

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

VOLUME 43

"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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BEGINNING OF OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES

547 Lesson

THE SPIES' ENCOUNTER WITH RAHAB

MEMORY VERSE: "And they said unto Joshua, Truly the LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the in-habitants of the country do faint because of us" (Joshua 2:24).

TEXT: Joshua 2:1-24

In the previous chapter, God had given Joshua, the son of Nun, a divine mandate to lead the children of Israel across Jordan to the Promised Land. In response, he immediately charged the Israelites to prepare to pass over river Jordan. Joshua wasted no time in drawing strategies preparatory to their onslaught on the first city beyond the river Jordan.

Our lesson centers on the encounter of the two men sent to spy out the city of Jericho and bring information about the condition and status of the city. We shall observe Joshua's commission to the spies, their encounter with Rahab and miraculous escape from their enemies. We shall also see Rahab's account of the palpable fear of people in the land, and her wisdom in negotiating her security and that of her family. It is remarkable that by a twist of destiny and great grace, this woman, described as a 'harlot' in this account was later to be celebrated in the New Testament as a great believer (Hebrews 11 :31) and one whose faith proved itself by good works (James 2:25) and brought her into relationship with the chosen people of God.

Question 1: Who was Rahab and what lesson does her salvation teach us?

Rahab was a sinful woman from a pagan background, who was depicted as a harlot. She could be likened to "**a woman in the city, which was a sinner...**" (Luke 7:37). yet because of her faith, abandoned Canaan's gods. Having recognized the true God of heaven, she joined believers to serve Him (Hebrews 11:31). Her faith and decision earned

her a place in the ancestry of the Messiah (Matthew 1:5,6). The salvation of Rahab illustrates that even while God is in the process of judgment, any person who sincerely repents, **"feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him"** (Acts 10:35).

JOSHUA'S DISCRETION AND DIVINE INTERVENTION (Joshua 2:1-7; Numbers 13:1-21; Psalm 37:23; 32:8; 107:7; Exodus 33: 14; Ecclesiastes 10: 10; Proverbs 8: 12; 2 Chronicles 2: 12)

"And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land. Even Jericho..." (Joshua 2: 1). Joshua was one of the twelve spies that Moses sent to spy the land of Canaan. He understood the benefits of knowing the strengths and weaknesses of the enemy; he therefore sent two men to survey Jericho and bring the account to him. As a military general and strategist, he was careful in taking the right steps well ahead so as not to stumble at the threshold of his leadership. As a commander-in-chief, it was not proper that Joshua should venture over Jordan while completely oblivious of the strength and posture of his enemies. He therefore hoped that from the report of the two men, he would be able to take the necessary measures in taking-over the land of Jericho.

Question 2: What lessons do we learn from Joshua's prudence and the spies' response?

Great men and leaders sometimes gauge society's mood through a select few. They do so by using other people's opinion and experiences - particularly using what such people see and hear on development in society. Armed with key facts, they are better placed to take appropriate decisions that will affect others. Christian workers and leaders should know and understand the condition of members in their congregations, to enable them minister appropriately unto them. Besides, those that should be entrusted with sensitive ministerial responsibilities must be people of impeccable character and uncompromising stand, just as it was applicable to the spies that Joshua sent to Jericho. Second, Joshua's action teaches that

faith in God's promise and power should not cause us to abandon our responsibility and diligence. The Lord want saints to always pray and be watchful. Joshua was sure of God's presence and power, yet sent men before him to view the land. Third, the prompt response of the spies to this hazardous assignment calls to question the commitment and submission of many believers today. The two men in our text put their lives at risk; they ventured into service in obedience to their leader.

There is obvious divine intervention in the spies' course to the house of Rahab, rightly confirming the scripture that **"the steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighted in his way"** [Psalm 37:23]. The two spies got over Jordan into Jericho, a distance of about twelve kilometres and "came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there". Here, a *harlot called* Rahab must have been a woman who had a negative image, but eventually repented. Similarly, Simon in the New Testament was referred to as a leper who received cleansing (Matthew 26:6). Christ also talks of publicans and harlots entering into the Kingdom of God and having access to the privileges of the Kingdom, while self-righteous hypocrites are shut out (Matthew 21:31). We learn from here that no matter the magnitude of our sin, God's grace and mercy are capable of cancelling it (Isaiah I: 18).

Prior to the arrival of the spies at Jericho, God had prepared the ground for their security through a woman who was a sinner, to prove that He can defend His people through the most unexpected means. Those at the center of God's will should be assured: He will look after them, to ensure fulfillment of His glorious end. As long as we acknowledge God in our ways, He will direct our paths (Proverbs 3:6). He hid Jeremiah and Baruch from the swords of the king of Judah (Jeremiah 36: 19-26). Believers today should be assured of the protection and preserving power of the Almighty God.

RAHAB'S FAITH AND WISDOM (Joshua 2:8-20; Hebrews 11:31; James 2:18-26; Matthew 21:31; Isaiah 1:18; Ephesians 2:8,9; Colossians 3: 19; Revelations 21:8)

"And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof; And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you" (Joshua 2:8,9). Rahab's faith in the God of Israel dictated her response and deeds to the enemies of her nation. She could have handed them over to the authorities for execution; instead, she protected and took care of them. Her action was borne out of the fact that she believed in the Lord. She declared to the spies that **"our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath"** (Joshua 2:11). The New Testament commentary states that **"by faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace"** (Hebrews 11:31). So, it was by faith that her shameful past was forgiven. The same mercy still awaits every repentant sinner who looks away from the reproach of his sins unto the crucified Christ on the Cross {John 3:14,15}.

Question 3: What was the basis of Rahab's faith?

Rahab's faith was mainly a product of the testimonies of the wonders of the God of Israel which was common knowledge in Jericho (Joshua 2: 10). She turned this information to her advantage by believing in the mercy of the God of Israel. This underscores the power of testimonies of God's mighty works among His people on evangelism and church growth. Believers in all local assemblies must earnestly seek God's sincere manifestations in His church today in order to advance the frontiers of the gospel (John 4:48).

Rahab showed her guests exceptional hospitality. She welcomed them despite the fact that she knew their mission was preparatory to their take-over of Jericho. Knowing that the city was doomed, she believed in the God of Israel and cleverly negotiated her own salvation. Rahab's action was not only to save herself and her household, it was indeed an act of God to also preserve the spies. To ensure security of the spies, she quickly took

them onto the roof of the house and covered them with stalks of flax. The king of Jericho had reason to fear when a dreaded enemy nation was at his door. He had reason to demand from Rahab that she should bring forth the men, so he could deal with them. Rahab's refusal to hand them over received divine commendation as good works of faith: "**Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way**" (James 2:25)? This act of faith set her above the fear of man, even the wrath of the king. She believed that the God of Israel was the only true God, and that what was already determined upon Canaan would undoubtedly be fulfilled. Her faith would have been dead and inactive if she did not act to save the spies and received the scarlet as a token of salvation. She showed her faith by her works. True believers are known by the courage of faith to risk their lives for a necessary divine cause.

Question 4: Why was Rahab commended and justified by God?

That which justified Rahab in this incident was that she knew the Lord had given Israel the land and that her obligations to God were higher than they were to her nation. If after knowing that God had given Israel the land, it would have been a sin if she had joined those who attempted to hinder them from possessing it.

We also read that she told a lie to the officers who examined her. What shall we say to this? Perhaps she felt that if she had said the truth or kept silent, she would have betrayed the spies, result in a greater sin. She knew no other way of concealing them than by directing the officers to pursue them another way. Being a Canaanite, she had not been taught the evil of lying, God therefore accepted and pardoned the sin of Rahab. But her lying was needless because the scripture commands us not to "**do evil that good may come**" (Romans 3:8). Had she spoken the truth, God who delivered the three Hebrew children out of the fire of Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel out of the den of lions was able to save the spies from the hands of the king and his people (Daniel 3:16,17; 6:21,22). Believers

must avoid lying and not excuse it with Rahab's example. The Bible says: "all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelations 21:8).

THE SPIES' ESCAPE AND REPORT (Joshua 2:21-24; Psalm 124:1-7; 33:18,19; 34:17; Job 5: 19; 2 Peter 2:9; Acts 16:31; Joshua 24:15; Romans 9:1-3; John 3:16-18; Hebrews 2:3)

After soliciting the favor of the spies, Rahab sent them away with sure advice that they will not fall into the hands of their enemies; **"and the pursuers sought them throughout all the way, but found them not"** (Joshua 2:22). Her request for salvation at the hands of the people of Israel was with a proviso: that "she bound the scarlet line in the window". It is obvious that the sinner has a part to play in his own salvation. True, Christ paid a supreme price for our salvation, but to be saved, the sinner must confess his sins and exercise faith in the vicarious death of Christ. Besides, he must forsake all past sins in order to receive God's salvation. The condition for Rahab's safety and of her household was very clear. The scarlet line connote the same role as the sprinkled blood of Israelites' Passover lambs in Egypt, and a pointer to the Savior's precious blood. The second was the assembling together into Rahab's house as many as she wanted saved (Joshua 2: 19). Christ is the ark or 'house' of salvation, therefore nobody can be saved except he or she abides in Him. Continual abiding in the Lord still remains the condition for eternal salvation of all believers in Christ today.

Question 5: What lesson do we learn from Rahab's request for the salvation of her relations?

Those who have received the gift of salvation should seek and pray earnestly for the salvation of their unsaved family members and humanity in general (Acts 16:31; Joshua 24: 15).

Question 6: What does the spies' strict adherence to the safety precaution given them by Rahab teach us as believers?

The spies having been let down by the cord through the window were charged to flee to the mountain and remain there for three days until their pursuers returned. Strict adherence to this precaution was necessary to guarantee the spies' safe return to base. Thus, they escaped the king's wrath and death because they availed themselves of God's salvation through Rahab (Hebrews 2:3). They got back to their camp and reported to Joshua all that happened to them. They were unlike the ten spies in Joshua's mission to Canaan; they were full of faith, positive and true in their report. **"And they said unto Joshua, Truly the LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us"** (Joshua 2:24).

Thus, their report was an encouragement to Joshua and all Israel to march into their possession. As servants and ministers of the gospel, we must be people of faith and regularly provoke the people of God to hope and be ready always for the heavenly Canaan. That the names of the two faithful messengers were not mentioned teaches us never to seek vainglory, applause or commendation from men, while we labor tirelessly for God (Philippians 2:3). Every service rendered in love and out of pure motive to God shall doubtlessly receive divine approval here on earth and an eternal reward in heaven.

DAILY BIBLE READING

MORNING		EVENING	
MON	Luke 7	Proverbs	1-2
TUE	" 8	"	3-4
WED	" 9	"	5-6
THUR	" 10	"	7-8
FRI	" 11	"	9-10
SAT	" 12	"	11-12
SUN	" 13-14	"	13-14

548 Lesson

DIVINE BLUEPRINT FOR CROSSING JORDAN

MEMORY VERSE: "And Joshua said unto the people, sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you" (Joshua 3:5)

TEXT: Joshua 3:1-17

Following the return and faith-inspiring report of the men Joshua sent to spy Jericho and its inhabitants considered in our previous lesson, the children of Israel moved from Shittim to Jordan and pitched their tents there. This progress in their journey to the promised land was greatly influenced by the positive report of the spies, when compared with the retrogression they experienced through the evil report of the ten spies Moses had earlier sent out to inspect the land. Their report: **"Truly the LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us"** was a clear evidence of their faith in God. Relying on the unfailing promises and power of God, they believed that no man or circumstance could hinder them from possessing the land. When the believer shares testimonies based on God's promises, the faith of fellow pilgrims are strengthened and spiritually energized to advance in their journey heavenward. Though their faith had been strengthened and established in the promise of God through the report of the spies, they still needed to be instructed on how to overcome barriers to their successful pilgrimage to the promised Land. The instructions in our text came from the officers, Joshua their captain and God who redeemed them. The officers instructed the people to follow the Ark with reverence by maintaining some distance (Joshua 3:2-4); Joshua commanded them to sanctify themselves (Joshua 3:5) and instructed the priests to bear the Ark and lead the people (Joshua 3:6). God gave to Joshua the blueprint on crossing the river Jordan (3:7-9) and he

made public proclamation of the miracle that God was to perform for them (Joshua 3:9-13). river Jordan is divided as God promised and Israel is brought safely through on their Journey to the Promised Land (Joshua 3:14.17). Like the children of Israel, we will be confronted with obstacles that inhibit our progress in life and pilgrimage to the heavenly city. But such obstacles test our faith in the omnipotence of God, who never fails to fulfill His promises to His people. We will overcome all obstacles that confront us if we follow the divine blueprint for successful pilgrimage the way Israel did as we shall see in this lesson.

SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE: A PRIVILEGE OF GOD'S PEOPLE (Joshua 3: 1-4; Deuteronomy 32: 12; Psalms 78:52-54; 5:8; Isaiah 30:21; John 10: 1-5,27,28)

"And Joshua rose early in the morning and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan he and all the children of Israel and lodged there before they passed over" (Joshua 3: 1).

<p>Question 1: What challenge can Christians and church leaders receive from Joshua's habit of early rising?</p>

Joshua's habit of rising early is worthy of emulation by contemporary Christians and church leaders (Joshua 3:1; 6: 12; 7: 16). This disciplined lifestyle was also found in our Lord Jesus Christ, who rose before dawn to pray (Mark 1:35). Believers who seek to accomplish great things for God should jettison the love of ease which is the cause of many fruitless and wasted lives (Proverbs 6: 10, 11). The prompt response of the children of Israel - men women and children - rising early without prior notice to' embark on their journey is also commendable.

It could be recalled that it was at Shittim that the children of Israel fell into the snare of Moab through the evil counsel of Balaam that brought divine judgment upon them (Numbers 25: 1; 31: 16; 33:49). To avoid a repeat of such misfortune, retain God's abiding presence and be the beneficiaries of the promised miracle of crossing the river, the officers went through the camp and gave

them instructions to follow the Ark, but maintain some distance from it as a sign of their reverence for God. **"And they commanded the people, saying when ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure; come not near unto it..."** (Joshua 3:3-4)

Understandably, the Ark of the Covenant, containing the tables of the law and the mercy-seat, was symbolic of God's presence. So, the word of God is indispensable in the life of every child of God as it is the surest pledge of God's presence and favor. Everyone who seeks to make a successful pilgrimage to heaven must be guided by the Word.

Question 2: What can believers learn from the instructions given to the Israelites before crossing Jordan.

From the instructions given the Israelites to follow but maintain a distance of a thousand yards from the Ark, we learn that God is always ready to lead His people whom He has redeemed. **"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye"** (Psalm 32:8). Basically, God guides His children through His word, Spirit and Spirit-filled servants. In order to be effective leaders of God's people, Christian ministers must therefore hold forth the word of life in the power of the Spirit. All believers must follow leaders who are godly and Christ-like. Besides, God's word must be held in high reverence by all Christians as undue familiarity with it breeds contempt. Reverence for the word of God does not mean we should not read the Bible but depend on some Christian leaders to read and interpret it for us. Everyone is qualified to read, study and apply the word of God to his/her life.

Question 3: Mention the various areas a believer can trust God and receive guidance

The believer needs God's guidance in all areas of his/ her life, such as marriage, career, job, business and residence. **"And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying,**

this is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left” (Isaiah 30:21). Rather than walk by sight and yield to the dictates of the flesh, using yardsticks such as beauty education wealth, eloquence, kindness and fame, as basis for choosing a life partner, for example, the believer should prayerfully seek God's guidance. Many marriages fail today because those involved did not seek God's leading. Also, many Christians who are frustrated in their chosen courses, careers and businesses could have been happier if they waited on the Lord for guidance.

Spiritual guidance is however the exclusive preserve of the redeemed. The sinner cannot hear the Shepherd's voice because he/she does not belong to His sheepfold (John 10.1-5,27,28). To enjoy this rare privilege, the sinner should turn to the Savior by acknowledging his/her sins, repenting and forsaking them; and asking Christ to become his/her Lord and Savior (Romans 10:9-13). The backslider should return to the Lord he/she once loved. Church leaders and all whose consuming passion is to fulfill the great commission can trust in the Lord to direct their evangelistic efforts. Since He led the apostles and early disciples in fruitful outreaches (Acts 5:19, 20; 8:26- 30; 10: 1-20; 13: 1-3; 16:9,10; 18:9-11; 22: 18-21; 23: II), He will lead us as we obey His command to **"Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world, Amen"** (Matthew 28:19,20). As long as He is with us, He will direct the gospel work.

SANCTIFICATION: A NECESSARY SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE (Joshua 3:5; Leviticus 20:7,8; John 17: 17- 19; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Corinthians 6:14- 18; Isaiah 52: 11).

"And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you"(Joshua 3:5).

Question 4: In what ways is a believer expected to sanctify himself today?

Joshua told the people that they needed to sanctify themselves from uncleanness, to enable them experience God's wonders. Separation from sin and all forms of defilements was a condition they must fulfill before God grants them the expected and promised miracle. This called for self-examination on their part and the part of believers expecting any form of divine intervention in their lives today. **"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"** (2 Corinthians 13:5). The people were about to enter the holy land and God wanted to show them uncommon favor, so they needed to get themselves ready. The condition is still the same today. To experience God's glory or appropriate His precious promises, the scripture enjoins that we cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and perfect holiness in the fear of God (2 Corinthians 7: 1).

Man is born with moral pollution and needs to be cleansed from sinful passions. Though saved, the believer still needs to be cleansed from inbred sin (adamic nature). He needs to be sanctified. Sanctification is also referred to as circumcision or purity of heart (Deuteronomy 30:6; Matthew 5:8). Response to the call to salvation and separation from the world precede this divine heart operation. **"Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God. And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am the LORD which sanctify you."** That is why Joshua told the people to sanctify themselves. As Joshua directed all Israel to sanctify themselves, it is possible for the whole church to be separated from sin and the world, and be sanctified by the Lord.

Question 5: Why is it necessary for the believer to be sanctified?

As a Christian experience, sanctification experience is an act of God's grace by which the affections of man are purified to love Him supremely. This glorious experience is

necessary because God commanded it (Leviticus 20:7, 24-26; I Peter 1:1-4); God demands it (Genesis 17:1); it is the nature of God (Leviticus 19:2); it is difficult to walk with God consistently without it (Amos 3:3; Leviticus 11:43-45); it is what makes supreme love for God possible (Deuteronomy 30:6); it makes obedience to God's word wholehearted (Deuteronomy 10: 16); it makes the believer holy like His heavenly father (Matthew 5:48); it sets us apart as peculiar children of God (I Peter 2:9); it brings us unto perfect bond of unity with other believers (John 17: 17, 21; Jeremiah 32:39); and it qualifies us for heaven (Hebrews 12:14). Thus, it is an indispensable experience for every Christian who desires abundant and victorious life in this world and in eternity with God.

SIGNS AND WONDERS: PROOFS OF GOD'S PRESENCE WITH HIS PEOPLE (Joshua 3:6-17; Genesis 1: 14; Deuteronomy 9:2,3; Luke 2:8-18; 4:22; Psalm 96:3; Isaiah 8:18).

Preparatory to the expected wonders of God, the priests were ordered by Joshua to take up the ark of the covenant and pass before the people (Joshua 3:6). Ordinarily, it was the Levites' work, not the priests,' to carry the ark (Numbers 4: 15). But on this great occasion, the priests were instructed to do it; and they obeyed. Christians should learn prompt obedience to leadership from the response of the priests to their leader's instruction.

Question 6: What is the place of God's word in experiencing His power in individual's life and in the church?

"And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, come hither, and hear the words of the Lord your God" (Joshua 3:9). There can be no wonders and miracles without a proper place accorded the sound preaching, teaching, acceptance of God's word. God has exalted His word above His name (Psalm 138:2). So, the word of God should be given prominence in the gathering of the' people of God rather than dancing and drumming. Like Joshua admonished the people to expect great things from the Lord and move forward to actualize God's plan for them

(Joshua 3:10-13), Christian servants should ensure they constantly exhort God's people in order to build their faith and hope of miracle on God's word and faithfulness. Ministers must discharge every God-given responsibility with humility of heart as Joshua did. Though God said He would magnify him before the people, he did not mention or display it. And like the priests, every spiritual leader must learn to always take the lead in the path of righteousness in times of challenges.

When **"the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water..."**, a miracle happened. **The waters failed, and were cut off and the people passed over right against Jericho**" (Joshua 3:15,16). God did as He said. The priests that bare the ark stood firm on dry ground in the very midst of Jordan and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground. What a wonder! There is no Jordan a child of God cannot cross; he only needs to trust in the Lord, with whom nothing is impossible. The God that parted the Red Sea also divided river Jordan. The child of God should be rest assured that the Lord that granted victory before will do it again.

Question 7: Identify and state God's purposes for signs and wonders in the Bible.

The Bible has records of miraculous wonders of God. Some of these include the creation of the world (Genesis 1:1-31), the great flood (Genesis 7:1-24; 8:1-22), the destruction of Sodom (Genesis 19:1-38), the opening of Rachel's womb (Genesis 30:22), the flaming bush (Exodus 3:2), the plagues in Egypt (Exodus 7-12) and the pillar of cloud and fire (Exodus 13:21,22; 14:19,20). Others include Israel's passage through the Red sea (Exodus 14:22), the destruction of Pharaoh and his army (Exodus 14:23-30), provision of manna (Exodus 16:4-31), Balaam's donkey's speech (Numbers 22:23-30), dividing of Jordan river (Joshua 3:14-17; 4:16-18), the fall of Jericho (Joshua 6:20) and all the New Testament healings, deliverances and resuscitation of the dead, to mention a few.

According to Joshua, this miracle of crossing river Jordan was proof of God's divine presence with the people. **"Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites"**. Signs, wonders and miracles in the Bible are meant to (1) execute judgment on idols and idolaters and make men comply with divine directives as seen in the plagues in Egypt (Exodus 10:3,4); (2) convince the sons of men about His power, such as the preservation of the three Hebrew children in Nebuchadnezzar's fire and Daniel in the lion's den (Daniel 3:24,25; 6: 19-22); (3) challenge the faith of His people and make people believe the gospel, like the cursing of the fig tree and raising of Lazarus back to life (Mark 11:12-14,20-22; John 11:40- 45); (4) manifest His power, like opening of the blind man's eyes (John 9:1-7); and (5) prove His supremacy over other gods, such as the fall of Dagon (I Samuel 5:1-4). .

Believers need not run from one place to another in search of miracles. The miracles we seek will happen as we seek first His righteousness, reverence and keep God's word, yield to the Spirit's leading and obey Christ-like leadership. Above all, commitment to the great commission will make the believer not a seeker of miracles but carrier of God's explosive miracle power (Mark 16:15-20).

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
MON	Luke	15-16	Proverbs	15-16
TUE	“	17-18	“	17-18
WED	“	19	“	19-20
THUR	“	20	“	21-22
FRI	“	21	“	23-24
SAT	“	22	“	25-26
SUN	“	23	“	27-28

549 Lesson

MEMORIAL OF CROSSING JORDAN

MEMORY VERSE: "Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever" (Joshua 4:7).

TEXT: Joshua 4:1-24

The previous chapter gives us a detailed account of Israel's simple but miraculous passage through river Jordan into the land of Canaan. This supernatural event was facilitated by Joshua's courageous and strict adherence to the details of divine order on the one hand and the people's unquestioning obedience and submission to Joshua's leadership on the other. This chapter gives further account of this great event as well as spells out the divine directives for the erection of a monument of stones to serve as memorial for coming generations of the children of Israel.

Joshua's habit of keeping to every detail of divine instruction while communicating God's mind to the people is instructive. This attitude creates an enabling environment for the Spirit of God to work effectually in the heart of God's people - working in them to "**will and to do His good pleasure**" (Philippians 2: 13). As a result, the children of Israel laid aside their personal opinions and obeyed in details every command that Joshua gave them. This should serve as a standard for God's ministers at all times. No minister of the gospel can succeed in his calling who is not courageous, diligent and faithful in declaring all the counsel of God to His flock. As the people obeyed, God was honored, Joshua was magnified and the entire nation advanced towards possessing their land of promise.

COMMAND AND SIGNIFICANCE OF MEMORIALS TO ISRAEL (Joshua 4:1-9; Genesis 17:1-13; Exodus 16:32-34; Numbers 17:1-10; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

It is important to note that God gave the command to set up memorials of this historic event. If Joshua had done it on his own initiative, some people could have perceived such act as deliberate attempt to perpetuate and honor himself. Others could have considered such memorials as unnecessary. But the directive from God forestalled any such misgivings. It inspired a whole-hearted obedience and reverence for God. Ministers and church leaders who follow every divine directive will normally, command a loyal following and accomplish great feats in ministry. On the other hand, those who are bent on acting according to their own wish will create many occasions of stumbling among the flock (1 Samuel 14:24-34).

God gave the command to set up the memorials because He was well-acquainted with Israel's tendency to forget His works. The memorial of 12 stones was to serve as a constant reminder of the day the Israelites crossed the Jordan river on dry ground. It will enable their children to see the stones, hear the story and learn about God. Human beings often forget things that are vital and critical to their spiritual well-being, while they easily remember issues that support their prejudice and base sentiments to their own detriment. While in the wilderness, the children of Israel did not remember the anguish of heart they suffered when they were under bondage in Egypt (Exodus 1:13,14; 2:23-25). Surprisingly, they had forgotten God's mighty hand that delivered them from the affliction in Egypt (Exodus 13:8,9). In their thoughts, they desired Egypt, especially because they recollected the variety of food they ate, including garlic, cucumber, onions, and the like (Numbers 11:4-6). Any wonder then that prior to his departure, Moses repeatedly warned the children of Israel not to forget God. He advised them to remember God's interactions with them, and that they needed to obey God's commandments (Deuteronomy 8:2,11)

The reason for setting up the memorial was to help keep God's wondrous works in perpetual remembrance. As believers, we should responsibly preserve God's past deeds of kindness in our lives and ensure we transmit them to our children and coming generations. They will create strong platform and act as basis for consolidating their faith in God.

God directed that each tribe of Israel should be assigned to carry the 12 stones out of the midst of river Jordan to their place of lodging that day. This act was symbolic: each tribe had equal opportunity of contributing to the erection of the memorial. This policy of representative activity and government is manifested many times in Scripture (Joshua 3:12; Numbers 1:4; 13:2-15; 34:18; Deuteronomy 1:23). The 12 stones which were ordered to be taken out of the midst of Jordan were to prove to posterity that the 12 tribes miraculously crossed the river Jordan on dry ground.

The use of these stones was appointed for a sign and a memorial (verses 6,7). They would give occasion for their descendants to ask their parents in future, **"what mean ye by these stones?"** This will then provide a platform to teach their children the ways of God. The passage clearly reveals Gods concern for the future generations. God keeps in view a future perspective to His present dealings with His people. He uses present interactions to meet our needs, accomplish His programs as well as shape the future according to His eternal plan. Right from the time of Abraham, God has always shown concern for future generations, He makes His people to see how the present could affect the future. The way we manage our present opportunities and challenges could make or mar our future. Looking at His greater future plan for Abraham and indeed the entire human race, God said: **"Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him"**

(Genesis 18:17-19).

Churches and ministries who neglect or pay lip service to the spiritual life of the upcoming generations are likely to fall short of God's plan and may wind up in apostasy in time to come. This neglect among the children of Israel in later years resulted in a generation of Israelites "...**which know not the Lord, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel**" (Judges 2: 10). The result was that they forsook the Lord and began to worship strange gods of the heathen (Judges 2:11,12).

The children of Israel obeyed Joshua because he was mindful to follow every detail of what God commanded. Leaders of God's people must be good examples of submission and obedience to the Lord. Like Paul the Apostle, they should be able to confidently declare to others: "**Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ**" (1 Corinthians 11:1).

Question 1a): Explain how Moses' life and service contributed in moulding Joshua into a faithful minister.

1b): What challenge does this pose to Christian workers and leaders today?

As a leader, Moses lived a life that was transparent and totally committed to doing the will of God. His life and ministry had a great influence on Joshua. Suffice it to say that Moses reproduced himself in Joshua who eventually succeeded him. Like Moses, he was faithful in carrying out all that the Lord commanded him. As contemporary leaders and faithful ministers of the gospel, we must understand that our actions and inactions will definitely influence our followers. Often, we produce the kind of leaders we are.

Question 2: (a) What is a memorial? (b) In what way does the ordinance of the Lord's Supper serve as a memorial?

The two monuments of stones which were set up at river Jordan when Israel crossed over it are of great significance, especially when we compare this miracle at Jordan with a similar one at the Red Sea (Exodus 14:21,22). When God divided the Red Sea for Israel to cross over and had a clean

break from Egypt, there was no instance of setting up a memorial. God did not want His people to live in Egypt or in the vicinity of the Red Sea any longer. Thus, erecting a monument there will not be of importance to Israel. But at Jordan, the case was different. Lying at the eastern border of the land of Canaan, river Jordan site of the monuments were places Israel were to continue to see for a long time. It is, however, pertinent to state that generally, a conspicuous heap of stones was the customary method of directing attention to a scene of remarkable event in those days.

Question 3: State the purposes of memorials in Israel?

God has always kept memorials of great events that indicate His mercy and inspire devotion and godliness among future generations. Circumcision was a memorial of God's covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17: 1-13); the Passover was the memorial of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt (Exodus 12:17-27); the manna and Aaron's rod kept in the ark were memorials of the miraculous feeding of Israel ,in the wilderness for forty years and the confirmation of Aaron's priesthood (Exodus 16:32-34; Numbers 17:1-10).

SACRIFICE AND COMMITMENT OF FAITHFUL SERVANTS AND THE ENCAMPMENT AT GILGAL
(Joshua 4: 10-20; Judges 8:4-6; 2 Samuel 23:9-10; 1 Corinthians 4:2 ; Hebrews 3: 1-3; Revelation 2: 10).

The priests bearing the Ark patiently waited until everything was finished that the Lord commanded Joshua (verse 10): Holding the Ark on their shoulders and standing still until all the people cross over the river was demanding, yet the priests patiently waited and endured the discomfort. This is a challenge to Christian workers and leaders. Regardless of the hard conditions under which we dispense our duty for God, we should patiently endure until the task is accomplished as God rewards faithfulness. As the tokens of God's presence sustained the priests, so also will it comfort and sustain us as we labor for the Lord even under difficult conditions.

Our text reveals that "**...the people hastened to pass over**" (verse 10). This suggests that it would probably take a whole day to pass over it, so they hastened "to get the passage completed during daylight hours in order to be ready to camp at night.

The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh faithfully kept their word to Moses (Numbers 32: 16-27) as 40,000 chosen men of them armed, passed over the river Jordan with their brothers (Joshua 4: 12, 13). They had no excuses or reasons to complain. They did not renege on their promise on account of the danger involved. They had made a commitment to join their brethren in fighting against the inhabitants of the land of Canaan; and they did it faithfully. As Christian workers and leaders, faithfulness in stewardship demands that we keep our commitment and consecration even when danger looms.

Nehemiah exemplified this when enemies threatened him at his duty post: "**And I said, Should such a man as I flee? And who is there, that, being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in**" (Nehemiah 6:14). The scripture says: "**For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it**" (Mark 8:35).

Joshua set the example of faithfulness in stewardship; God magnified him in, the sight of all the people. He was used by, God to divide river Jordan and the people were convinced that God was with him as He was with Moses His authority over the priests and the people was thus confirmed: "**...and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life**" (Joshua 4:14), The surest way to command respect of subordinates is not by threatening them, but showing them examples of godly lifestyle, and love; and caring for their welfare.

When all the people had passed over to the other side, the priests bearing the ark came out of Jordan. Note that Joshua did not order them out of Jordan until God directed him to do so (verses 15-17). What a lesson to contemporary leaders. This, no doubt, was the secret

behind the success of Israel and their leader, Joshua. As soon as the priests and the ark had come out of Jordan, the waters of Jordan which had stood on a heap gradually flowed down according to their usual course (verse 18). When the purpose of the miracle was fulfilled and the tokens of God's presence (the ark) was removed, the usual flow of water returned. The miracle of the parting of Jordan was not allowed to last longer than necessary. God does not indulge in needless display of power. His miracle working power is employed to accomplish definite purposes.

After crossing Jordan river, the people encamped at Gilgal, the same day being the tenth day of the first month of the Jewish calendar, five days short of full forty years. God so ordered it that they entered Canaan on the very day when the preparation of the annual Passover began (Exodus 12:3). This acted as reminder of their deliverance from Egypt.

THE PURPOSE OF THE MEMORIAL RESTATED (Joshua 4:21-24; Psalms 106:6-13; 78:4-13; 2 Peter 1: 12-13)

Joshua having set up the memorial at Gilgal re-emphasized its purpose to the children of Israel (verses 20-24). The emphasis was to guard against forgetfulness or misconception. A monument whose purpose is misconceived, relegated or lost could degenerate into an idol as in the case of Gideon: "**And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, even in Ophrah: and all Israel went thither a whoring after it: which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house**" (Judges 8:27).

<p>Question 4: Explain how the monument in Gilgal could fulfill God's purpose among all generations of Israelites.</p>

The purpose of the monument in Gilgal was to encourage future generations to ask questions that will provide opportunity to tell them of the great miracle of the drying up of river Jordan for Israel to cross over. God wanted all generations - old and young - have an enduring reverence for Him, especially as Gilgal, the spot of the monument to

become a very significant worship place and meeting point for national issues in later years (I Samuel 7: 16; 10:8; 11:14,15). The monument at Gilgal was designed to be a help to faith. The practical result expected by the creation of the monument is **"that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty; that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever."**

Question 5: Explain in practical terms how present day believers can set up memorials that can aid the faith of future generations.

Churches and ministries today can set up memorials that can help reinforce the faith of future generations. Upholding Christ's doctrines and commitment to the teaching of the full orb ed truths remain the lasting legacy that we can leave for future generations. And as they keep the word, live by its holy precepts and proclaim them to, others, they will experience greater revival than has ever happened and do greater exploits than we have done.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
MON	Luke	24	Proverbs	29-30
TUE	John	1	“	31
WED	“	2-3	Ecclesiastes	1-2
THUR	“	4	“	3-4
FRI	“	5	“	5-6
SAT	“	6	“	7-8
SUN	“	7	“	9-10

550 Lesson

CAPTAIN OF THE LORD'S HOST

MEMORY VERSE: "And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?" (Joshua 5: 14)

TEXT: Joshua 5:1-15

In the previous chapter, the children of Israel had miraculously passed through river Jordan after which they made a monument of twelve stones picked from the midst of Jordan as a memorial for future generations, to signify God's salvation and grace toward His people. It was also to serve as a demonstration of God's eternal power and protective ability to all generations.

The children of Israel had passed over to the west side of river Jordan, ready to take possession of the Promised Land. They had already slain the five kings of Midian (Numbers 31:8), as well as Sihon, the powerful king of the Amorites (Numbers 21:21-24), and Og, king of Bashan (Deuteronomy 3:3) on the East side of Jordan. The news of their conquests and the crossing of river Jordan with its inundated banks struck terror in the hearts of the Amorites and the Canaanites such that **"their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them anymore, because of the children of Israel"**. To the natural mind, the condition is ripe for the possession of the Promised Land. The people of Israel were filled with excitement and motivation, having miraculously crossed the Jordan on dry ground; and the enemy was in mortal fear and dread after hearing of God's miraculous dealings with Israel. However, in God's economy and plan, there are spiritual values, priorities and principles that are far more vital and fundamental to victory (2 Corinthians 10:4,5). So, to be victorious or successful from God's standpoint, certain things are essential if we are going to attack the various fortresses against us.

Our study today focuses on the preparation of the children of Israel for the battles ahead. The passage under consideration divides into five sections, with each being fundamental to their victory in the Promised Land. These include a statement regarding the morals of the inhabitants of the land (5: 1); the renewal of the right of circumcision (5:2-9); the observance of the Passover (5: 10); eating the produce of the land and the ceasing of manna (5:11,12); Joshua's encounter with the Captain of the Lord's host (5:13-15).

IMPACT OF THE MIRACULOUS CROSSING OF JORDAN ON THE CANAANITES (Joshua 5: 1; Exodus 15: 14,15; 23:27; Joshua 2:9-11; 2 Corinthians 7:8-12)

"And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them anymore, because of the children of Israel"(Joshua 5:1).

The news of the miraculous crossing of river Jordan spread across the entire region. This instilled paralyzing fear in the hearts of the kings of the Amorites on the western side of Jordan and the Canaanites such that they lost the courage to fight the advancing army of the Lord.

Question 1: What was the effect of the miraculous crossing of Jordan on the Canaanites? What lesson can we learn as believers?

As the children of Israel approached the land of Canaan, the inhabitants were frightened to the point that they lost courage and fainted. Unfortunately, the fear they had for the God of Israel did not lead them to submission. They could see the terror of the Lord advancing on them, yet could not do anything about it. The imminence of judgment ought to lead sinners and backsliders to godly sorrow and sincere repentance.

The crossing of river Jordan also had impact on the Israelites. It gave them assurance of God's continued presence and protection - an evidence that He would work for them through Joshua as He did with Moses. Such assurance was needed to strengthen their hearts as they embarked on the conquest of the land - the task that had consumed a whole generation of their race and staggered the faith of their fathers forty years ago (Numbers 14:1,26-30). This should serve as consolation to believers who are obedient to the Lord. When our spiritual enemies see that we are trusting God and are willing to step out in obedience and faith, they will lose confidence in their battle against us.

RENEWAL OF THE COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION AND CELEBRATION OF PASSOVER (Joshua 5:2-10; Genesis 17:1-14; Exodus 12:21-28; Hebrews 12:14; Matthew 5:48; 1 Thessalonians 5:23,24)

"At that time the LORD said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time" (Joshua 5:2). Circumcision is significant to Israel because it is a token of the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 17:1-14; Acts 7:8). Israel's covenant of circumcision with God was connected to their possession of the Promised Land. It is, therefore, important that those who have not been circumcised should do so before taking possession of the Promised Land.

It should be noted that the lives of the generation of Israelites who left Egypt had been wasted. It was only Joshua and Caleb that survived and made it into the Promised Land (Numbers 14:26-35; 26:63-65). The wandering in the wilderness made it difficult for those born on the way to be circumcised, it was therefore necessary to do it before entering the land of promise.

"And this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise: All the people that came out of Egypt, that were males, even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt".

The circumcision of the children of Israel at this point was a demonstration of their obedience and faith in God. This is because, ordinarily, circumcision would make them physically vulnerable to attack. The inhabitants of the land could easily have taken advantage of their weakness and assaulted them. It was suicidal for all the men of fighting age in Israel to be unable to fight for several days; thus, making them vulnerable to their enemies (Genesis 34:24,25).

However, God had promised them protection and victory in the Promised Land. Normally, a circumcised adult takes about three weeks to heal. But on the fourth day they were completely healed and ready for battle and to partake of the Passover. The healing of their wound was a demonstration of God's preserving and healing power.

The effect of the circumcision was the rolling away of the reproach of Egypt. **"And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day"** (Joshua 5:9). Lack of circumcision to the Israelite is a sign of gross impurity. This might account for why it was not possible for them to observe the Passover in the wilderness. The circumcision rolled away the reproach of their slavery in Egypt.

This second circumcision is quite significant to the children of Israel as a testimony of God's reconciliation with the people. They had to be circumcised before the approaching Passover to distinguish them from the Canaanites, into whose land they had come; and to ratify their covenant with God. The ratification of the covenant assured them that God would now fulfill His promise to give them the land of Canaan (Exodus 12:25; Leviticus 23: 10; Numbers 15:2).

Question 2: What is the significance of circumcision to the believer today?

Under the New Testament dispensation, circumcision is synonymous with Christian perfection, holiness of life and sanctification. It is the second work of grace, subsequent to the new birth whereby a believer's heart is made

pure. Just like the people of Israel were required to be circumcised before crossing Jordan to the Promised Land, sanctification is indispensable to the believers' prospect of eternity with a holy God in a holy heaven. Our Lord, Jesus Christ has paid the price for our sanctification on the Cross at Calvary. The conditions for heart circumcision include current testimony of salvation, entire consecration, spiritual thirst or hunger and prayer of faith. After their circumcision, the Israelites were ready to observe the Passover. **"And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho"** (Joshua 5: 10). This was the third Passover celebrated by the children of Israel: the first was in Egypt (Exodus 12: 11-24); the second 'at mount Sinai (Numbers 9: 1-5); and the third here at Gilgal. While they were in the wilderness, they could not partake of the Passover. We need to understand that the observance of any ordinance is not as important to God as our obedience to His commandments. The Passover was a memorial of God's redemption of Israel from Egyptian slavery. It symbolized God's deliverance of His people from the tyranny of sin (Exodus 12:43-51). Just like Israel kept the Passover as a memorial of their deliverance, we are to constantly remember our redemption at Calvary through regular partaking of the Lord's Supper and live to please God no matter the cost (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24,25).

CESSATION OF MANNA AND APPEARANCE OF THE LORD OF HOST (Joshua 5: 11-15; Exodus 16:35; Revelation 22: 8,9; Hebrews 2:16)

"And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the Passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day. And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna anymore; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year" (Joshua 5:11,12).

<p>Question 3: What lesson(s) can a believer learn from the cessation of manna as soon as the children of Israel started eating the corn of the land?</p>
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Provision of manna ceased the moment they started eating the old corn of the land. The cessation of manna indicate that (i) It did not come by chance or common providence. as rain or hail, but by God's special design. Manna stopped dropping from heaven when they could afford to make a living without it. (ii) We should not expect supernatural supply when we have ability to provide for ourselves. It is only those things which are impossible for us that require our expectation of extraordinary intervention by God. When Israel needed manna, He provided, but when they had supplies from the land, God withdrew the manna. God is a wise Father who knows the needs of His children and makes provision for them. (iii) We are expected to work with our hands (2 Thessalonians 3: 10). From the next planting season, the Israelites were expected to till the land in order to provide their own food supply.

In the case of today's believers, the word of God is our spiritual manna. It is the believer's constant source of spiritual nourishment all through his journey from earth to heaven. And God is willing to supply this manna in sufficient quantities throughout our sojourn here. But this manna shall cease when we enter our heavenly Canaan where we shall sit face to face with the Word Himself.

"And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" (Joshua 5: 13). There is a general agreement among Bible Scholars that the person mentioned in the passage is Christ, the Son of God. Evidences in the text that prove that Joshua interacted with a divinity, not an ordinary man or angel, are (i) The personality who appeared to Joshua claimed He is the Captain of the Lord's host. (ii) Joshua worshiped Him. Only a divine personality will accept worship from men; angels do not (Revelation 19: 10). (iii) Joshua called Him Lord. (iv) Joshua recognized himself as His servant. (v) Joshua, like Moses was told: **"Loose thy shoe from off thy foot ..."** (Joshua 5: 15; Exodus 3:5). Only God could make such a demand. (vi) The place where the angel met

Joshua was made holy by His presence. Christ is the only member of the Godhead that manifests Himself in human form (John 1: 14). Christ had at other times appeared in bodily form to Abraham (Genesis 18: 16-33) and Jacob (Genesis 32:24-30).

Question 4: What encouragement can we derive from Joshua's encounter with the Captain of the Lord's host?

The appearance of the Captain of the Lord's host to Joshua was to re-assure him of God's presence with him and with Israel (Exodus 23:20-22; 33:14; Joshua 1:5). It was also to instruct him on the prospects of the battles ahead. The conquest of Jericho, Ai and other cities were achieved by methods and strategies given by God Himself.

We learn from Joshua's encounter with the Captain of the Lord's host that Christ is the Captain of our salvation (Hebrews 2: 10) and through Him, we have eternal salvation. Second, in the warfare between forces of darkness and light, good and evil, as well as followers and foes of Jesus, we must fight under the banner of Christ. Third, victory is guaranteed when we fight under Christ's leadership and directive. Lastly, we all must realize that Christ is holy, His presence is holy and we must be holy to walk with Him and enjoy continual victory in battles of life.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
MON	John	8	Ecclesiastes	11-12
TUE	“	9	Song of Solomon	1-3
WED	“	10	“	4-5
THUR	“	11	“	6-8
FRI	“	12	Isaiah	1-2
SAT	“	13-14	“	3-5
SUN	“	15-16	“	6-7

551 Lesson

THE CONQUEST OF JERICH0

MEMORY VERSE: "And the Lord said unto Joshua, see I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the King thereof, and the mighty men of valor" (Joshua 6:2).

TEXT: Joshua 6:1-27

After crossing river Jordan, Joshua led the children of Israel to camp at Gilgal, east of Jericho where he circumcised every male Israelite born in the wilderness according to divine directive. We also observed in the previous lesson that they kept the Passover. All these were necessary spiritual preparations for them to be able to face the challenges ahead of them. Our study today focuses on the immediate challenge they faced, for which their obedience to get circumcised qualified them for divine intervention as God does not fight for the disobedient (Isaiah 59: 1-3; Jeremiah 5:25). With the seal of all the borders and gates that led to the city of Jericho, conquest of Jericho would have been an idle' dream without God's intervention.

"Now Jericho was straightly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in."

Trusting in the strength of the formidable city walls and strong gates for defence, the inhabitants of Jericho had thought that they could frustrate Israel's efforts to take possession of the Promised Land. Their intention was not only to prevent any possible invasion from dreaded ,Israelites (Joshua 2:9-11) but to also ensure that no deserter flees the city to negotiate peace with Israel like the Gibeonites did. But God gave Joshua the right technique for the conquest of Jericho and assured him of victory ahead of the combat, regardless of the strong walls of Jericho. Besides, we shall see in this lesson how divine- human partnership leads to believers' possession of promised blessings.

DIVINE INSTRUCTION FOR CONQUEST OF JERICH0

(Joshua 6:1-6; Matthew 23:13; Zachariah 4: 6,7; 1 John 5:4, 5).

The seal of Jericho's gates was an avowed declaration of opposition to Israel's occupation of Canaan, a "land flowing with milk and honey" after their forty years' journey towards it. Like Jericho, many villages, towns, cities and countries are sealed physically or spiritually, in attempt to prevent entry of the church with the gospel. In some places, this takes the form of ungodly edicts, laws and policies that prohibit freedom of worship. This may also include any religious or cultural policy that inhibits either the free spread of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ or that disallows conversion from a cultic or religious group to Christianity. The good news for the church however is that, the same way the strong walls of Jericho fell before the people of God shall all satanic oppositions against the gospel crumble.

Question 1: What should be the believers' attitude in the face of opposition to_ the clear will of God in his life?

“And the Lord said unto Joshua see I have given into thine hand Jericho and the King thereof and the mighty men of valor.” This was an assurance from God to Joshua that the battle was as good as won. Though opposition to Israel's occupation was an open rejection of the reign of God in Canaan land, Joshua did not entertain fear or doubt the ability of God to fulfill His promise as he knew that walls or bulwarks cannot hinder God from doing His will.

God's instruction was that they should **"compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall**

of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him." Rather than depend on his military prowess and past experiences, Joshua relied solely on the seemingly ridiculous, absurd and uncommon military preparations prescribed by God. Christian leaders, workers and indeed all believers should always seek to hear from God so as to stand on the promises of God that cannot fail.

Question 2: What lessons do you learn from the uncommon military strategies given to Joshua by God in the conquest of Jericho?

This uncommon military strategy was to teach Israel to lean on God and learn to expect success, not from their valor or skills but from God's providential blessing through faith. **"...Not by might, nor by power but by my spirit, said the Lord of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubabel thou shalt-become a plain... this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith"** (Zechariah 4:6,7; 1 John 5:4). Two, Israel was to learn to appreciate divine institutions and act on them with faith. Three, it was to make Israel ascribe all the victory and glory to God. "For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favor unto them" (Psalm 44:3). It would amount to robbing God of His due to think about themselves or any other thing as source of their victory. Suffice it to say that victory belongs to God (2 Chronicles 29: 11; 1 Corinthians 15:57) and He grants it to His people in honor of their faith and obedience to His word.

God's instruction that the children of Israel should maintain absolute silence until the seventh day when they were to give a uniformed shout was to avoid temptation of faithless and unguided utterances which could lead to discouragement and carnal reasoning. Quietness of spirit is a virtue that all believers need to possess. The scripture clearly states that **"in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man and able also to bridle the whole body"** (James 3:2).

ISRAEL'S SIEGE AGAINST JERICHO (Joshua 6:6-16; Zachariah 4:6,7; 1 John 5:4; Isaiah 58:1; Numbers 10:9; 2 Chronicles 13: 12; 2 Corinthians 10:4,5; Zachariah 2:3· Exodus 14: 14)

As soon as Joshua received the instruction from God on the strategy he deployed to conquer Jericho, he communicated the same message to the priests and the people without any modification. His unreserved surrender of personal ideas and opinions on military tactics to command a procession of Israelites in obedience to God is a good example for believers to follow.

The people also responded with prompt obedience. **"And It came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before the LORD, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them. And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the reward came after the ark, *the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.*"** The people's compliance with Joshua's instruction to march round the city in deep solemnity without making noise is commendable. How often are people tempted to ignore or forget the place of God-ordained leadership in times of crises when God's word says to **"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation"** (Hebrews 13:7). Everyone who desires miracles or supernatural breakthroughs in marriage, business, academics, and other areas of life must not rebel against divinely- appointed leadership. Obedience brings blessings while disobedience serves as a catalyst of retrogression.

Careful attention to divine precepts and patient perseverance in following them is the surest pathway to success.

God's command that the children of Israel should march around Jericho's wall while seven priests were to sound seven trumpets of rams' horns was a divine-human partnership that is always required by Him for our benefits.

He could do anything without us but has chosen to use us to fulfill His purpose on earth. The involvement of the priests in sounding the trumpets was to serve as a declaration of war which struck terror in the hearts of the Canaanites. Like the priests, believers must declare the displeasure and judgment of God to the ungodly around them and lead them to repentance and salvation.

It needs be underscored here that believers do not fight physical battles except in military formations for defense of territorial integrity of their countries. The scripture reveals that **"though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh ... 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** (2 Corinthians 10:3; Ephesians 6: 12). Thus, our handling of spiritual warfare and all battles of life must be in compliance with the word of God if we are going to have the victory. Spiritual warfare should not be conducted based on carnal considerations or human principles. Though God has promised us salvation, sanctification, Holy Spirit baptism, healings, miracles, victory, and other blessings, we can only experience them by fulfilling God's conditions of faith and obedience to His word the same way the congregation of Israel did.

Question 3: What is the role of the ministers in the preaching of the gospel in their communities?

During the siege, Joshua commanded the people saying, **"Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout.** This instruction that the children of Israel should maintain absolute silence until the seventh day when they were to give a uniformed shout was to avoid temptation of faithless and unguided utterances which could lead to discouragement and carnal reasoning. Quietness of spirit is a virtue that *all* believers need to possess. The scripture clearly states that "in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body" (James 3:2).

The trumpets of rams' horns were used in this instance to extol the majesty of God which is not the usual thing to do in declaring hostilities against an enemy nation. Jehoshaphat also used the power of praise to conquer a Confederacy of enemy nations. The truth here is, God decides in every battle what weapon to use for securing victory. **“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God”** (2 Corinthians 10:4,5)

After marching round the walls seven days, Joshua ordered the people to shout with the assurance that God had given the city to them.

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERICHO (Joshua 6:17-27; Psalm 9:17; Hebrews 11:30,31; Isaiah 55:7 Matthew 25:31)

Prior to the collapse of the wall of Jericho, Joshua gave two general instructions to the people. He admonished them to abstain from the accursed things that could attract the judgment of God after the experience of victory. **“And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it”** This instruction to avoid covetous practices came in view of the possibility of compromise after an experience of victory. Though God has promised to grant victory and breakthrough to His people, He would not compromise His moral standard of holiness. Two, Joshua instructed that **“all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD”**. Since God was the One who granted them the victory, these items mentioned must be consecrated unto Him. How many believers today have refused to honor God with what is due to Him from the proceeds of breakthroughs and blessings granted them. God being the owner of all things. we must obey His command to

pay complete tithes as well as give offering to advance the cause of the gospel of Christ. These will help us in laying up incorruptible treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:20,21). Christians working in public offices need to be wary of accursed monies either stolen directly from the public coffer or extorted from the common people as bribes by their unbelieving colleagues. The scriptures enjoins us to imbibe the virtues of godliness and contentment (1 Timothy 6:6) so as not to perish with the world.

Question 4: What lesson can believers learn from the destruction of Jericho?

"So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword."

When the people shouted as commanded, the wall of Jericho collapsed to give the Israelites an open entrance into the city. The New Testament Scripture affirms that **"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days"** (Hebrews 11:30). The fact that Joshua and the people had faith in the promise of God was instrumental to the fall of Jericho. This speaks of the unlimited potential and possibilities of believers' faith. The sudden fall of the walls of Jericho no doubt threw the inhabitants of Jericho into sudden consternation that they could not resist the sword of Israel.

The destruction of the city of Jericho reminds us of the impending judgment of all impenitent sinners who ignore or reject the gracious offer of salvation in Christ Jesus. **"The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God"** (Psalm 9: 17). The scripture says that "now is the accepted time of salvation and **"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation."** Though God

delights in mercy and not judgment and men have taken His longsuffering for granted (Micah 7: 18: 2 Peter 3:9,10), He will surely judge all sinners. His will, however is for everyone to repent, exercise faith in Christ and be saved.

Question 5: Explain how Rahab escaped being destroyed with the inhabitants of Jericho?

Before the city was set ablaze, Joshua gave specific instruction to the two men who served as spies to **"Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye swear unto her."** Interestingly, Rahab and her father, mother, brethren and all that she had were brought out of Jericho. Thus, Rahab the harlot was saved by faith. **"By faith Rahab the harlot perished not with them that believed not when she had received the spies with peace"** (Hebrews 11:31). She believed and identified with the true God of Israel. The woman caught in the very act of adultery and brought to Christ also received forgiveness (John 8: 1-11). No matter how morally weak you are. God will receive and save you the same way He saved these women. Rahab was spared because she feared God and hid the messengers of God by faith in hope that she would receive mercy. **"Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thought; and let them return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our Lord for he will abundantly pardon"** (Isaiah 55:7). God honors faith anywhere it is manifested. He has promised that **"whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have eternal life"**.

Joshua's saving of Rahab the harlot and admitting her into the camp of Israel pointed to the future admission of the gentiles who believe into Christ's kingdom (Matthew 21 :31). As Rahab received the two spies and was saved because of her hospitality. Believers need to be hospitable to all, including strangers (Hebrews 13:2).

After the conquest of Jericho. Joshua placed a curse on anyone who attempts to rebuild it. Rebuilding the city would be at the expense of his eldest and youngest sons.

The fall of Jericho is a timely warning to all prosperous cities of the world and their inhabitants who reject God. The assurance we have as believers is that we can bring down spiritual and legal bulwarks inhibiting the penetration of the gospel into unreached places through coordinated warfare, prayers and gospel outreaches. God's unfailing promise in this regard is, **"Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."** As the Lord was with Joshua, He has promised to be with soul-winners unto the end.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
MON	John	17-18	Isaiah	8-9
TUE	“	19	“	10-11
WED	“	20-21	“	12-14
THUR	“	1-2	“	15-16
FRI	“	3-4	“	17-18
SAT	“	5-6	“	19-20
SUN	“	7	“	21-22

END OF OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES

BEGINNING OF NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES

552 Lesson

THE SINFULNESS OF ALL MEN

MEMORY VERSE: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23)

TEXT: Romans 3:1-31

In the preceding chapter, Paul, the writer of the book of Romans had clearly stated that empty profession of Judaism offered no advantage to the Jews over the Gentiles. On the contrary, the Gentiles who were obedient to the degree of light they were exposed to would be justified before God, "**For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified**" (Romans 2:13).

In this chapter, Paul further affirmed that though the Israelites occupied a special place in the program of God's redemptive plan for man and were privileged to be the chosen people entrusted with the word of God, the old covenant was not sufficient to atone for their sins, just as it was not sufficient also for the sins of mankind in general.

Question 1: What can atone for the sins of any man?

Though Israel was a chosen race, God's continued relationship with them was not unconditional. He argued that the purpose of the law was to prove the whole world guilty before God. As such, man could only be justified by faith in the shed blood of Christ.

THE PRIVILEGES OF THE JEWS (Romans 3, 1-8; 2 Samuel 7:23; Deuteronomy 14:2; Psalm 78:52; Isaiah 43:3-4)

Paul, the apostle had earlier stated that possession of the law and the rite of circumcision were of no profit unless the law was wholly obeyed. A fundamental question the emergence of "the new covenant raises in the mind of the Israelites is **"What advantage then hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision?"** (Romans 3:1) In response, he replied, **"Much every way: chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God"** (Romans 3:2).

Question 2: what advantages had the children of Israel over the gentiles?

The people of Israel had the unique privilege of being separated unto God as peculiar people, but the greatest advantage was that they had the oracles of God the Holy Scriptures. As custodians of the word of God they had greater light, better privileges and higher honors among others.

Enjoyment of these privileges and promises are conditional. Fulfillment of the promise of God to Abraham and his descendants is based on their continual obedience to all His laws. Outright disregard for the law of God, including the messianic prophecies and rejection of Jesus their promised Messiah led to the loss of those privileges. However, the privilege of sonship Israel lost is granted to believing gentiles. **"He came unto his own, and his own received him not But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name"** (John 1:11-12).

There are several lessons that contemporary believers can learn from God's dealing with the children of Israel. First, salvation and other benefits of Calvary are received by grace and should not be taken for granted. Second God has power and authority to form nations and promote Individuals as He pleases. It is therefore unreasonable to murmur or complain about His dealings with man because He is ever merciful and equitable in all His ways (Jeremiah 18:7-10). Third, believers should be steadfast in obedience in spite of unfavorable circumstances, for God is ever faithful to His word.

TOTAL DEPRAVITY AND SINFULNESS OF ALL MEN

(Romans 3:9-18; Job 14:4; Psalm 51:1-5; Mark 7:21-23; Ephesians 2: 1).

Question 3: What is sin and what are the characteristics of sinners?

Since the fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden, all men born into this world (Jews and Gentiles) are sinners and utterly void of the holiness of God. The uniform testimony of the Scripture is that "**...There is none righteous, no, not one**" (Romans 3: 10). Sin is simply defined as Satan inspired nature. It can also be defined as all unrighteousness (1 John 5:17), transgression of the law (1 John 3:4), neglect of opportunity to act right (James 4:17), and any act of unbelief (Romans 14:23). The entire nature of man - mental, physical, moral and spiritual - has been affected by sin.

The characteristics of sinners are highlighted in our text. These include unrighteousness, lack of understanding of the nature of the true God, not seeking after the Creator of the entire universe, wandering out of the way of righteousness, unprofitability to the Master of the whole world, evil utterances, deceit and bitterness, murderous and destructive tendencies, ignorance of the way of peace and lack of fear of divine judgement. Man's separation from God is the cause of his sorrow, shame, fear, heartaches and manifold spiritual and mental problems. All men have become enslaved to sin; they are conceived in sin, born in sin and live in sin. By nature and habit, man is a sinner. The natural man cannot resist sin.

All these have brought man under the wrath and condemnation of God (Romans 6:23). It is important to stress that there is nothing the natural man can offer to appease God in order to escape His righteous judgement.

THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW AND JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH IN CHRIST (Romans 3:19-31; 4:15; Galatians 3:19-24; Psalms 32:1,2; Isaiah 1:18; Micah 7:19; Acts 13:38)

"The law", as used in this context is neither the ceremonial laws of the Jews (or barely the five books of Moses) nor the laws of nature, but the moral laws as contained in the Scripture to which all men are bound. The purpose of the law is to make the whole world guilty before God.

Question 4: Why was the law given?

The law was given to show us what God requires, that we might know our sinfulness "**...for where no law is, there is no transgression**" (Romans 4:15). It shows us the nature and extent of transgression by alerting us as to how far we have missed the mark. Apart from revealing the penalty for transgression, the law brings conviction for sins. Ultimately "**the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith**" {Galatians 3:24}. In summary, the law leads the convicted sinner to the Redeemer

Question 5: Who needs justification and why?

The need for justification becomes necessary because man is not able to provide a solution to his problem of sin. Justification is an act of God's grace through which a penitent sinner who exercises faith in the atoning blood of Jesus receives forgiveness and remission of sins and is counted righteous. The justified individual stands before God as though he had never sinned, not on the basis of any personal merit but in the light of what Christ had accomplished for mankind by using His life as a substitute, through death on the cross at Calvary. Consequently, the righteousness of God comes upon all that believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Only Jesus can deliver from the penalty of sin. He is "**...the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the whole world**" (John 1:29). **And He is "the propitiation for our sins..."** (1 John 2:2). Hence, we are justified freely. Jesus Christ paid the price for our justification. All forms of pride or boasting should be excluded, because salvation "**...is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast**" (Ephesians 2:8,9). It is an unmerited favor.

Question 6: How can a sinner be born again?

God is calling all men (Jew and the Gentiles) unto salvation because He is “ **...not willing that should perish, but that all should come all to repentance**” (2 Peter 3:9). He is the one that justifies all. To benefit from the work of Calvary, the sinner and backslider need to sincerely repent of all sins by acknowledging, confessing and forsaking them. He should go to God on the merit of the atonement made by Jesus Christ through His vicarious death and accept the sacrifice as a substitute for the punishment of his own personal sins. With genuine repentance, every sinner who asks for forgiveness will be justified by His grace through faith.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
MON	Acts	8	Isaiah	23-24
TUE	“	9	“	25-26
WED	“	10	“	27-28
THUR	“	11-12	“	29-30
FRI	“	13	“	31-32
SAT	“	14-15	“	33-35
SUN	“	16	“	36-37

553 Lesson

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

MEMORY VERSE: "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Romans 5: 1,2).

TEXT: Romans 4:1-25

This lesson dwells on the place and power of justification through faith in a believer's life. Paul, in the previous chapters, had argued that justification could neither be attained by the deeds of the law nor through circumcision of the flesh. He thus provides an analogy between the New Testament Christian's justification and Abrahamic experience of justification in the Old Testament which is the thrust of this discourse.

Question 1: What is justification by faith?

The words "justification" and "justify" in common Greek are legal terms which mean to acquit or vindicate someone who stands accused of a crime. It ascribes or imputes innocence or virtue to the person being accused. Martin Luther in the Sixteenth Century, recalled his personal encounter with the Lord thus: *I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement that "the just shall live by his faith."* Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God Justifies us through faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning, and whereas before the Justice of God had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul became to me a gate to heaven.. "It was this definite experience of Martin Luther's that ushered in the great breakthrough that put an end to the theological Dark Age.

Therefore, justification is the act of God's grace through which one receives forgiveness and remission of sins and is counted righteous before God, through faith in the atoning blood of Jesus. Having thus been cleared of every guilt of sin, the regenerated soul stands before God as though he had never sinned, not on the basis of personal merits but in the light of what Christ had accomplished for mankind by His substitutionary death on the cross at Calvary (Psalm 32: 1,2; Isaiah 1: 18; Micah 7: 19; Acts 13:38).

COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM AND HIS RESPONSE OF FAITH (Romans 4:1-8; Genesis 12:1,2; 15:6; Psalm 32:1,2; Genesis 3:19,20; 15:1,2; Hebrews 11:4-7; Genesis 17:1,10; Jeremiah 31:31)

"What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God" (Romans 4: 1,2). Paul, who had proved in the previous chapters that neither Jews nor Gentiles are worthy of God's justification by the deeds of the law or good works, here advances his argument using Abraham (the esteemed patriarch and father of our faith among both Jews and Gentiles) as illustration. He thus provides an analogy between the New Testament Christian's justification and Abrahamic experience of justification in the Old Testament. God had called Abraham to leave his idolatrous kinsmen and nation and come over to a land of promise where He would make of him a specimen kingdom of godly people. Abraham obeyed promptly and God entered into a covenant relationship with him.

In the Old Testament, Abraham was justified by faith and was considered righteous because he responded with faith to the covenant offered by God. **"And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness"** (Genesis 15:6). The law, on the other hand, is incapable of leading anyone to righteousness. Given about 430 years after God's covenant with Abraham had been established, the law was to reveal the sinfulness of sin to man. **"Now we know that what things so ever 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. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:19,20). The law was given so that man will attain the knowledge of sin and to stop gainsayers who trust in their own merits rather than the righteousness of God. While the Jews believe that father Abraham was justified in circumcision, thus, edging out the Gentiles from Abrahamic covenant, the apostle argues on the basis of Scripture that neither the Jew nor Gentile is justified on merit. **"Neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision"** (Romans 2:28). Whether Jew or Gentile, salvation or justification is solely by grace through faith.

Abraham obtained justification through faith when he believed and answered the call of God, to depart from his native country and his father's house to an unknown country which he would later possess. Abraham's response to the call of God marked a new beginning in his life. Prior to this, Abraham had lived in the land of the Chaldees where the whole land was devoted to idolatry. He heard the call of God to separate himself and follow Him. In obedience to God, he singled himself out and began a unilateral walk with God even when he did not know where God was leading him. This was the basis of his justification. **"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness"** (Romans 4:3-5).

Question 2: From our text, how did David describe the sinner who has now been justified by faith?

The greatest blessing a sinner could receive is to be justified or acquitted. David was quoted to have described a justified man as blessed. He described the man as one to **"whom God imputeth righteousness without works"** (Romans 4.6). That is, the sinner, saved by grace attains

righteousness which he does not merit. Two as one "**whose iniquities are forgiven**" (Romans 4:7). The sinner with a record of sins rather than being judged is discharged and acquitted. Three, "**whose sins are covered**" (Romans 4:7). This describes the appearance of the justified man before God as though he had never sinned because the record is no longer available. Four, "**the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin**" (Romans 4:8). Though he had sinned before, God would no longer hold him guilty because they have been erased.

This is justification which can only be attained by faith. It is not because of what a man does or works for but a free gift. This was Abraham's experience long before the law was given.

Question 3: How is Abraham's experience of justification different from circumcision of the flesh?

We should be careful not to confuse circumcision of the flesh given to Abraham with justification which comes through faith. Abraham had walked with God by faith for about 24 years before he received the covenant of circumcision. He answered God's call to salvation when he was about 75 years old (Genesis 12: 1) but received the seal of circumcision at 99 (Genesis 17: 1,10). "**And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also**" (Romans 4: 11). He was not justified because of circumcision rather the circumcision of the flesh was given after he had attained justification as a seal of God's covenant with him. He did not work for it; he simply believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness.

Father Abraham walked with God by faith and demonstrated that the position he attained with Him and the blessings that followed were a result of his faith In Him. One, he received the promise to be the "**heir of the world**" (Romans 4:13). Two, he believed that God who

"quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were" would quicken his own body at one hundred years of age to have a son (Romans 4: 17). Three, he **"against hope believed in hope..."** that God would make him **"the father of many nations"** even when he had no sons coupled with the deadness of Sarah's womb (Romans 4: 18,19). Four, "he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief" (Romans 4:20). Five, **"he was strong in faith, giving glory to God"** (Romans 4:20). Six he was **"fully persuaded that, what God had promised, he was able also to perform"** (Romans 4:21). It was the life and, walk of faith that earned Abraham the title - father of faith.

Question 4: Mention other Bible figures who demonstrated faith over reasoning?

The Scripture records many other men who walked with God by faith and it was also imputed unto them for righteousness. By faith, Abel obtained witness that he was righteous because he **"... offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain"** (Hebrew 11:4). Enoch **"was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God"** (Hebrews 11.5). He experienced the Rapture in the Old Testament which is the expectation of New Testament saints. Noah **"found grace in the eyes of the Lord ... and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith"** (Genesis 6:8: Hebrew 11:7). **"By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not..."** (Hebrews 11.31). Therefore, justification comes neither by works nor by circumcision but by faith in God's promises and provisions.

CHRIST'S SUBSTITUTIONARY SACRIFICE FOR OUR JUSTIFICATION (Romans 4:24,25; Isaiah 53'3-5; 1 Corinthians 15: 1-4; Romans 3:24-26,28; Hebrews' 12:24; Romans 5:1; 1 Peter 2:24; 2 Corinthians 5:21)

"... Jesus our Lord... Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Roman 4:24,25). The world today, comprising Jews and

Gentiles are guilty before God because "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). As sinners we are all condemned to death, but the Pascal Lamb of God, Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. He who had no sin was crucified on the cross at Calvary. **"He was manifested to take away our sins"** (1 John 3:5). He died a most painful death. He was buried and on the third day resurrected for our justification.

God imputed unto us the righteousness of Christ at the same time our sins were imputed to Christ when he was on the cross. As it is written **"...For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him"** (2 Corinthians 5:21). Hence, Christ declared that **"IT IS FINISHED"**. No other sacrifice is required; Jesus paid the full price for the redemption of mankind.

Question 5: Mention some of the benefits of our justification in Christ.

Through His vicarious death on the Cross, Jesus procured for us forgiveness and full Justification (Luke 23:33,34); sanctification and holiness (Hebrews 13:12); mansions in heaven (Luke 23:43); healing and health (Isaiah 53:5); deliverance from and defeat of principalities and powers (Colossians 2: 14-15); cancellation of every curse (Galatians 3: 13); and made us kings and priests unto our God (Revelation 5: 10). No amount of works of righteousness by ourselves could atone for our sins; nether would any self-inflicted pains purchase our justification. Only the blood of Jesus can make full and final settlement for the debts of sin which we owe. What a great privilege!

CHRISTIANS' JUSTIFICATION BY OBEDIENCE OF FAITH (Romans 4:5, 16.24,25; 3:20-25; 5: 1.2; 10:4.9,10; Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Hebrews 10:38; 1 John 3:6.8-10)

"But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was

raised again for our justification" (Romans 4:24,25). The God of Abraham is the God of all flesh. He has made provision for all men who seek to inherit the blessings of Abraham to receive pardon not through personal struggle because **"him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness"** (Romans 4:5). Their standing before God is not dependent upon personal merit, achievement, keeping of the laws and good works. Sinners today can be justified from the guilt and condemnation of sin. They can be transformed from the depths of defilement to become specimens of the grace that come by faith.

Question 6: What is the basis for Christian justification by faith?

God accepts only those who believe, not because of any good thing He sees in them, not even because of their ability to keep the law but solely on the basis of Christ's righteousness reckoned to their account. It is this unmerited righteousness of God, imputed in man through Christ Jesus by faith that forms the basis for the Christian's justification. **"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all"** (Romans 4: 16).

Question 7: What is the evidence of the new birth and how can a sinner or backslider attain this?

Christ's atonement on the cross guarantees universal provision of salvation for all men. This could only be appropriated on personal basis through faith in Christ Jesus. The sinner who seeks salvation must take the necessary step of exercising faith in the blood of Jesus. He must confess and repent of his sins; he must invite and accept Christ Jesus as his personal Lord and Savior. Having been saved through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the redeemed soul should have evidence to show for his justification. **"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new"** (2 Corinthians 5: 17). Before

he was Justified, the sinner was plagued by the works of the flesh as catalogued in Galatians 5: 19-21; but after justification he becomes born of the Spirit, his new life is now characterized by the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 23). He becomes more like Christ in his lifestyle, speech, conduct and disposition,

Obedience to the word of God comes naturally by faith, not by works. The newborn becomes a partaker of the new covenant. **"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people"** (Hebrew 8:10). A saved soul does not continue in sin. People who claim to be saved but still live in sin are liars (1 John 3:6, 8-10).

David referred to this state of the new man as a state of blessedness. **"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile"** (Psalm 32:1,2). It is this blessed state of mind that produces the unspeakable peace and joy in the heart of the creature. Though the imputed righteousness, the new believer becomes naturally disposed to obeying the requirements of the law which is now written in the heart. He puts on the righteousness of God which reflects in good work. Christians must cherish and guard jealously this great experience of salvation. They must appreciate its cost and totally yield themselves to live for Christ all the days of their pilgrimage on earth.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
MON	Acts	17-18	Isaiah	38-39
TUE	"	19	"	40
WED	"	20	"	41-42
THUR	"	21	"	43-44
FRI	"	22-23	"	45-46
SAT	"	24-25	"	47-48
SUN	"	26	"	49

554 Lesson

BENEFITS OF JUSTIFICATION

MEMORY VERSE: "Therefore, being justified by faith .we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"(Romans 5:1)

TEXT: Romans 5:1-21

Paul, the apostle has shown, in the preceding chapters of this book the impossibility of justification by the works of the law. He therefore hinges the hope of everyone's Salvation in the mercy of God that can only be appropriated by faith through Christ. In this chapter, he concentrates on the subject of justification and its benefits. He ends the chapter by giving a vivid contrast between the consequence of Adam's sin and the blessings of Christ's redemptive work for all men.

Question 1: What is Justification?

In legal term, justification means to declare an offender not guilty. It is the grace of God through which a sinner receives forgiveness and remission of sins and is counted righteous before God through faith in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ's. It is a state of acceptance with God, who for Christ's sake, regards and treats the believer in Christ as a righteous person.

Our text reveals that justification is by faith, not by works of the law. **"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our lord Jesus Christ"** (Romans 5:1). The basic reason for the requirement of faith for justification rests on the fact that the death of Jesus Christ is the only sacrifice acceptable to God as ransom for the sins of mankind. Thus, all that a sinner is required to do to be saved is accept and repose confidence in Him as his Substitute, Savior, Redeemer and Lord. Justified, the believer is granted righteousness and peace in his heart with the assurance of relationship with the Almighty God.

BASIS OF OUR JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH (Romans 5: 1-8; Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-17; 3:1-10; Romans 6:23a; Hebrews 9:22; Exodus 12: 13; 30: 10; Psalms 49:6,7; 1 Peter 1:18,19; Hebrews 10:1-6; John 1:29; Isaiah 53:1-11; Matthew 26:28; John 3:16).

Question 2: Why is it right for God to punish sin?

After the fall in Eden, man lost the privilege associated with having the image of God; as such, he is separated from God. The entire human race stands condemned and guilty before Him (Romans 5:1-8), Condemnation for sin has always brought with it defeat, despair, hopelessness, misery, pain, oppression, sorrow and all kinds of suffering. Justice demands that whoever transgresses the law should face the wrath of the law. And for every sin that a person commits, the law stipulates death as its penalty.

This is because God is holy and righteous. He detests and punishes evil. His law and justice demands that a man or a worthy substitute should pay the penalty for his sin, which is death (Genesis 2:16,17; Ezekiel 18:4). Since no man can pay or help himself out of this spiritual and moral destitution, **"God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"** (Romans 5:8). God accepted the price Christ paid for everyone to be justified freely as earlier foretold by Isaiah. **"He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities"** (Isaiah 53: 11). Man's justification is, therefore, entirely by grace. **"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God..."** (1 Peter 3:18).

Question 3: What are the deficiencies of animal sacrifice as means of atonement for man's sins?

The death of Christ on the cross is the only acceptable sacrifice for man's redemption. In normal transactions, we purchase items with money or things equal in value

to what we want to buy. To redeem man, what price is his soul worth? Sheep, goat, bull or ram were previously used for atonement in the Old Testament. The sense is that life has to be replaced with another life. But **"it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins"** (Hebrews 10:4). It is also not possible for an ordinary human being to atone for the sins of his friend or brother as all human beings are guilty of sin and condemned before God (Romans 3:23).

Question 4: Why is Christ's substitutionary death the only acceptable means for man's redemption and justification?

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die" (Romans 5:6,7). Jesus, the sinless Son of God, is the perfect Substitute who offered Himself to redeem us from sin. He bore the punishment for our sins so that everyone who believes and accept His death as penalty for his/her sin can be forgiven and acquitted of all past sins committed. Thus, the full price for our sin has been paid; and as many as will accept Him will be justified and set free from sin.

BENEFITS OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH (Romans 5:1-11; Psalm 85:7-13; Luke 23:44-46; Ephesians 3:8; 1:7; 2:1- 18; Hebrews 10:19-25 Romans 8:35-39; Colossians 1:26; Hebrews 7:23-25; 1 Thessalonians 1:9.10; 5:8.10).

Verses 1 and 2 of our text reveal that justification procured for us by Christ pardons past sins, releases Christ's righteousness by grace through faith for present life and guarantees a blissful eternity. Being justified then by Christ's blood, we have **"peace with God"**.

Before justification, every sinner is an enemy of God because he does not have the moral strength to obey God's law. This leads to moral crisis and absence of peace (Isaiah 48:22). However, everyone who receives Christ as Savior by faith is justified and freed from guilt and condemnation. God imputes His **"righteousness"** in the

erstwhile sinner to be able to live to please Him. No one can ever obtain righteousness and peace through "**the law** (that) **worketh wrath**" (Romans 4: 15).

Question 5: What are the benefits of justification by faith in Christ Jesus?

He that is justified has "**access**" to God. The Jew was kept from God's presence by the veil and the Gentile by a wall in the temple. When Jesus died, He tore the veil and broke down the wall of partition. In Christ, believing Jews and Gentiles have access to God to enjoy His inexhaustible riches of grace (Luke 23:45; Ephesians 2: 14, 18; Hebrews 10:19-25; Ephesians 1:7; 2:4; 3:8).

It is justification that gives us graceful Christian life (Romans 5:3,4). Though it does not provide escape from the trials of life (John 16:33), justification makes us receive grace to endure and bear the cross. Through trials, the justified believer comes off living a victorious and graceful life because no amount of suffering can separate him from the Lord (Romans 8:35-39). Suffering builds believers' characters and toughen their spiritual muscles to overcome subsequent challenges of life. As we go through tribulations, trusting in God's grace, the trials will be instrumental in helping to get rid of the chaff in our lives.

Justification equips us with God's abundant love within (Romans 5:5-8). "**Hope deferred maketh the heart sick**" (Proverbs 13: 12). As we wait for the fulfillment of this hope, the love of God is poured into our hearts. Before we were saved, God proved His love by sending Christ to die for us. Now that we are His children, He will love us the more. As we go through tribulations, it is the inner experience of His love through the Spirit that sustains us.

The justified are saved from future wrath (Romans 0:9.10). If God saved us when we were enemies, Now that we are His children. He will keep on preserving us; He will save us from the "**wrath to come,**" through His intercession (1 Thessalonians 1:9, 10; 5:8-10). Paul explains that

if Christ's died for us, He will also save us by His life. Furthermore, justification brings immeasurable blessings to the believer. These include freedom from guilt, joy, the gift and abiding presence of the Spirit, fellowship with God, special knowledge and revelation, assurance of answers to prayers, and leading by the Spirit (Colossians 1:26; Romans 8:14). Through justification, saints become objects of God's love, grace, power and purpose (Ephesians 2:4; 1: 18-20.11; 3: 11; 2 Timothy 1:9). They are also made fit for the inheritance of the saints since their names are written in the book of life.

CONTRASTS BETWEEN ADAM AND CHRIST (Romans 5: 12-21; Hebrews 7:9-10; Romans 5: 19; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 10:10-14; I Peter 2:24; 1 Corinthians 15:20-22).

The Bible reveals that Adam's sin has affected the entire human race in a negative way. **"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world."** Sin entered the world when Adam fell. As the progenitor of all humanity, his sin automatically become that of every person born into this world. Since the wages of sin is death, man died spiritually. Separated from God, man will forever be banished from Him if there is no repentance and justification by faith. The Bible speaks about death as the separation of body from the soul (physical death), separation of the soul from God in time (spiritual death) and separation of the soul from God forever (eternal death). Death is universal because sin is universal.

The comparison between Christ and Adam in our text clearly portrays what one did as the opposite of the other. In Adam, God's purpose for creating man is aborted but in Christ, His original plan is fulfilled. God's gift to mankind in Jesus Christ does not restore us to the kind of life Adam possessed before he sinned, but to a life of incomparable quality. **"The thief cometh not, but for to steal and to kill and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly"** (John 10:10). Justification is a free gift for all who believe in Jesus Christ, just as all men inherited sin. Every man in Adam reaped the results of Adam's fall much as every

man in Christ reaps the benefits of His redemptive work.

Question 6: Compare and contrast the work of Adam for man's condemnation and the work of Christ for man's justification.

The contrasts can further be summed up as follows: (i) Adam was head of the old creation (Genesis 1:26) while Jesus is the head of the new creation (2 Corinthians 5: 17,18; Ephesians 2:10). (ii) Adam sinned (Genesis 2:17; 3:6; Romans 5:12-21). Christ did not sin (1 Peter 2:22). (iii) Adam, by one act of sin, made many sinners (Romans 5: 15), Christ by a single act of obedience made many righteous (Romans 5:19; 2 Corinthians 5:21). (iv) Adam was made a living soul but Christ a quickening spirit (I Corinthians 15:45). (v) Adam was of the earth, Christ was the Lord from heaven (I Corinthians 15:47). (vi) Adam brought death but Christ brings life (Romans 5:12,17,18: 1 Corinthians 15:21-22: John 10:10). (vii) While Adam passed a sinful nature to His offspring, Christ imparts a sinless nature (Romans 5:19; Psalms 51:5; 2 Corinthians 5: 17,18; 2 Peter 1:14). (viii) Adam brought condemnation (Romans 5:16-18). Christ brings justification (Romans 5: 18; 3:24: 4:25). (ix) Adam lost the grace or favor of God (Romans 5: 15; Genesis 3:6-24), Christ restores grace to men (Romans 5:15-17: 3:24; John 1:17), (x) Adam offended God (Romans 5:15.17-18: Genesis 3:6.17-24), Christ pleased God (Romans 5:18: Matthew 3:17; 17:5; 2 Peter 1: 17).

Question 7: Describe the differences between justification by faith and by works. Which of them do you subscribe to?

God does not only forgive, pardon or justify. He also regenerates the believer to be able to live a new life of righteousness. Justification will be of no effect if those who are justified and cleansed by His blood still continue in their old sinful life. God has made provision for the saved to continuously live a just, upright and saintly life. Since **"the just shall live by faith"** (Romans 1:17), everyone that has been redeemed must ensure he continues to live a holy lifestyle and do good works. **"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only"** (James

2:24) We are justified by faith before God but by works before men. Continuity in His words, obedience, prayer, love, service, holy and righteous living will make us enjoy the full benefits of our justification through Christ's blood on earth and in heaven.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
MON	Acts	27	Isaiah	50-51
TUE	“	28	“	52-54
WED	Romans	1-2	“	55-57
THUR	“	3-4	“	58-59
FRI	“	5-6	“	60-61
SAT	“	7-8	“	62-63
SUN	“	9-10	“	64-65

555 Lesson

THE POWER OF GOD'S GRACE

MEMORY VERSE: "For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Roman 6: 14).

TEXT: Romans 6:1-23

In the previous chapter, Paul the apostle finally concluded his relentless and logical argument in defence of the doctrine of justification by faith. In the opening verses (1-5), he sets forth the fruits of justification as peace with God, access by faith into God's grace, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, and glorying in tribulation. In the rest of the chapter, he described the fountain and foundation of justification as laid in the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the passage under consideration, Paul the apostle with the same fervor and cogency advanced righteousness and holy living as the unmistakable evidence of justification. Therefore to tolerate sin under any guise is unscriptural and unacceptable. This is because the grace of God has immense power embedded in it, so much that sin will completely lose its influence.

Paul advocated two theological concepts that unveiled the true nature of holiness. The first entails dying to sin and living in righteousness. Consequently, the believer is dead to sin, free from the reign of sin and does not yield his members as instruments of unrighteousness. The second implies the elements of walking in newness of life (verse 4); being alive unto God through our Lord Jesus Christ (verse 11); yielding ourselves to God as those alive from the dead (verse 13) and our members as instruments of righteousness to God (verse 13).

Question 1: What is the meaning of grace?

Grace is favor or kindness shown without regard to the worth or merit of the one who receives it. Grace is God's riches at Christ expense. The Scripture reveals God

as being **“merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth”**(Exodus 34:6). Grace is therefore associated with mercy, love compassion and patience.

PROVISION AND PURPOSE OF GOD’S MATCHLESS GRACE (Romans 6;1-10; 3;24-28; Ephesians 2:1-9; Titus 2:11,12; Deuteronomy 9:5,6; John 1;14-17; Acts 15;11)

In the Old Testament, the supreme example of grace was the redemption of the children of Israel from Egypt and their establishment in the Promised Land. This did not happen because of any merit on Israel’s part but because of God’s faithfulness and mercy (Deuteronomy9:5,6).

Question 2: Give one example each of God’s grace from the old and New Testaments

God had always related with His people on the basis of Grace. However, Jesus Christ is the supreme revelation of His grace to mankind. Jesus was the embodiment and manifestation of God’s grace that brought salvation to mankind(Luke 2:40; John 1:14; Titus 2:11). By His death and resurrection, Jesus restored the broken fellowship between God and His people, both Jews and Gentiles. The only way for any person to attain salvation is **“through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ”**(Acts 15:11).

Question 3: In the light of the scriptures, highlights the primary purpose of divine provision of grace.

The grace of God revealed in Jesus Christ is applied to all men for their salvation by the Holy Spirit, Who is called “the Spirit of grace”(Hebrews 10:29). He reveals Christ to the world and helps repentant sinners to receive forgiveness, adoption to Sonship, newness of life and spiritual gift (Ephesians 4:7). The theme of grace is especially prominent in the letters of Apostle Paul. He exalts grace above the works of the law {Romans 3:24-28}. Paul makes it abundantly clear that salvation is not something that can be earned or merited: it can only be received as a gift of grace. Grace, however, must be accompanied by faith;

a person must trust in the mercy and favor of God, even while it is undeserved (Romans 4:16). Mighty as sin is, the grace of God is mightier still. The grace of God is like the tide of the ocean, which enters a vast harbor and overflows and sweeps away accumulated pollutions .

Victory over sin is a possibility for every sinner; more so because God is the Giver of grace, Jesus Christ the Minister of grace, and the Holy Spirit the Agent of grace.

PRECEPTS FOR PARTAKERS OF GOD'S MARVELLOUS GRACE (Romans 6:11-13; 14-22; Hebrews 12:15; Titus 2:11-12; 2 Timothy 2:1; Colossians 3:10; Galatians 2:21; 2 Corinthians 12:9; 6:1; Acts 20:24; Zechariah 12:10; Genesis 6:8; 19:19; Esther 2:17; Proverbs 3:34).

In the above passages, we find timeless precepts for the partakers of God's grace. Notice how often Paul uses the word "know" in this chapter (verses 3,6,9,16). Satan wants to perpetually keep us in the dark when it comes to the spiritual truths we should know. This is the reason many Christians are living beneath their privileged position. By his exposition, Paul, however, shows that it is impossible for a true Christian to live in sin any longer since he is dead to sin. This is the evidence of our identification with Christ. Not only did Christ die for us, but we died with Him. When the Spirit baptized us into the body of Christ, we were buried with Him and raised to newness of life. Romans 6:3,4 do not refer to water baptism but the operation of the Spirit in putting us "**into Christ**" as members of His body (this operation is illustrated by water baptism). When Christ died, we died with Him; when He was raised, we were raised to newness of life with Him. This is our new position in Christ. Christ did not only die for sin, He also died unto sin (Romans 6: 10). He, therefore, broke the power of sin and destroyed the old nature (Romans 6:6).

Sin and the old nature are hard masters. The unsaved person is a slave to sin (John 8:34; Romans 6:16,20). He is dead in his sins and trespasses (Ephesians 2:1-3). He is a servant of sin because he has failed to wholeheartedly believe God's provision for salvation and righteousness

through Christ (Romans 10:9'10). Every professing Christian in the church who still lives in sin is in the same spiritual situation with the unsaved person. However, through the grace of God in Christ, believers are "dead to sin" (Romans 6:2). They are crucified with Christ (Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20). The old, sinful nature in them has been destroyed; as a result, sin has no dominion over them (Romans 6:14).

It is not enough to know our new position in Christ; we must, by faith, reckon it to be true in our individual lives. Reckoning is faith in action. It is resting on the word of God in spite of circumstances or feelings. We must, by faith, believe that we have been crucified with Christ and that "the old man" has been put to death. This is the beginning of walking in newness of life.

As believers who have truly reckoned ourselves dead to Sin, we must prove our faith by yielding ourselves to God. This is an important step in the process of getting victory over the old nature, the flesh. We must completely yield the members of our bodies to Christ.

Prior to our salvation, we yielded ourselves to sin, and were the servants of sin. Consequently, we received the "**wages**" of sin- death(verse 23). But now that we have received Christ as Savior, we have been made free from sin; that is, our new position in Christ gives us a new Master as well as a new nature. We are now the servants of righteousness instead of the servants of sin! As we yield our members to Christ as "instruments"(verse 13), He comes to control our lives, and we bear fruit unto holiness (verse 22).

Question 4: List and explain the scriptural steps that ensure the believers' total victory over sin.

It is important that we keep these three steps in order. We cannot yield to God and get victory over the flesh unless we first reckon ourselves to be dead unto sin and alive in Christ. But we cannot reckon ourselves dead unless we know our position in Christ. Satan does not want us to live up to our high position in Jesus Christ, so he tries

to confuse us about our victory in the Son of God. It is not enough to know that Christ died for us, we must also know that we died in Christ. It is not enough to know that we have a new nature within; we must also know that the old nature was dealt with on the Cross. Know, reckon, yield: these three steps lead to daily victory over the flesh. Our knowledge and practical application of these steps in our lives will lead us to the throne where Christ is exalted on high, where (with Him) we "reign in life" as servants of righteousness, not slaves of sin.

Believers should know that these three - know, reckon and yield, are spiritual factors, that needs to be constantly observed. They are not emergency measures that are to be employed in times of special temptations. Believers who spend quality time with the Word of God daily will know their position in Christ. They will have the faith to reckon themselves dead to sin and be able to yield themselves to the indwelling Spirit. The answer to the problem of sin is not simply determination, discipline, reformation, legislation, or any other human endeavor. It is through crucifixion and resurrection with Christ that we have the needed victory.

PERILS AND PENALTY OF GRACELESS LIVING (Romans 6:23; Genesis 3:8-12,23; Romans 1:24-32; Ecclesiastes 7:26; 8:12; Ezekiel 18:4; Revelation 20:11-15)

It is a sad reality that God's grace, in all its overwhelming power and influence to overcome sin and stem the tide of evil, thus affording the believer the sublime and the enviable privilege of being partaker of God's divine nature (2 Peter 1:4) can be: (1) resisted (Hebrews 12:15), (2) received in vain (2 Corinthians 6: 1), (3) quenched (I Thessalonians 5: 19), (4) frustrated (Galatians 2:21), and (5) abandoned (Galatians 5:4) by the believer. The ultimate result is gracelessness in the life of such a believer. A graceless life is invariably one that is steeped in the works of the flesh (Galatians 5: 19-21). Except by the grace of God, a believer has no power to resist sin or yield his members as instruments of righteousness (John 15:5). This is a sobering truth that calls for humility, prayer and

self-examination (Romans 12:3; Philippians 2:5; Matthew 26:41; 2 Corinthians 13:5).

Question 5: Mention three consequences of sin.

The frightening prospect of graceless living is aptly captured in many parts of the Scripture. Firstly, sin brings guilt. A soul burdened with guilt cannot approach God with boldness and faith (Genesis 3:8-12). Secondly, sin is contagious in nature. When introduced, sin in the life of a single individual has the potential to spread within the body of believers in a local assembly (Song of Solomon 2: 15; 1 Corinthians 5:6-8, Galatians 5:9). Another peril of graceless living is the possibility of falling away (apostasy). If allowed, sin in a believer's life could take him through a sequence of moral degradation that culminates in a state whereby it becomes impossible to renew him unto repentance. **"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Hebrew 6:4-6).** Again, **"For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (Hebrews 10:26-27).** Apostle Peter described it thus: **"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviors Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (2 Peter 2:20-21).**

Additionally, sin brings shame, fear, illusion, mean fulfillment and cynicism. We can find hell even in our greatest achievement. We can set out with the noblest aims

and finish in the vilest gutter. Judgment for sin is plain throughout the Scripture. Sin brings death (Genesis 2:17; Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 6:23; James 1:15). Sin is ultimately self-destructive.

Finally, sin leads to eternal death or perdition which is everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power” (2 Thessalonians 1:9).

Question 6: Explain how a sinner or a backslider can escape the judgment of God.

However, when a sinner or backslider turns to God from sin in genuine repentance, God pardons all his sins. The power embedded in the grace of God miraculously transforms and empowers such an individual. It is only then that he will experience true freedom from sin thereby averting divine wrath.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
MON	Romans	11-12	Isaiah	66
TUE	“	13-14	Jeremiah	1-2
WED	“	15-16	“	3-4
THUR	1 Cor.	1-2	“	5-6
FRI	“	3-4	“	7-8
SAT	“	5-6	“	9-10
SUN	“	7	“	11-12

556 Lesson

DELIVERANCE FROM THE LAW AND POWER OF SIN

MEMORY VERSE: "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we are held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of letters" (Romans 7:6).

TEXT: Romans 7:1-25

Paul, the apostle, has revealed in the preceding chapter that Jesus Christ is the Author of grace. Grace refers to the unmerited mercy, favor or forgiveness that God grants the penitent sinner who exercises faith in Christ's death and resurrection. Through grace and gift of salvation, the redeemed does not "**continue in sin**" but lives in total freedom from and constant dominion over sin. Thus, saints in Christ are "**dead to sin**", "**alive from death**", "**alive unto God**", "**free from sin**" and have become "**servants of righteousness**" (Romans 6:5,10,11,18).

In this chapter, the apostle explains that the law holds everyone living in sin guilty before God. The law fulfills its holy purpose by generating agitations, struggles and inner crisis arising from the moral failures of the unregenerate. The law also shows the consequence of man's sinful acts which is death without the ability to deliver him from its grip. Since death serves a dual purpose not only being the penalty but also the means of freedom from the law of sin, Christ, assuming the position of the condemned sinner, has fully satisfied the demand of the law through His vicarious death on the cross. Thus, in the life of everyone who believes and accepts this transaction and payment made on his behalf by Christ, the law or power of sin and death will lose their hold. "**For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me**" (Galatians 2: 19,20).

This explanation became necessary because many Jews whom he addresses in this chapter construe salvation in Christ to be renunciation of the law and their loyalty to God. Though many of them blindly rely on the law for justification, he clarifies that through Jesus Christ, both Jews and Gentiles have been delivered from any obligation to the law and can bear fruit of righteousness unto God through faith in the gospel.

FREEDOM FROM THE LAW AND SIN THROUGH CHRIST (Romans 7:1-6; 6:14; 3:19; 1 Corinthians 7:39.; Romans 6:3,4,11; 8:2-4; Galatians 2: 9, 20; 5:18; Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2: 14).

Question 1: Explain the analogy of marriage relationship in connection with believers' freedom from the law.

"Know ye not brethren (for I speak to them that know the law) how that the law has dominion over a man as long as he liveth?" (Romans 7: 1). "The law has dominion over man" but, through Christ's death, its rule over its subjects has been abrogated. Many of the Christians who were in Rome, being Jews, were acquainted with the law of Moses given their religious background. They argued that obedience to the law was a perpetual obligation. This line of understanding was affecting their submission to the gospel. Paul therefore reasoned with them that Just as the law had no dominion over a dead man, so also are Christians free from the grip of the law and sin through Jesus Christ.

He illustrates this truth by appealing to the law of marriage. **"For the woman which has an husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he liveth, but, If the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband..."** (Romans 7:2,3). This illustration is intended to prove to Roman believers that as the law of marriage is binding on a man or woman only as long as the partner is alive, so also, the power of the law and sin is binding on the human race only as long as it remained outside Christ. While in sin, every human being is under the control of the lusts of his flesh. **"For when we were in the flesh,**

the motions of sins which were by the law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now, we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter" (Romans 7:5,6).

Question 2: What is the purpose of the law in man's justification before God?

Before salvation, the sinner is described as being in the flesh and under the control of his carnal propensities. The law of sin has dominion over him. His heart is constantly drawn towards sin as the desire of a wife is towards her husband. But, at the point of repentance, through identification with Christ's death, the believer is freed from the power of the law and sin. By this discourse, Jewish believers were being told to relinquish their commitment to the law and submit to Christ. This is because the dominion of the law was meant to be temporary. It was intended to lead the people of the old covenant to Christ. "Wherefore, the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith: But after that faith is come, we are no longer under the schoolmaster" (Galatians 3:24,25). He explains further that the law does not justify anybody before God. There are many religious people today who hold firmly to partaking of the Lord's supper, getting baptized in water, attending church service regularly, engaging in religious services, philanthropy and other religious rites as means of justification, but are not free from sin like their Jewish religious counterparts. These religious rites cannot save; it is only Jesus that can save from sin.

THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW (Romans 7: 7-13; Romans 3:20; Galatians 3:19,21; Romans 4:15; 5:20; 2 Corinthians 3:6,7; Psalm 19:8; 119:38,137; Leviticus 18:5 ; Ezekiel 20:11; Luke 10:25-28; 1 Timothy 1:8).

Question 3: Is it possible for a man to be saved by just keeping the law?

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid.

Nay, I had not known sin but by the law; ... for I had not known lust, except that the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Romans 7:7.8). The truth here is that, though the law does not justify anybody before God, it served a divine purpose in the life of man. It was given to reveal sin. The law does not produce sinful passions in any man. The evil tendencies in man are inherent in his sinful nature. The law only helps to expose and brand them. **"For I was without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died"** (verse 8). This statement talks about the role the law plays in awakening sinners to the reality of their sinfulness but does not supply the needed grace to be saved from it.

The awakened sinner needs the grace of God through Christ to be free from the power of sin and the condemnation it brings. Those who are awakened to their spiritual destitution like Judas Iscariot but refuse to genuinely repent of their sin and receive salvation through Christ will continue in endless fruitless struggle the carnal nature generates until death.

DELIVERANCE FROM FRUITLESS STRUGGLE UNDER THE LAW (Romans 7:14-25; Galatians 5:17; Romans 6:19; I John 1:8,9; Proverbs 28:13, John 1:12; Romans 8:1-4; Colossians 1: 12-14).

Question 4: Give reasons why the fruitless struggle recorded in our text cannot be the experience of truly saved believers.

At this point the Apostle continues to show that sin is the source of death, not the law. He says, **"the law is spiritual"** that is, it is divine. He therefore reveals in verses 14-23 the fruitless struggles of religious people who try to overcome evil and do good by their own power under the law. Everyone who lives in sin is under the law. These verses describe the life of the natural man as **"carnal, and sold under sin"** (Romans 7:14). His confession is **"... sin ... dwelleth in me"** (Romans 7: 17,20). He is a person that perpetually does what he dislikes and fails to do those things that he is supposed to do. The person who lacks the moral strength to abstain from evil and do right must be an unconverted sinner or backslider. He must

be a religious sinner, having "**delight in the law of God after the inward man**" (verse 22) but lacks the grace to live in accordance with it. This description corresponds with what Paul the Apostle said of his own personal condition prior to his conversion. He says, "**I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the foot of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous towards God as ye all are this day**" (Acts 22:3). He was zealous of the law; yet, he was chief of sinners! In his ignorance of the gospel of Christ, he severely persecuted the church.

After his encounter with Christ, Paul's testimony became a sharp contrast to that of the religious sinner portrayed in our text. He says, "**There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son on the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit**" (Romans 8:1-4).

Paul says, "**Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.**" He is free from the law of sin and death! This is the true spiritual experience of all the Redeemed! They are no longer "**sold under sin.**" Sin no longer "**dwells in them.**" Christ has "**condemned sin**" in their lives; and, the righteousness of the law has been fulfilled in them through Christ.

The word of God declares that man is in a state of bondage to sin until Christ makes him free. There is no part of the Bible that says redeemed people of God are sold under sin. John 8:36 says, "**If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.**" Through Christ, a sinner is delivered from his sins, he is given the power of sonship and the power to "go and sin no more" (John 1:12; 8:11). If

through carelessness and. lack of watchfulness, a believer falls into sin, can quickly look up to Christ for immediate restoration. “And if any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins...” (1 John 2:2) Though believers are in a constant struggle against sin, Satan and the world Jesus Christ remains their constant and permanent Source of victory (Romans 7:24).

Question 5: Do wicked and wretched sinners have any hope of being totally delivered from sins?

"O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death" (Romans 7:24). This is the highest function of the law. It is to lead the sinner to the point where he finds himself totally helpless so that he will cry out to God for mercy and pardon. **"Seek the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon him while He is near"** (Isaiah 55:6,7). Any sinner who reaches out to God for deliverance will always testify and **"thank God"** for obtaining salvation **"through Jesus Christ our Lord."** There is total deliverance from the law and power of sin for everyone in Christ.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
MON	1 Cor.	8-9	Jeremiah	13-14
TUE	"	10-11	"	15-16
WED	"	12-13	"	17-18
THUR	"	14	"	19-20
FRI	"	15	"	21-22
SAT	"	16	"	23
SUN	2 Cor.	1-2	"	24-25

END OF NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES

BEGINNING OF SPECIAL STUDIES

557 Lesson

TOTAL DEPRAVITY, SINFULNESS AND GUILT OF ALL MEN

MEMORY VERSE: "How much more abominable and filthy is man? Which drinketh iniquity like water?" (Job 15:16).

TEXT: Psalm 51:1-5; Job 14:4; Romans 3:10-23

Man was created in the image of God, holy and righteous. He was the highpoint and crown of God's marvelous creation and was granted dominion over all the works of His hands (Genesis 1:26,27; Psalm 8:4-8). Nothing could compare to man's exaltation and place in the Garden of Eden which he was commissioned "to dress and to keep." But through voluntary disobedience and transgression, man fell into sin and lost his original position with God. There was nothing left in the natural man that was not affected by this fall. Man became depraved and the glory and beauty of God's holiness departed from him.

Question 1: Describe the extent and impact of man's fall.

SINFULNESS OF ALL MEN (Psalm 51: 1-5; Mark 7:21-23; Romans 3:10-18,23; 7:14-21; 5:12-17· Job 14:4· Isaiah 48:8)

Adam and Eve committed the first act of sin when they disobeyed God in the Garden. God had "**commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it ...**" (Genesis 2: 16,17). Unfortunately, they yielded to temptation and transgressed this commandment. The Lord was displeased, pronounced judgment on them and drove them away from the Garden. This singular act of disobedience by Adam and Eve became the undoing of mankind. All men born through our first parents became transgressors through

inheritance of the sin-nature. By extension, everyone born through a man and a woman became sinners, shaped in iniquity and utterly devoid of grace and the holiness of God. Man became totally inclined to evil. **"And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually"** (Genesis 6:5). All generations of men became sinful, a people laden with iniquity, seed of evildoers and corrupt children. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no moral soundness because sin has corrupted man's nature.

Question 2: Explain sin.

Sin is the transgression of the law of God. God has given us commandments to regulate our lives and conduct. Any departure from them amounts to a violation of His law. Every deed or act contrary to God's command is a challenge to His authority. All acts of immorality, adultery, fornication, murder, theft, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, blasphemy, pride, foolishness, and a host of others violate God's laws and amount to sin. Also, sin goes beyond commission of evil against God and includes failure to do what is right according to the truth of God's word (James 4: 17). God will hold anyone who transgresses His word guilty.

Sin altered the course of man and made him every other thing that God did not make him. His fallen nature began to manifest in various forms which the Bible illustrates in various terms. Jesus Christ referred to sinners as swine and dogs. **"Give not that which is holy unto dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine ... "** (Matthew 7:6). He also referred to them as goats (Matthew 25:33). In his epistle to the Philippians, Paul warned them to beware of evil workers which he termed dogs (Philippians 3:2). In Romans chapter three, he referred to this fallen nature of man by saying that, **"there is none righteous, no, not one", "they are together become unprofitable", "their throat is an open sepulchre", "whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness"** (Romans 3:10- 18). Jesus and John the Baptist described men as vipers (Matthew 3:7: 12:34)

The unregenerate man is also characterized with a reprobate mind filled with all unrighteousness (Romans 1:28-32); he is treacherous, violent and destructive (Isaiah 48:8; 59:5-8). cunning and crafty, full of wickedness, blind, foolish, with darkened understanding, children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3: 4: 14). The heart devises wicked imaginations and it's a factory that generates all manner of evil acts. By whatever measure - nature, habit, character, disposition - man is a sinner.

TOTAL DEPRAVITY AND CORRUPTION (Psalm 51:1-4; Romans 3:23; 5:17,19)

The consequence of the fall is that man became totally depraved and devoid of any moral ability. He lost the glory of God and the power to resist and overcome sin. His depravity made him corrupt, immoral and degenerate. Sin polluted and poisoned the fountain of life in man so that his entire being was corrupted. He became a servant to sin, totally sold out to do evil. The entire nature of man - mental, physical, moral and spiritual has been affected by sin. The testimony of the scriptures is that the image of God in man has been seriously marred by this great fall. All men have become enslaved to sin. **"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way..."** (Isaiah 53:6).

Question 3: What is the effect of man's depravity?

The immediate effect of man's sin was his separation from the holy God And the curse upon Adam and his descendants (Genesis 3: 1-6,14-19,23,24; Romans 5: 12; 8:22). God's judgment also came upon all men: **"for the wages of sin is death"** (Romans 6:23). The total depravity, sinfulness and guilt of all men render all sinners subject to God's wrath and condemnation. **"Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished..."** (Proverbs 11:21).

THE SAVIOR'S WORK OF ATONEMENT (Leviticus 17:11; Romans 5:11; 6:23; Isaiah 53:4-8; Hebrews 9:22; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Acts 8:32~35; I Peter 1:18~21; 2:24).

As a result of the fall and nature of sin inherited, man became totally separated from the perfect, holy and pure God. This separation is the cause of man's sorrow, shame, fear, heartaches and manifold problems, both spiritual and mental. Man became a transgressor and brought under the wrath and condemnation of God. "... **The soul that sinneth it shall die**" (Ezekiel 18:4). There is nothing we can do on our own to absolve ourselves of this verdict. No amount of sacrifice that can commend us to a righteous and holy God. There is nothing the natural man, fallen away from grace, can offer to appease God in order to escape His righteous judgment.

But supreme love constrained the holy God to plan for man's redemption in order to fulfill the demand of Justice. Therefore, God undertook the redemption work for man by sending Jesus Christ to die for him. He became the divine provision of a Perfect Substitute and Sin-bearer (Genesis 22:7,8,14; Hebrews 9:22; Matthew 1:21). By the perfect sacrifice of His blood, man has complete protection from the eternal consequences of the fall and from the curse of the broken law (Exodus 12:13; Galatians 3:13).

Through His blood also there is complete removal of the guilt and condemnation for sin and full redemption by faith (Isaiah 53:4-8; Acts 8:32-35; 1 Peter 1:18-21; 2:24).

<p>Question 4: Explain Christ's atonement in the light of Old Testament sacrifices.</p>
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The atonement is the reconciliation of sinful, fallen man to God made possible through the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The vicarious death of Jesus Christ is the substitution of the sufferings of Christ for the punishment of all sinners. Just as it was required in the Old Testament that men make atonement for their transgressions through the sacrifice of animals, Christ undertook to be our perfect and final sacrifice (Hebrews 7:27; 9:28). The prime purpose of this is the full redemption of fallen mankind. Through this "mercy-seat", sinners are reconciled to God. The power of sin over the natural man can only be broken by the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:12; Romans 5:17-19), "**For as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one man shall many be**

made righteous" (Romans 5:19). However, God demands repentance from all sinners to avail themselves of the provision of this redemption through Jesus Christ (John 3: 14,15; 1 Corinthians 5:7; John 1: 12; 3: 18.36), Repentance is the change which takes place in the penitent's attitude towards sin and causes him to turn to God.

Question 5: How can a sinner benefit from Christ's work of atonement?

Sincere and total repentance with godly sorrow for sin through the agency of the Holy Spirit is an important pre- requisite for salvation. Repentance is the deep inward experience which makes the sinner turn from sin to God. Therefore, God demands repentance from all men (Mark I: 15; Matthew 4:17; Luke 13:3,5; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30). When a sinner hears the gospel, he must acknowledge and manifest deep, godly sorrow for his sins. He must also confess them to God and ask for forgiveness on the merit of the atonement made by Jesus Christ through His vicarious death, accepting the sacrifice as a substitute for the punishment of his sins. On the basis of this genuine repentance, the sinner asks for forgiveness and pardon based on the promises of God in the scriptures (Proverbs 28:13; Isaiah 55:6,7; 1 John 1:9; Ezekiel 18:21,22). As the sinner repents genuinely through the agency of the Holy Spirit, he receives forgiveness and pardon.

Question 6: Why is the believer in Christ described as a new creature?

Genuine repentance is followed by transformation of heart and life. Sin's guilt and condemnation are taken away and the peace of God floods the heart (Romans 5:1; 8: 1). The believer begins to live a new life of righteousness, Godliness and holiness which was hitherto impossible because of his fallen nature. He lives as though he had never sinned before; old things have passed away and all things have become new (2 Corinthians 5:17). His passion and aspiration now will be to live and please God all the days of his life. This is the miracle of the transformation of a once-guilty sinner now turned saint.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
MON	2 Cor.	3-5	Jeremiah	26-27
TUE	"	6-7	"	28-29
WED	"	8-9	"	30
THUR	"	10-11	"	31
FRI	"	12-13	"	32
SAT	Galatians	1-2	"	33-34
SUN	"	3-4	"	35-36

558 Lesson

UNEQUAL YOKE AND CHRISTIAN BUSINESS ETHICS

MEMORY VERSE: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness and what communion hath light with darkness" (2 Corinthians 6:14)

TEXTS: 2 Chronicles 25:1-10

The Old Testament narratives from the days of the Patriarchs till the time of the prophets reveal that God hates unequal yoke between believers and Unbelievers. The dispensation of grace clearly indicates that we must remain distinct from unbelievers. "**Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers**". The reasons for this are not far-fetched.

First, the believer stands with God in a very special relation. "**For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special People unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth**" (Deuteronomy 7:6). The Christian is one chosen from the unholy mass to be peculiarly God's property. He belongs to God in body, soul and spirit. He is a vessel for the Master's use. His every power, life, relationship is to governed by the word of God. In this special relation, he must have nothing to do with sin but unite with others of like-precious faith to fight against it.

DESCRIPTION OF UNEQUAL YOKE (2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Deuteronomy 7:2, 3; 1 Corinthians 5:9; 10:20,21; Ephesians 5:7, 11)

Unequal yoke is the unholy intimate relationship that exists between a believer and an unbeliever. It is generally seen in marriage. When a Christian man or woman who professes to be journeying heavenward goes to marry a sinner or one of a doubtful Christian claim either with the intention of leading such a person to the Lord after their marriage, he or she has gone into unequal yoke.

Any Christian lady or man, student or worker who has sinners as his or her best friends has gone into unequal yoke. When a Christian in a Bible-believing and Christ-exalting church secretly worships in occult churches or seeks "solace" from their prophets or prophetesses, he is into unequal yoke. A Christian's partnership in business with a non-Christian is unequal yoke

Question 1a: What is unequal yoke? (b): In what areas must we watch against unequal yoke?

The Scriptures sternly warn against unequal yoke. Paul queried the Corinthian Christians: "**What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?**" Essentially, Christians are not supposed to have more concourse with unholy men than is absolutely necessary. There can be no profitable fellowship, business or friendship between the Christian and the unbeliever, as there can be no communion between light and darkness. As Christ can have no concord with Belial, so a believer in Jesus cannot have concord with unbeliever. The Christian and non-Christian are subjects not only of two separate kingdoms but two diametrically-opposed kingdoms. They act on very different principles.

Question 2: Why are believers warned against unequal yoke?

CAUSES OF UNEQUAL YOKE (2 Timothy 4: 10; Genesis 16:2,3; Mark 14:10,11; Judges 14:3; Joshua 9:3-21; 2 Samuel 17:24-26)

Right from the ages, certain factors have been responsible for a believer's indulgence in unequal yoke. A critical examination of the life of some Bible characters serves as a warning to contemporary believers. Though they started very well in their walk with the Lord, at a point, they compromised their faith. While only few of them had the opportunity to retrace their steps, many others could not, they therefore ended- up in eternal punishment in hell.

Among other things, impatience is one of the causes of unequal yoke. This is seen in the case of Abraham

going in unto Hagar (Genesis 16:2,3), covetousness as manifested by Judas in selling Jesus is another factor (Mark 14:10-11). Another contributory factor is worldliness and carnality as typified by Demas (2 Timothy 4:10). Also, business or military alliance is another factor that has pushed many believers into unequal yoke. This was the case with Jehoshaphat, king of Judah when he went into affinity with Ahab, king of Israel (2 Chronicles 18:1-3). At other times, it is willful disobedience, as seen in Samson's relationship with a Phillistine woman (Judges 14:3). Ignorance is another major cause. Is it any wonder then that many believers today make unnecessary comparison of themselves with others in other Christian assemblies, their conviction notwithstanding. As a result of ignorance, Joshua was deceived into making an unwholesome pact with the Gibeonites (Joshua 9:3-21). Another factor which we must watch against is inordinate ambition. This drove Absalom and gang into shameful defeat and disaster (2 Samuel 17:24-26; 18:9)

CONSEQUENCE OF UNEQUAL YOKE (1 Kings 11:1-5; Numbers 31:7,8; 1 Samuel 28:6)

Unequal yoke, either in marriage, friendship, business or worship, is very dangerous. Unequal yoke is practical compromise. And compromise is the beginning of backsliding, a very dangerous spiritual glide down the drain. Though no immediate effects may be apparent when one goes into unequal yoke especially in marriage, worship and business, it will steadily weaken the foundations of one's spiritual strength. Though it may possibly not lead to an immediate open sin, it will surely but imperceptibly cool off that fervency of spirit which attended a believer's first love. Unequal yoke in marriage might appear to be working well at the beginning until several displeasing and spiritually disastrous signals begin to show forth.

Solomon went into unequal yoke in friendship with the king of Egypt (1 Kings 3:1). It appeared to work well for a while but later took a terrible turn. He married the daughter of Pharaoh. But his downward descent which began with unequal yoke did not end there. He ended up with marrying **seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines**

that turned away his heart from God (1 Kings 11 :3). As he sped past the border of grace, he went headlong into idolatry. With his royal authority and wealth, he built shrines for idols his wives worshipped (1 Kings 11;7,8).

Apart from Solomon, Samson thought he was still right with God at the onset of unequal yoke. His strength depleted and over the period, his energy drained off slowly, but he did not know it. Unequal yoke in marriage which initially appears to be harmless was his great undoing. Eventually, he lost his eyes, ministry and life.

Balaam went into unequal yoke in friendship and worship with Balak. All appeared well at the onset, but gradually, the prophet's fervency cooled off for coming into intimate contact with the evil king. As usual, he knew it not. He eventually ended up an ally of the Midianites and died in battle fighting against the people of God, Israel (Numbers 31:7,8).

The doom of Saul was sealed with the whirlwind he reaped as a result of unequal yoke in worship. There was dryness in his soul. There was spiritual blackout in his relationship with God. **"And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets"** (1 Samuel 28:6). He, therefore, resorted to familiar spirit. It is a pity today that many believers who experience some protracted delays in getting their prayer answered, coupled with some difficulty in effectively breaking through some seeming difficult terrains quickly and "smartly" resort to familiar spirit, witch doctors, occult churches, strange prophets with spurious prophetic gifts. This is unequal yoke. And it is dangerous.

Unequal yoke is doubtlessly dangerous. At the minimum, it makes you less heavenly-minded. But, emphatically, this is the starting point of a most fatal spiritual plunge. Believers must beware of unequal yoke in all areas of life, including friendship, fellowship, marriage, worship and business.

Question 3: Give three examples of Bible characters who went into unequal yoke

Question 4: What are the consequences of unequal yoke?

PRIORITY OF CHRISTIAN BUSINESS ETHICS (Leviticus 19:35,36; Deuteronomy 25: 13-16; Psalms 34:9,10; 37:25; Proverbs 10:2; 13:11; 20:21; 20:10; 11:1)

The importance of Christian business ethics among believers cannot be overemphasized. If our way of life must be acceptable to God in this world, we must learn scriptural principles and make them have pre-eminence in all our activities and relationships. It is important that we start with God by asking for His guidance in every aspect of our business life.

It is disheartening to see some believers use every means to cheat people they transact business with. They device all kinds of ways to ensure that people are not given services or products that is worth their money. Among the ways they deploy is counterfeiting and unjust measures contrary to the word of God. "Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small" (Deuteronomy 25:14). Some worldly-wise masters set up their servants who have completed their apprenticeship with spurious allegations of wrongdoing in order to withhold their entitlements. Some servants also indulge in pilfering and graduate to steal huge sums of money and run away. Some business owners seem to enjoy engaging the services of artisans or employees without pay to the displeasure of God (Jeremiah 22: 13). How about those who must collect bribes before discharging their official duties? This is why in government establishments, parastatals, schools and colleges or organized private sector (in small and medium scale enterprises), maximizing personal gains has continued to take precedence over ethics. Quest for riches have taken many business people to shrines where they offer parts of their bodies, their spouse or children in exchange for ephemeral things of life. Christ warns believers to **“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).

Question 5: Mention the three cardinal business principles a Christian must uphold

In all his business dealings, a Christian is required to uphold the principles of integrity, honesty and uprightness. He must not be involved in the methods, modes and sharp Practices of the unregenerate, which though commonplace, are abominations in the sight of the Lord (Proverbs 13:11; 20:10; 11:1; Romans 12:11). These sinful and worldly methods may appear gainful and promising at the onset, but the end thereof results in shame, sorrow, disaster and death. **“For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out, for the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some converted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God , flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness”** (1 Timothy 6:7,10,11). If we allow divine principles in our lives and relationships, we will be successful in this world and be qualified for reward in heaven.

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
MON	Galatians.	5-6	Jeremiah	37-38
TUE	Ephesians	1-2	“	39-40
WED	“	3-4	“	41-42
THUR	“	5-6	“	43-44
FRI	Phillippians	1-2	“	45-46
SAT	“	3-4	“	47-48
SUN	Colossians	1-2	“	49

559 Lesson

JESUS' PATTERN OF SOUL - WINNING

MEMORY VERSE: "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master and the servant as his Lord" (Matthew 10:25).

TEXT: Matthew 4:17-25; 9:9-13

As Jesus went about fulfilling His ministry of teaching, preaching and healing, Bible scholars note that He covered about 240 cities and villages. His passion for souls not only drew multitudes of sin-sick minds from the valley of despair, His style of evangelism *also* presented challenges and pattern to all His disciples in a hitherto uncharted course.

The call of Peter, Andrew, James, John and Matthew presents a platform from which to look at the Lord's pattern of soul- winning. Here, the authority, greatness, love, compassion of our Chief Shepherd not only shine, the dramatic change of character and conduct of a life exposed to divine love is clearly set forth.

THE PLACE OF PREACHING AND HEALING IN SOUL - WINNING (Luke 4: 17-28; 24:25-27- John 2:23:- 10:25,41,42; Acts 19:11,12).

"And Jesus went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people" (Matthew 4:23).

The two words, "preaching" and "healing", provide the clue to the outstanding success experienced by Jesus in the business of soul-winning. He demonstrated astonishing authority and mastery of the scriptures in preaching and teaching and manifested awesome power in healing, miracles signs and wonders.

Question 1: Why do we need the demonstration of healing, miracles, signs and wonders today in the business of soul- winning?

Actually, His success in soul-winning derives from these two sources: vast knowledge of the scriptures and dynamic power evangelism informed by a consistent prayer life (Mark 1:35; Luke 4:1-14; 6:12; 10:21; 22:39-44; John 17:1-26) Together, they present a model through which to look at His pattern of soul-winning. In teaching, He taught with authority and wisdom. He was able to do that because He was a man of prayer and the Scriptures. It is doubtful whether anyone could make much progress who is not given to much prayer and deep study of the Scripture. The biblical injunctions, "**men ought always to pray, and not to faint**" (Luke 18: 1), "**pray without ceasing**" (1 Thessalonians 5: 17), "**study to shew yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth**" (2 Timothy 2: 15) perhaps hold true in soul-winning than anywhere else. No believer can be as successful as Christ was who if he is not fervent in prayer and diligent in studying the scriptures. The prayer aspect of soul-winning could also include fasting (Matthew 17,21).

Jesus shows by His approach that a result-oriented soul-winning venture must of a necessity be accompanied by demonstration of the power in healing the diseased, the sick and the demon-oppressed. Society, as presently structured, with rampant outbreak of diseases and demonic afflictions, needs that the gospel be presented with demonstration of God's power

Question 2: How can a soul-winner acquire the power to minister to the sick, the diseased and the oppressed?

As demonstrated by the exploits of the Lord in the field of soul-winning, consistent prayer life and holy living are the two cables through which a soul-winning strategy can tap into the vast divine power for miracles, signs and wonders. There is a limit to what we can do without the backing of God's power. Notice that more souls were won to the Lord through healing, miracles, signs and wonders than through hard-core preaching. For instance, "**In Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did**" (John

2:23). In another instance, "**many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracles: but all things that John spoke of this man were true. And many believed on him there**" (John 10:41,42).

DIVERSE AUDIENCE, DIVERSE APPROACH (Matthew 10: 1- 7;13: 1-34; Mark 10:17-27; Luke 10:25-37; 15:1-32; John 4:4- 30;8:1-11;Acts 13:13-44; 17:16-34).

The Lord's approach differed from person to person. Situation and wisdom dictated his method of approach. In Matthew's case for instance, He not only ate with him, His disarming comment silenced, even if momentarily, the bitter criticism of religious bigots. In Christ's time, prejudice evidently trudged the land of Palestine. The scribes and Pharisees versus the Publicans and the Gentiles. The Sadducees versus Pharisees. The Samaritans versus the Jews. Deep-seated animosities ruled and guided interactions among the sects. They were so bigoted to the extent that they did not pay attention to the inner yearnings of their hearts. Christ's pattern of soul-winning was to change all that. Wisdom dictates that He varies His approach according to the level of His audience's understanding. He was sensitive to the man-made barrier as He was determined to break the middle wall of partition existing among them. Successful soul-winning demands diverse approach since understanding and temperaments differ from person to person.

Question 3: Why do we need wisdom in soul-winning?

People, place and circumstances determined the slant of Jesus' message. Parables, conversations, questions, comment on current happenings all came in handy as a means of driving home a point. They were thought-provoking as they were witty. He wielded them like a rapier. With them, feelings were gauged and motives unmasked, thus leaving the sinner with no place to hide from the searching glare of God's word. But in all, wisdom supervised and guided the appropriateness and preferences of the use of each. Soul-winning opportunity can be lost when wisdom is not allowed to decide the appropriateness of the use or words or method!

For instance, to an ordinary eye, it would appear that Jesus had some axe to grind when, in a rare expression of holy indignation, He pronounced "woes" on the scribes and the Pharisees for their hypocrisy, impenitence and unbelief (Matthew 23:13-33). Yet, in one instance, He honored a dinner invitation from a Pharisee (Luke 7:36-50) and in another praised a scribe for his sincerity (Mark 12:28-34). He was not caught in the prejudice that exists between the Pharisees and the publicans. He related with them equally. His life was ruled by one maxim: charity towards all, malice towards none. He was swayed by neither the hermitism of John the Baptist (Luke 7:33,34), the hospitality of the Pharisees nor the geocentricism of His disciples (Luke 9:55). He related with His audience with understanding and firmness. Successful soul-winning demands that reason be separated from emotion. Nothing erodes confidence as when preconception is allowed to rule and guide interaction between a soul-winner and his subjects.

Commendation or condemnation should come, as occasion demands it. Notice the tactful use of commendation in the conversation between Jesus and the scribe: **"And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God"** (Mark 12:34). Tact is also evident in His conversation with the Samaritan woman. **"Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband"** (John 4:16,17). In dealing with souls, there might be need to commend a kind act done or word said by a seeker. In some cases, this might turn out to be the only means of getting him to accept the gospel.

THE SINNER'S FRIEND (Matthew 9:9-13; John 8: 1-11; Luke 7:36-50; Romans 5:8,19; 1 Timothy 1:15).

In associating with Matthew, a certified sinner in the Pharisees' mind, Jesus showed Himself a true Friend of all spiritual wretch. His condescension that started with His incarnation acquired a new meaning as well as become redefined as He reaches out to sinful men. Criticism,

rather than bring about change of behavior in a sinner, will only harden his heart.

Ordinarily, a publican suffered from a poor public image. He was, on account of his activity as a tax-collector, shunned as a stooge of the Roman Empire. Besides, the demand of his duty, an intimate relationship with the Gentiles placed him in bad light among the Jews.

Question 4: Why were the Publicans so despised in the eyes of the Pharisees?

By interacting with publicans widely regarded as the sinners and scorn of the society. Jesus set His divine mission on a collision Course with the prejudice of His time. It was no wonder therefore that the Pharisees took His disciple to task "**Why eateth your master with publicans and sinners?**"

In asking this question, however the Pharisees betrayed their ignorance of the Messiah's mission on earth: "**I am not come to call the righteous, but the sinners to repentance**" (Matthew 9.13). It is instructive that Jesus answered them out of their own scripture. Christ's answer must have sounded like a new note in the tradition and religious practice of the day.

The religious people who regarded Jesus' association with men of "questionable occupation and character" as scandalous undoubtedly have a wrong assumption of what constitutes acceptable service to God. While they were very particular about religious formality, they neglected the very essence of the Law. The much-despised publican and the sinner are probably nearer the kingdom of heaven than the self-righteous Pharisee "**Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots into the kingdom of God before you**" (Matthew 21:31).

Question 5: What do you learn from Jesus' association with the publican and sinners of His day?

But we should not forget the lesson being driven at here: to be a successful soul-winner, you will need to show

yourself friendly to people whose souls you aim to win for Christ. Your disposition is as important as your message. In fact, in some cases, It has sometimes turned out to be the entire message a sinner needs to surrender his life to Christ.

One of the interesting features of Christ's passion for souls is HIS practice of taking the gospel to the seekers' abode, homes, towns, cities, streets, roads, seashores, desert, and synagogues – none proved a no-go-area in pursuance of this objective. He condescended to the level of His audience. He identified with their agonies and pains. Doubtless, in the offices, in the neighborhood, in schools, in the small circle of acquaintance and relations. In the larger society, are people who don't care about the salvation of their souls about the life hereafter. But any soul-winner who hopes to be like his Master must look beyond the demeanor and character of people. He will need to warm up to the snobbish and cheer up the downcast.

Christ's passion for. Souls is not one without some highlights. One, He is as much grieved over the spiritual state of multitude as He was "over one sinner". Before His encounter with Matthew He had preached the gospel in Galilee, Capernaum, Nazareth, Bethsaida. Jericho. Yet, He was as excited with one seeker as with crowd of people. With both He exuded the same warmth, love, kindness and compassion.

Two, His passion for souls recognized neither place nor time. Every place or time was just alright insofar as people were willing to give audience to His message. People's homes, places of work, deserts, synagogues, seashores, wilderness all provided a cozy place to address men on the subject of repentance and faith towards God. Three, every situation, circumstance and contact with people became an opportunity not only to experience the wonderful power of God in bodily healing but also the marvellous grace of God in repentance, redemption, and regeneration of life.

Four only one theme ran through His messages: repentance from sin and faith toward God. Little wonder this evangelistic fervor, tenacity and zeal passed on to

His disciples who constitute the nucleus of the early church. Later, Peter was to re-iterate their commitment to soul-winning, saying **"We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard"** (Acts 4:20) while the early disciples **"scattered abroad"** by intense persecution went **"every where preaching the word"** (Acts 8:4). And through it all one theme stood out: **"repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ"** (Acts 20:21).

CONVERSION AND COMMITMENT TO EVANGELISM
(Matthew 9:9, 19; 10: 1-3,5,6; John 4:28,30,39-42; Acts 2:47b; 8: 1-4; 2 Timothy 2:8,9; 4: 1,2).

Matthew honored the Lord and His disciples not only to commemorate his spiritual rebirth but also to create opportunity for seekers to meet with the Savior. Of course, being young in the faith, he could not preach to the people. He left the job for Jesus. Therein lies an unforgettable lesson for new converts: you can share your testimonies with and invite your acquaintances and intimate friends to fellowship and church services. You can organize a forum where a minister of God or a more experienced church leader can minister to them. This was the same principle applied in the disciples meeting with "certain Greeks" who came to Jerusalem to worship at the feast of the Passover (John 12:20-22).

Question 6: In fishing for souls, how may we employ Matthew's method?

An unfamiliar face sitting by your side during worship or fellowship session could be a visitor waiting to be won for Christ. Striking up conversation with the person after service might prove to be the ideal thing to do. Every believer is called to be a soul-winner. And what an excellent pattern the Lord has left for us to follow.

One, avoid popularity-seeking and see in every man or woman you meet a unique creature whose soul is as important as any other in the sight of God. Two, let seekers see in you the love, compassion and understanding which the society does not and cannot offer. Let them know

through your conduct and character that God will not reject them if they come to Him in penitence and genuine repentance. Three, give no respite to your passion for soul-winning but recognize in every contact with people an opportunity to reach out to them with the gospel. Lastly, keep to the message that can save the soul from eternal damnation: repentance from sin and faith toward Christ.

Our willingness to accept and obey the commission to win souls is the true test of our conversion. Conversion and evangelism go together. Where there is real conversion, there will also be zeal to take the gospel to the unreached by all possible means.

As we obey the Lord, His promised presence will grant the soul-winner peace, protection, preservation, power, provision on earth and a place in heaven.

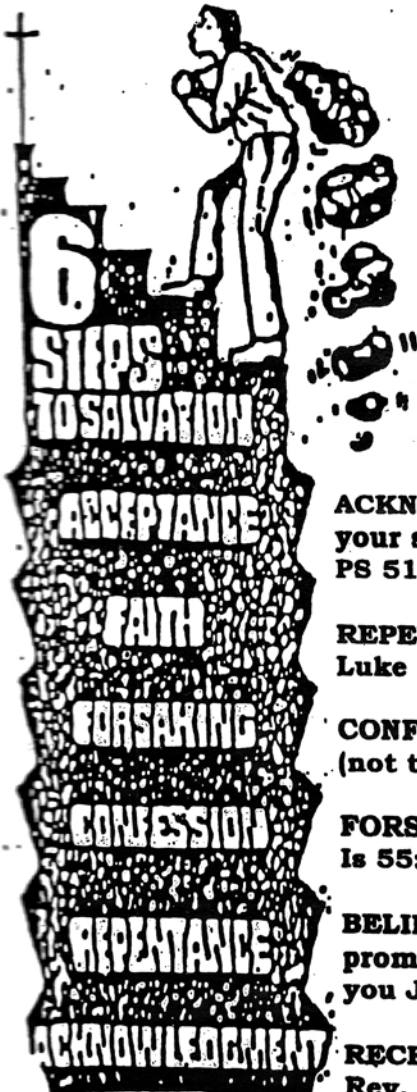
DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
MON	Colossians.	3-4	Jeremiah	50
TUE	1 Thess.	1-2	“	51
WED	“	3-4	“	52
THUR	“	5	Lamentations	1-2
FRI	2 Thess.	1-3	“	3
SAT	1 Timothy	1-3	“	4-5
SUN	“	4-5	Ezekiel	1-2

THE END OF THE STUDIES, BUT BE ADVISED THE WORD OF GOD IS TIMELESS (DOES NOT BECOME OBSOLETE AT ANYTIME). 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

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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