accepted God's verdict with total submission and made adequate preparation for Israel's march to the Promised Land.

**Question 3: How can church leaders and ministers avoid the mistake of Moses?**

Moses' fate concerning Canaan is a lesson in watchfulness, carefulness and attention to details. Christians, church leaders and ministers should not be overwhelmed with the work to the detriment of their own souls. While we labour to preserve the flock of Christ, we should not neglect to watch over our own souls, attitudes, disposition, character and manner of life. We should constantly listen to the voice of the Spirit on how to handle God's work and relate with leaders and members. Members, on the other hand, should be mindful of their actions lest they constitute a stumbling block to the leadership (Hebrews 13:17).

**MOSES' DEATH AND BURIAL** (Deuteronomy 34:5-8; 1:37; 3:26-28; 32:50-52; Psalm 116: 15; Revelation 14: 13; Luke 2:29; Philippians 1:23).

**“So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day”** (Deuteronomy 34:5, 6).

Death is an inevitable and necessary end of all men and the man Moses had to face this unavoidable phenomenon. The lawgiver, a man greatly beloved and honoured by his people, departed out of their sight **“according to the word of the LORD”**. The phrase, “according to the word of the Lord”, refers to the statement of his exclusion from the Promised Land when he offended at the waters of Meribah (Numbers 27:12-14). Moses worked with God and God delighted in his dying in His presence as a worthy servant of God. **“Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints”** (Psalm 116:15) God's servants must die that they may rest from their labours and receive their rewards (Revelation 14:13).

Here, we see the courage and the willingness of Moses

to die according to God's will. He would have wished he took the children of Israel to the Promised Land but God's decision must prevail. Similarly, believers should always resign to God's will knowing that God's plan for us is far better than ours. **"For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end"** (Jeremiah 29: 11). **"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD"** (Isaiah 55:8).

A common characteristic of those who have lived their lives in fellowship with God is that they always face death with courage because of their absolute trust in God. Such mortals even anticipate death and face it with peace and joy (Luke 2:29, 30; Philippians 1:23).

<p><b>Question 4: Give scriptural evidence to prove the fact that Moses went to be with the LORD.</b></p>
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God's approval of Moses' ministry and his departure to be with the Lord is clearly demonstrated in the scripture when he appeared on the mount of transfiguration along with Elijah and spoke with Jesus (Matthew 17:3; Mark 9:4). This invalidates the argument by some who say that Moses did not enter heaven.

Getting to heaven must be the ultimate goal of every believer. It does not matter what we achieved on earth or failed to achieve our greatest pursuit should be to make heaven. Making it will serve to soothe our pains and repay our toils of life. We will forget all the persecutions, afflictions and trials of life. The years of labour and service will seem as nothing compared with the glory that shall ensue. We should therefore diligently watch against everything that can deny us entry into this glorious place of rest and reward.

Quite observable and instructive is the manner in which God conducted the burial of Moses. He carefully arranged his death and ensured the secrecy of the burial location. **"And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day"** (Deuteronomy 34:6). It is probable that

the reason Moses was buried privately was to prevent the Israelites, out of great reverence for him, from idolizing the prophet or turning him into a deity. Likewise, believers should take caution not to idolize any leader or minister no matter how greatly the Lord had used him. This, however, does not mean that people should not admire or honour their leaders. Everyone must die at one time or the other. The question is: how prepared are we for this inevitable appointment?

**Question 5: What should be the attitude of believers when mourning for their departed loved ones?**

Moses died a strong leader at a good old age of 120 years without any debility in his natural body: **“his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated”**. This, of course, was by a miraculous work of God who strengthens and preserves His servants for the benefit of His church. The Israelites mourned for Moses for 30 days as a sign of grief and sorrow for the loss of a great leader. However, believers are admonished to consider the hope of the resurrection of the righteous in respect of their departed loved ones. **“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him”** (1 Thessalonians 4: 13, 14).

Whatever mistakes Moses made, he was a man who started and ended well with God. He lived uprightly and faithfully carried out all God’s commands and finally died in the will of God.

**MOSES’ UNCOMMON CREDENTIALS** (Deuteronomy 34:9-12; Numbers 27:15-18; Joshua 24:31; Acts 6:3; Exodus 33; 11; Numbers 12; 3, 7, 8).

One quality of a godly leader is his willingness and ability to prepare a replacement for himself (2 Timothy 2:2). Moses, realizing that he was about to die, carefully followed the will of God and commissioned Joshua to take over the leadership of Israel. His sincere desire for the progress of Israel is evidenced in his request to God: **“And Moses**

**spake unto the LORD, saying, Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd”** (Numbers 27: 15-17). This reveals Moses’ selfless love for Israel and his faithfulness to God. Following this request, Joshua, a man **“full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him”** was appointed to lead the children of Israel.

Considering the appointment of Joshua, a number of factors are clearly seen as reasons for his qualification. One, he was selected by God and endued with the Spirit as a divine seal. This shows that church leaders and ministers must, as a matter of fact, be filled with the Holy Ghost baptism for excellence in ministry. Two, Moses trained and mentored Joshua and finally laid his hand on him and this enabled him to walk in Moses’ footsteps. Three, God commanded Moses to set him before the congregation and give him a charge. Obviously, this was a kind of introduction that gave him general acceptance by the people **“... that all the congregation of Israel may be obedient”** (Numbers 27: 18-20).

**Question 6: What lessons can we learn from Moses’ willingness to hand over to Joshua?**

Moses’ sincere desire to hand over to Joshua teaches us that we must not see our successors as competitors but co-labourers together working for the glory of God. Second, when transfer occurs, it is important to make things convenient for whoever is taking over to enable him continue the work. Also, Joshua’s attitude in waiting patiently for the divinely appointed time even though he had been selected and anointed to take over from Moses is quite instructive.

Judging by the greatness and the incomparable personality and ministry of Moses, one would easily conclude that he was irreplaceable and therefore, the nation would not

move on without him. But Israel's progress through the leadership of Joshua dismissed this supposition. God has His way of doing things; He can achieve His plan and purpose for an individual, a group of people or a whole nation irrespective of who goes or remains. Thus, Joshua, Moses' successor eventually led the children of Israel to the Promised Land through military victories and faithful obedience (Joshua 24:31).

**Question 7: What necessitated the divine testimony concerning the character of Moses?**

The divine testimony concerning Moses is not as a result of his natural endowment but because of his implicit obedience and loyalty to God. He followed Him with unparalleled humility and faithfulness (Numbers 12:3; Hebrews 3:5). He discharged his duties in spite of oppositions and challenges. He was a prophet and leader who demonstrated God's power through signs and wonders that sent *waves* of terror throughout the land of Egypt.

Moses' leadership style and ability had the capacity and will of rallying the children of Israel to a common purpose of obedience to God's commandment (Exodus 19:8).

In conclusion, it is an undeniable fact that Israel did not have a greater leader than Moses. **“And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, In all the signs and the wonders, which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, And in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel”.** We shall all bid this world farewell one day; may we accept the fact that we can only be remembered by what we have done.



## DAILY BIBLE READING

	<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Hebrews	9-10	Job	7-8
TUE	“	11	“	9-10
WED	“	12-13	“	11-12
THUR	James	1-2	“	13-14
FRI	“	3-4	“	15-17
SAT	“	5	“	18-19
SUN	1 Peter	1-2	“	20-21

# 538 Lesson

## THE CALL AND COMMISSION OF JOSHUA

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel” (Joshua 1:2).

**TEXT:** Joshua 1:1-18

**A**fter the death of Moses, a leadership vacuum was created that needed to be filled. As a faithful servant of God, Moses has earlier prayed in anticipation of his exit from the leadership scene that the Lord should **“set a man over the congregation, Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd”** (Numbers 27:16, 17). The death of Moses threw the whole nation of the new generation of Israel into thirty days of mourning at the borders of the Promised Land. Joshua’s appointment by God to lead His people at this period of transition brought renewed hope for a new beginning for the nation in the face of overwhelming odds and daunting challenges.

In this chapter of the book of Joshua, God re-affirmed his call on Joshua and commissioned him for the difficult task ahead. Though the task seemed daunting, God encouraged Joshua and assured him of His support and presence. **“There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee”** (Joshua 1:5). In obedience to the divine command, Joshua began without delay to .make necessary preparations to fulfill the appointed task. First, he gave instructions to the people to make ready for crossing over River Jordan (Joshua 1: 10-11). Second, he reminded the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half tribe of Manasseh of their promise to help the other tribes to conquer Canaan, and called on them to fulfill their promise (verses 12-18). Third, he

mapped out strategies for a full-blown military campaign to take possession of Canaan and to divide the land amongst the tribes.

**Question 1: Mention some Bible characters and the work they were doing before they were called by God.**

From the first mention of Joshua in Exodus chapter 17, he had demonstrated good courage, faith, diligence, industry, implicit obedience and confidence in God. All those who will be used of God are expected to be engaged in worthwhile ventures. God does not tolerate laziness and idleness among His people. The Scripture is replete with examples of men whom God called while they were occupied in productive labour. They include, among others, Moses (Exodus 3:17), David (1 Samuel 16:11-13), Gideon (Judges 6: 11), Elisha (1 Kings 19: 19), Peter, Andrew, James and John (Matthew 4: 18-22).

**THE CALL AND COMMISSION OF JOSHUA** (Joshua 1: 1-6; Numbers 27: 15-23; Deuteronomy 34: 1-9; 11:24,25; 31:68,14; Romans 8:29-31; Hebrews 13:5,6).

**“Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou and all this people unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel”** (Joshua 1:2). Joshua’s call and commission was anchored on three charges: to cross over Jordan; mobilize the army for the conquest of Canaan; and divide the land among the tribes of Israel.

**Question 2: Explain the Charges God gave to Joshua.**

The choice of Joshua by God was revealed to Moses before his death (Deuteronomy 31:7, 14, 23). The name Joshua (Hebrew, Yehoshua) signifies, ‘saviour’, ‘the Lord saves’ or the ‘the Lord is salvation’. The Greek form of the name is ‘Jesus’. Joshua is a type or representative of Jesus Christ. In his role of leading Israel into the Promised Land, Joshua is an Old Testament type of Jesus, whose role is to bring “many sons unto glory” (Hebrews 2: 10). Joshua did not just emerge, he had been schooled and mentored, tried and tested and found trustworthy. His character, training and availability fitted him for the assignment and God’s plan of redemption for Israel.

**Question 3: What are the attributes that qualified Joshua to be a leader?**

Joshua's character had everything to do with his choice. He was noble, simple, brave, soldierly, cool-headed, warmhearted, energetic, swift in thought and action. He was selfless, humble and modest. He had learned to obey and therefore is fit to command. He was able to endure the fatigue of the march as well as the rush of battle, not fainting under the hardships of the weary campaigns. His training has also to do with his choice. He was no novice when the mantle of leadership fell on him. He was an aged man of experience and gifted with the spirit of wisdom. His long association with Moses as his lieutenant prepared him for the assignment.

When ten of the spies brought an evil report, Joshua with Caleb demonstrated faith in God, a heart that is fixed on the Promised land, and steadfastness in standing on God's side. Even though this meant casting his lot with the minority against a violent, aggressive majority, God testified of him with Caleb that **"they wholly followed"** Him. When God called Moses to come up to the **"mount of God"** to receive the Ten Commandments, Joshua went with him. He was not in camp when Israel backslid. Joshua was left alone for **"forty days and forty nights"** (Exodus 24:18) without food or friends only in fellowship with the invisible God. While Israel was impatient in waiting for Moses, Joshua was patient (Exodus 32: 15-18). When Moses pitched the tabernacle without the camp, **"Joshua departed not out of the tabernacle"**. He was loyal to leadership at a critical moment (Numbers 13:8, 16) and was Moses' minister (Exodus 24: 13; Joshua 1: 1). He decisively defeated Israel's enemies while serving as commanding officer (Exodus 17: 13). Joshua maintained his faith in God's plan while many of his brethren rebelled against God.

**Question 4: What is Christ's mandate to the church?**

The scope and boundaries of the promised possession were clearly defined by God. **"Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon; that have I given you..."**

**From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, and all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast”** (Joshua 1:3,4). In God’s economy, the ministry of every one of His servant is well defined. As He did with Paul and others in the New Testament, so He deals with us today. God has given the heathen for an inheritance unto Christ, His Son (Psalm 2:7, 8). And Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has commissioned the church to reach the whole world with the gospel so as to take that possession (Mark 16: 15; Matthew 28:19).

The command to **“go over this Jordan”** was a test of faith and obedience just as Moses was commanded to cross the Red Sea with the children of Israel. However, God gave Joshua a promise and assured him of divine assistance and support (Joshua 1:5). God’s promise cannot fail because God cannot fail. Victory is assured as long as we remain in the path of divinely appointed duty. Witches and wizards, magicians and sorcerers, occultic and traditional people will not be able to stand before us if we are truly converted and divinely called. His power, protection and preservation is not for a limited period, but **“all the days of thy life”**. As He was with Moses when he stood before Pharaoh and the magicians of Egypt, so will the Lord be with us. Joshua’s faith was unshaken and his confidence in God’s faithfulness unmoved, despite the challenges inherent in the divine assignment. For he said: **“If the Lord delights in us, then he will bring us into this land and give it us ...”** (Numbers 14:8). Joshua staggered not at the promises of God for he knew the Lord will make a way for His people.

**DIVINE IMPERATIVES FOR SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP** (Joshua 1:6-9; Deuteronomy 5:32, 33; 31:10-13; Psalm 1:13; Matthew 7:21-25; 1 Timothy 4:15, 16; James 1:22-25; Revelation 22:14).

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

**prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success”** (Joshua 1:8).

**Question 5: What is the pathway to successful leadership?**

As soon as God called and commissioned Joshua, He also gave him the divine blueprint for success in the divinely appointed task. **“Be strong and of a good courage... observe to do according to all the law... This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth.”** Implicit obedience was demanded from Joshua if he expected to succeed in his ministry. He was not to turn to the right or to the left. He was not to lean on his own understanding, or to be inclined to the opinions of others; but to be governed by the written word of God in all things. The Christian is not to pick and choose what commandment to obey if he is to please God. Our obedience can only be acceptable to God if we have “respect unto all his commandment” (Psalm 119:6). We must not be partial or discriminating in our obedience to God’s word. The pathway to successful leadership is total, implicit and unquestioning obedience to God and His word. Meditation on God’s word is not only the means of spiritual growth but is also a necessary ingredient for success in life. If Joshua was to succeed and complete the work which Moses began, then he must obey, teach and maintain the law which God gave through Moses. We cannot expect the God of truth to be with us if we neglect the truth of God.

**“Be strong and of a good courage. Only be thou strong and very courageous”** (Joshua 1:6, 7, 9). Upon entering Canaan, powerful enemies had to be faced; for the land, was inhabited by races of giants. Formidable obstacles had to be overcome. Joshua must be strong and very courageous. The same is true in our Christian lives today. To obey God and regulate our character and conduct by the divine standard, we require resoluteness, fortitude and daring perseverance. To do God’s work in His appointed way, when the flesh and the world are suggesting an easier way, requires strength and courage to swim against the tide of popular opinion. But we have the promise of divine presence and protection while we walk the path of obedience. If God be for us, who can be against us?

(Romans 8:31). God delights in our success in all things which He has appointed for us to do. And He has shown us how to succeed in His word. If we follow His revealed plan, our lives will be fulfilled and meaningful; our ministries will be fruitful and successful.

**PREPARATION FOR THE CONQUEST OF THE PROMISED LAND** (Joshua 1: 10-18; Psalms 119:32, 60; Luke 9:59-62; Numbers 32:1-7, 16-25, 31, 32; Ecclesiastes 5:4-6; Hebrews 13: 17; 12:25, 28).

When God commissioned and commanded Joshua, his response was prompt and immediate. He did not procrastinate or delay his obedience. **“Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people.”** He did not act before God spoke, neither would he run ahead of God. But once God has spoken, there was no tardiness but prompt obedience. That is ever the conduct of one whose heart is committed to honouring and glorifying God. There is no halting between two opinions, no waiting for a convenient season, or conferring with flesh and blood (1 Kings 18:21; Acts 24:25; Galatians 1:16). Procrastination is an evidence of a lack of readiness to obey divine precepts. Thus, our profession with regards to the truths on repentance, restitution, evangelism, marriage, sanctification, etc. should always be, **“I made haste, and delayed not, to keep thy commandments”** (Psalm 119:60).

<p><b>Question 6: What preparations do we need to make as believers to ensure our progress toward our heavenly home?</b></p>
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The officers were also to **“command”** the people. Each level of leadership has authority and control over the people under it. Where there is no honour or respect for the leader immediately above us, there will not be the expected progress in our ministry and service. **“... Prepare you victuals for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land”** (verse 11), To pass over Jordan they were to prepare food, not boats. Joshua had faith in God and expected that as they passed over the Red Sea miraculously so will they pass over Jordan through the unfailing power of God. His language expressed faith and full confidence in God. If we are going

to be strong for the journey and the battles ahead, we must be well fed with the bread of life, properly nourished, in the word of faith.

**Question 7: What is the result of unity among leaders and members of the church?**

**“The Reubenites, the Gadites and half the tribe of Manasseh”** were called upon by Joshua to **“remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded them”**. They had promised Moses that they would play their part in the conquest of Canaan. They assured Joshua that they were resolute and would keep their commitment to the Lord despite the death of Moses. If we will be recipients of God’s blessings and favour, we must fulfill our commitment and vows unto God.

In conclusion, the new generation of Israelites in one voice re-affirmed their readiness to obey the commands of Joshua. **“All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go.”** The rebellious mixed multitude had all died in the wilderness. The only message they gave to Joshua was exactly what God had already told him: **“only be thou strong and of a good courage.”** Then, in unity, they decided to deal with anyone and any group of people who will rebel against the authority of the leader. This is a worthy example for us to emulate. When believers are united with the leadership of the church, there will be divine favour and blessings and the church will experience spiritual and numerical growth. The children of Israel kept their word and God kept His promise to them. They possessed their possession. God is ready to take all of us over this Jordan to our promised inheritance. No power can frustrate the plan of God for our lives if only we can obey God with a perfect heart. Then victory will be certain and success sure.



## DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
MON	1 Peter	3	Job	22-23
TUE	"	4-5	"	24-26
WED	2 Peter	1	"	27-28
THUR	"	2-3	"	29-30
FRI	1 John	1-2	"	31
SAT	"	3-4	"	32-33
SUN	"	5	"	34-35

## END OF OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES

## NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES

# 539 Lesson

## PAUL'S MINISTRY TO THE BARBARIANS AT MELITA

**MEMORY VERSE:** "But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel" (Philippians I: 12).

**TEXT:** Acts 28:1-15

Paul's appeal to Caesar at his trial before King Agrippa necessitated his travelling to Rome. After the shipwreck, by providence, Paul and his company were brought to an island called Melita. There, they were kindly received by the islanders who, finding them in their present condition, prepared fire to warm and refresh them. Paul's humble effort to assist in the exercise exposed him to a viper attack from the bundle of sticks laid on the fire. The people, seeing this, supposed him to be a murderer under divine vengeance; but when he shook it off his hand and was unhurt, they changed their minds, supposing him to be a god. An effectual door of ministry opened after a courteous reception of Paul's company and the prisoners by Publius, the chief man of the Island. The miraculous healing of Publius' father set in a chain of gospel ministrations by Paul and his companion to the other natives. The ministration of Paul to these hospitable Melitans forms the focus of this study.

Melita (presently called Malta which typifies honey in Greek language) is an island formerly celebrated for large production of honey. It is one immense rock of white, soft freestone, with about one foot dept of earth on which cotton, wheat, figs, roses and other excellent fruits are produced. It was also known as a place of refuge or escape for Phoenicians when they extended their traffic to the ocean in the stormy weather. It is about twenty miles in length from east to west, twelve miles in width from north to south, about sixty miles in circumference and about

sixty miles from the coast of Sicily. It was on this island that Paul was cast for the next stage in his ministry.

**THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD AND HOSPITALITY OF THE BARBARIANS** (Acts 28:1, 2; Exodus 22:21; Leviticus 19:34; 25:35; Deuteronomy 4:39; Isaiah 46:10; 1 Kings 8:56; Psalms 46:1-7; Luke 10:30-36; Romans 12:13).

**“And when they were escaped, then they knew that the Island was called Melita** (Acts 28:1). Paul and his companions found themselves in this new environment by divine providence (Acts 27:24, 26). God had earlier promised Paul, **“Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee”** (Acts 27:24).

The safe landing of Paul and his company shows that God’s promises are reliable. And believers, especially those on the pathway of duty, should always remember His promise: **“ ...Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen”** (Matthew 28:20). The enemy may rage, the wind may blow, the lion may roar and the mountains move, yet God is the refuge of HIS people (Psalm 46: 1-7).

**Question 1a: What lessons can believers learn from the safety of Paul and his company on the Island Melita? b. What lessons can we learn from the kindness of the Barbarians to Paul and his company at Melita?**

**“And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one”** (Acts 28:2). The natives of Melita were called Barbarians because they could not speak the Greek or Roman languages. The Barbarians had compassion on the victims of the shipwreck. They immediately kindled fire for these strangers to warm themselves from the cold. The Barbarians were helpful in adversity just like the Good Samaritan was to the man who fell among robbers on the way to Jericho (Luke 10:30-36). They were also different from many modern day Christians who would have exploited the victims, taking advantage of the situation as an opportunity to make money; rather, they showed mercy. If the Barbarous people could do that, true believers should do more. Christians should be compassionate to

those in distress and misery irrespective of their gender, religion, tribe, etc. As much as God has given us the ability, we should be ready to entertain strangers (Hebrews 13:2), and give a cup of cold water to the thirsty (Matthew 10:42).

**SUPERSTITION OF THE BARBARIANS** (Acts 28:3-6; Exodus 20:3; Job 4:7-9; 5: 1-5; 8:4; Ephesians 6: 16).

**“And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and lay them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand”** (Acts 28:3). Here we see the active, humble and industrious Apostle joining others to sustain the fire already kindled by the Barbarous People for the benefit of everyone. Though great, he became **as one that serveth**” among the people. As the fire was sustained, the viper that was hiding in the cold environment came out and fastened on Paul’s hand. Like Paul, every member of the church should strive to sustain the fire of prayer and evangelisms in order to expose any ‘vipers’ in the midst of God’s people.

**“And when the Barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, no doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live”** (Acts 28:4). The Barbarians went into wrong conclusions about the serpent’s attack on Paul; they quickly reasoned that Paul must be a murderer and was under a death sentence. Thanks to God they did not lay hands on him by themselves. They were waiting for him to either swell up or die suddenly. Contrary to their belief, the servant of God shook off the beast into the fire and felt no harm. His Lord once again kept His promise that **“they shall take up serpents: and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them...”** (Mark 16:18). Believers are to take the shield of faith (the promises of God) in times of fiery trials and direct opposition from Satan.

Though wrong in their assumption, the Barbarians knew that murder is a heinous crime that will not go unpunished. This view is also supported by the Holy writ: “thou shall not kill” and **“whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed...”** (Exodus 20:13; Genesis 9:6).

Cain the first murderer, was cursed by God (Genesis 4:11, 12). There are many offspring of Cain today who kill in modern and sophisticated ways. They kill through robbery, abortion, disposal of babies into the gutter and toilet as well as those who kill for ritual purposes. Judgment of sin for murder is certain except the perpetrators repent while there is still time (Proverbs 11:21; Ecclesiastes 8: 11). It was in this group of murderers the Barbarians classified Paul, the servant of God.

**Question 2: From the wrong perception of Paul by the Barbarians, what are the dangers of negative criticism in the body of Christ?**

As believers, we should avoid baseless criticisms, judgmental attitude and negative comments about people especially the true servants of God. Sometimes, righteous people might be greatly afflicted for the sake of Christ and righteous living. This may be direct or indirect persecution from Satan and his agents. At such a time, it is wise to be quiet, patient and find out the truth before comments are made. **“He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life also”** (Proverbs 13:3). The Barbarians, like Job’s friends soon realized they were wrong for **“they changed their minds, and said that he was a god”** (Acts 28:6).

Also, the Barbarians were wrong for calling Paul a god just like the people of Lystra attempted to sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas {Acts 14: 13-15}. No matter how highly gifted, educated, rich or popular a man, God only should be worshipped {Exodus 20:3}. Moreover, favoured and successful believers should shun the worship of men. Rather, they should seek the glory of Christ alone. Humility ensures continuous divine presence (Proverbs 16: 18; 29:23). God honoured Paul by the miracles he wrought in the Island. This created ample opportunity for him to declare the gospel message to the people.

**SUPERNATURAL MINISTRY AMONG THE BARBARIANS**  
(Acts 28:7,10; Mark 16:17-18; John 4:48; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; 1 Timothy 6:7).

The hospitality showed to Paul and his company cuts across the rank and file of the Barbarians of Melita. **“In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man**

**of the Island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously**” (Acts 28:7). Publius, a chief among the Barbarians who was rich in earthly possession took care of these strangers in his own house. This teaches us that we should be generous with our earthly possessions. We should not hold tenaciously to our earthly possession that we find it difficult to release for the furtherance of the gospel. **“For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out”** (1 Timothy 6:7).

**Question 3: What is the place of signs and wonders in gospel preaching?**

Having received a prophet in his own house, Publius got a prophet’s reward. His father who was sick of fever and bloody flux got healed miraculously through the prayer of Paul. One would have thought that Paul, at this time, will be downcast and count his loses. Instead, he seized the opportunity provided by the miraculous healing of Publius’ father to declare the gospel. He demonstrated God’s power over sicknesses and diseases. Truly, Paul was a committed, consecrated and undaunted preacher. He had unquenchable passion for the lost. He reckoned himself a debtor - both to the Greeks and the Barbarians. As a result of the healing of Publius’ father, he needed no other publicity as others who had diseases in the Island came to Paul and were healed (verse 9).

Miracles advertise Christ. This underscores the fact that preachers, especially missionaries, should seek the anointing and power of the Spirit to make their messages effective. Paul once declared, **“For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost”** (I Thessalonians 1:5). Christ also said, **“... except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe”** (John 4:48). However, believers should watch against counterfeit miracles from satanic agents who are wolves in sheep’s clothing (Matthew 7: 15).

**Question 4: What should be the duties of church members toward faithful ministers of the gospel?**

The power of God manifested through Paul attracted honour and reverence from the Barbarians. Consequently, the needs of Paul and his company were also met. The Barbarians”...**honoured us with many honours... they laden us with such things as were necessary**” (Acts 28: 10). The scripture admonishes Christians to give **“honour to whom honour is due”** (Romans 13:7). **“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour...** “(1 Timothy 5: 17). Similarly, members of the church should not close their eyes to the needs of faithful ministers. They should encourage and support preachers of the gospel. Paul, on his part, accepted the kindness of the people of Melita, not as a fee for the miracles but as a relief for his needs. Unlike many contemporary ministers of the gospel, Paul did not commercialize the gospel message but gave freely what he received freely (Matthew 10:8).

**THE SOJOURNERS’ DEPARTURE TO THEIR DESTINATION** (Acts 28:11-15; Matthew 25:1-13; Mark 13:33-37; 1 Corinthians 10: 12; 16: 13; Colossians 4:2).

Melita Island served as temporary shelter for these sojourners for three months in winter, while Rome was their final destination. They tarried in Melita for three months because sailing in winter was dangerous. In winter, travelling is very difficult and uncomfortable because the way usually becomes dirty and sailing on the sea dangerous. Paul had once told Timothy to **“do thy diligence to come before winter”** (1 Timothy 4:21). This teaches that scriptural warnings about ministry, marriage, business and carrier should be taken seriously to avoid great and painful consequences. Also, believers should pray ahead of seeming ‘winter seasons’ on their way to heaven. It is no light thing that Christ teaches us to pray thus: **“lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:** (Matthew 6:13).

**Question 5: What lessons can believers learn from Paul and his company tarrying for three months during the winter season?**

**“And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux”** (Acts 28:11). The sign of Castor

and Pollux inscribed on this ship was out superstition. Castor and Pollux were pagan deities believed to be in charge of the sea to protect seafaring men from storms. While seeking for protection, prosperity and other blessings, believers should shun all forms of superstition. God is the only source of all blessings for believers. We can trust Him, He never fails (Psalm 125:1).

**Question 6: What lessons can believers learn from the meeting of the brethren from Appii Forum and the Three Taverns with Paul?**

Though Paul was a prisoner, the Puteoli believers were not ashamed to identify with him in his bonds. They travelled long distances to meet him and his company when they heard of their arrival. Likewise, brethren should show concern for one another; keep communion and fellowship with one another; not be ashamed to identify with gospel ministers who undergo persecution for the sake of the gospel; esteem and honour the leaders who labour in love and doctrine; and not forsake the assembling of themselves together (Hebrews 10:25; Psalms 133:1-3). This is the only way we can prove our unity in the household of faith.

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

	<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	2 & 3	John	Job	36-37
TUE		Jude	“	38-39
WED	Rev.	1-2	“	40-42
THUR	“	3-4	Psalms	1-4
FRI	“	5-6	“	5-7
SAT	“	7-8	“	8-10
SUN	“	9-10	“	11-14



# 540 Lesson

## PAUL'S MINISTRY IN ROME

**MEMORY VERSE:** "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also" (Romans 1:14, 15).

**TEXT: Acts 28:16-31**

**T**his lesson dwells on the concluding part of Paul's third missionary journey and the last recorded course of his ministry to the Gentile world. It is the fulfillment of the vision and revelation he received from the Lord that he would bear witness of Christ as Lord and Saviour in Rome. "**And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome**" (Acts 23: 11). It was also the realization of his long cherished desire to bear witness of the gospel in Rome (Romans 15:22-29).

By some divine twist, Paul arrived in Rome as a prisoner in chains; and this was after he had encountered myriads of trials, setbacks, storms and shipwreck in his previous missionary journeys. But in spite of obstacles, the apostle remained resolute, steadfast, faithful and committed to the preaching of the gospel to the very end. This should serve both as a challenge and encouragement to all believers and ministers of the gospel not to allow difficulties, trials, persecutions and discouragement to hinder them from their responsibility in preaching the gospel.

**Question 1: What lessons do we learn from Paul's attitude to challenges while preaching the gospel?**

The Lord has assured us in His word that He will neither leave us nor forsake us in times of trials. "**When thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when**

**thou walkest through the fire, thou shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee”** (Isaiah 43:2). If the Lord allows us to go through unpleasant paths, we should be assured that all things will work together for our good. **“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”** (Romans 8:37-39).

The study features Paul’s arrival in Rome and the warm reception from the brethren; his conference with the Jewish leaders during which he espoused his faith in the gospel of Christ and his confinement in his rented quarters from where he proclaimed the gospel fearlessly and confidently, **“no man forbidding him”**.

**PAUL’S ARRIVAL AND RECEPTION IN ROME** (Acts 28:15, 16; Romans 1:7-12; 15:22-24; Hebrews 10:23; James 1:27; Matthew 25:34-40; Philemon 1:6-9).

**“And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage”** (Acts 28:15). God had revealed to Paul that it was His purpose that he preached in Rome (Acts 23: 11); but circumstances had before now prevented him from actualizing the vision of preaching in this imperial city. Paul’s desire and prayer, many years before, had been to visit the brethren in Rome so as to impart the blessings of the gospel to them: **“For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you”** (Romans 1:9, 10). He had waited long for this desire to be fulfilled and even solicited the prayers of the brethren in Rome for this mission (Romans 15:30-32). After many years, this desire was fulfilled by

divine interposition. A great lesson for believers today is that they should trust the Lord for the fulfillment of His promise in their lives, in spite of delays. God's word must surely come to pass if we patiently wait upon Him because He is faithful (Hebrews 10:23).

**Question 2: What assurance do we have that God's promises will be fulfilled in our lives?**

Rome was strategic to the then world as the imperial capital city. It was in fact the indisputable capital of the world. Therefore, if Christianity was to gain a foothold and impact the world of that time, Rome could not be ignored. Rome, the capital city of Italy, was situated on the river Tiber, fifteen miles from the sea and was built on seven hills. Its population was about 1.5 million people. It was rich in imposing structures: the great Colosseum (amphitheatre), surrounded with massive walls and several large gates from which Roman roads branched out as arteries of communication with the wide world beyond. This made the adage: "All roads lead to Rome" more than a figure of speech.

Ironically, Paul, the great apostle of the Christian faith arrived Rome as a prisoner, exhausted, having survived a harrowing shipwreck. Bound in chains, he was **"not ashamed of the gospel of Christ"** but boldly declared the risen Christ as Lord and Saviour. As a prisoner, he needed some encouragement, so it was a thing of immense joy, comfort and consolation when the brethren in Rome accorded him a joyful welcome. Some came to Appii forum about 43 miles from Rome on the Old Appians way. Others met the pearl at the Three Taverns, about 33 miles from Rome. The reception from the Roman church cheered up and revived the spirit of the weary apostle. It was a practical exhibition of Christian sympathy and love as they identified with him in his travail and did not despise his chains. Much good will be done if believers cultivate the habit of visiting and encouraging one another. The distressed, the sick, the bereaved or troubled, and those who suffer persecution on account of their faith should not be denied fellowship of the brethren through visitation and admonition.

The effect of this visit was tremendous; it brought great comfort to Paul for which he **“thanked God, and took courage”**. Paul must have thanked God for His past faithfulness, divine protection through the stormy voyage to Rome, the honour to suffer and endure hardship and persecution for Christ’s sake and, especially, for putting it in the heart of His people to show kindness to His servant. Like Paul, there are many things we should thank God for: life, salvation, health, family, friends, relations, preservation, protection, prosperity, mercies, kindness, victories, etc. We should always have an attitude of gratitude and thankfulness.

**Question 3: Mention some blessings for which we should give thanks to God.**

Eventually, Paul **“came to Rome”** and great kindness was shown to him by the centurion. Though in chains, he was permitted to dwell in his rented quarters under custody of a soldier. He remained faithful and was committed to preaching the gospel which the Lord commissioned him to.

**PAUL’S DISCOURSE WITH JEWISH LEADERS** (Acts 28:17-29; Luke 24:27; Isaiah 6:9, 10; Romans 11:8-10; Matthew 13:13-15; Romans 10:1, 2).

**“And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening”** (Acts 28:23). Three days after his arrival, Paul sent for the Jewish leaders in Rome. He sought to explain that his imprisonment was not due to any wrongdoing against Israel’s religious customs, but that it was clearly **“... for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain”** (Acts 28:20).

**Question 4: Why was it necessary for Paul to send for the Jewish leaders in Rome to give reasons for his imprisonment?**

Paul had come with the desire to preach the gospel in Rome, especially to his kinsmen, and since he could not

go to the synagogue, he decided to create a forum in his rented apartment to reach them. This underscores the need for soul-winners to create opportunities for witnessing where there is none. Two, he needed to clear himself of any prejudices that would have made his person unacceptable to them before his ministry. In all, the apostle's action leaves a great lesson for us today. It is the duty of the ministers of the gospel to wisely remove all prejudices which might hinder them from effectively and fruitfully preaching the gospel.

The response of the Jewish leaders showed that the good hand of the Lord was upon Paul. Their subsequent reply to his defence was implicit and reflected three things. First, they had nothing to say in particular against him since they neither received any letter from Judea nor any negative report from any Jew concerning him. Second, they desired to know the doctrine he preached and the religion he tirelessly propagated that brought him so much opposition. Third, they knew no more about Christianity than a sect **“everywhere spoken against”**. That this Jews called Christianity a sect showed their ignorance and disdain for the faith ordained for their redemption and the world's. Moreover, to call Christianity a sect is not in the least a great error. Great differences lie between Christianity and a sect.

**Question 5: What are the major differences between Christianity and sects?**

In the first place, Christianity establishes that which is of common concern to all mankind and connects man to God but sects are built upon narrow opinions, dogmas and private interests. Second, Christianity aims at spiritual and eternal benefits whereas sects are aimed at worldly gains or advantages.

Third, while Christianity unites people of all races and colours, sects divide the children of men and set them at variance one with another.

Once the prejudices were removed, the air was clear for Paul to begin preaching. Now on a set day, they came to

his lodging during which he boldly expounded to them the Scriptures **“persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets”**. His speech was greeted with mixed reactions: **“some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not”**. So, it was among Christ’s hearers: some believed and some blasphemed. Even today, believers encounter similar reactions from sinners: some are hardened and unrepentant, while others believe the gospel and are converted. Nevertheless, Christians are admonished to preach the gospel faithfully and fearlessly, though its message may seem unpopular to many. Believers are also under obligation to warn sinners and backsliders of the impending Judgment of God as Paul did to his hearers.

As the Jews rejected the gospel, Paul now must go to the Gentiles. The fall of Israel had become the riches of the Gentiles and their loss, the world’s gain. We should not give up or be discouraged when we seem to fail in our attempts to win the lost to Christ. We should take courage in the perseverance of Paul and preach **“the whole counsel of God”** until the unsearchable riches of Christ be made known to others. The word of God cannot be bound and **“will not return unto him void”**.

<p><b>Question 6: What should be our attitude when the gospel message we preach is not received by our hearers?</b></p>
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The salvation of God is sent to all men and there are those who will hear and those who will not. Believers are therefore urged to preach the word **“in season, and out of season”** with passionate *zeal* and fervent prayers.

**PAUL’S CONFINEMENT AND PREACHING** (Acts 28:30, 31; Ephesians 6: 19, 20; 2 Timothy 4:6-8; 4:1, 2; Mark 16:15-20);

Paul’s ministry in Rome was successful. His confinement indeed could be seen as refreshment to one who had been all his days itinerant. When he was free, he was in continual fear by the lying in wait of the Jews (Acts 20: 19), but now his confinement became his security in disguise. It turned out to be a blessing to the Kingdom of God. It

was during these two years' confinement that he wrote his exilic epistles namely, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon and second Timothy. He spent two years **"in his own hired house"** and receiving all that came unto him **"preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him"** (Acts 28:31). Thus, his ministry in Rome was a combination of preaching and teaching. He had stood boldly before Felix, Festus and Agrippa, fearlessly witnessing for the Lord. Now as a Roman prisoner, he still boldly proclaimed the gospel. Like Paul, Christians and ministers must earnestly and passionately preach the gospel everywhere and to all, despite setbacks, persecutions, denial of rights, imprisonment and all odds. In this regard, courage, prayer and yieldedness to God for guidance and wisdom are most needful.

**Question 7: What challenge does Paul's ministry in Rome pose to believers and ministers of the gospel today?**

Though, Paul the Apostle came to Rome as an **"ambassador in bonds"**, he reached there better fitted for the work through trials. For us today, "let us publish to all men the 'salvation of God', Let us raise the royal banner of the Cross and herald the kingdom of God". If we attempt to do like Paul, the whole earth will be filled with the knowledge of the gospel of grace.

<b>DAILY BIBLE READING</b>				
	<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Rev.	11-12	Psalms	15-17
TUE	"	13-14	"	18
WED	"	15-16	"	19-21
THUR	"	17-18	"	22-24
FRI	"	19-20	"	25-28
SAT	"	21-22	"	29-31
SUN	Matt.	1-2	"	32-33

# 541 Lesson

## RIGHTEOUSNESS THROUGH THE GOSPEL

**MEMORY VERSE:** “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:16, 17).

### **TEXT: Romans 1:1-17**

**P**aul, the apostle wrote the epistle to the Roman believers from Corinth about AD 56-58. As a Pharisee, he once believed in righteousness by the works of the law and persecuted early believers who received the gospel and lived righteous lifestyles by faith in Christ. After his conversion however, he began to preach and write on the same message of righteousness by faith. Thus, every sinner and persecutor of Christians like Saul-turned-Paul can receive pardon and be justified by God. It was this experience of genuine conversion for instance, that made religious sinners, **“strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes”** who were converted at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2: 10) instrumental to the founding of the church in Rome after the feast as Paul had never been there before he wrote this epistle. When these converts returned to Rome, a city that was then full of luxury and profligacy, they acted on what they believed and propagated their faith. As the city’s population increased with people from different nations conquered by the Roman empire, so were the abominations as we shall see in the later part of the text. Yet, the church planted there grew to be the subject of discussion in most cities of the then world. This is a lesson for believers who attend retreats and leadership programmes to be prompt and committed to the great commission and church planting.

Prior to writing this epistle, Paul seemed to have been briefed about that church by Aquila and Priscilla and other Jews expelled from there by the decree of Claudius (Romans 16:3; Acts 18:2) that the church was made of



up of Jews and Gentile believers. As it were, the claims of the Gentile converts to equal privileges in Christ with the Jewish converts was rejected by the latter resulting in conflict that Paul now addresses in this epistle. The Jews always believed that the Gentiles must observe the rite of circumcision to make their salvation complete. Paul begins this epistle by showing the Roman Christians his divine call to apostleship, reason for his commission and salutation to the church and commendation of their faith (Romans 1:7,8), expression of earnest desire to see them in order to impart to them some spiritual gifts (Romans 1:9-15) and ends these verses that form the introduction to the epistle with the description of the Gospel of Christ and its power to produce righteousness in every believer (Romans 1:16,17).

**REVELATION OF PAUL'S APOSTLESHIP AND SOURCE OF THE GOSPEL** (Romans 1:1-8; Acts 9:16; 13:2, 4; 26:16-18; Romans 11:13; Acts 12:2; 9:15, 16; Galatians 1:15, 16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Titus 2:11, 12; 1 Thessalonians 4:13, 18).

Paul begins this epistle by revealing his true identity as **“a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God”**. Though separated unto the gospel from birth, he went wild only to be drawn by the cord of God's love and mercy into the fold and commissioned to fulfil God's purpose for his life. Obviously, salvation experience brings a man's life to the path of fulfilment. Although Paul was not among the original twelve apostles, he explained that he was among those who were called, those who **“received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name”**. As a persecutor of the church, Paul did not merit the salvation of God. He was saved by GRACE through faith. As grace was a gift so was his apostleship to preach the gospel. Obviously, no one can be an apostle or a servant of Christ who has not received the grace of God that brings salvation to all men, **“Teaching us that, denying “ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world”** (Titus 2:12). The grace of God produces obedience

in the professing believer that makes him a useful vessel (II Corinthians 15:8-10). It was necessary he explained his call, commission and apostleship in relation to the gospel so as to give this epistle authenticity and acceptance among Roman believers. Besides, he also revealed that God is the Source of the gospel, that it had been promised and prophesied in Scriptures by the prophets and that the central subject of it is **“his Son Jesus Christ our Lord”**, who incarnated through the virgin birth, and has been **“declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead”**. Christian servants need to faithfully reveal Christ the central subject of scripture to their listeners, viewers and readers as Saviour, Lord and Source of all blessings. It was through this gospel message that God called the Roman believers and still calls people out of sin today.

**Question 1: What was Paul’s purpose in writing the epistle to the Romans, and what should be the purpose of the preacher and gospel writer today?**

Paul’s purpose for writing this epistle was to express his great joy for their new-found faith which was spoken of throughout the whole world (verse 8). It was also to communicate to them his earnest desire and prayer for them and express his desire for the establishment of their faith through the impartation of some spiritual gifts (verses 9, 11). Above all, it was also to prevent further spread of the false teaching adherents of Judaism were peddling which was capable of dividing and destroying the church. Paul also revealed his bond of fellowship and desire to have some fruit among them (Verse 12, 13). In like manner, church workers and leaders involved in preaching the gospel and Christian literature writing must aim at achieving specific objectives as: (i) evangelizing the sinners (Matthew 28:19,20); (ii) teaching the church the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27); (iii) edifying the body of Christ (Romans 1:12; Ephesians 4:11-14); (IV) influencing the society towards righteousness (Matthew 5: 14-16); (v) warning believers against the danger of being lured into sin by false teachers and philosophers (Matthew 7:15; Philippians 2:8); and (vi) preparing the Church for Christ’s Second coming (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Colossians 1:28, 29).

**PAUL'S PASSION AND READINESS TO PREACH THE GOSPEL IN ROME** (Romans 1:8-15; John 3:16; Acts 4:12; 20:20, 24; 21:13; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4; Mark 16:15-20).

**“I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.”**

**Question 2: How can a believer be as passionate to preach the gospel as Paul was?**

Paul's passion and readiness to preach the gospel was founded on solid spiritual experiences and sound scriptural truths. He had a clear commission from Christ immediately after his conversion to preach to the Jews and chiefly to the Gentiles. It was **“to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me”** (Acts 26:18). He also had a relentless zeal and passion to rescue sinners from the impending judgment of God (Romans 10:1-3; 2 Corinthians 5:11). Paul's passion for souls was borne out of his relationship from regular devotion and growing intimacy with God through prayers, profitable Bible study and purposeful meditation. Consistent soul-winners usually have an excellent devotional life, walk intimately with the Lord and have pursuit of personal holiness.

**Question 3: Briefly mention the content of the gospel message.**

Readiness to preach the gospel manifests in the believer's commitment to daily tell people about Christ's sacrifice for their salvation (John 3:16; Acts 4:12; I Corinthians 15:3, 4). To be ashamed of the gospel is to be ashamed of Christ. A believer is ashamed of Christ if he is unwilling to publicly speak of the sacrifice of Christ and His free gift of salvation (Mark 8:38).

The word gospel refers to the glad tidings of salvation through Christ' death, burial and resurrection. The

inherent power in the gospel of Christ regenerates a soul that is dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1; Titus 3:5). However, just as a stick of dynamite needs to be lit before its inherent power becomes evident, the gospel needs to be preached before the power of God to save souls can become manifest. And believers are the only media God has ordained to get His message to a lost and dying world.

## **THE GOSPEL AS SOURCE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS** (Romans 1:16, 17; Matthew 5:20; 3:8; Acts 20:20, 21).

**“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation of every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”** The words, **“righteousness”** and **“righteous”** are mentioned about 300 times and 236 times respectively in the King James Version of the Holy Bible. This shows the centrality of this virtue in man’s relationship with God. God seeks to convert and bring every sinful soul to the path of righteousness. Righteousness is doing that which is morally right and acceptable in the sight of God.

**Question 4: What does biblical righteousness entail?**

Christ in His gospel declares, **“For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven”** (Matthew 5:20). Christ reveals that believers must manifest a kind of righteousness that is different from those of the Pharisees which was mere legal compliance and not out of love for God. Biblical righteousness must come from what God has done in us, not what we can do by ourselves and go beyond keeping the law to living by the principles of God’s word. We should be just as concerned about our inward dispositions that people do not see as about our actions that are seen by all (Matthew 5:16).

**Question 5: Mention the necessary steps a sinner must take in order to obtain biblical righteousness.**

Anyone desirous of God’s righteousness in his life must realize and acknowledge his state of sinfulness (Psalm 51:3); repent and confess them to God ( 1 John 1:8,9; Acts 3:19,20); renounce all fellowship with the devil and his agents and destroy all materials in his possession (Acts 19:19); receive Christ as personal Lord and Saviour (John 1:12); and (6) reckon himself dead unto sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ (Romans 6:11-13). The virtue of righteousness can be maintained by abiding in Christ, watching and praying (John 15:4; Mark 13:32-35). The believer who hopes to live with God eternally in heaven must avoid relapsing into bitterness and harshness of spirit, unprofitable conversation, unkind criticisms, evil speaking, self-indulgence, prejudice, impatience, selfishness and self-management but continue in holiness till the end.

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

<b>MORNING</b>			<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Matt.	3-4	Psalms	34-35
TUE	“	5	“	36-37
WED	“	6	“	38-40
THUR	“	7-8	“	41-43
FRI	“	9	“	44-45
SAT	“	10	“	46-48
SUN	“	11	“	49-50

# 542 Lesson

## THE GUILT OF MAN

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Now we know what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God” (Romans 3:19).

### **TEXT: Romans 1:18-32**

**T**his study focuses on Paul’s discourse on the guilt and deplorable state of man. The word ‘guilt’ in this context refers to the blame, condemnation and responsibility that go along with disobedience to the word of God. Man’s fall from grace through sin is what inevitably made him guilty before God. The Impact of sin on man is so tremendous that his entire human nature has been tampered with. Thus, sin has affected man physically, mentally, morally and spiritually. However, despite the helpless state of man, there is a cure of sin made possible through the vicarious death of Christ on the cross and His resurrection.

**CAUSES AND CASES OF GUILT** (Romans 1:18-23; 3:23; Genesis 3:9; 42:21, 22; 1 Samuel 15:23, 24; Acts 23:1-5; 24:16).

Many factors are responsible for man’s guilt. But sin and backsliding (whether open or secret) in particular have always been the primary cause of man’s guilt. It is when man falls into sin that guilt becomes operational in his life. Those addressed in our text were found guilty for holding the truth in unrighteousness (Romans 1:18-27). They were aware of the beauty of God’s creation but that did not draw them closer to their creator. They rather decided to give themselves to idol worship. This is unfortunate because God gave man the greatest honour by creating him in His own image. But man, on his own part, dishonoured God by reducing and likening Him to the image of created beasts.

**Question 1: Outline some causes of guilt.**

Failure to glorify and be thankful to God also leads to a sense of guilt and divine displeasure. Those who have the knowledge of God must necessarily acknowledge Him as the Creator and a holy God, worthy of honour, adoration, respect and worship. Believers should practically be thankful to Him for His multitudinous blessings and favour. The importance of a thankful attitude cannot be overemphasized as it is a sign of our reverence for God. If the Gentiles who did not have access to the written word of God were considered inexcusable for breaking God's law, then what is the fate of present-day believers who have the light of the gospel to guide them and yet fall into sin?

As pointed out earlier, sin has always been the root cause of guilt. The origin of guilt, therefore, is traceable to man's fall in the book of Genesis where Adam and Eve fell into sin of disobedience which brought about guilt and condemnation in their hearts. The story is still the same today. No one who commits sin is ever free from guilt and condemnation.

**Question 2: Mention some Bible characters who experienced guilt as a result of sin.**

The Bible is replete with people who at one point or the other had guilt. Adam and Eve hid themselves in the Garden of Eden following their sin of disobedience. **“And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden”** (Genesis 3:8).

No doubt, hiding themselves from God's presence indicated the presence of guilt. Joseph's brothers were hunted by a terrifying sense of guilt many years after selling their brother into the land of Egypt (Genesis 42:21). Saul acknowledged his sinfulness when his attention was drawn to his disobedience to God's instruction to utterly destroy Amalek (1 Samuel 15:24). David's heart smote him for cutting off King Saul's skirt (1 Samuel 24:5). Paul was disturbed by his conscience for speaking against Ananias the High Priest and had to apologize immediately (Acts 23:5).

**Question 3: How can believers today maintain a conscience void of offence towards God and men?**

To maintain a conscience void of offence towards God and man, the believer, among other things, should note the following: one, he should be sensitive to the Spirit's leading. This will impress on him the willingness to carry out any outstanding restitution. Two, he should also be able to apply the biblical admonition, **"...let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath"** (James 1:19). Three, he should be prayerful and filled with God's word. Four, he should also have a regular period of self-examination coupled with possessing the mind of Christ.

**CONSEQUENCES OF GUILT** (Romans 1:24-32; Ezekiel 7:8,9; Isaiah 64:6; Romans 3:23; 6:23; Ephesians 5:6).

Although God is a God of love, He is equally a God of justice and judgment. His unchanging reaction to sin has always been the cause of divine displeasure and chastisement. Prophet Ezekiel, writing on God's judgment on Israel declared God's intention thus: **"Now will I shortly pour out my fury upon thee, and accomplish mine anger upon thee: and I will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense thee for all thine abominations. And mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: I will recompense thee according to thy ways and thine abominations that are in the midst of thee; and ye shall know that I am the LORD that smiteth"** (Ezekiel 7:8, 9).

**Question 4: State the consequences of guilt.**

The consequences of the guilt of man are diverse, deadly and grave. God's anger over sin is expressed by His giving up the wicked to uncleanness and vile affection that degrade the body and bring ruin and death to the disobedient. Also, the wicked has no access to the promises and blessings of God for His people which include peace, protection, provision, good success, long life, answered prayers and other blessings. If they fail to repent, they will face the wrath of God and eternal punishment in hell.



In the Christian faith, having a head knowledge of God is not enough. A personal, sincere acknowledgement of God as Creator as well as personal Lord and Saviour is not only necessary but a must. It is at this point that the real knowledge of God begins.

Also, one must deliberately and consistently study God's word, meditate upon it and believe it so as to ensure rapid growth in the knowledge and power of God. This is in conformity with what our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ once reprimanded His audience for: **“Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God”** (Matthew 22:29).

**Question 5: Carefully explain how one can retain God in one's knowledge.**

If we desire to retain God in our knowledge, practical obedience to His word is also necessary. We must endeavour to know what God's will is concerning every area of our lives as well as strive to fulfill same. It is also important that we carry out the Great Commission by preaching Christ and His saving grace to others. This is necessary because the more we help others to obtain the knowledge of Christ, the more we retain Him in our knowledge.

Finally, we must deliberately pray for God's enabling grace in our Christian journey.

**THE CURE FOR GUILT** (Ezekiel 18:31, 32; Romans .5:8, 9; Acts 17:30; John 3:36; 1 Thessalonians 1: 10; 5:9).

God, in His infinite love and mercy, has made adequate provision for the cure of man's guilt. When the penitent sinner comes before God in sincere repentance and faith in Christ, he receives pardon for his sins.

**Question 6: Briefly explain the steps involved in Scriptural repentance**

Biblical repentance involves the following simple but necessary steps. First, there must be acknowledgement

of sin by the penitent sinner (Romans 3:23). Second, the guilty sinner is expected to confess his sins and repent from them. Third, the sinner should have faith in God. He should believe that God loves him and that Jesus died for him. He should also believe that God has forgiven his sins. Fourth, he should invite Jesus into his heart as personal Lord and Saviour through the prayer of faith. Once these simple steps are taken, the individual becomes a new creature and old things, including his guilt problem and its penalty, are passed away.

As a new creature, he is now expected to take sides with God by having absolute hatred for sin, love for righteousness and assist in spreading the gospel to avert God's wrath on sinners. Such would bring sinners into repentance and reconciliation with God. At this juncture, it is necessary to emphasize that God does not only frown at those who sin directly but also at those who derive pleasure from others' sins as well as encourage them (Romans 1:32).

**Question 7: Identify some common sins that some believers are guilty of though they are not outrightly involved in them.**

There are some believers today who, though not guilty of improper dressing, yet are found guilty for accommodating others who dress improperly. Some other believers are guilty of encouraging female ladies who wear miniskirts, transparent blouses and tight fitting materials. There are women who do not perm their hair or wear trousers but see nothing wrong with these practices. Also, there are those who do 'not take alcoholic drinks but use same to entertain others. Some believers who got married scripturally now encourage others to resort to unscriptural methods and short-cuts while preparing for marriage. There are also seemingly good Christians who would not steal but patronize those who sell stolen items and materials.

It is sad to note that some Christian mothers absolutely have no business with earrings but bore their newly born baby's ears. There are equally those who do not organize but readily attend second burials on invitation. God does not want us to be partakers of other men's sins (1 Timothy 5:22).

## DAILY BIBLE READING

	<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Matt.	12	Psalms	51-54
TUE	"	13	"	55-57
WED	"	14-15	"	58-60
THUR	"	16-17	"	61-64
FRI	"	18	"	65-66
SAT	"	19-20	"	67-68
SUN	"	21	"	69-70

# 543 Lesson

## JUDGEMENT OF ALL SINNERS

**MEMORY VERSE:** “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:14).

### **TEXT: Romans 2:1-29**

**T**he first chapter of the book of Romans highlights the corrupt nature of man with direct emphasis on the Gentiles. It reveals the guilt of all men and a God who will not ‘look the other way’ at the sinner and his sin. The chapter also underscores His revealed wrath against all unrighteousness. Numerous sins such as fornication, wickedness, covetousness, malignity, envy, murder and others are catalogued as condemnable, including those who have pleasure in such practices (Romans 1:18-32).

The apostle comes in chapter two to stress the universality of sin in order to puncture the notion of Jews who condemn the Gentiles and excuse themselves because “**that unto them were committed the oracles of God**” (Romans 3:2). He points out that Jews as well as Gentiles are guilty and will suffer the same severe divine judgment if they practice the same sins. Paul harps on the impartiality of God to prove that no sinner can escape the grim reality of His judgment which is backed by the unchanging standard of His law. The chapter closes with the true identity and character of the faith that is in Christ.

**IMPARTIALITY OF DIVINE JUDGMENT** (Romans 2:1-11; Acts 17:30, 31; Ecclesiastes 8:11-13; James 2:13; Hebrews 9:27, 31; Proverbs 11:21).

**“Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things”** (Romans 2:1). The inexcusable position of the man who thinks that God will favour one over the

other is here stated. It calls attention to the impartial posture of God towards all men irrespective of their status. As privileged custodians of the law (Romans 9:4), the Jews had thought that they would escape the judgment of God no matter what they did; they erred. Here lies the inescapable lot of people who feel that they will get away with their evil or be excused from God's judgment because of who they are. The scripture makes it clear that if they commit the same sins, God's impartial nature of justice will **"render to every man according to his deeds"** (verse 6).

**Question 1: Mention instances of God's judgment in the Bible.**

Right from the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:22-24), God's judgment fell on individuals, families, generations of people, cities and nations who sinned against Him. Other examples include: overflowing flood on Noah's generation (Genesis 6:5,6,21-24); fire and brimstone on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24,25; Luke 17:29; Jude 7); death by stoning on Achan and his family (Joshua 7:20,26); Korah, Dathan and Abiram died unnaturally when the ground caved in and buried them alive (Numbers 16:31,35); Ananias and Sapphira died prematurely (Acts 5:3,10); the fallen angels are reserved for judgment in everlasting chains (Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4).

The word of God is replete with warnings concerning the judgment of sinners who reject God's offer of salvation **"... because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness ..."** (Acts 17:31). God requires sinners to repent of their sins. Following divine example, governments, societies and organizations exercise judicial powers to enforce morality and restrain evil, reward good conduct, punish evil-doers, acquit the guiltless and condemn the guilty (Roman 13:1-4; 1 Peter 2: 13). However, whatever judgment or punishment man receives now or might have received in the past, all is anticipatory of God's future judgment.

**Question 2: Why do sinners continue in their sin despite constant warnings?**

Satan's grand design is to keep sinners blinded and unprepared for God's judgment. He flatters them to believe that God is too merciful to judge and punish them. He makes them feel that the story of the flood and the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah are mythical; many see hell as a metaphor. Some also believe that their sins are not grave enough to attract God's displeasure. To them God is a permissive and indulgent Father who cares little about how men live their lives. This is not strange. The antediluvian people did not believe Noah's preaching; the Sodomites laughed Lot to scorn as he told them of God's visitation against their sins. King Belshazzar did not give serious thought over his impending doom while he drank himself to a state of stupor; Pharaoh paid no heed to Moses' warnings.

Today, many people think it is incredible that God should judge sinners. Therefore, let everyone who know the truth and yet continue in their wickedness realize that God is impartial; there will be **“tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; For there is no respect of persons with God”** (Romans 2:9, 11).

<b>Question 3: State the qualities of divine justice.</b>
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God's justice system cannot be compared with man's. One, it is according to truth, not by sight or sentiment (Romans 2:2; Isaiah 11:4). Two, God will render to every man according to his conduct (Romans 2:5, 6). Three, there is no respect of persons, partiality or favouritism with Him (Romans 2:11).

Worldly judicial systems may be skewed in favour of the rich and mighty; they may grant immunity and waivers to corrupt “sacred cows” and government functionaries. A bank executive who loots depositors' wealth may escape jail term by taking so-called plea-bargain and a ‘slap on the wrist’ and go home free. God is not a man. A day is coming when all liars, murderers, whoremongers, corrupt politicians, looters of national treasury and hypocritical church-goers will face His judgment (Romans 14:12).

## **INVARIABLE STANDARD OF THE GREAT JUDGE**

(Romans 2:12-16; Jeremiah 17: 10; 32: 19; Matthew 12:41, 42; Luke 12:48; John 3:19; 8:9.

God's judgment is going to be consistent with His truth because He operates a consistently steady rule in His relationship with His creatures. The measure of His standard is not variable but consistent with His way and word in all ages. The scripture reveals His expectation from everyone who had lived before, during and after the law as well as those who lived during the dispensation of grace. He is a righteous, holy and all-knowing God who knows our thoughts, reads our actions, weighs our deeds and interprets our motives. In fact, all things are open and naked before Him (Hebrews 4: 12, 13). Though He is a loving Father and a merciful Redeemer, He will not lower His standard of righteousness and holiness for anyone.

**“For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law”** (Romans 2: 12). His judgment is going to be according to the privileges men had. Men and women shall be held responsible according to the level of revelation which they had. The generations of those who lived before the law or **“without law”**, that is, the written law shall be judged according to the truth which God had revealed in their conscience. They had a law of nature which gave them a sense of right or wrong. Evidently, those who did wrong contrary to this law of nature **“shall also perish without law”**. Likewise, those who sinned or transgressed the law after it was given shall be judged according to the law. This is the equitable rule on which the Lord will deal with the world.

**Question 4: Examine carefully principles by which God would reward people from one generation to another.**

## **IDENTITY OF TRUE BELIEVERS IN JESUS CHRIST**

(Romans 2:17-29; Philippians 3:3; Colossians 2: II; Matthew 7: 15-20).

The apostle points out some of the privileges of the Jews (verses 17-20) but is quick to say how those privileges will enhance their condemnation. Jews take pride in knowing the law, being guides to the blind, instructing and teaching others but they are transgressors of the things they preach.

It is not enough to hold privileged positions or titles in the house of God. Those who boast of their titles and yet abuse their positions or live in sin are not true followers of Christ. Our acceptance or rejection before God shall depend on the quality of our character and lifestyle which must of a truth be patterned after Christ.

**Question 5: How can we identify true followers of Christ?**

Christ gives a simple description of His followers: they bear fruits of righteousness. He says, **“Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them”** (Matthew 7:20). Those who profess faith in Christ must be seen to bear fruits of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, meekness, etc. There must be a correlation between their lives and the amount of light they have received. Our text warns believer against hypocrisy, highlighting the sin of others and covering up theirs (Romans 2: 1-3, 22, 23). We should note that God lays premium on the grace of the inner man, than the outer. For **“he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh, but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God”** (Romans 2:28,29). God is neither impressed nor deceived by religious activities such as water baptism, giving of tithes, taking of holy communion, pilgrimage to the holy land and giving of alms to the poor without a thorough heart transformation.

The bottom-line of Paul’s submission in our text is that self-righteousness cannot procure salvation for anyone unless true redemption found in Christ’s atoning sacrifice.

**Question 6: In view of the coming judgment, what is the duty of saints**

Knowing full well that God is not willing that any man should perish and that God delights in mercy, all saints



should make it a point of duty to warn sinners against the dangers of persisting in sin. To escape God's Judgment sinners must confess their sins, repent of them, believe in Christ and make restitutions where applicable.

By rejecting God's offer of mercy, sinners provoke Him to anger (1 Corinthians 10:22). They also accumulate and treasure up His wrath and anger. They bear the shame and dishonour of sinful living. They will face eternal damnation in hell. The twin cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and Noah's generation perished for rejecting divine mercy. Today, the sins of modern man have surpassed that of Sodom in depth, sophistication and gravity. In some parts of our society today, men have institutionalized corruption and immorality, conducted same-sex marriages and ordained gay priests, organized drug cartels, kidnapping rings, killing humans for ritual, thus daring God and His judgment. Except they repent and renounce those acts, God's judgment awaits them.

**Question 7: How can a sinner escape God's impending judgment?**

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Matt. 22	Psalms	71-72
TUE	" 23	"	73-74
WED	" 24	"	75-77
THUR	" 25	"	78
FRI	" 26	"	79-80
SAT	" 27	"	81-83
SUN	" 28	"	84-86

**END OF NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES**

## SPECIAL STUDIES

# 544 Lesson

## CHRIST'S VIRGIN BIRTH, DEATH AND RESURRECTION

**MEMORY VERSE:** "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7: 14).

**TEXT:** Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Romans 1:4; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4

**A**fter the fall, God planned man's salvation through the Seed of the woman which was designed to be a sign to Israel and other nations. Thus, the Holy Spirit prophesied through Isaiah that **"a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."** One of the most important facts concerning Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God is that He was born of a virgin. The virgin birth confirms His Deity and distinguishes Him as the only sinless man conceived without Adamic depravity.

**Question 1: Why do some people doubt the virgin birth Of Jesus?**

Some people have refused to accept the revelation of scripture on Christ's virgin birth because it is beyond scientific experiment or intellectual reasoning. Others could not comprehend the possibility of God having an only Son as claimed by Christians. But they **"err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God"** (Matthew 22:29). God is omnipotent and can do all things. Even the Virgin Mary wondered how she was going to conceive without knowing any man. But the angel of God told her, **"The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power Of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God"** (Luke 1:35).

The virgin birth is thus an essential doctrinal truth which must be upheld because of its significance in

God's redemptive programme and its inevitable necessity for the salvation of mankind. Disputing this cardinal doctrine is, by implication, faulting Scripture's claim and denying Christ's Deity and distinctive sinlessness that qualified Him as the **"Lamb of God"** who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). This truth has, however, disqualified every man from satisfying God's demand for substitutionary death. Christ is the spotless Lamb of God found in fashion as a man. His incarnation through the virgin birth is God's divine design which finite minds cannot comprehend. **"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts"** (Isaiah 55:9). To receive and believe Scripture's claim about Christ's birth by a virgin-mother is to settle the question of the mystery and omnipotence of God.

**THE PECULIARITY OF CHRIST'S INCARNATION THROUGH THE VIRGIN BIRTH** (Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6a; Luke 1:26-38; Matthew 1:18-25; 2:1-12; Luke 2:1-7).

**Question 2: What makes Christ's birth unique, and why?**

God was the first to unveil the virgin birth of Christ when He referred to Him as the **"seed of the woman"**. This was His allusion to the fact that Christ would be conceived by a woman who had never known any man. The prophet Isaiah proclaimed, **"Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son..."** (Isaiah 7: 14). The word 'virgin' as used in this reference means a woman that has not had carnal knowledge of any man. Luke, in his gospel recorded that the angel Gabriel was sent to Mary, a virgin betrothed to Joseph saying, **"behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest ."** Matthew, another gospel writer also revealed that Mary was found with a child by the Holy Ghost before she came together with Joseph, her espoused husband. While Joseph thought of putting her away secretly, **"the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is**

**conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”** He further recorded that Joseph knew her not till she had brought forth her first born son, and he called his name JESUS (Matthew 1:25).

Apart from the direct involvement of God the Father, the Holy Ghost and angels, Jesus, during His earthly ministry, sometimes referred to others as His mother, brothers, sisters, but never called any mortal man His father – not even Joseph (Matthew 12:49, 50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21). He always referred to God as His Father and this is another proof of His deity and divinity. The Bible says that Joseph was a just man (Matthew 1:19). If Joseph had had carnal knowledge of Mary before Christ was conceived, he would not have thought of putting her away, and would not be qualified to be referred to as a “just man”. On the other hand, if Mary as an espoused virgin had conceived through a man before her marriage, it would have been right for Joseph to put her away (Deuteronomy 22:13-21; Matthew 19:9). In fact, the angel of God bore witness that the seed conceived in Mary was by the power of the Holy Ghost (Luke 1:35).

**Question 3: State why Christ is different from other descendants of Adam.**

God bears witness to His approved ministers in various ways. Some of the signs that were recorded concerning Christ were also recorded concerning a few other messengers of God. A voice from heaven witnessed to the ministry of Christ, but that was not as unique as the virgin birth because a similar witness was recorded in the ministry of Moses (Numbers 12:5-8; Matthew 17:5). An angel announced the conception of Christ, but we also know that the birth of Samson and John the Baptist were announced by angels (Judges 13:2-5; Luke 1: 11-15, 26-33).

However, Moses, Samson and John the Baptist had earthly fathers. They were all descendants of Adam’s fallen race. The virgin birth is therefore a unique sign from God,

conferred on Christ and Him alone. No other living soul had ever or will ever be conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Christ was born in Bethlehem. Angels announced His birth to shepherds and wise-men travelled a great distance to worship Him in the manger. As He grew up, He entered into public ministry to fulfill the purpose of His birth. He traversed the land, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing those that were oppressed of the devil. But many people did not believe and receive Him despite His invitation to all. At the appointed time, He went to the cross to die for humanity.

**THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION, DEATH AND BURIAL** (Genesis 3:14,15; Psalm 22:6-8,16,18; Isaiah 53:36; Matthew 16:21-28; 20:17-19; 27:57-66; Mark 8:31-38; 9:1; 15:24-47; Luke 9:22-27; 18:31-34; 23:33-56; John 19:18-30; Hebrews 2:9). The virgin birth is not the only historical event that confirms the deity of Christ; His crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection from the dead state even more. The Old Testament is replete with prophecies concerning Christ's crucifixion. And these prophecies found fulfillment in the event on the cross. Christ also foretold His crucifixion and death while He was yet with His disciples.

Christ was despised and rejected of men. As He hung on the cross, passers-by railed on Him and wagged their tongues. Even His supposed friends forsook and abandoned Him at the darkest hour of His life. A crown of thorns was plaited and placed on His head; stripes from barbed whips were laid on His back. His crucifiers drove long spikes through his hands and feet and pierced His side; He was wounded all over, all because of our transgressions. Apostle Peter confirmed the verity of Christ's crucifixion in His defence before some religious bigots (Acts 4:5-10). He told the audience, made up of the high priest and his kindred that the impotent man got healed through "**the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead**". Apostle Paul also said the same things (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

Christ's crucifixion opens the floodgate to temporal and eternal blessings for man. Through it, we have access to God's rich blessings. Believers in Christ are made inheritors of heaven's inexhaustible store. Through His death, Christ purchased for us forgiveness and full salvation (Luke 23:33, 34), sanctification and holiness (Hebrews 13:12), a home in heaven (Luke 23:43), healing for all (Isaiah 53:5), deliverance from, and defeat of principalities and powers (Colossians 2: 14, 15), cancellation of every curse (Galatians 3: 13), full and perfect redemption. (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14).

To be Christ-like, believers must reckon themselves to be crucified with Christ, live a new life of righteousness, complete separation from the world (Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20; 5:24; 6:14).

**Question 4: What is the purpose of Christ's death and what are the benefits available to us?**

Jesus Christ, the Pascal Lamb of God hung on the cross at Calvary until He gave up the ghost. Soldiers on guard certified Him dead before His body was released to Simon of Arimathea for burial. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses witnessed His burial in a sepulchre that had been prepared for that purpose. His death became a reference point for the past, present and future events. In history, reference is made to BC (Before Christ) and A.D (After the Death of Christ).

**PROOFS OF CHRIST'S BODILY RESURRECTION**  
(Matthew 28:2-15; 27:66; Mark 16: 1-11; Luke 24: 1-12,39; John 20:1-18; Acts 1:3; 2:23,24; 10:39-41; Romans 1:4).

Following the great earthquake and descent of the angel that rolled back the stone from the mouth of the grave, soldiers on guard **"became as dead men"** And Jesus Christ arose! Forces of death and hell could not hold Him; powers on earth, underneath the earth and in heaven were incapable of preventing the King of kings from resurrecting as He had prophesied (Matthew 20: 19; Luke 24:7). To the women who visited the graveyard early the third day, the angel said, **"He is not here: for he is risen, as he said.**

**Come, see the place where the Lord lay...And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him” (Matthew 28:6,9).**

**Question 5: What are the proofs of Christ's resurrection?**

The bodily resurrection of Christ is mentioned 104 times in the New Testament. What are the proofs? First, soldiers who were detailed to watch the tomb for fear that the disciples might **“come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, he is risen from the dead”** (Matthew 27:64) knew that Christ's resurrection was a physical reality. Second, the Jews knew that the resurrection was not a concocted story. It cost them a great deal of money to conceal the miracle and stop the soldiers from spreading the news (Matthew 28:11-15). Third, for several years, the apostles, proclaimed the resurrection in Jerusalem, the city where Jesus was crucified and rose from the dead after three days. The story of the resurrection has since the historic event spread unchallenged. 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 to challenge him. Fourth, in Mark's gospel, Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene who went and told Peter and others (Mark 16:10, 11). Again, Jesus appeared to two of the disciples on their way to Emmaus (24: 13-31). By far, the greatest proof of Christ's resurrection is His bodily appearance to His disciples at different times. This puts to rest the erroneous doctrine of so-called spiritual resurrection.

Jesus is incomparably greater than any other prophet either before or after Him. If His teaching was the only thing that made Him the Son of God, He would not be different. Founders of other religions taught good human principles as well. If ascetic life, miracles, wonders and signs were the only things that made Thomas to call Jesus **“My Lord and my God,”** founders of other religions would also be qualified to be called “Lord” because they too lived ascetic lives and worked signs and wonders. But, no; the virgin birth and resurrection made all the difference.

Christ is “**declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead**” (Romans 1:4). He is not only the Son of God but also the Saviour and Judge of the whole world, of the living and the dead, Jews and Gentiles, Barbarians and Greeks, Hindus and traditional worshippers. Whoever therefore shall call upon Him today shall be saved.

**PARTAKING IN CHRIST’S REDEMPTIVE BENEFITS** (I John 4:2, 3; 1 Corinthians 15: 1-4; John 3: 16; Romans 10:9, 10; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Hebrews 12: 14; Revelation 14:4).

The doctrine of Christ’s virgin birth, crucifixion, death, burial and bodily resurrection is the foundation of our Christian faith and hope of spending eternity with God. Rejection of this truth disqualifies the unbeliever from partaking in the redemptive benefits which Christ has procured for us. “**And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world**” (I John 4:3). Similarly, nobody gets saved and blessed by arguing with God on the tenets of Christ’s crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection. “**Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which... ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved... that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures**” (I Corinthians 15: 1-4).

**Question 6: How can sinners and believers partake of Christ’s redemptive benefits?**

To partake of the redemptive benefits in Christ sinners must repent of their sins, believe that Jesus is the Son of God and receive Him as Saviour and Lord. “**That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved**” (Romans 10: 9). After obtaining salvation by faith in His redemptive name,



the believer needs to henceforth live in the consciousness, comfort and assurance of His divine presence revealed by His name - Immanuel. The church as well as the individual believer is required to live a holy lifestyle.

Obviously, Christ's crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection accomplished our salvation and made God's grace available and obtainable. Apart from getting saved and living a holy life based on God's precepts, every believer is required to proclaim this saving truth for others to be saved and established in the truth.

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

<b>MORNING</b>			<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Mark	1	Psalms	87-88
TUE	“	2-3	“	89
WED	“	4	“	90-91
THUR	“	5	“	92-94
FRI	“	6	“	95-98
SAT	“	7	“	99-102
SUN	“	8	“	103-104

# 545 Lesson

## THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

**TEXT: Galatians 5:22, 23; John 15:1-8**

**MEMORY VERSE: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Galatians 5:22,23).**

**I**n Christendom, there is emphasis on Christian character. Everyone appears to know that the true New Testament Christian life has a striking manifestation of a Christ-like pattern of character. The Scripture gives this character-pattern a pungent expression in Peter's second epistle: **“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ”** (2 Peter 1:5-8).

**Question 1: What is meant by the expression “fruit of the Spirit?”**

These true Christian virtues are collectively called **“the fruit of the Spirit”** and couched in the best words in Galatians 5:22, 23. Here we have the exact definition of the total Christian personality and a beautiful resume of Christ's Sermon on the Mount presented in a most digestible form. It is the character of Christ reproduced in the Christian through the Holy Spirit. It is as though all New Testament principles are wrapped up there.

Some people produce the fruit of human efforts or what may be best described as “works of the human spirit”. Such people strive, endeavour, and by a great exercise of the will produce some fruits - good culture, courtesy, calmness (outward), kindness, endurance - which are only commendable to fellow human beings. But these products of natural effort are not the fruit of the Spirit revealed in Scripture. They come from man's labour. They are more of

man's invention. That is why we call them fruits of human effort or works of the human spirit.

Works belong to the workshop, whereas fruits belong to the garden. Fruit is the silent growth of the abounding life, whereas, work comes from the skillful factory hand. The presence of fruit - the fruit of the Spirit - assigns the grace of the Christian character to the true source - God.

**THE NATURE OF THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT** (Galatians 5:22, 23; Ephesians 5:9).

In direct contrast to the works of the flesh, Paul the apostle, by inspiration states the nine fruits produced by the Holy Spirit in the believer. They are: **“love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance ...”** (Galatians 5:22, 23). They are collectively called “the fruit”, implying that none is without the other and cannot be whole without others. Therefore, everyone who claims to have the Spirit of God must possess “the fruit” in its entirety.

Being the kernel of Christian character and embodiment of all virtues, a thorough analysis of each fruit is here commended:

First, love (1 Corinthians 13; Romans 13:10; John 13:34; I John 4:7-12). It is interesting to note that the first of these fruits is love.

<b>Question 2: How does love embrace all other fruits of the Spirit?</b>
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In reality, love is the very basic essential life of the living Christ which expresses itself in all the nine fruits. A Christian writer once wrote how the eight other fruits of the Spirit are anchored in love. He said: “Joy is love exulting; peace is love reposing; longsuffering is love enduring; gentleness is love refined; meekness is love with a bowed head; gentleness is love in action; temperance is true self-love, and faith is love confiding; so that the whole sum of Christian living is just loving.”

Second, joy (Isaiah 61:10; Jeremiah 15: 16; John 16:22; Acts 8:8; 1 Peter 1:8). Joy is more than happiness. It comes from the Lord and is anchored in Him. Jesus is the source of joy. The way into this joy is repentance and practical confession of faith in Christ. Money, mansions, might or material wealth never gives this joy. They all give transient happiness which is not better than misery. The book of Acts talks about people being filled with joy in the Holy Ghost. After Samaria received salvation, “**there was great joy in that city**” (Acts 8:6). Paul said, “**the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost**” (Romans 14.17).

This joy transcends troubles and challenges of life; it leaps over tough circumstances and abides through problems, pains and even death. It is unspeakable!

Third, **peace** (Philippians 4:7; Romans 5:1; Psalm 119: 165; Isaiah 26:3). Peace is regarded as one of the supreme attainments. It is the state whereby the soul and spirit of man is so imbued with the presence of God’s gracious Spirit that he is not easily provoked. Peace is the selfless, self-giving, self-losing, self-forgetting and self-sacrificing love that is manifest in spite of all adversities of life. Jesus is the source of true peace. He is called the Prince of Peace. If the heart is open to receive the risen Christ, He comes in, speaking peace - just as He came again and again to His frightful disciples after His resurrection saying, “**Peace be unto you**”. The peace He imparts is the quiet, potent, gracious attitude of serenity and goodwill that meets the bitterness of others with good cheer and repose. This peace is calm in crises, untroubled in trial and determined in disaster. The peace of Christ transcends trouble; it is the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Fourth, longsuffering (1 Corinthians 13:4; Colossians 1:11; 3: 12; 2 Peter: 3:9; Exodus 34:6). Longsuffering is more commonly called endurance or patience. Longsuffering is the powerful capacity of selfless love to bear all things and continue in adverse situations. It is a generous willingness to try to understand awkward people, disturbing events

and unwelcome situations that God allows to come your way. This quality of character was beautifully displayed in Jesus Christ “**who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame...**” (Hebrews 12:2). Longsuffering possesses the benefits of discipline, development and direction.

Fifth, **gentleness** (1 Thessalonians 2:7, 11; 2 Timothy 2:24; Psalm 18:35; James 3: 17). Gentleness comes fifth in the package of the “**fruit of the Spirit**”. When love, joy, peace and long suffering abound in the Christian’s heart, he is characterized by an unusual but essentially divine gentle lifestyle. Gentleness is God’s enduring quality in the centuries of His dealing with man. The gentleness of God has drawn man to Him with a bond stronger than steel. Gentleness, the fruit of the Spirit is different from natural gentleness which is exclusively enjoyed by loved ones. Gentleness which grows out of the spirit is enjoyed by all - our friends as well as our persecutors, revilers, scorners, scoffers and all who speak evil against us. Gentleness is loving, appreciating, caring, tending, accommodating and correcting a friend, child or partner in a firm manner.

Sixth, **goodness** (Genesis 45:5-8, 15; 1 Samuel 24:17; Acts 7:60; 1 Thessalonians 5: 15). Goodness is God’s special peculiarity and He puts a great emphasis upon it. When Jesus was physically in the world it was reported in striking simplicity that He “**went about doing good**”. Goodness, the peculiar characteristic of Christ, comes from the life that has received of God’s abundant grace. The Christian whose life reflects goodness is one with a noble purpose, strong character, reliable conduct and trustworthy lifestyle. He is good, gracious, generous, gentle, peaceful and joyful and in the business of making others happy. Goodness takes away any sense of pride or patronage.

Seventh, **faith** (1 Samuel 17:37; Psalm 37:3, 5; Isaiah 26:3, 4; Psalm 125:1). Faith, in its general sense, is our basis for belief. It is the divinely implanted principle of inward and wholehearted confidence, trust in and reliance on God and all that He says. This faith makes the believer rely on

God, exercise confidence and assurance in the church, believe the leadership of the church and the brethren.

The basis of our faith is love. The Christian who is full of faith, loves to the point of trusting and yielding himself faithfully to the service of the Church and his fellowmen. Faith therefore is active. It searches for any hint of honour in others - men, the Church and God. Faith pushes on, perseveres and remains loyal even when there are reverses and disappointments.

Eighth, **meekness** (Luke 6:29; 1 Peter 3:4; Galatians 6:1; Numbers 12:3). Meekness is the very true nature and character of Christ. Every heaven-conscious Christian needs to understand biblical and Christ like meekness. The meek is gentle, pliant, flexible but firm and frank. He is strong, courageous and mild. He uses his strength and courage to defend the glory of God. The meek sees the good virtue in others and gives his best to help the brethren to live a happy life. The meek Christian is submissive, quiet, kind, soft and patient especially with the weak.

Ninth, **temperance** (Titus 2:2; Proverbs 16:32; 2 Peter 1:5-7; James 3:2). Temperance is also called self-control, moderation or self-restraint. Temperance seems to be the last and crowning fruit of God's Spirit. It is the outward sign of a well-disciplined life. Temperance means bringing the whole person - body, soul and spirit - under subjection and to do just what Christ wants him to do. That implies that the believer's total personality - mind, emotion and will - is at Christ's command. The entire body's appetites, drives, desire, instincts are governed by God.

**Question 3: Explain the nature of any of the fruit of the Spirit you can remember.**

**CONDITIONS OF FRUIT-BEARING** (John 15:1-8; Psalm 1:1-3; John 12:24; Romans 7:4).

Good as the fruit of the Spirit is, some Christians still find it missing in their lives. Many think it is impossible for someone who has not been baptized in the Holy Spirit to

bear the fruit of the Spirit. But this is wrong because the chain of virtues in Galatians 5:22, 23 is simply referred to as the “fruit of the Spirit” and not ‘fruit of the baptism in the Holy Spirit’. The fact is that the virtues that are collectively so-called come from the Spirit of Christ that indwells the believer at the point he or she receives Christ as Lord and Saviour. This, therefore, explains that the bearing of the fruit is conditioned upon the possession of the salvation experience. At salvation, the Holy Spirit cultivates the ground of the heart of the saved soul to bring forth His fruit.

**Question 4: Mention some of the conditions for fruit bearing.**

Mere membership of a church does not qualify anyone to bear the fruit of the Spirit, neither does tithing our income or being involved in church activities guarantee the bearing of the fruit of the Spirit. The journey to possessing the fruit begins with being born again. This means therefore that everyone that would bear fruit must first establish a living relationship with Christ, the Vine. He or she must be a branch grafted into the Vine that supplies the life and nourishment (John 15:4, 5).

Second, there is the necessity of abiding in the Vine (verse 4). We must remain and be close to Christ to continue to bear fruit. The power to overcome sin, do good and nourish in the graces of Christ comes from Him. **“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing”** (John 15:4, 5).

Third, we must partake in the divine nature. Every living branch partakes of the nature of the vine and continually does so to remain alive. God’s nature of holiness must manifest in our lives before we can bear fruits unto holiness.

Fourth, we must hold fast to the Vine so as not to be plucked off by the violent efforts of storms and winds. We

must walk and hold fast to the Master. Those who follow Him ‘afar” stand the danger of being removed from the source of their strength and security.

Fifth, believers who wish to bring forth fruits unto righteousness must, as it were, be planted by God’s **“brooks of honey and butter”** (Job 20: 17). For them the glorious Lord will be unto them **“a place of broad rivers and streams”** (Isaiah 33: 21) where they drink consistently to the full.

Sixth, death to the old life (John 12:24). The old life is an impediment to growth in grace and fruitfulness. Sinful appetites and passions inhibit God’s grace so that it does not find full expression. Therefore, those who hope to flourish in God’s grace must put to death the old life of corruption (Colossians 3:5).

Seventh, fellowship and communion (Romans 7:4). It is a natural prerequisite that there cannot be fruitfulness in marriage without the union and fellowship of the couple. In the same breath, believers who wish to bear fruits of grace must be in regular and constant fellowship with Christ, the Bridegroom.

**BENEFITS OF THE FRUIT-BEARING LIFE** (John 15:7, 8; Psalm 92:13,14; Ezekiel 47:12).

The fruit-bearing Christian is beautiful in the sight of God. He exudes fragrance that attracts God’s commendation and blessing. Unlike ‘branches’ that are severed from the Vine resulting in withering away, believers who remain with the Lord and consequently bear fruits enjoy abundance of the juice coming from the Vine.

**Question 5: Mention some of the benefits of the fruit-bearing Christian life.**

Christ, in the fifteenth chapter of John, commends fruit-bearing Christians and condemns fruitless ones. Among the many benefits of the fruit-bearing Christian life are: one, answer to prayers. **“If ye abide in me, and my words**



**abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you**” (John 15:7). There is a pledge that heaven would listen to such believers as abide in Christ and are fruitful in Him - His ears are open to the righteous.

Two, God will be glorified in them. What more honour can be earned by a child of God than that His Father should be glorified in Him and he becomes His **“workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works”**?

Three, that the believer bears fruits of grace, righteousness and good works makes him or her like trees (of righteousness) planted by the Lord where the glory of His grace is displayed.

Four, such shall be called disciples of Christ and shall be identified with the Lord - **“so shall ye be my disciples”**. By bearing fruit in Christ shall men know that we are His followers indeed; for by their fruits **“ye shall know them”**.

Finally, age shall not be a barrier to their fruitfulness. **“Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age they shall be fat and flourishing”** (Psalm 92:13, 14). They shall consistently enjoy God’s riches and abundance.

**DAILY BIBLE READING**

	<b>MORNING</b>		<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Mark	9	Psalms	105
TUE	“	10	“	106
WED	“	11	“	107
THUR	“	12	“	108-109
FRI	“	13	“	110-113
SAT	“	14	“	114-118
SUN	“	15	“	119

# 546 Lesson

## CONSISTENT CHRISTIAN LIVING

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord’ (1 Corinthians 15:58).

**TEXT: Genesis 5:22-24; 17:1; Ephesians 6:10-18**

One of the negative end-time prophecies of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is that the love of many Christians shall wax cold. Its fulfillment, as the Christendom is presently witnessing, spells grave consequences. It is obvious now that many who were once zealous and committed to the Lord are losing their first love and enthusiasm with which they served God. This is because the god of this world has enticed them with materialism into spiritual sleep and inertia, and sowed tares of discord, misfortune and sickness into their lives.

Manipulated by the enemy, these Christians lose their conviction as their fellowship with God and His people become irregular. They have consequently become unstable and unpredictable in character, and unfaithful to God and His church. Outright backsliding has become rampant. With this development, Christ, who always knows what to do, charges fervent believers and the church to wake up to their responsibility of reviving despondent, weak, lukewarm and inconsistent believers. **“Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent ...”** (Revelation 3:2, 3). Saved from sin or restored from backsliding, the believer needs to maintain a consistent righteous life to qualify to enter heaven.

**THE CHARACTER OF HEAVENLY PILGRIMS** (Genesis 5:22-24; 17: 1; Hebrews 11:5, 6, 13-16; Philippians 3:20).

**Question 1: State the indispensable step to a consistent Christian living.**

Enoch, son of Jared and the father of Methuselah, is mentioned in our text as one who maintained a consistent, God-pleasing lifestyle throughout his life-time. According to scripture account, Enoch knew God at the age of 65 and he walked with God for 300 years. That he lived in the Old Testament period before the Cross, strips inconsistent believers of excuses they give for rising and falling in the Christian faith. Enoch lived in this same wicked world infested with demons as we do today.

Moreover, with the death and resurrection of Christ at Calvary, every earnest seeker can live a consistent Christian life. If it is not possible to live a righteous life, God would not have called Abraham to it (Genesis 17:1). However, the call to salvation precedes the call to consistent Christian living and perfection. Abraham had first responded to the call to come out of sin unto salvation and separation before this time. None is on pilgrimage to heaven until he or she is born again or genuinely saved from sin. Pilgrimages to holy lands and engagement in religious rites and duties do not set the religionist free from sin. Sinners and backsliders need to repent of their sins and receive Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Saviour to be free from sin.

**Question 2: Why should believers live consistent Christian lives before the omniscient God?**

Set free from sin that binds and inhibits spiritual progress, the believer begins to live a life of victory over sin, the flesh, self, the world and the devil. He is careful to **“walk with God”** and **“walk before God”** in righteousness. These phrases suggest that the believer consciously walks side by side with, lives and does everything under the watchful, never-blinking eyes of God (Psalm 139:1-12). As sane human beings do not want to expose their nakedness before the camera, so also the believer would not want to do evil while the omniscient and omnipresent God watches. These attributes of God together with the fact that He is the final Judge who knows every detail of our lives should instill holy fear in the believer and enable him to live a consistent Christian life.

Besides living in the consciousness of God's presence, maintaining a consistent Christian life requires courage and faith. The heroes of faith grouped with Enoch and Abraham in Hebrews chapter 11, also regarded as **"strangers and pilgrims on earth"** all had their problems, difficulties, temptations, trials and challenges. Rather than give in, they exercised their faith in God and were victorious. The challenges we face as believers will not last; we will continue to overcome if we lean on the Lord.

**CAUSES OF INCONSISTENCY AND BACKSLIDING**  
(Matthew 24: 12; Genesis 19:26; 2 Timothy 4:10; 2:16-18; Zephaniah 1:12; 1 Timothy 6:9, 10),

**Question 3: What are the causes of inconsistency of believers in the faith?**

The heroes of faith focused their desire and attention on the city of God. **"But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city"** (Hebrews 11:16).

Just as they did not allow their challenges to overcome them, they were not divided in heart and aspirations like Lot's wife. They forgot the sinful world and lifestyle that existed in it when they came out. To this end, Paul the Apostle exhorted believers to set their affections on things above where Christ is, Demas was able to return to the world because he loved it just like some believers who have not burned the bridge that linked them with the world. They want to enjoy the best of two worlds. But Christ says no one can serve two masters and fervently **love** both at the same time. It is futile to try it. Therefore, those who seek to maintain a consistent life of holiness with God must be crucified to the world.

False doctrines are deadly to the spiritual health of the Christian. Beliefs in purgatory, unconditional security of saved souls, continuing to live on earth without any hope of going to heaven, etc. engender licentious, careless living. The antidote to being poisoned by false doctrines is

diligence in acquiring the word of God in both personal and congregational study of the Word. **“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some”** (2 Timothy 2:15-18).

The devil may allow a man to start the journey to heaven but he will do all he can to obstruct him from making heaven. In these last days, he uses scoffers to dissuade believers from continuing on the path of righteousness (2 Peter 3:3-11).

The global economic recession is another factor that can divert the attention of the heaven-bound pilgrim. Many people will attempt to do a lot of things for economic survival. Many would even dare to deny the faith in an attempt to survive in these last days. But the Bible has warned; **“Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth”** (Luke 12:15).

Men are apt to forget God during promotion and prosperity (2 Chronicles 25: 14). It is possible for a fervent believer to begin to become cold gradually until he loses all the good virtues he once had. Other causes of inconsistency in Christian living are fear of men (1 Samuel 15:24), evil association (1 Kings 11:4), stony hearts (Luke 8: 13), spiritual laziness and emptiness (Zechariah 1:12), unbelief (John 6:64, 66) love of the world (2 Timothy 4:10, lust of the flesh (Proverbs 7:6-27) and quest for materialism (1 Timothy 6: 10). Although Abraham was ninety-nine years old, he still needed to walk consistently before God for seventy-six more years. In view of what had happened to Abraham in the past and what lay ahead of him in the future, God needed His firm resolve to walk consistently before Him. His being brought into the realization of what God expected of him provided him with a great impetus to

consciousness, consistency and perseverance as it does to believers today.

**CALL TO CONSISTENCY AND CONTINUITY IN HOLINESS.** (Genesis 17: 1; Matthew 5:48; 1 Thessalonians 4:7; 1 Peter 1: 15, 16; Luke 1:74, 75; Acts 11:23; Galatians 5: 1; Ephesians 4:14; Philippians 1:27; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 2 Peter 3:17; Hebrews 12:14; 13:12, 13).

**Question 4: Why is it necessary for believers to respond to God's call to consistent holy living?**

God's demand for a perfect lifestyle and consistent holy living is not limited to any generation. God is holy: He desires as well as demands that all who worship and walk with Him live holily. **"Be ye therefore perfect,"** Christ demands of every Christian, "even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). As He called Abraham to lead a perfect life so also has He called every believer to this same experience. **"For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness"** (1 Thessalonians 4:7). God's call to perfection or holy living is not limited to a particular day, week, month or period of time in our lives; we are to walk **"in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life"** (Luke 1:75). You can experience this holiness, sanctification or purity of heart through prayer and faith in the blood of Christ.

**Question 5: How then can a believer maintain a consistent walk with the Lord?**

Our text gives us the antidote to backsliding. **"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might"** (Ephesians 6:10). Believers are enjoined to be strong in the Lord and to make use of divine ability. God's power is strong enough to keep all His children (1 Peter 1:5). It is the duty of every believer to ensure that he is strong at all times. A wise believer will ensure that he does not have any careless moment. Many believers have fallen because the enemy attacked them in their careless moments. But it is the will of God that every believer is strong in the Lord. And this requires that the believer knows the devices of the enemy, take the entire spiritual armour provided by Christ and constantly engage in spiritual warfare. **"For we wrestle not against flesh**

**and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places”** (Ephesians 6:12).

Principal agents - high-ranking wicked spirits and demons - have been mandated by the devil to wrestle with believers with the aim of weakening and if possible, overcoming them. No Christian can afford to trifle with the devil and his cohorts. The believer is in constant warfare with the devil and his agents. The devil is conscious of the fact that there is an on-going battle between his host and God's people.

Another thing that calls for constancy in the spiritual strength of the believer is the subtlety of the enemy. The methods of the devil are so complex that the believer needs to put on the whole armour of God at all times. The devil is at work night and day trying to entrap, enslave and ruin the careless believer. Consistency is synonymous with putting on the whole armour of God. The believer who constantly lives the victorious Christian life needs not fear the devil.

You need to remain unchanged as far as your commitment to the truth is concerned. Stand for the truth. Do not compromise. Compromise is sin. We are commanded to put on the breastplate of righteousness. Holiness is a great weapon in spiritual warfare. Holiness is a shield. It protects from backsliding. It is not possible to maintain a consistent walk with God without living a consistent life of holiness.

The Bible also commands believers to be consistent in winning souls to the Lord.' Their feet must be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Many believers have wondered why they have found it difficult to live victoriously. Such have forgotten that soul-winning is an important weapon as far as victorious Christian living is concerned. If you have discovered that you experienced more victory when you were actually consistently involved in evangelism than now when you have lost your passion for winning the lost to the Lord, it is an indication that you have lost one piece of your armours for victory. Also, you need to make use of the shield of faith. Develop your

faith I always. None can live the consistent Christian life without walking by faith.

Prayer is an important weapon for consistent Christian living. The Bible enjoins us to pray **“always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints”**. The believer who wants to walk with God consistently needs to pray frequently. He will be able to “stand” unconquered by the enemy. Gluttony and talkativeness must not shut the believer’s mouth from praying. Also, overmuch sleep leads to spiritual poverty. Men ought always to pray and not to faint. The righteous praying Christian is a powerful Christian. The believer who adds fasting to prayer of faith becomes impregnable; he will be able to abide in the will and word of God and have divine energy with which to do exploits for God. After all, the goal of consistent Christian having is to bear fruits of righteousness and soul-winning to the glory of God.

**THE REWARD FOR CONSISTENT CHRISTIAN LIVING** (Exodus 19: 5; Matthew 5: 8; Numbers 32:12; Joshua.14:12-14, Numbers 23: 21-24, Daniel 1: 8, 19, 20, Ruth 1.16; 4: 13-22; Philippians 3: 7, 8; Psalm 103: 17, 18; Matthew 24:13).

Believers who maintain a consistent lifestyle of purity will be peculiar treasures unto the Lord. They will experience increasing abiding presence of God. The pure in heart shall see God and shall receive divine intervention of answers to prayers. They shall see the move of God in their lives and ministry. They shall also see God in heaven.

To grow in this experience demands that the believer must wholeheartedly follow the Lord, constantly examines his Christian life and conduct to make sure they are scripture-based, sincerely renews his vow to walk with and serve the Lord. He must be ready to deny self, carry his cross and forego even legitimate things that inhibits his entire consecration to the Lord and his holy pilgrimage to heaven. Joshua, Daniel, Ruth, Paul the Apostle, etc. were consistent and faithful in their walk with God and



they were blessed and used for the glory of God. So also were Enoch and Abraham in our text. Enoch in particular was translated to glory without seeing death, giving hope of eternal bliss in heaven to every believer who lives a consistent holy life. It is obvious that those who do not maintain a consistent holy and obedient lifestyle will not be able to enter heaven (Matthew 7:21-23). But the believer who is steadfast and faithful in God's service will be blessed on earth and rewarded in heaven by the Lord.

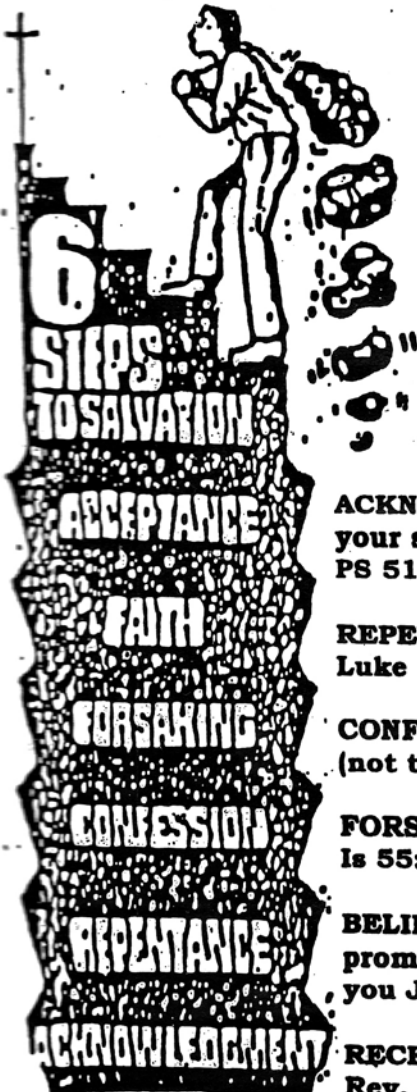
**DAILY BIBLE READING**

<b>MORNING</b>			<b>EVENING</b>	
MON	Mark	16	Psalms	120-126
TUE	Luke	1	"	127-134
WED	"	2	"	135-136
THUR	"	3	"	137-139
FRI	"	4	"	140-142
SAT	"	5	"	143-145
SUN	"	6	"	146-147

**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: 188-21 Suffolk Drive, St. Albans, NY 11412 (347) 200-3301
4. New Jersey: 23-39 South 20 Street, Irvington (973) 202-3989
5. Staten Island: 144-146 Morningstar Road, Staten Island, NY 10303 (917) 238-2258
6. Spring Valley: 95 North Main street, Suite 1 (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

#### **MONDAY BIBLE STUDY**

Rockland County	7:00 PM
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#### **TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY**

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

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

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

All the Church Locations except Rockland County	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	11:00 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**