

Search The Scriptures

VOLUME 59

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



NAME _____

DISTRICT _____

REGION/GROUP _____

STATE _____

**A Publication Of
Deeper Christian Life Ministry
P.O. Box 59, University of Lagos P.O.
Akoka, Yaba, Lagos, Nigeria
ISSN 0795-8994**

CONTENTS

LESSON		PAGE
<u>OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES</u>		
755	Saul Slays the Priests at Nob	04
756	Saul Pursues David	11
757	David Spares Saul's Life	18
758	The Foolishness of Nabal	25
759	David's Deception and Rejection	32
<u>NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES</u>		
760	Redemption Through Christ	38
761	Call and Commitment to Perfection	43
762	Warning Against False Teaching and Worship	50
763	The Believer's Risen Life	56
764	Admonition to Prayer and Good Conduct	61
<u>SPECIAL STUDIES</u>		
765	Contemporary Social Vices: The Christian View	67
766	Earnestly Contending for The Faith	75
767	The Great White Throne Judgment	81

BEGINNING OF OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES

755 Lesson

SAUL SLAYS THE PRIESTS AT NOB

MEMORY VERSE: “And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod” (1 Samuel 22:18).

TEXT: 1 Samuel 22:1-23

David had some turbulent moments on his way to the throne. He had been a victim of a cruel persecutor who would stop at nothing to eliminate him simply because God had elevated him. Saul was in a hot chase for the son of Jesse who, by the help of the Lord, wrought deliverance for Israel against the Philistines. David had also been an instrument of relief to Saul when an evil spirit tormented him. For no fault of his, he had to be in flight from one place to another for fear that Saul’s multi-pronged fang would catch up with him. However, we see God working inexorably to protect and preserve him until the day of his coronation and elevation to the throne. David’s experience with Saul underscores the possibility of persecution of the righteous without a cause, suffering for righteousness’ sake and having to endure misunderstandings, misrepresentations and hatred on the way to heaven. Truly, **“many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all”** (Psalm 34:19).

The chapter under examination exposes Saul’s degeneracy, depravity and cruel determination to destroy an innocent soul. It shows the depth to which the king of Israel had sunk morally because of jealousy and unfounded fear. King Saul’s savage elimination of an entire religious community is the height of sacrilege and cruelty.

DAVID’S REFUGE IN THE CAVE OF ADULLAM (1 Samuel 22:1-8; Psalm 142:1-5; 57:1-11; Isaiah 40:28-31; Matthew 11:28-31; Acts 27:20-25)

Due to King Saul's relentless pursuit and determination to kill David, it was no longer safe for him (David) to go to his house, the palace or any other place within Israel's territory. **"David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave of Adullam..."** The name 'Adullam' means refuge. It was located within the territory of Judah, not far from Israel's border with Philistia, but between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. David must have found safety in this place so as to escape Saul's tentacles. The location also afforded him the opportunity to rue his predicament, meditate on the ways of God and pour out his heart before Him.

It is believed that the contents of Psalms 57:1-11 and 142:1-7 were penned in this place; this affirmed that the perplexing situation drew him to seek refuge in God. He said, **"I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble. I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul. I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living"** (Psalm 142:2,4,5). The import of this is that when we appear helpless, hopeless and disappointed, we can always find refuge in God. Secondly, it shows that the situation afforded him opportunity to wait on the Lord for strength, encouragement and victory. It enabled him to meditate, reflect on his past dealings, pray and possibly repent of his sin of lying to Ahimelech. Thirdly, with much more sublime and noble exercise of humility, he was able to seek God's face, crying out, **"Be merciful unto me, O God, Be merciful unto me"** (Psalm 57:1). Finally, it was time to praise the Lord for past deliverances while trusting Him for future help (Psalm 57:5,11).

Unlike King Saul, David did not trade blames for his predicament; rather, he took time apart to exalt God's mercy and power. His attitude is a challenge to believers to put up positive attitudes when they are under persecution, to remember to praise God for His past mercies while believing Him to give them victory. Believers who are under intense persecution or

immobilized by circumstances should utilize the period for sober reflection, self-examination and, if need be, confession and repentance of any known sin.

Question 1: What should be the believer's attitude during persecution?

The situation in Israel at this time appeared so melancholic under Saul to the point that **“every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him [David]; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.”** These were people negatively affected under Saul's tyranny – those in distress due to the situation in the kingdom and those in debt due to the neglect of God's laws. Also, they perceived that David was being unjustly hounded and decided to switch loyalty to him with hope for a better future. Dreading their fate, David's family also fled their homes to join him. There was a general discontent in the land. The Scripture says, **“When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn”** (Proverbs 29:2).

The categories of people who resorted to David can be likened to the general state of humanity. Men and women without the grace of Christ are distressed, disoriented and discontented. And, like David received these people and became captain over them, giving them protection, purpose and direction in life, the Son of David is ready to receive the distressed sinning souls who He will transform, train and commission for Kingdom service. He says, **“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”** (Matthew 11:28). David's effort to transfer his aged parents to a secure location is also worthy of mention. Our parents, the elderly and aged ones should be cared for despite our commitments and service in the Lord's vineyard.

Question 2: What can we learn from the categories of people that resorted to David?

“And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah.

Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth” (1 Samuel 22:5). Gad forewarned David to relocate from his stronghold. This counsel was definitely one of God’s ways of testing and making him exercise faith, wisdom and courage in Him in preparation for the kingdom. It was to teach David to walk by faith and not by sight. The ministry of true prophets of God is indispensable for the health, growth and safety of the flock of Christ. They are needed in the church to teach, warn and provide direction (Ephesians 4:11,12).

Question 3: What would the contemporary Christian learn from the counsel of Prophet Gad to David?

DOEG’S REPORT ABOUT DAVID AND AHIMELECH: (1 Samuel 22:6-10; 21:7; Exodus 23:1; Proverbs 6:18,19)

With a feeling of self-pity, Saul accused his aids of treason and disloyalty. He alleged: “**...all of you have conspired against me, and there is none that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?**” (1 Samuel 22:8). This suggests that many of his servants were not in agreement with him in the matter of David. His persistent murderous quest for the innocent life of David did not go down well with everyone in his kingdom. They knew what David had done for their nation: how he risked his life to confront Goliath and fought many battles.

Question 4: Point out some of the carnal methods king Saul used to obtain information about David and Jonathan from his servants.

Saul combined worldly wisdom, politics and tribal sentiment to get information about David and Jonathan, his own son. He asked the people if a man from Judah would favor the tribe of Benjamin with riches. “**Will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards...?**” He became emotional and insinuated that the people were unfaithful for conspiring against him. “**And all of you have conspired against me... there is none of you that is sorry for me.**” “Then

answered Doeg the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub” (1 Samuel 22:9). Doeg did a dirty job and indicted Ahimelech the priest to be David’s accomplice who gave him Goliath’s sword to fight against Saul. His action led to the destruction of the city of priests.

Obviously, Doeg did not mean well for David and harbored the same hatred for him. Being a descendant of Edom (Esau), he carried on a generational hatred for the Israelites. It is important to be objective when making reports about people. Reports and petitions that are meant to feather our nests of hatred and cause harm to others are not of God. **“Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness”** (Exodus 23:1). This is different from reporting sin or any evil going on in the church. Believers need to be careful and prayerful in handling such matters.

DASTARDLY MURDER OF THE PRIESTS (1 Samuel 22:11-23; Exodus 20:13; Matthew 5:21; 1 John 3:15; Ecclesiastes 9:18; 2 Samuel 21:1,2)

Upon the indictment of Ahimelech by Doeg, Saul summoned him and his entire house to answer the charges against them which included conspiracy, giving bread and sword to David, and enquiring from God for him. Ahimelech pleaded his innocence: **“for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more.”** Grounds for Ahimelech’s innocence were that he believed David was one of the most faithful of all Saul’s servants; that he was only seeking to do good to Saul’s son-in-law; that he was on errand for the king; and so on. He even remarked: **“Who is as faithful among all your servants as David?”**

However, backslidden and demon-inspired Saul did not care for the reasons given by Ahimelech; rather, he rashly passed a sentence of death on and his household. To their credit, Saul’s servants declined his instruction to execute Ahimelech because they feared the Lord who

said in His word, **“Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm”** (1 Chronicles 16:22; Psalm 105:15). However, Doeg, willing to please his master at any cost, carried out the king’s order and murdered eighty-five priests of the Lord. The vengeful king, not satisfied with this, went ahead to treat the innocent city of Nob as an enemy territory. **“And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword”** (1 Samuel 22:19). Only Abiathar, Ahimelech’s son, escaped the massacre.

Saul’s order was cruel and barbaric, to say the least. Children of God should never, for fear of the consequences, bear false witness against anyone or carry out an ungodly decree. The Lord had said, thou shall not kill, but Doeg, under instruction from Saul, broke this commandment.

<p>Question 5: From the example of Saul’s servants, what should be the believer’s attitude to ungodly edicts?</p>

David lamented the death of all persons in the priestly lineage of Ahimelech. **“And David said unto Abiathar, I knew it that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul: I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father’s house”** (1 Samuel 22:22). This could be implied in two ways: David’s presence with Ahimelech made him (Ahimelech) guilty before Saul. Secondly, his lie to Ahimelech that he was on errand for the king made the priest to offer him needed support. These, however, would neither expiate Saul’s guilt nor reduce Doeg’s punishment for the blood of the priests and inhabitants of Nob. Everyone involved in this evil deed or any other shall surely be judged. The Scripture says, **“Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished...”** (Proverbs 11:21). The only option of escape for all sinners and wicked persons is genuine repentance and turning away from evil; else, God’s fiery judgment will surely be visited upon them. **“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him;**

and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 55:7).

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
MON	1 Timothy	6	Ezekiel	3-4
TUE	2 Timothy	1-2	“	5-6
WED	“	3-4	“	7-8
THUR	Titus	1-3	“	9-10
FRI	Philemon	1	“	11-12
SAT	Hebrews	1-3	“	13-14
SUN	“	4-5	“	15-16

756 Lesson

SAUL PURSUES DAVID

MEMORY VERSE: “And Saul called all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men” (1 Samuel 23:8).

TEXT: 1 Samuel 23:1-29

The preceding chapter reveals the flight of David into the cave of Adullam where the distressed and discontented resorted to him for protection and succor. His stay in this cave, occasioned by Saul’s unrelenting chase, afforded him some thoughtful moments for reminiscences, realization and confession of past misdeeds which led to the deadly massacre of eighty- five priests and the inhabitants of Nob by Saul based on Doeg’s malicious report. David’s conduct in this study bears evidence of spiritual restoration which also attracted continued divine deliverance from Saul’s relentless chase. Saul’s murderous act was intended to be punitive as well as serve as a deterrent to the inhabitants of all cities in Israel to refrain from sympathizing, associating with or helping David escape being caught. So, it was suicidal for anyone or city to stand in Saul’s way as he continued to hunt David. God, who is always faithful in preserving His children from the wrath of their enemies, preserved David’s life. Therefore, believers should daily live and serve Him with the assurance that “**He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous...**” (Job 36:7) but watches over them.

SELFLESS CONCERN AND WATCHFULNESS IN DOING GOD’S WILL (1 Samuel 23:1-15; Psalm 25:9; John 11:7,8; Proverbs 3:5,6; Joshua 2:1-16; Psalm 118:8,9; Proverbs 18:10)

While still hiding in the cave of Adullam, David was informed of the Philistines’ invasion of Keilah. He took time to enquire from God whether to intervene and deliver them or not. He was not presumptuous here by relying on his past victory over Goliath or embarking on

an ego trip for popularity. He humbly allowed the Spirit of God to lead him. Children of God should always ask for divine guidance before taking any major step in life. The Scripture says, **“as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God”** (Romans 8:14). God gave His nod for the rescue of the inhabitants of Keilah and David mobilized his foot soldiers for the battle.

Question 1: What should believers do before taking important steps in life?

However, the news that **“the Philistines fight against Keilah, and they rob the threshing floors”** terrified David’s men who drew his attention to the risk of confronting such a well-organized army. Undeterred by their fear, David went to God again for further clarification. Believers need to avoid fear-induced counsels when making critical decisions in life. They should instead resort to importunate praying to obtain the grace to obey God. Complacency, delay and procrastination after knowing the will of God under the guise of waiting for confirmation is deadly. If David had delayed further, the people of Keilah would have been destroyed. Believers do not need to wait for another prophecy or revelation before obeying clearly revealed will of God in Scripture. Subjects like repentance, restitution, water baptism, evangelism, tithe, etc. do not require praying to ascertain whether they are the will of God or not. We are just to obey.

Even in this context, God acceded to David’s planned rescue of the inhabitants of Keilah to teach us the importance of rescuing perishing souls. His irretrievable command is, **“... Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned”** (Mark 16:15,16). Delaying to obey may lead to the perishing of souls and their blood will be required from us. With compassion, prompt obedience and selfless sacrifice, **“David saved the inhabitants of Keilah”** (1 Samuel 23:5).

It was after this victory that Abiathar, son of Ahimelech the priest who was the only known survivor of Saul’s

massacre, came with an ephod to meet David at Keilah. The ephod was a sacred vestment worn by priests and used as a means of knowing the mind of God (Exodus 28:6-14,31-35; 25:7; 1 Samuel 23:9,12; 30:7,8). As New Testament believers, we do not resort to consulting any ephod or casting lots to know God's mind as we now have the Spirit and Word of God to guide us. Like Abiathar, believers who are suffering any form of persecution should abide in fellowship with God and fellow believers.

Question 2: What can believers learn from David's rescue mission to the people of Keilah?

David was watchful while doing God's will. Though he delivered the inhabitants of Keilah from being overrun by the Philistines, he did not put his trust in them to shield him from being captured by Saul. If he cast a javelin at Jonathan in an attempt to kill him and actually killed the priests whom his servants feared to touch, he would definitely not spare the people of Keilah for harboring David. In fact, Saul was already celebrating David's entry into a walled city that **"God hath delivered him into mine hand; for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars"** (verse 7). It was the intelligence report that Saul was preparing to overrun the city of Keilah that drove him to use the ephod to pray to God. **"Then said David, O LORD God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake. Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O LORD God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant"** (verses 10-12). In answer to his enquiries, God told him Saul would come to seek him and the men would deliver him up. Rather than facilitate his escape with the fear and love of God in their hearts like Rahab did to the two spies sent to Jericho, the men of Keilah were ready to prove their loyalty to the king by delivering David, their benefactor into the hand of Saul. That is why the Bible admonishes that, **"It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes"** (Psalm 118:8,9). Christians should be watchful at all

times and not depend even on their own understanding. **“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths”** (Proverbs 3:5,6).

Question 3: What challenge does David’s inquiry from God pose to believers today?

David and his men left Keilah for the wilderness of Ziph where they hid in strongholds. While they were there, Saul sought David every day but **“God delivered him not into his hand”**. As he did his part by abiding in strongholds, God also faithfully preserved him. **“A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished”** (Proverbs 22:3; 27:1). Thus, Saul could not succeed in his wicked plot against David.

We need to be wise, watchful and careful as we walk daily in the will of God, bearing in mind that the name of Christ is our strong tower. We must run away from sin and abide in Christ always to continue to enjoy divine protection.

SACRIFICIAL COURAGE AND LOVE DURING TRIALS AND PERSECUTION (1 Samuel 23:16-19; Proverbs 18:24; Job 4:4; Joshua 1:6,7,9; Isaiah 35:3,4; Hebrews 12:12,13)

Jonathan’s visit to David at his trying time speaks volumes about genuine love among the brethren. This visit was not to accuse or condemn David like Job’s friends did but to strengthen him, even when such gesture could endanger his own life. **“And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth”** (1 Samuel 23:17). The words we speak to brethren at their trying times matter a lot. Jonathan spoke words that will dissolved doubts and allayed David’s fears; and words of affirmation of divine purpose for David and Israel. In order to **“lift up the**

hands which hang down, and the feeble knees”, the Scripture teaches that we should **“Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you”** (Hebrews 12:12; Isaiah 35:4).

Though it was obvious that Jonathan could not stop his father, he did not take sides with him. He knew the truth that David would become king over Israel and he selflessly submitted to this will of God. Resisting, working and fighting against His will attracts troubles, demonic torment, sleepless nights and eventual destruction such as Saul suffered. Jonathan’s love and humble submission to the will of God are proofs of a sanctified heart which every believer needs. Jesus prayed and sacrificed His life for the sanctification of heaven-bound believers.

Question 4: What can we learn from the way Jonathan visited David at his most trying time?

CONNIVANCE AND DELIVERANCE IN TRIALS AND PERSECUTION (1 Samuel 23:19-29; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 Peter 4:12,13)

“Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us in strong holds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of Jeshimon? Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of thy soul to come down; and our part shall be to deliver him into the king’s hand”. The Ziphites who were of the same tribe of Judah with David were supposed to protect and assist him in time of his travail, but they betrayed him. With this unsolicited intelligence report on the hideout of David, Saul commended as well as commissioned the Ziphites to get more details about his movement. **“And Saul said, Blessed be ye of the LORD; for ye have compassion on me. See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me with the certainty, and I will go with you: and it shall**

come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah” (1 Samuel 23:21,23).

It was a hard time for David to have the king of Israel pursue him, and this time, intending to comb the land to terminate his life. It was ironical that instead of being celebrated, he was being chased; instead of recognition, he faced relegation; instead of reward, he suffered reproach; and for his love and kindness, he was betrayed even by his kinsmen. Trials and persecutions are part of the Christian’s experiences. God has promised that He would never leave nor forsake but will deliver us in times of trouble. It was in the expectation of deliverance after the Ziphites’ betrayal that David prayed in Psalm 54:1-7: **“Save me, O God, by thy name... Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth. For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them. Selah. Behold, God is mine helper... I will praise thy name, O LORD; for it is good. For he hath delivered me out of all trouble...”**. Believers need to imbibe these godly attitudes of praying, praising and trusting God for deliverance in times of betrayal.

<p>Question 5: What should be our attitude during trials and persecutions?</p>

It is instructive that David did not leave his suffering to an imagined fate but was also working on intelligence reports he received about Saul’s plots. Before the Ziphite betrayers could return, David had relocated from the stronghold in the hill of Hachilah to a rock in the wilderness of Maon. Prayer is good, but it is not an escape from responsibility of taking precautionary measures for self-protection.

It was in this wilderness of Maon that Saul came close to capturing David. **“And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them. But**

there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land. Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David...” (1 Samuel 23:26-28). God, in His providence, delivered David by allowing Saul to hear news of invasion of the Philistines. He suspended the manhunt abruptly when it was almost the end of the road for the son of Jesse. God’s hands are indeed not short to deliver His people from trouble (Isaiah 59:1). Thus, David’s prayer in Psalm 54 above was fully answered and serves as an encouragement to believers in distressful situations to pray and expect divine intervention. He says, **“call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me”** (Psalm 50:15). God will always make a way out of every difficult situation for His children at the right time. He is never late!

DAILY BIBLE READING

MORNING			EVENING	
MON	Hebrews	6-7	Ezekiel	17-18
TUE	“	8-9	“	19-20
WED	“	10	“	21
THUR	“	11	“	22
FRI	“	12-13	“	23
SAT	James	1-2	“	24-25
SUN	“	3-5	“	26-27

757 Lesson

DAVID SPARES SAUL'S LIFE

MEMORY VERSE: "And he said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD" (1 Samuel 24:6)

TEXT: 1 Samuel 24:1-22; 26:1-25

Believers have the responsibility to manifest God's love to all people, whether the beneficiaries are willing to reciprocate the gesture or not. This lesson was properly captured in the preceding chapter where David fled Keilah because he was told by the Lord that the people, whom he rescued from being overrun by their enemies, would deliver him to Saul. Their revealed action of betrayal is similar to what our Lord Jesus suffered in the hands of the Jews. Despite His love for them, they still rejected Him.

Having enjoyed God's undeserved love, mercies and deliverances, David continued to manifest the same virtue in this study by sparing Saul's life, not minding that he had been constantly on the brink of death.

Question 1: Mention some of Saul's attempts to take David's life.

DAVID'S TENDER RESPONSE TO SAUL'S PERSECUTION (1 Samuel 24:1-7; 26:1-12; Romans 12:17-20; Mathew 5:43-48)

Saul's uncontrollable obsession to kill David manifested in expeditions to the wilderness of Engedi and Ziph. **"And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi. Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats. And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon?"**

Then Saul arose, and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph” (1 Samuel 24:1,2; 26:1,2). The cruel massacre of the priests and the inhabitants of Nob by Saul instilled fear of a similar punishment in people all over Israel and made them willing volunteers of information about the movement of David. It was however unfortunate that there were not the likes of Amram and Jochebed, Rahab, Obadiah and Ebedmelech who risked their lives by faith to preserve Moses, the spies, the prophets, and Jeremiah respectively (Exodus 6:20; Hebrews 11:23; Joshua 2:1-16; 1 Kings 18:3,4; Jeremiah 38:7-13).

Question 2: List the ungodly traits of Saul that should not be seen among believers.

In his bid to get rid of David, Saul assembled three thousand soldiers to search for him and his men upon the rocks in the wilderness of Engedi, and later Ziph. But as Saul and his men were in deep sleep in a cave, David and his men came and stood on the other side. Highly elated that the battle was over, his servants reminded him of the Lord's promise to deliver his enemy into his hands (1 Samuel 24:4). Also, Abishai pleaded with him to allow him smite Saul with the spear (1 Samuel 26:8-11). Though God had delivered his arch-enemy into his hands, David declined to raise his hand against the Lord's anointed. Instead, he cut a piece of the king's skirt and took his spear and cruse of water to make Saul realize the absence of divine presence with him. It was to prove to the king that if he was wicked and carnal like him, he would have killed him.

The lives of the duo present us with a number of striking differences. One, Saul's heart was obstinate, but David's heart was tender. Two, David feared God, but Saul was driven by the fear of man. Three, David manifested a forgiving spirit but Saul harbored hatred (1 Samuel 24:19; Matthew 6:12-15; Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60; Romans 12:21). So, the virtues of love, mercy and kindness which were truly demonstrated by David were lacking in Saul.

Question 3: Highlight some dissimilarities between David and Saul.

David's life should serve as a challenge to contemporary believers. He fulfilled the New Testament obligations that require all believers to forgive their enemies, pray for them and overcome evil with good. He understood well the teaching of non-retaliation. God is not a murderer. His desire is for all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Therefore, prayers and pronouncements of disaster and death on persecutors and perceived enemies are contrary to the teachings of the Scripture. Christ was emphatic when He said: "... **Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?**" (Matthew 5:44-46).

DAVID REPROVES AND COUNSELS SAUL (1 Samuel 24:8-15; 26:13-20; Hebrews 1:9; Isaiah 54:17)

It is clear from the Scriptures that Saul's insistence on getting rid of David was baseless. However, David had to prove his innocence because he was falsely accused of seeking to hurt the king. In doing this, like a passionate preacher, he spoke to his conscience and reasoned deeply with him in the hope that it might lead him to repentance. "**David also arose afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself. And David said to Saul, Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt? And he said, Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil is in mine hand?**" (1 Samuel 24:8,9; 26:18). The two separate encounters of David with Saul provide us with some vital lessons. First, David used

the occasion to prove to Saul that he was neither after his life nor his throne as people might have made him believe. Two, though he had been anointed king, he was still humble and respectful to Saul (1 Samuel 24:11; Romans 12:10; 13:7). Three, he was bold in telling Saul the truth. Four, he pointed out Saul's faults and counselled him to repent and submit to God (1 Samuel 26:19,20). Five, he made him see the futility of fighting against God's will. Though he had opportunity to deliver himself, he patiently waited for God's time (Romans 12:17-21). Six, David was bold to declare his righteous lifestyle. If we want God to fight for us, we must eschew evil and live to please Him (Hebrews 1:9). Lastly, he affirmed his faith and trust in God to deliver him from the king. Persecution, trials and afflictions should not make us to descend to the valley of despondency. Like David, we should face every challenging situation with faith and confidence in God.

Question 4: What can we learn from David's encounters with Saul in the wilderness?

“And David said to Abner, Art not thou a valiant man? and who is like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord” (1 Samuel 26:15). Although Saul went after David with three thousand-foot soldiers led by Abner, they could not overrun him and his men. Believers should not be afraid of Satan or his agents. Promises that affirm God's sure victory and security for His children abound in the Scriptures. **“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD”** (Psalm 46:1; Isaiah 54:17).

By scolding Abner, David proved to Saul and his army that it is only God who can provide adequate and unfailing security. It was also an opportunity to make the king see reasons for his failure: he had been cut

off from the Source of his strength and refuge (Psalm 127:1). We are to put our trust in God and demonstrate unshakable faith in His unfailing promises. In moments of crises, we should maintain a resilient posture knowing full well that “...**our God whom we serve is able to deliver us...**” (Daniel 3:17).

THE TRIUMPH OF GOOD OVER EVIL (1 Samuel 24:16-22; 26:21-25; Psalm 37:1-7,9-15; James 5:10,11)

“And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil” (verses 16,17). David’s speech had a profound effect on Saul. The king realized that he would have been dead but for David’s kindness. He was, therefore, embarrassed by his personal vindictiveness towards David. Unfortunately, his remorse was short-lived as he proceeded to still pursue David after being incited by the Ziphites (1 Samuel 26:1,2).

Question 5: State the differences between genuine and false repentance.

Saul eventually discovered that his efforts to kill David were underpinned by folly. A similar scenario played out in the wilderness of Ziph with the same outcome.

“Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly” (1 Samuel 26:21). But his confession fell short of genuine repentance because it was borne out of shame. He never confessed his sins to God. Under the New Testament dispensation, genuine repentance encompasses “... **repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ**” (Acts 20:21).

Question 6: List the scriptural requirements for eternity with God.

When it became apparent that God was with David, Saul was forced to abandon his manhunt for him. Believers are commanded to **“Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men... live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath... Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirsts, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil but overcome evil with good”** (Romans 12:17-21). Through his godly attitude, David broke the heart of Saul who confessed: **“thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil... wherefore the LORD reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day... I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand...Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail”** (1 Samuel 24:17-20; 26:25).

When it dawned on him that he could endanger his posterity with his vindictive attitude, he said, **“Swear now therefore unto me by the LORD, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father’s house”** (1 Samuel 24:21). At the time both men parted, it was clear to David that he could not achieve the will of God by human strength and to Saul that it is futile to fight against the will of God. He conceded defeat by affirming that David would become king. God is always a winner (Psalm 33:11; Acts 5:39).

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
MON	1 Peter	1-2	Ezekiel	28-29
TUE	“	3	“	30-31
WED	“	4-5	“	32
THUR	2 Peter	1-2	“	33
FRI	“	3	“	34-35
SAT	1 John	1-2	“	36
SUN	“	3-4	“	37-38

758 Lesson

THE FOOLISHNESS OF NABAL

MEMORY VERSE: “Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send” (1 Samuel 25:25).

TEXT: 1 Samuel 25:1-44

David was still in flight to escape Saul’s dragnet and determination to kill him. He then moved to the wilderness of Paran, a few miles from the city of Carmel. There, he encountered shepherds tending the flocks of Nabal, a wealthy but an insolent and contentious man. Nabal lived in Maon but had his business in Carmel and was of the house of Caleb. David heard that he was shearing his sheep and sent ten of his young men to request him to “...**give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David**” (1 Samuel 25:8). Nabal refused this appeal bluntly even though David and his men had protected his flock from rustlers. This response infuriated David who mobilized his men swiftly for a revenge mission. The result would have been bloody, but for Abigail’s quick intervention.

Nabal’s attitude was deemed foolish, arrogant and uncharitable. Accounts of what followed his action, how the situation was managed and Nabal’s end, form the focus of this text.

DAVID’S REQUEST AND NABAL’S FOOLISH RESPONSE (1 Samuel 25:1-11; Psalm 118:8,9; Hebrews 13:1-3; Proverbs 18:23; Luke 12:16-21; 1 Kings 12:1-16; Proverbs 14:1-3)

Our text opens with the death and burial of Samuel and Israel’s lamentation over him. Not much was said about Samuel’s death here probably because it is the inevitable end of all men. Sooner or later, all men must

pay this debt, but the most important question is how and where it meets us. Every wise person must prepare for this last journey by way of turning away from sin unto Christ the Savior of mankind. The Scripture says, **“it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment”** (Hebrews 9:27).

“And there was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel; and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel” (1 Samuel 25:2). The man introduced here was Nabal (verse 3), a Calebite with a large herd of sheep and livestock. He was said to have possessed part of the estate of Caleb and was wealthy but was not wise; he lacked the virtues for which patriarch Caleb was renowned. He was simply of a churlish, mean and stingy disposition.

Sheep shearing was an elaborate gathering marked by entertainment and festivity, and very common among wealthy individuals in the nation. It was a time of open-handed hospitality among flock-masters. The character of the occasion is evident in Absalom’s case when he invited the king’s sons to his sheep-shearing in Baal-Hazor in order to deal with Amnon while his heart was **“merry with wine”** (2 Samuel 13:23).

Under normal circumstances, David’s request came at the most auspicious time as sheep shearing afforded the hosts opportunity to share and care. Secondly, David and his men had performed a valuable service to Nabal, protecting his flock from Philistine raiders and rustlers. Thirdly, David’s request was polite and courteous. He sent the request with greetings of peace, warmth and kindness so that Nabal would not feel intimidated. **“And thus, shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity, Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast”** (1 Samuel 25:6). Fourthly, Nabal could not plead paucity of resources because the occasion would not support it. Lastly, going by the culture at that time, refusing hospitality to a traveler was an insult. It was therefore absurd for Nabal to respond the way he did.

Question 1: What informed David's request from Nabal?

Nabal turned down David's request with utter contempt. He grumbled loudly and sent them away with insults. **"And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master"** (1 Samuel 25:10). Who had not heard about David: a man of valor and mighty in battles; the killer of giant Goliath of Gath? Nabal deepened his insult by ascribing to David the status of a rebellious, run-away servant.

Question 2: What should be the attitude of people endowed with wealth, power and position?

REVENGE MISSION AGAINST NABAL AND ABIGAIL'S REACTION (1 Samuel 25:12-35; Ecclesiastes 7:9; Matthew 5:38-41; Deuteronomy 32:35; Psalm 94:1-4; Proverbs 15:1; Colossians 4:6; Ecclesiastes 9:14-18)

Upon Nabal's refusal of hospitality, David decided to take laws into his hands and wipe out his family. As uncouth, unkind and ungrateful as Nabal was, it was equally wrong for David to react the way he did. Obviously, he would not have been guiltless had he carried out his threat. First, he was hasty to react to the insult. **"Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools"** (Ecclesiastes 7:9). Second, he was impulsive and yielded to temptation, which is sin. Third, he forgot the word of God on revenge or retaliation and did contrary to it. **"To me belongeth vengeance, and recompense; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste"** (Deuteronomy 32:35). **"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord"** (Romans 12:19). Fourth, God would have us bear insults with grace and love, returning people's evils with good (Matthew 5:38,39). Fifth, David did not show Nabal the same kindness and longsuffering which he

showed to Saul. He had spared the latter's life when he had opportunity to kill him. Sixth, he was not mindful of soiling his hands with the blood of an entire household (1 Samuel 25:21,22).

However, as soon as Abigail heard of her husband's uncouth behavior, she took some presents and hastened to meet David. She accepted responsibility for the foolish actions of her husband, prepared victuals for David and his men and spoke softly to them. **"Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses"** (1 Samuel 25:18). She also said, **"... Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid"** (1 Samuel 25:24). With these words, she restrained the hand of David from shedding innocent blood. Surely, **"A soft answer turneth away wrath..."** (Proverbs 15:1).

Question 3: What do we learn from Abigail's courage to step into the situation and make peace between the parties?

David's action was as indefensible as it was out of character because he called his men to arms. His reaction was incompatible with the virtues for which he is associated. Christians should do nothing that will call their profession to question. **"This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto me"** (Titus 3:8). Watchfulness, sobriety, vigilance, being filled with the knowledge of the Scriptures and led by the Holy Spirit are pillars to support believers to withstand temptations and remain victorious on daily basis.

There are many lessons from Abigail's handling of the offence. One, she was wise and prompt. A little delay could have been calamitous. Two, she was very humble and submissive by falling down at David's feet to pacify him. Being the wife of a rich man would have made

her proud and pompous. Three, she took responsibility for Nabal's action. Four, she gave David and his men a prized gift. Five, she asked David to forgive Nabal his ill-actions. Six, she suggested that David should not carry out a slaughter that would haunt his conscience for life. Seven, she urged him not to lower himself to Nabal's level of foolishness. Eight, she was courageous, and her motive was to plead for the lives of others. Nine, her persuasion made David to repent of his evil intention and seek forgiveness from the Lord.

Question 4: What can we learn from the way Abigail handled the situation?

DEATH OF NABAL AND DAVID'S MARRIAGE TO ABIGAIL (1 Samuel 25:36-44; Psalm 37:9-13; 73:17-20; Romans 7:2)

Nabal lived up to his name – a fool. While his life was in imminent danger, he ate and drank himself to stupor. **“And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken...”** (1 Samuel 25:36). Again, Abigail displayed her characteristic wisdom by delaying to discuss the incident until the following day after the wine was gone out of him. By daybreak, she relayed how David had come within minutes of killing him and wiping out his household. The shock caused him heart attack and he fainted and **“became as a stone.”** He lingered in a coma for ten days before he finally died.

Nabal's death is a lesson to everyone – rich or poor. A day before, he was merry with wine; and shortly after, he was mowed by providence. So is the life of all men: it springs up in the morning and by evening, it is withered away; **“For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways”** (James 1:11). This is the inevitable end of all mortal and only the wise will prepare for life beyond the grave. David blessed the Lord at the news of the death of Nabal, not because he rejoiced at it but **“that** [the

Lord] **hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil: for the LORD hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head...**" (1 Samuel 25:39). He was restrained by divine hand from avenging himself and would have been guilty. God wants us to leave the battles of our lives for Him, Who alone knows how best to avenge our wrongs (Romans 12:19). Children of God are not permitted to rejoice at the calamity or death of other people – friend or foe (Proverbs 24:17).

However, David yielded to the practice and tradition of people of those days and seized the opportunity of Nabal's death to marry his widow, Abigail, though he was husband to other women (1 Samuel 18:27; 25:43; 2 Samuel 3:2,3). It is true that a woman can marry another husband after her husband's death (Romans 7:2, 3; 1 Corinthians 7:39), but for David to have taken Abigail to be a wife negates the New Testament teaching on marriage and therefore is not a pattern for Christians today. Polygamy is forbidden for believers: **"And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?"** (Matthew 19:4,5).

Question 5: What is God's approved standard for Christian marriage?

Abigail certainly has a prominent place in the story of women of integrity and destiny in the Bible whom God used in extraordinary ways. Her deeds were noble, humble, godly and wise. She was a virtuous woman. Other women who also excelled in godly and gracious deeds were, Deborah (Judges 4:4-24). She was among the judges of Israel in her generation. Second, Ruth: she was a vessel unto honour and an epitome of determination, industry and chastity (Ruth 1:6-19; 4:9:11). Third, Esther was a woman of the hour who responded promptly to the call to rescue her kinsmen (Esther 4:7,8,15,16; 7:7,9,10). Fourth, Priscilla was an ideal evangelistic partner to her husband (Acts 18:26).

Our Christian women can also be used of God to do exploits in their generation.

Nabal died as a foolish man. He was foolish because, one, he died without preparing for eternity. The end came to him suddenly without an assurance of spending it with his Creator (Luke 12:20). Two, though rich in the things of this world, he was not rich in good works, nor did he lay up in store for himself a **“good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life”** (1 Timothy 6:19). Three, he was high-minded and lacked understanding in responding to a distressing situation (1 Samuel 25:8-11). Four, he failed to do good when it was within his powers and had forgotten that he was a caretaker of his wealth and should use it, not only for his benefit, but also for others (Proverbs 3:27). Five, he lived in pleasures (1 Timothy 5:6). Six, he was drunk with wine instead of being filled with wisdom from above. Seven, he forgot to number his days that he may apply his heart to wisdom and be prepared to answer the final call (Psalm 90:12).

Wisdom is a principal, necessary commodity to guard and guide men in the path of life. Without it, we are bound to make costly and fatal mistakes. Believers today can be filled with God’s wisdom to lead a successful and victorious life. **“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him”** (James 1:5).

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
MON	1 John	5	Ezekiel	39
TUE	2 & 3 John		“	40
WED	Jude		“	41-42
THUR	Revelation	1-2	“	43
FRI	“	3-4	“	44
SAT	“	5-6	“	45
SUN	“	7-8	“	46-47

759 Lesson

DAVID'S DECEPTION AND REJECTION

MEMORY VERSE: "And Achish answered and said to David, I know that thou art good in my sight, as an angel of God: notwithstanding, the princes of the Philistines have said, he shall not go up with us to the battle" (1 Samuel 29:9).

TEXT: 1 Samuel 27:1-12; 29:1-11

David spared Saul's life in the wilderness of Ziph in the preceding chapter in consonance with the scriptural principle of non-retaliation. It could be recalled that Saul had been relentless in hunting him. Rather than seize the opportunity to revenge by killing Saul, he decided to flee to the land of the Philistines, Israel's archenemy. He knew it was wrong and sinful to kill the king in order to ascend the throne, especially considering the fact that God chose him when he least expected it. So, he had to wait to be enthroned at the right time. By refraining from taking vengeance, he proved that he did not harbor hatred for Saul. Assassinating other people's character or life to gain promotion or privilege or remain relevant is sinful. David could only become a king over Israel if he outlived the incumbent. Any wonder then that the king would live no stone unturned to get rid of him. As the chase continued in the text, David's faith began to ebb, giving way to fear, hasty decision and deception that believers should not emulate.

DAVID'S FEAR AND FLIGHT (1 Samuel 27:1-7; Numbers 11:14,15; 14:1-4; 1 Kings 19:1-4; Psalm 146:3; Proverbs 29:25; Isaiah 30:1,2)

David was facing a great threat to his life from Saul. Overwhelmed with self-pity and discouragement, he could not keep hope alive through prayer for divine assistance. **"And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of**

me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand” (1 Samuel 27:1).

Question 1: What led to David’s decision to relocate to Gath?

Being killed by Saul would have been impossible according to God’s word, for the Lord anointed him to be the next king of Israel (1 Samuel 16:1-13; 24:4). Once a believer forgets God’s promise of His abiding presence and protection, he will look for refuge in a wrong place. David might have forgotten the program of God for his life as the fear of premature death infiltrated his mind. His temporary loss of hope and confidence in God further led to a hasty decision to relocate and settle with Achish, the king of Gath. Similarly, the fear of uncertainty and hasty decision, borne out of prayerlessness, made Elimelech and Naomi to head downhill to Moab. Many present-day believers have suffered similar fate because decisions taken under pressure and fear do not generally glorify God (Numbers 11:14,15; 1 Kings 19:4). The best thing to do when in distress is to pray and trust God for His intervention. He frustrated all previous efforts of Saul to eliminate David and would have preserved him in the present situation. In times of hardship, need or problem, believers should pray in faith for divine intervention rather than jump into conclusion and take decisions that contradict Scripture. Any believer who puts his trust in the Lord (Proverbs 3:5-7) will have definite testimony and “...**boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me**” (Hebrews 13:6).

Question 2: Mention some Bible characters who took decisions in uncertainty, and the consequences.

“And David arose, and he passed over with the six hundred men that were with him unto Achish, the son of Maach, king of Gath. And David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household, even David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal’s wife” (verses 2,3). This self-imposed exile and asylum in the Philistine territory brought reprieve as Saul “**sought**

no more again for him". On arrival, David requested a dwelling place outside the city of Gath to avoid any close monitoring and **"Achish gave him Ziklag that day"** (1 Samuel 27:2-7). Achish was magnanimous in giving him the city during his sixteen months sojourn. Christ teaches that believers' righteousness must surpass those of unbelievers to be able to enter heaven. The Scripture commands that we should entertain strangers, shelter the distressed and homeless, albeit with wisdom.

DECEPTION BY DAVID (1 Samuel 27:8-12; 21:10-15; 2 Samuel 15:10-12,31; Proverbs 24:21; Jeremiah 2:36,37; Ephesians 4:14; Hebrews 13:9)

During his stay in Gath, **"David and his men went up, and invaded the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites... smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned, and came to Achish"** (verses 8,9). The annihilation of all people in those territories was to avoid any eyewitness reportage that might lead to a short-lived asylum. To Achish's enquiry on where they went, David lied by saying, **"Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites"** (verse 10). He was, here, being economical with the truth by avoiding specific mention of those cities but presented it in a way that made Achish infer that he had invaded the territories of Israel. Deluded, **"Achish believed David saying, he hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore, he shall be my servant forever"** (1 Samuel 27:12). Achish continued to live in a fool's paradise without investigating the truth. And this was not the first time David would deceive him (1 Samuel 21:10- 15). Deception or lying, whether it is done to escape danger, get gain, employment, admission (with false credentials), get married or whatever, can take one to hell if not repented of (Revelation 21:8,27).

<p>Question 3: What is the danger of deception or lying, and how can a deceiver or a liar escape judgment?</p>

Apart from David, some other people like Jeroboam's wife, the Gibeonites, Ananias and Sapphira were trapped in this evil act of deception (1 Kings 14:1-6; Joshua 9:3-6; Acts 5:1-10). And they all suffered its consequences. The Scripture says that many deceivers are in the world today and believers should take heed lest they are deceived too. **“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirit whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world”** (2 John 7,8). A Christian leader should be diligent to know the state of his flocks and try every spirit to avoid laying hands suddenly on anyone to be in the work-force (Proverbs 27:23; 1 John 4:1; 1 Timothy 5:22; Proverbs 29:18).

Question 4: What should be the disposition of a Christian leader in the world full of deceivers and hypocrites?

DISCERNMENT BY PRINCES OF THE PHILISTINES AND REJECTION OF DAVID (1 Samuel 29:1-11; 1 Kings 14:1-10; 2 Samuel 14:12-19)

The Philistines and Israelites were sworn enemies. Another war was looming between the two as **“the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek: and the Israelites pitched by a fountain which is in Jezreel”** (1 Samuel 29:1). The princes of the Philistines discovered during routine check of the army that David and his men were Hebrews. They were not gullible and deceived as Achish. To their question, **“What do these Hebrews here?”**, he defended by describing David as faultless. **“And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us...”** (1 Samuel 29:4). The discernment and vigilance of the princes of the Philistines is commendable. They were able to identify the presence of a personality that posed a threat to their nation and gave convincing reasons David must leave their army. In these days of global insecurity, vigilance should be our watch-word. Christian leaders

should have eagle eyes to detect sinners and backsliders like Ananias and Sapphira in the workforce, people who are sabotaging soul-winning efforts like the damsel with the spirit of divination that Paul the apostle cast out, and hypocrites and compromisers like Simon, the sorcerer. This is possible through possession of gifts of the Spirit. However, caution should be taken not to confuse the Spirit of discernment with suspicion, accusation and counter accusation that is rampant in many Christian assemblies today.

Question 5: How should a believer handle rejection?

King Achish humbly conceded to the reasoning of his subordinates and dispatched David and his men. **“Then Achish called David, and said unto him, Surely, as the LORD liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host is good in my sight: for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day: nevertheless the lords favor thee not. Wherefore now return, and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines... I know that thou art good in my sight, as an angel of God: notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up with us to the battle. Wherefore now rise up early in the morning with thy master’s servants that are come with thee: and as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light, depart”** (1 Samuel 29:6,7,9,10).

Believers should display graceful attitude during rejection like Stephen and Jesus Christ. When marriage or business proposal is turned down by the other party, it is not a time to think as a believer that your world has collapsed. Staying away from fellowship or even contemplating suicide is no solution either. So, be careful how you react or respond at such a time lest Satan takes advantage of you (2 Corinthians 2:11).

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
MON	Revelation	9-10	Ezekiel	48
TUE	“	11-12	Daniel	1
WED	“	13-14	“	2
THUR	“	15-16	“	3
FRI	“	17-18	“	4
SAT	“	19-20	“	5
SUN	“	21-22	“	6

END OF OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES

BEGINNING OF NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES

760 Lesson

REDEMPTION THROUGH CHRIST

MEMORY VERSE: “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sin” (Colossians 1:13,14).

TEXT: Colossians 1:11-21

Paul the apostle gave thanks to God in the preceding verses of this chapter for the fruits of righteousness the gospel bore in the lives of the Colossian brethren. Though he had no previous contact with them, he was endeared to them by the report of their gracious lifestyle which drew him and his fellow companions into unceasing intercession for them to be filled with wisdom and spiritual understanding. He undertook to enlighten them that the transforming power of the gospel was predicated on Christ’s sacrifice and redemption through Him.

The Greek word used for “redeemed” is “lytrôsis” which literarily means “a ransoming, deliverance” or “a rescue.” This fits appropriately into what Jesus did by giving His life on the Cross as ransom for humanity. He shed His blood so that every sinner might be redeemed. In biblical terms, redemption means to “purchase” or “ransom”. Historically, redemption was used in reference to the purchase of a slave’s freedom. A slave was “redeemed” when a price was paid for his freedom. The use of the word in the New Testament includes this same idea. Every unconverted person is a slave to sin, and it is only through cleansing in the blood of Jesus Christ that such a person can be redeemed (Hebrews 9:11- 15).

Question 1: What is redemption and why does everyone need it?

THE BASIS AND MEANS OF OUR REDEMPTION
(Colossians 1:11-14; John 8:34; Romans 6:17; 7:14; 8:21)

Paul the apostle, having a clear understanding of the power of sin and its eternal consequence, was full of gratitude to God for the salvation of the Colossian brethren. He disclosed reasons for being thankful to God the Father which are, namely, that he had qualified them to be mutual beneficiaries of the inheritance of the saints. Aside delivering believers from the power of darkness, he was grateful that God had translated them into the kingdom of His Dear Son. For these reasons, all believers ought to always rejoice and praise God. It must be underscored that all these benefits can be enjoyed only through redemption in Christ.

It needs be emphasized that God **“hath delivered us from the power of darkness... translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins”**. The basis of our redemption is here revealed as enslavement to sin and Satan. The Bible states that every human being is born with the nature of sin and grows to be a captive and servant to sin (John 8:34; Romans 7:14; 8:21). It is clear also that every person needs redemption. **“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”** (Romans 3:23). Anyone who is not redeemed will be damned and suffer eternally. **“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”** (Romans 6:23). It is, therefore, only through redemption that the believer can secure freedom from sin and its accompanying present and eternal punishments. **“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”** (Romans 3:24).

Christ’s blood is the efficacious means of redemption. It occupies a central place in the redemption of man, and its significance is invaluable. **“And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission”** (Hebrews 9:22). The ‘shedding of blood’, which is simply a phrase that refers to death, is critical to the redemption of man. All humans would be candidates of hell had Christ not died and shed His blood as the Lamb of God for the remission of our sins. But the good news is that

Jesus has already made the provision for the penitent sinner to be redeemed with His blood and thus saved from the wrath of God. **“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him”** (Romans 5:9). Saved from wrath through repentance, forgiveness and cleansing by the blood of the Lamb, believers enter into fellowship with God and have hope of living with Him forever. It is obvious no one can obtain the inheritance which God has prepared for His children without cleansing in Christ’s blood. The Scripture affirms that the blood is His life. **“For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul”** (Leviticus 17:11). This clarifies the whole concept of redemption; that Jesus **“gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father”** (Galatians 1:4).

Question 2: Why is redemption of mankind impossible without Christ’s blood?

THE PRE-EMINENCE OF OUR REDEEMER (Colossians 1:15-19; Hebrews 1:1-5; 2:8-10; Genesis 3:15)

Our Redeemer is the Lord Jesus Christ. He has unassailable credentials that qualified Him to redeem lost humanity. He is described as the One, **“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature... And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence”** (Colossians 1:15,17,18). Paul the apostle presents Christ as unique in many ways in the text: one, He is the express image of the invisible God; two, He is the Son of God (Hebrews 1:2); three, Jesus was in existence before all things on earth and in heaven were made; four, He is the Creator of all things that are visible and invisible, and upholds all things that He has created by the word of His power; five, He is the Head of the body, the Church; six, He is the firstborn from the dead who resurrected; seven, He is pre-eminent because all the fullness of God reside in Him bodily; eight, He is the

Mediator who made peace between God and man.

Jesus, as our perfect Sacrifice, fulfilled the conditions of God's justice in dealing with the sin problem (Hebrews 10:4-9; John 1:35,36). It is unarguably clear from the foregoing that no one else qualifies to be our Redeemer and Savior. **“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”** (Acts 4:12).

Question 3: Mention some features of our Redeemer that stand Him out as preeminent.

THE BENEFITS OF REDEMPTION THROUGH CHRIST (Colossians 1:20; Revelation 5:9,10; Ephesians 1:7; Romans 5:17; Galatians 3:13; 4:5; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 1:14-18; 1 Corinthians 6:19,20; Psalm 130:7,8; Luke 2:38; Acts 20:28)

“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (Colossians 1:20).

Question 4: Mention some benefits of redemption through Christ's blood.

Redemption through Christ affords sinners the privilege of reconciliation with God. Everyone should make haste to be reconciled with God to obtain forgiveness, righteousness, freedom from bondage to sin and peace with God. To be redeemed, then, is to be justified and made holy; to be set free from the power of darkness, curses and yoke of the devil and live to glorify the Lord. Believers enjoy divine protection and preservation by the blood of Christ. His atoning blood **“speaketh better things”** or blessings the believer can obtain from God (Hebrews 12:24). What with the victory we have and enjoy over satanic forces through the blood of the Lamb. **“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death”** (Revelation 12:11).

Moreover, the greatest of all benefits of redemption through Christ’s blood is that it grants the redeemed access to God’s presence to commune with Him. **“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood Christ”** (Ephesians 2:13). If Christ, **“by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us”** (Hebrews 9:12), it is by the same blood every believer will gain entrance into the heavenly city. But we must abide in the benefits of redemption through Christ, pray and watch till the end to get to heaven.

DAILY BIBLE READING

MORNING		EVENING	
MON	Matthew	1-2	Daniel 7
TUE	“	3-4	“ 8
WED	“	5	“ 9
THUR	“	6-7	“ 10
FRI	“	8-9	“ 11
SAT	“	10-11	“ 10
SUN	“	12	Hosea 1-2

761 Lesson

CALL AND COMMITMENT TO PERFECTION

MEMORY VERSE: “Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (Colossians 1:28).

TEXT: Colossians 1:21-29

In the previous lesson, the issue of redemption through Christ was addressed. Through Adam’s disobedience, the principle of sin was introduced into humanity. This operating principle produced the practice and habit of sin in every offspring of our first parents (Romans 5:12). Man, in his fallen state could not save himself or pay the ransom for his redemption. But in mercy, God undertook our redemption by sending His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to die in our place. He met the demands of the law and became the legal substitute by shedding His precious blood for us (Romans 3:24; Isaiah 53:4-8; Matthew 26:28; 1 Peter 1:18,19). All who exercise faith in His finished work at Calvary are saved from sin and its consequences.

However, the redeemed soul needs to walk by the holy principles of God’s kingdom. He is holy and all that would walk with Him must be holy. **“Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy”** (1 Peter 1:16). Therefore, being holy is synonymous with Christian perfection, which is the focus of this study.

THE CASE FOR CHRISTIAN PERFECTION (Colossians 1:21,22,28; Luke 1:74,75; 1 Peter 2:24; Matthew 5:48; Deuteronomy 30:6; 1 John 4:18; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

Question 1: What is the literal meaning of the word perfection?

Perfection is defined as a state of completeness, wholesomeness and having everything that is necessary. It refers to a thing without flaw or fault (Leviticus 22:21; Matthew 5:48). Perfection also has to do with maturity (Ephesians 4:13; Hebrews 6:1,2).

Christian perfection has long generated controversy in Christendom, dividing the church of Christ into camps of those who believe that it is possible and those who think otherwise. This problem is due to either misunderstanding by the rejecters or unwillingness to accept the truth. It is necessary therefore to state from the outset what Christian perfection is not and what it is. One, it is not absolute. Only God has absolute perfection, not even the angels. Of angels, the Scripture says, **“Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly”** (Job 4:18). Two, it is not infallible, that is, incapable of making mistakes. Christians can be perfect in heart but not in the head. We observe the great Apostle Paul tendering apology after he erred in the matter of the high priest. **“I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people”** (Acts 23:5). Three, it is not knowledge perfection. Because we do not have all knowledge, we can misunderstand, misapply or misinterpret situations. Only God is perfect in knowledge.

What then is Christian perfection? The word perfection as a religious construct means the following: one, deliverance or salvation from sin to live a holy life (Luke 1:74,75; Matthew 5:48). Two, uprightness of character and disposition (Job 1:1,8; Deuteronomy 18:13). Three, it is entire sanctification or second work of grace when the heart is purged from inbred sin or adamic nature (Romans 6:6,7). Four, it is pure, unconditional or *agape* love – love for God, fellow Christians and neighbors (1 John 4:18; Deuteronomy 30:6; John 15:12; 1 Corinthians 13:4-13). In essence, perfection is the purifying of our hearts to love God with all our heart, soul and mind; to love fellow believers as Christ loves them; and to love our neighbors as ourselves (Colossians 1:28). Five, it is maturity and spirituality (compare 1 Corinthians 3:1 with Hebrews 5:13,14; 6:1; Philippians 3:15 and Ephesians 4:13).

It should be noted that to be made holy, perfect or sanctified is the work of God and a Christian needs to yield his heart to Him as a patient does in an operating

theater to the surgeon for an operation to deal with the shoots and roots of sin. However, perfection or entire sanctification, though God's work, leaves an important role for the believer. **"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God"** (2 Corinthians 7:1). Believers must deliberately separate themselves from sin and all objects of sin – idolatry, materials related to immorality or pornography – whether in print or electronic media. Indeed, God's desire for the believer is to have a "clean heart" or "pure heart." A blameless life is one that will live with God throughout eternity because the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

Question 2: What do you understand by Christian perfection?

THE CALL TO CHRISTIAN PERFECTION (Colossians 1:22-27; Genesis 17:1; Matthew 5:48; 2 Corinthians 13:11)

Christ's work of redemption which brought salvation to the lost sinner also brought reconciliation with God. The purpose of this redemptive work is, **"...to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight"** (Colossians 1:22). God wants to bring every redeemed soul to the spiritual position where He looks and finds nothing sinful or evil. The process of attaining this goal entails obedience to the call to **"...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"** (Philippians 2:12). We cannot be holy and without blame if we are careless in our attitude and disposition towards worldly allurements and attractions. Christian perfection will enable us walk on a higher pedestal with God.

Abraham had been called out of his land of nativity for twenty-four years, and it was now thirteen years since Ishmael was born to him. At ninety-nine years old, God called him to be perfect in his walk with Him. **"And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou**

perfect” (Genesis 17:1). By this, he was required to be upright and consistent. Between his call to salvation at age seventy-five and the call to perfection, he had manifested some signs of inconsistency with God. First, he lied out of fear about his relationship with Sarah. Secondly, through the counsel of his wife, he slept with Hagar, Sarah’s maid. The Lord therefore, needed to call him to a consistently righteous walk.

The New Testament dispensation is superior to Abraham’s; hence, our High Priest, Jesus Christ, calls the Church to a perfect walk with the Father. “**Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect**” (Matthew 5:48). In the Epistles, believers are also called to perfection (2 Corinthians 13:9,11; Hebrews 6:1; Colossians 4:12). In order to gain this perfection, believers need to be steadfast in the faith, surrender and consecrate their lives to Christ. “**And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it**” (1 Thessalonians 5:23,24).

Question 3: Why are Christians called to perfection?

Paul the apostle was appointed a minister to preach the gospel of salvation to the world. In the process of carrying out this commission, he went through sufferings for the sake of Christ, but he was not discouraged; rather, he rejoiced in the Lord (Colossians 1:24). He called the word of God he was given to preach, mystery, “**Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations.**” This mystery is the breaking down of the wall of partition between the Jews and Gentiles, thereby producing mutual access to the gospel of salvation and its privileges.

COMMITMENT TO CHRISTIAN PERFECTION
(Colossians 1:28,29; Philippians 3:12,22-32; 3:12-16, Colossians 4:12; 2 Corinthians 11:12)

“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present

every man perfect in all wisdom" (Colossians 1:28). The work of the gospel in perfecting believers involves preaching, warning and teaching. For the Apostle Paul, he preached the full gospel of salvation from sin through the sacrificial death of Christ on the Cross. Secondly, he preached deliverance from the powers of darkness and translation from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God. Thirdly, he warned every man, particularly believers, night and day against sin and all appearances of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:8-10,22,23; Acts 20:32; Colossians 3:5-9). Lastly, he kept back nothing that was profitable unto them in order to qualify them for the ultimate salvation in heaven.

Presenting "**every man perfect**", whether from the pulpit or through individual pastoral counselling or the printed page, must be handled with care and wisdom. Like Paul, ministers of God today should be committed to preaching, warning and teaching the flock of Christ, the whole counsel of God. A minister who fails to warn his congregation against the danger of sin and imperfection is preparing them and himself for God's final judgment.

Question 4: Describe the role of sound doctrine in the perfection of believers.

Every believer must be committed to perfection, always doing things that help to deepen the experience. First, the individual has to be personally committed to perfection in order to sustain the experience. The one who has accepted the call to perfection must avoid the love of the world and keep himself pure. Second, the Christian minister, like Apostle Paul, must be committed to living, preaching and teaching it. The Lord has raised leaders in the church to fulfil His goal of perfecting the body of Christ. "**And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ**" (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Third, the local church should also be united in upholding the truth and remaining steadfast. Perfection should be a constant aspiration, pursuit and experience of everyone truly devoted to God. A man of God said, “The unceasing and steady aim of every Christian should be perfection-perfection in all things – in love of God, of Christ, of man; perfection of heart, and feeling, and emotion; perfection in his words, and plans and dealings with men; perfection in his prayer, and his submission to the will of God. No man can be a Christian who does not sincerely desire to be perfect as God is, and who does not make it his daily and consistent aim to be as perfect as God.” We should be united against worldliness, lukewarm attitude and false doctrine. Finally, God Himself is fully involved in empowering the Church to obey His Word and make it glorious, not having spot or wrinkle (Ezekiel 36:26,27; Ephesians 5:25-27).

The blessings of our commitment to perfection are manifold. One, it helps us to be in favor with God and enjoy fellowship with Him. Enoch walked with God consistently for three hundred years (Genesis 5:22-24). That he did it implied that he lived a life of communion with God. Two, a Christian should be committed to perfection in order to be like our Father in heaven who is perfect (Matthew 5:48). Three, it would enable the believer to avoid falling into sin or backsliding from the faith (Hebrews 10:38,39).

Four, it ensures or guarantees a place in God’s heaven on the last day. **“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God”** (Matthew 5:8). Five, it will bring glory to God and bring others to the knowledge of the truth. **“This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men”** (Titus 3:8). Finally, it must be noted that to sustain this gracious experience, the believer must be watchful and careful, read the Bible and meditate upon it daily (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:2); pray without ceasing (Luke 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17); endeavor

to fellowship regularly with other believers (Hebrews 10:25); resist the devil and all his cohorts in times of temptation (1 Peter 5:8,9); and remain steadfast. **“And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away”** (1 Peter 5:4).

DAILY BIBLE READING

	MORNING		EVENING	
MON	Matthew	13	Hosea	3-5
TUE	“	14-15	“	6-8
WED	“	16-17	“	9-10
THUR	“	18	“	11-12
FRI	“	19-20	“	13-14
SAT	“	21	Joel	1-2
SUN	“	22	“	3

762 Lesson

WARNING AGAINST FALSE TEACHING AND WORSHIP

MEMORY VERSE: “In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words” (Colossians 2:3,4).

TEXT: Colossians 2:1-22

Paul the apostle expressed his affection for the Colossian brethren with whom he had no previous contact before writing this epistle. Having discussed the subject of redemption in Christ and commitment to perfection in the preceding chapter, he proceeded to comfort as well as exhort them to unity, love and assurance of the truth concerning Christ. He proactively presented this truth, so they would not fall prey to the deception of erroneous teachers of their day who upheld the ceremonial laws and traditions of men above the doctrines of Christ. The reason is, believers who have spiritual understanding of the personality, power and doctrines of Christ will not embrace falsehood but abide steadfast in the faith. Like the Apostle, Christian ministers have a duty to continually feed the flock of Christ with the unchanging, full-orbed truth of Scripture to shield them from straying into error that damn the soul.

Question 1: Why do Christian leaders need to repeatedly emphasize the truth of Scripture to their flock?

REVELATION OF CHRIST’S DIVINITY AND BELIEVERS’ EXPECTED RESPONSE (Colossians 2:1-7,9,10; 1 Corinthians 1:24,30; John 15:4,5; Romans 11: 33-36; 1 Thessalonians 2:5)

Though Paul the apostle had not seen the Colossian brethren physically, he desired to make them come to “**full assurance of understanding of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge**” (Colossians 2:2,3). Obviously, he had a spiritual goal in

mind before writing this epistle. Without full assurance and proper understanding of complete redemption in Christ, they would remain spiritual babes capable of being **“tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive”** (Ephesians 4:14). Aware that the Judaizers claimed superior wisdom and knowledge outside Christ that makes redemption complete and worship acceptable to God, the Apostle aptly declared the divinity of Christ, who is the embodiment of wisdom and knowledge. All the knowledge and wisdom required to be saved, righteous, serve God acceptably and enter heaven at last, can be found only in Christ who is the express image of the Father. Every other knowledge and wisdom that contradict Christ as the incarnate Son of God, Savior, Sanctifier, Sustainer, Healer, Baptizer in the Holy Ghost, Teacher and coming King is therefore false and capable of misleading babes in Christ.

The Apostle clarifies that the purpose of this revelation is **“...lest any man should beguile you with enticing words”** (Colossians 2:4). It is unflinching commitment to preaching and emphasizing the truth that nullifies falsehood attractively wrapped and communicated with a heavy dose of flattery and fair speech. The truth is, whoever is born of God is indwelt by Christ and thus possesses the wisdom and knowledge of God. Christ declares that **“...I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you”** (John 14:20; 15:4). As possessors of God’s wisdom, believers have no reason to accept teachings that discountenance the pre-eminence of Christ and redemption through Him.

God does not want any of His children to be swayed from the way of righteousness. Though the Apostle was physically absent, he declared that he abode in fellowship with them in the spirit and attested to their steadfast faith in Christ. He therefore exhorted that **“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving”** (Colossians 2:6,7). To benefit

from the fountain of wisdom and knowledge of the full provisions and power of God which Christ embodies, it is important that believers continue to walk with Him. Consistent walk with Christ will make the believer to be rooted, built up and established. He also urged them to abide in the truth they had been “**taught**” with gratitude to God (Colossians 2:7). Detachment from the Savior makes a professing believer lose the supply of grace, power and wisdom to live righteous and resist falsehood.

Question 2: How can believers have and enjoy the wisdom of God which Christ embodies?

WARNING AGAINST TEACHINGS THAT UNDERMINE CHRIST’S PRE-EMINENCE (Colossians 2:8-15; John 1:1-13; John 14:20; Matthew 7:15-20; 15:6-12)

Paul the apostle warns the Colossian brethren and believers of all ages against deception, tradition, human philosophy and convention. **“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ”** (Colossians 2:8). To ‘spoil’ in the text means to corrupt, plunder or rob them of the faith and hope in Christ through philosophy. Greek philosophy thrives on speculations about the divine existence, subjective reasoning and imperfect deductions and conclusions. It thrives on mere fallacy and refers to truth as subjective. These philosophy and vain deceit are predicated on human precept and elementary knowledge of the physical, changing world.

Philosophy, human traditions, syncretism or conventions that are based on plausible variables are not compatible with God’s word. The Apostle who understood traditions and vain philosophies of these predators declared that they were not based on the teachings of Christ. Christian leaders must be abreast of prevailing philosophies and traditions of men around them that contradict the word of God and proactively warn their members of the danger of embracing them. The Apostle further emphasized the privileges a believer in Christ enjoys. He revealed that in Christ “dwelleth **all**

the fulness of the Godhead bodily"; that is, in Christ resides the boundless ocean of inexhaustible blessings anyone can ever dream of, pray for and receive in life and eternity. John the Baptist admitted that **"of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace"** (John 1:14,16). The fullness of the triune God can be found in Jesus. The believer is therefore **"complete in him"** since he dwells in Christ where the fullness of the Godhead resides. By virtue of his position in Christ who is **"the head of all principality and power"**, he is above the forces of darkness. The Apostle further revealed that the blessing of spiritual circumcision is obtainable in Christ. And through the observance of water baptism, the believer identifies with His death and resurrection. Believers who have obtained forgiveness are **"risen with him"** after being **"quicken together with him"** by faith. They also enjoy freedom from the burden of ceremonial laws which Christ abolished, **"took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross"**. It is erroneous to uphold and carry out such **"ordinances"** which only pointed to the perfect sacrifice of Christ and have now been abolished. Above all, believers enjoy the victory of Christ who **"spoiled principalities and powers"** publicly on the Cross. These great blessings, it must be emphasized, can be lost by embracing philosophy, vain deceit, traditions of men and human reasoning based on observable facts in the physical world.

Question 3: What should be the attitude of believers and spiritual leaders to false doctrines and preachers?

Present-day believers and leaders must expose false teachings and teachers and maintain their commitment to teaching the wholesome truth of Scripture. We must avoid people who **"resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith"** (2 Timothy 3:8; Romans 16:17).

EXHORTATION AGAINST FALSE WORSHIP
(Colossians 2:16-23; 1 Timothy 4:1; Titus 1:14; Isaiah 29:13,14; Mark 7:6,7)

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new

moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind” (Colossians 2:16-18).

Having exposed the error and falsehood of adherents of philosophy and traditions of men, Paul the apostle proceeded to exhort believers in Colosse not to allow anyone condemn them on any matter that relates to ceremonies of the law Christ abolished. He specifically mentioned such practices as meat or drink offering, holyday, new moon or Sabbath days which foreshadow the reality. All the ceremonies represent the shadow of the Person and sacrifice of Christ. An acceptance and practice of such amounted to saying that Christ had not come. He also cautioned them against worship of angels describing such humble submission to an ungodly practice as only a voluntary humility and not a divinely commanded one. Therefore, it is vain and unacceptable as such practice is a result of a carnal reasoning. Underneath such evil practice is pride. Even though it has a show of humility, the motive behind it is usually to gratify self, projecting oneself as wiser than others. In their worldly wisdom, they intentionally reject and dishonor Christ **“the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God”** (Colossians 2:19).

The Apostle repeatedly used the phrase **‘let no man’** to show that no one irrespective of gender, social or economic status or ties should be allowed to deceive them to lose their spiritual benefits and rewards here or in eternity.

Question 4: How did Paul the apostle describe Colossian Christians’ submission to false teaching?

Anyone who believes and is dead with Christ is no longer subject to ordinances that were temporary and had been abolished. Believers today are cautioned never to accept any form of worship that is perverse and

idolatrous. Any worship that demeans the Sonship of Christ but elevates an object or any personality above Him must be jettisoned.

There are however two ordinances Christ instituted to be observed namely, water baptism and the Lord’s Supper. While water baptism by immersion is identification with the burial and resurrection of Christ, the Lord’s Supper is perpetually observed in remembrance of His sacrifice and anticipation of His imminent return.

DAILY BIBLE READING

MORNING		EVENING		
MON	Matthew	23	Amos	1-2
TUE	“	24	“	3-4
WED	“	25	“	5-6
THUR	“	26	“	7-9
FRI	“	27	Obadiah	1
SAT	“	28	Jonah	1-2
SUN	Mark	1	“	3-4

763 Lesson

THE BELIEVER'S RISEN LIFE

MEMORY VERSE: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Colossians 3:1)

TEXT: Colossians 3:1-25

Following the warning against false teaching and worship considered in the preceding chapter, Paul the apostle emphasized the need for the Colossian and present-day believers to live the risen life. The risen life is a glorious life of triumph over sin and the works of the flesh; a life that constantly seeks higher spiritual attainments that glorify God; a life that sets affection on and is preoccupied with the spiritual above the mundane; a life of spiritual and holy service with eternity in view; and a Christ-like, rapturable life with a constantly rising hope of meeting with Lord in heaven. This is the central thought in this study.

Question 1: What is the risen life?

SCRIPTURAL PRECEPTS FOR GODLINESS: (Colossians 3:1-11; Phil. 3:19,20; Romans 6:2; Ephesians 4:22,29,31; 5:3,5; 2:2; Romans 1:18; 1 Cor. 7:19; Galatians 3:28)

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:1-3).

Question 2: Why must believers set their affection on things above?

Living for God's glory is the priority of every heaven-bound pilgrim. His passion and preoccupation are directed at fulfilling God's plan. Therefore, he glorifies God with his body. The resurrection power that lifted Jesus from the grave is the same power that translates the believer from darkness to light. He or she who is

crucified with Christ is dead to sin, pride, the allurements and fashion of the world, worldly ambition and pursuits, sinful entertainment or sensual pleasure.

God demands absolute compliance with the divine imperative to mortify our members. We are admonished to denounce and desist from the delusion of the end-time where people trust in their religious activities and revel in unrighteousness. The Bible warns: “**But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saint**” (Ephesians 5:3). Joseph lived up to this exhortation while he was in the house of Potiphar in Egypt (Genesis 39:7-10).

Question 3: How can a believer mortify his member?

To mortify is to crush, kill or destroy. Believers are to deal the death blow to the works of the flesh. As captives in a strange land, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did not succumb to the corrupt tendencies in Babylon. The Lord wants us to separate from illicit practices by mortifying our body and keeping it in subjection to His Spirit. Believers who claim to be faithful in paying their tithes or engage in one activity or the other in the house of God but still indulge in fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, covetousness, idolatry, stealing, masturbation, lesbianism, etc. should remember that “**...because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience**” (Ephesians 5:6). The proof of our new nature in Christ is that we “**put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds**” (Colossians 3:8,9). The risen life shines forth as light and dispels every work of darkness that is detrimental to grace and godliness.

SPIRITUAL GARMENT FOR THE NEW MAN:
(Colossians 3:12-17; 1:28; Philippians 2:3; 2 Corinthians 6:6; Galatians 5:22,23; Ephesians 4:2,32; 5:19,20; 1Corinthians 13:1-13; 10:31; John 14:27; Romans 10:17)

The gracious translation from darkness to light demands that the believer disengages and discontinues with the works of darkness. He must make the necessary progress by changing his spiritual apparel that befits his new faith and life. **“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering. Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye”** (verses 12,13). The bowel of mercies denotes inward pity and compassion for saints in distress. This is the mind of Christ that is devoid of hypocrisy, pretense and deception. These noble virtues, captured as fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22,23, propagate grace and godliness in the body of Christ. We are to put on kindness and eschew wickedness, callousness, censorious and fault-finding spirit and pride that the devil has smuggled into many Christian assemblies today. We must forgive others the way Christ forgave us for our lives to please God. The new apparel for the new man makes for the beauty and elegance of the Christian life.

Question 4: Why are Christians commanded to put on charity above all things?

Believers are exhorted to put on charity which is the bond of perfectness. Love is the hub around which all other virtues revolve. It is the hallmark of our Christian life and we are called to daily live a life of love. Christian love is undisguised, unpretentious and selfless. We are to show love without hope of anything in return. There must be a readiness and inclination to love in every child of God. In love, we prefer other brethren and give place for the fulfillment of everyone. Christ Himself declared: **“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength...Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself... By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another”** (Mark 12:30,31; John 13:35). Love is the Christian virtue that distinguishes true believers from others.

As part of the risen life, Paul the apostle instructs that we should allow the inflow of the peace of God to our hearts by the way we live, be grateful for the benefits of redemption enjoyed, get committed to intake and internalizing Christ's words, teach and admonish others with the word, sing spiritual songs with graceful hearts and **“do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him”** (Colossians 3:15-17).

SOLEMN CHARGE FOR CHRISTIAN HOMES:
(Colossians 3:18-25; Ephesians 5:22-28; 6:1-4; Acts 20:32)

The Christian life is not lived in isolation. Practical demonstration of God's grace and goodness in the family is proof of true Christian profession. Charity, they say, begins at home; so, the risen life must first be reflected in the family. Irrespective of societal agitation for gender equality, Christian wives are to submit to their husbands according to Scriptures; **“Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well...”** (1 Peter 3:6).

Question 5: How can believers live the risen life in the family?

The husband's love for the wife must be selfless and sacrificial. He is here commanded not to be bitter against his wife, no matter the offence. The same applies to the wife. With the grace of God in their lives, they should be able to overlook each other's inadequacies and forgive. Children are commanded to **“obey [their] parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord”**. They are to obey in everything which is not contrary to the will or word of God. To buttress this point, a Bible commentator wrote that no parent has a right to require a child to steal, or lie, or cheat, or assist him in committing murder, or in doing any other wrong thing. No parent has a right to forbid a child to pray, to read the Bible, to worship God. Children should not be provoked by their fathers and mothers to avoid discouraging them from following the path of righteousness.

At home or in secular employment, servants or employees are commanded to obey their masters in all things. The phrase **“in all things”** does not give believers the liberty to flout God’s commandments. They are to obey their masters in all things that agree with Scripture without **“...eyeservice, as men pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God”**. We are required to be both just and diligent in whatever we do. As a faithful Judge, the Lord will reward our sincerity and faithfulness in service. Therefore, **“...whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ”** (Colossians 3:23,24). Being impartial, He will also punish those who do evil.

DAILY BIBLE READING

MORNING			EVENING	
MON	Mark	2-3	Micah	1-2
TUE	“	4	“	3-5
WED	“	5	“	6-7
THUR	“	6	Nahum	1-3
FRI	“	7	Habakkuk	1-2
SAT	“	8	“	3
SUN	“	9	Zephaniah	1-2

764 Lesson

ADMONITION TO PRAYER AND GOOD CONDUCT

MEMORY VERSE: “Continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving” (Colossians 4:2).

TEXT: Colossians 4:1-18

The text opens with the basic role expected of masters towards their servants that will promote justice and equity. This is subsequent to Paul the apostle’s teaching in the preceding chapter on believers’ risen life which is also expected to show in the distinct roles of wives, husbands, children and servants. In this concluding part, the Apostle exhorts masters (employers) to be just to their servants (employees) with the consciousness that they will also give account to their heavenly Master whose authority, majesty and sovereignty supersedes theirs. **“Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven... forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him”** (Colossians 4:1; Ephesians 6:9). Christian employers should know that underpaying their employees, delaying or withholding their entitlements, oppressing or bullying them, compelling people to work in unsafe life-threatening places or conditions, etc. are not godly aside the negative effect on working relations, employee motivation and loyalty which, in turn, affect output and productivity.

Question 1: Why is it necessary that employers should ensure fairness and equity in dealing with their workers?

DEMAND FOR SAINTS’ IMPORTUNATE PRAYERS:
(Colossians 4:2-4; Ephesians 6:18-20; Luke 18:1; 1Thessalonians 5:17; Isaiah 40:31)

Inspired by the Holy Ghost, Apostle Paul stressed the relevance of saints’ importunate prayers. **“Continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving;**

pray without ceasing” (Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17), largely amplifies and echoes the necessity of prayer in the life of believers. They are not only required to pray continually, they must also be watchful (1 Peter 5:8), fervent in prayers and with thanksgiving (Romans 12:12; Colossians 2:7). The indispensability of prayer in the life of a believer explains the reason our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ spent quality time in expounding the subject to His disciples during His earthly ministry (Luke 11:1-13; Matthew 6:9-15). Christ’s teaching on prayer provides a model for believers’ prayer pattern and procedure (Matthew 6:9-15; Luke 11:2-4).

Question 2: State the reasons Christians should embark on importunate praying.

As an ambassador of the gospel, Apostle Paul’s primary concern was to win souls for the Lord. He therefore made a passionate appeal for prayers from the brethren **“that God would open unto [them] a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ...”**. His request centered on three parameters: firstly, that God would provide open doors to ministers in the ministry (Colossians 4:3). Paul’s affirmation is based on his understanding that when believers ask God for open doors, He opens doors of great opportunities for them to preach and teach the word of God (1 Corinthians 16:9). Secondly, that gospel ministers would speak the mystery of Christ – God’s plan of grace that was revealed on the Cross for the salvation of all men (Colossians 4:3; Ephesians 3:3,4; 6:19). Thirdly, that ministers of the gospel would be bold to speak as they ought to (Colossians 4:3). Believers who have been washed with the blood of the Lamb have an obligation to prayerfully declare the gospel to backsliders and sinners.

Question 3: Why should we continuously pray for the church and faithful ministers of the gospel?

CHRIST-LIKE CONDUCT AND THE PROFITS OF SUSTAINED CHRISTIAN CHARACTER: (Colo. 4:5,6; Eph. 5:15,16; 1 Pet 1:14-16; Jam 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17; Mk 9:50; Lk 14:34,35; Rom. 12:18; 14:19; Heb. 12:14; 2 Peter 1:3-7)

“Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time” (Colossians 4:5). This verse reveals the need for believers to be Christ-like in their conduct irrespective of people of diverse dispositions around them. They should conduct themselves wisely before men in the world. Since believers are expected to communicate the gospel and influence others through their lifestyles, their daily conduct should concretely reflect the image of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ by walking **“circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise”** (Ephesians 5:15).

The Scripture clearly reveals the acceptable character of believers. **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service... As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance...”** (Romans 12:1,2; 1 Peter 1:14-16). These expressions aptly attest to the need for a holy conduct wherever God’s children are found. So, all forms of compromise and worldliness which betray our Christian profession must be avoided like a plague (James 4:4; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 1:27; Ephesians 4:1). As believers, our lifestyles should **“give an answer to every man that asketh [us] a reason of the hope that is in [us] with meekness and fear”** (1 Peter 3:15).

Question 4: How does the conduct of believers in the society influence preaching the gospel?

Moreover, walking in **“wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time”** (Colossians 4:5; Ephesians 5:15,16) implies that believers should serve the Lord with zeal, commitment, consecration and devotion, devoid of procrastination and indolence. This is because the devil is busy snatching souls to eternity without Christ (1 Peter 5:8). Therefore, proper time management for God’s work remains imperative for believers. We must make the most of every opportunity to preach the gospel of Christ (Colossians 4:5; 2 Timothy 4:2). This is the only way we can show appreciation to God for His manifold grace and mercies. Paul the apostle went further to exhort believers to **“let [their] speech**

be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that [they] may know how [they] ought to answer every man” (Colossians 4:6). This verse reveals the preservative quality of salt as a seasoning substance which also provides good taste for food. Believers are supposed to be outstanding and unique in their community, preserving it from evil and corruption. They should live blamelessly, both in deed and words.

Nothing reveals the state or condition of one’s heart more than speech. Abusive, caustic or evil words reveal the absence of the grace of gentleness, meekness and love. Christ’s admonition to His disciples clearly shows that more of the salt of grace will be needed to live in peace with others. **“Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves and have peace one with another”** (Mark 9:50). As believers, our speech is expected to comfort and inspire others to serve God.

THE DELIVERY OF STEWARDS’ SOLIDARITY AND APPRECIATION (Colossians 4:7-18; 2 Timothy 4:12,19)

Apostle Paul concluded this epistle by acknowledging the supporting role of his companions and conveying their greetings to the brethren. He carefully presented a solidarity and appreciation message to his worthy companions and ambassadors in ministry. In a properly articulated manner, he recapped vividly some basic instructions, greetings and appreciation concerning some of his fellow-workers in the gospel. Christian ministers need to emulate this. They were faithful brethren who supported him and his ministry even while suffering incarceration. He sent **Tychicus** to the Colossian brethren as a special messenger to inform them of his state of affairs (2 Timothy 4:12; Titus 3:12), and he was prompt in taking the letter to them. **Onesimus** was a runaway slave from the household of Philemon whom Paul had to send back to his master in the company of Tychicus. At the time the letter was written, Onesimus had been converted, and thus a brother in Christ to Philemon. **Aristarchus** was a faithful companion of Paul who followed him on the ship

to Rome when he was under arrest (Acts 20:4; 27:2). He described him as a fellow-prisoner.

Jesus, who is called **Justus**, was one of fellow-workers who brought much comfort to Apostle Paul. He was of the circumcision. **Mark** who had left Paul during the first missionary journey was back in Rome with him (Acts 12:12,25; 15:37-39). He was useful to him at this time in the ministry. **Epaphras**, who was from Colosse and described as a servant of Christ, labored fervently in prayers for the church to ensure their perfection and completeness in God's will (Colossians 4:12). Apostle Paul testified of his great zeal which every faithful believer and minister should emulate. His zeal for God's work motivated believers in Colosse, Laodicea and Hierapolis to join resources together to send him to Rome.

Luke, the beloved physician accompanied Paul in many of his journeys. **Demas**, at this time in ministry, was with Paul in prison. However, by the time Paul wrote his second letter to Timothy, "...**Demas hath forsaken [him], having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica...**" (2 Timothy 4:10).

<p>Question 5: Give reasons Christian leaders' appreciation and guidance could improve the spread of the gospel.</p>

It is noteworthy that Paul the apostle also extended his appreciation to the churches in various homes, especially the church in the house of Nymphas. Because of the absence of church building in Laodicea, Hierapolis and Colosse, believers assembled in the homes of members. Believers who offer their house, property or other resources for God's work will not miss their reward both in time and in eternity if they remain steadfast till the end.

Concerning **Archippus**, Paul counselled him thus: "**take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it**". This encouragement was necessary probably to stir him up to more diligence and enable him contend with false doctrines and false teachers. Leaders and members of the church who are already grounded in the faith have a responsibility to

encourage others, especially new converts to continue in their walk with and service to God. Monitoring their progress in the faith will help keep them from false prophets and teachers.

The epistle ended with Apostle Paul’s passionate appeal to the brethren to “**Remember** [his] **bond**”. This was a precise request for prayer for him since he was in prison because of the gospel. His earnest desire was to be freed in order to further the cause of the gospel. There is need for sustained prayers for church leaders and members who labour sacrificially for the sake of the gospel.

DAILY BIBLE READING

MORNING			EVENING	
MON	Mark	10	Zephaniah	3
TUE	“	11	Hagai	1-3
WED	“	12	Zechariah	1-2
THUR	“	13	“	3-4
FRI	“	14	“	5-6
SAT	“	15	“	7-8
SUN	“	16	“	9-10

END OF NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES

BEGINNING OF SPECIAL STUDIES

765 Lesson

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL VICES: THE CHRISTIAN VIEW

MEMORY VERSE: “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).

TEXT: Romans 1:18-32; Philipians 4:8,9

Since the Fall, Adam and all generations after him have become susceptible to evil imaginations and actions. Through the ages, mankind has elicited the evil traits in many different ways. Modern man lives in a world that invents “**evil things**”. Man, himself has a sin-generating mind. He has the capacity to create sin, sinful pastimes or entertainment. Sin, in itself, is inexhaustible. It is brewed in the depth of human heart. Man’s craving for evil is insatiable. He ever craves novelty in sin. Today, traditional sins are either weak in attraction or predictable in their nature. Thus, the contemporary man – youths, adults, boys, girls, rich, poor, educated, illiterates, invalid and deformed, restricted and free – has some newly devised set of evil and vicious values he engages in.

Question 1: How did God describe the spiritual condition of men before the flood?

Since the flood, the heart of man has always been evil. God saw the whole imagination of the thoughts of man’s heart and concluded that it was evil continually – every year, every day, every hour, every moment. He never deviated into good. Such is the authentic account of the whole race of mankind. Such were all men before God brought the flood upon the earth. And strange enough, the Scriptures do not give us a reason to think otherwise of man today. The mind of the modern man is a sin-generative machine.

Increase in technology meant increase in evil. The advent of the television, video, computer and the internet and their potential of conveying thoughts in picture, color, language or motion is accompanied by increased engagement in entertainment and pleasure. But, and that regrettably, we go full cycle from being pleasure-hungry to pleasure-mania to pleasure- boredom. The television, for instance, impresses some vices on the mind of youths and adults and make light of violence, hooliganism, murder and assault.

Question 2: What are the common contemporary vices that a Christian should guard against?

MENACE OF GROWING SOCIAL EVILS (Romans 1:28-32; 2 Timothy 3:1-6,13; 1 Cor. 6:19,20; Ephesians 2:1-3)

Drug addiction, a practice found among teenagers and students in institutions of higher learning is a vice that ranks very high in contemporary times. Some freely say that scriptures did not say anything about the use of drugs. Yes. But it did warn us against defiling or, in modern usage, destroying the temple of the Holy Ghost which we have in us. **“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s”** (1 Corinthians 6: 19,20).

The use of hard drugs is a contemporary vice and its toll on the life of its users is pretty heavy. Hard drugs inflame the mind, sedate the heart and make the soul to feel ‘high’. Its end is more dangerous and deadly than the beginning. It leaves its victim a wretch on one hand and a danger to others, on the other. Closely allied with drug addiction is involvement in cults among students in secondary schools and institutions of higher learning. Cults, these days, pretend to be a social club but when its activities are closely examined, it is revealed as the breeding ground of all contemporary vices – wild life, thuggery, drug addiction and, at times, immorality. In recent times, dangerous weapons like live ammunition,

machetes, spears and arrows are found amongst the members of cults in schools. This is a modern trend and it comes with every conceivable danger to life and property.

Another contemporary vicious practice, common amongst non-Christians, and at times, strange though, amongst Christians, is betting and pools-staking. The bottom line and motive of engaging in this practice is covetousness. An obsession to get-rich-quick or reap where you have not sown, avarice at its worst and, of course, laziness are the driving spirits behind this practice. It is sad to see this creep into the midst of some believers' years after they claimed to be converted. Common amongst students who are desperate to excel without corresponding input of labour and diligence is examination malpractice. In contemporary times, this has reached some level that frightens constituted examination bodies, school authorities, students who have fear of the Lord and, of course, Christian parents. This practice looks like a contemporary vice that has come to stay in most societies. But its permanence or rationalization does not make it right. It remains essentially evil and vicious.

Contemporary youths and even the generality of middle-aged folks are unduly exposed to the practice of pornography. The evil sight that stirs up the base nature of man through pornography has a demonic hold on youths. Some Christian youths cannot stand or continue in the faith because of pornography. The sad thing is that youths and adults (men and women) generally accept to sit loosely yielding to the gratifications of those appetites wherein they stand on a level with the beasts that perish. Sensual pleasure is basically sinful. It is strange to see that rich, elite and seemingly refined ones, the creams of the country are held by the fiendish power of pornography. Teachers as well as their students, employers as well as their employees, leaders as well as the led, the advanced, civilized, industrial countries as well as the developing, primordial societies are all given to pornography and all kinds of immorality. Closely allied to pornography are the unclean practices

of lesbian and homosexually immoral propensity to one's own sex. These are rampant practices amongst students in boarding schools and higher institutions. Strange enough, some highly placed folks are involved in this practice. Some of them are found in religious circles.

From the days of old, music has always been a spiritual and edifying medium. The Scripture exhorts us to admonish **“one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in [our] hearts to the Lord”** (Colossians 3:16b). David's songs and playing on the harp had great spiritual and soothing impact on Saul. Elisha called for a minstrel under whose ministration he received inspiration (2 Kings 3: 15). Indeed, hymn-singing is a great inspiration to those who preach, just as good singing and music precede most of all preaching today. In heaven, music continues. **“And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps”** (Revelation 14:2). Such is the traditional and even future use of music.

But in contemporary times, music has been perverted from its original spiritual, inspirational and edifying context. Wild music which in the past was once exclusive has been brought to the churches. Most churches have lost the solemnity, inspiration, freshness, and refreshing that comes with Christian music in Bible days. Contemporary youths are besieged by *rock 'n' roll*, wild noisy music, drumming and tune, which are very much akin to those that obtain in heathen shrines. Wild secular music has a strong appeal which makes the mind stray away from the kingdom. Contemporary pseudo-Christian music is a vice, which the believer must free himself from.

The local practice of chieftaincy titles, traditional honour and kingship as done in some societies comes with all its vices and the believer in contemporary times must avoid it like a plague. It is disheartening to see a Christian relish in the conferment of a chieftaincy title

on him. One wonders how near or far such a Christian is from his Lord. Did not Jesus show his detachment from such earthly conferment of titles?

Question 3: (a) What was Jesus' reaction to the offer to make Him king? (b) What do we learn from this?

“Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone” (John 6:14,15).

If indeed we believe and know that we will truly later be made **“kings and priests: and we shall reign on earth”** in the millennium and in the New Earth forever (Revelation 5:10; 2:26,27; 11:15; 20:4-16; 22:5; Daniel 7:18), why should we then get obsessed with the transient, perishable, earthly, ritualistic and generally devil-inspired titles on earth? No real Christian who is a shining example as well as a burning light can be so loved by the world to the point of conferring honour on Him.

Question 4: What should be the Christian's view in relation to chieftaincy titles?

Chieftaincy title, traditional honors and all recognition from people whose primary interest and focus is the devil and his continued hold on the people are vicious. The believer must steer clear.

Finally, the use of slang and gutter language is another contemporary vice. The Bible says: **“Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt”** (Colossians 4:6). Christian language, as salt, should do five things. First, it should sweeten, edify the heart and mind of the hearers. Second, it should purify, not defile or offend since whiteness of salt symbolizes purity. Third, it should preserve the hearers from decay and spiritual decomposition. Fourth, it should be pervasive in its influence, no matter how few the words are, just as a pinch of salt would pervade a whole meal. Fifth, it should be known for its characteristic. The Bible says

“... a fool’s voice is known by multitude of words”
(Ecclesiastes 5:3).

Question 5: What danger does the use of worldly slangs pose to the Christian testimony?

The Christian’s use of slangs sourced from brothels, drug addicts, thug-proselytizing musicians, “heroes” in boxing, sports and theater makes a believer to be one of them and this dwindles his potential to minister to them. We all then become blind together. And the Bible asks: **“... Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into the ditch?”** (Luke 6:39). And records again: **“Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch”** (Matthew 15:14).

THE CHRISTIAN’S STAND (Philippians 4:8,9; 1 Peter 1:5-11; 1 Corinthians 10:31-33)

There is no sitting on the fence for the Christian. He cannot afford to pitch his tent with Sodomites and Gomorrhahites and still claim to know Christ. The vices known in contemporary times are deceitful, but no Christian should be deceived. The Bible has given enough guide to the Christian as to the position he must take on these issues. As a Christian daily faces temptation and allurements from any of these vices, he needs ask some questions.

Question 6: How should a Christian assess any practice or conduct that looks like a source of temptation?

First, does it glorify God? Would God behold it with joy? Can I do it in the presence of the Lord? Can I do it or talk about it without any shame or contradiction before the saints of God in the church of the living God? **Second**, does it edify the saints of God? Does it provoke the brethren to love and good works (Hebrews 10:24). Is it worth emulating? **Third**, does it point the sinner to Calvary? Is that practice – pornography, homosexuality, lesbianism, smoking, involvement in cult, wild music, ferment of traditional titles, drug addiction, use of gutter language, gambling, betting and pools staking –

capable of gaining a soul for the kingdom or challenging the sinner on the need for the salvation of his soul? **Fourth**, does the practice harm the temple of the Holy Ghost whose body you are? Does it weaken your frame, enlarge your heart, enfeeble your mind, waste your resources and enslave you the rest of your life?

Fifth, does it make you an example to believers? **“Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity”** (1 Timothy 4:12). **Sixth**, it is exigent for the Christian to always ask himself some questions before embarking on any action: Does it draw me nearer to heaven? Does it enhance my preparedness for heaven? Does it make me rapture-ready? **Seventh**, will the practice, language or lifestyle earn me a smile of approval from my Lord and Savior? Finally, is the issue under consideration true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report? If it not, the Christian’s position is a firm ‘No!’

THE WAY OUT (Romans 10:9; 1 John 1:9,10; Jeremiah 18:8; Luke 13:3; Hosea 6:1; 2 Chronicles 7:14)

Victims of contemporary vices need a release. The vices are yokes and like every yoke, they must be broken.

Question 7: What is the way out of these contemporary social vices?

If we are to be free from the vices, essentially, we must avoid them like one would do a plague. Whoever has slipped into them should go back to the Lord in repentance and call on the Lord for restoration. Because involvement in these vices is tantamount to loss of eternal life, there is the need to fight manfully. The Bible says, **“The kingdom of God suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force”** (Matthew 11:12). Repentance is to be followed by a return to the Lord (Isaiah 55:7). To return implies one has felt some brokenness and contrition, and unto such the Lord is very much keen to save and deliver. **“The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit”** (Psalm 34:18).

It is very helpful to see the minister watching over

your soul for help. After repentance, returning and restoration, it becomes very necessary to practice the abiding presence of the Lord. Imagine the Lord is ever by you and do only those things that He would approve of. Like David, remember that wherever you are, God is there with you.

DAILY BIBLE READING

MORNING			EVENING	
MON	Luke	1	Zechariah	11-12
TUE	“	2	“	13-14
WED	“	3	Malachi	1-2
THUR	“	4	“	3-4
FRI	“	5	Genesis	1-2
SAT	“	6	“	3-4
SUN	“	7	“	5-6

766 Lesson

EARNESTLY CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

MEMORY VERSE: “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

TEXT: Jude 3-13

The Church has many adversaries. Notable amongst them are the devil, sin, the world, principalities, powers, and in some cases, institutional bodies like the government. Other religions of our time also militate against the Church. Faced with all these odds, the Church is always in the business of contending, struggling, fighting and resisting oppositions. Ours is not a fight against flesh and blood; it is not a struggle over temporal, perishable things of life - money, land, possession or material things. The fight is one orchestrated by the devil and designed to sift from us our great pearl, treasure, the imperishable word and revelation of the Almighty. This, in Scripture, is succinctly called the faith. It is the totality and entirety of all that we believe.

Question 1: What are the odds or forces against the Church?

The devil, his false prophets, principalities, powers, idolaters, our flesh, the human depravity and other agents of Satan labour tirelessly to take the faith away from us. Our singular business is to contend against them.

OUR CALLING AND CONDITION FOR CONTENDING
(Philippians 3:4; 2Timothy 1:9; Hebrews 3:1; 1 Thessalonians 4: 7; Luke 22:32; Mark 4:12; Matthew 18:3; Luke 5:32)

Before we can engage the contending forces against the faith once delivered to us, we must meet certain conditions.

Question 2: Mention the conditions we must meet before we can contend for the faith.

The first of these is conversion – a definite and unmistakable break from sin. Conversion is a change of heart from evil to a righteous and Christ-like life. At conversion, the Christian receives **“the power to become the son of God”** and to **“go and sin no more”** (John 1:12; 5:14). The strongest of men without conversion is mincemeat for the devil in the contest for faith. The weakest of men, with conversion, is a terror to him and his host. Peter, in his message on the day of Pentecost, alerted his audience on the need to **“repent and be converted”**.

Besides conversion, the soul contending for the faith must be called. All the apostles and disciples in the Acts of the Apostles were called by God. The called ones are those taken out of the world and transfixed in the body of Christ for fellowship, worship and ministry. Christ came to call the world to repentance. Moses, David, Elisha, Peter, Paul, Andrew, John and Matthew were all called. God calls men because He is not willing that any should perish but that all should have life eternal. Christ came to call sinners to repentance. After we have heeded the call then, we can start contending for the faith.

Question 3: Mention three types of the call of God on our lives.

The Bible qualifies the calling God gives us in these ways. First, it is described as a high calling – one higher than any other calling we could ever have on the face of the earth. It is higher than a call to serve in government, foreign service or to enjoy an overseas’ scholarship. The highest call we can ever have is one coming from heaven above. Paul the apostle puts it this way: **“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”** (Philippians 3:14). Paul here sees his call as one higher than being a Pharisee.

Second, it is described as a holy calling (2 Timothy 1:9). It is a call that only the Holy Spirit can explain, interpret and impress on a person. Third, it is a heavenly calling

(Hebrews 3:1). It comes from heaven and opens the gate for us into the presence of the Father.

Our call is further pictured in different ways in the Scriptures. Each of the descriptions shows details of the benefits accruing to us as a result of our response to the call of God. In his epistle to the Corinthians, Paul described our call as one to the fellowship of His Son (1 Cor. 1:9).

Many of those who profess to have partaken of the redemptive grace of God do not know that we are called into the great riches of Jesus and into partnership with Him. In this relationship, we drop our destitution, lack, dryness and we get into the riches, power and grace of God. Jesus, through this relationship lifts us up from our prostrate position of servants unto His side on the right hand of the Father. He is calling the suffering, sorrowful and sad ones to come and share in His fellowship and enjoy His glory, majesty and joy.

We are also called to eternal life and holiness (1 Timothy 6:12; 1 Thessalonians 4:7). The call of God on us not only brings us into the kingdom, it also sanctifies us and preserves us in the Kingdom (Colossians 1:13). The translation, sequel to our call, is one to a realm where Satan, witches, wizards and powers of darkness cannot reach or operate. This preservation touches our soul, spirit and body. There is a hedge, an impenetrable wall around all the redeemed of the Lord who have responded to the call of God.

COMPROMISE AND CONTEMPT FOR THE FAITH:
(Acts 13:8; 2 Corinthians 2:17; Jeremiah 5:31; 1 Timothy 1:19; Galatians 2:18)

We are called to contend for the truth and fight the good fight of faith. From the record of the Bible, there are people who, though called, did not remain within the hedge where God placed them.

<p>Question 4: How does the devil entice people and make them compromise?</p>

The devil usually dangles alluring carrots of false hope and opportunities in order to draw saints out of the Kingdom since he cannot gain access to them. He once tried this with the Lord. He showed Him all the kingdoms of the world with the glory therein at a glance. His condition was just a bow and worship. It was an attempt to draw Jesus out of the will of God, but He overcame; and we will also overcome. **“For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ”** (2 Corinthians 2:17).

But some Christians compromise their faith. They have contempt for the faith and degenerate to a state whereby they mutilate, corrupt, dilute, weaken and decimate the word of God. False prophets and congregations with itching ears are compromisers who also have contempt for the faith.

Question 5: What is the influence of false doctrines on Christians?

False teachings always lower the standard of righteous living, lighten the demand of God’s laws, remove fear of damnation of the soul, sear the conscience and take away responsibility both to God and man. Those who love false teaching to create some comfortable spiritual environment for themselves are compromisers. The Lord surely frowns on any fellowship, partnership or relationship with agents of compromise. We should avoid the agents of the devil who make believers to compromise and backslide like we also do to known witches or wizards. Their goal is to make standing believers make a shipwreck of their faith (1 Timothy 1:19).

Question 6: How can a compromising Christian be identified?

All those who were born again before but have now gone back to the use of incense in worship, candle- burning, turning the Bible into an amulet rather than a Book worthy of the most serious and earnest study are once again building the things they had destroyed. They make themselves transgressors. Those who once knew the Lord but have now gone back into carrying the crucifix in their pockets for protection, or the photographs

of a so-called preacher, or wearing amulet are showing signs of contempt for the gospel, Calvary and the blood of Jesus. **“For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor”** (Galatians 2:18).

CHRISTIANS CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH (Jude 3; Nehemiah 13:23-25)

Question 7: What must we do to keep contending for the faith?

To earnestly contend is to strive tenaciously to keep something that Satan is laboring to take away from us. We contend earnestly, diligently, courageously, consistently and honestly. Our strength, life, and our all must be involved in the struggle against anyone or anything who wants to take the faith away from us.

As we contend for the faith, we must effect a clean separation from all those who compromise the faith even if it would result in persecution, deprivation or misconception. Nehemiah set an example of such a position as he contended for the faith. **“In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews’ language, but according to the language of each people. And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves”** (Nehemiah 13:23-25).

So, must we also do when people go contrary to the word of God through immorality, adultery or speak disparagingly about the word of God. Second, we must refuse the invitation of agents of people whose design is to overthrow our faith. Third, have no fellowship with false prophets or anyone who has departed from the faith. We must evade Demases, Gehazis, Dathans, Korahs, and Abirams. Fourth, all messages and literature channeled by the enemy through his agents must be avoided. Fifth, we should preach the truth forcefully and with

conviction. We need to be more earnest and aggressive in our preaching than the perpetrators of evil. Sixth, publicly rebuke any member who departs from the faith and glide into false doctrine. This corrective ministry is not just for the local pastor, overseer or leader alone; it is the duty of every sound Christian who has a precious living and dynamic relationship with the Lord. Seventh, we are to live the uncompromising life that will challenge and convict the unstable. Eight, we are to support faithful pastors and Christians who preach the word of God sincerely without any compromise. Ninth, we need to train others who will be able to stand and effectively teach the whole counsel of God to the whole church and live by it. The whole church must rise and contend for the faith.

DAILY BIBLE READING				
MORNING			EVENING	
MON	Luke	8	Genesis	7-8
TUE	“	9	“	9-10
WED	“	10	“	11-12
THUR	“	11	“	13-14
FRI	“	12	“	15-16
SAT	“	13	“	17-18
SUN	“	14	“	19

767 Lesson

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT

MEMORY VERSE: “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27).

TEXT: Revelation 20:11-15

The subject of judgment is not strange to the minds of mortals. Since it is in the nature of human beings to err, it is common in every sphere of life to see men being tried and punished accordingly. The common practice and experience in homes, schools, offices, courts and many other places is to see someone give a verdict after trial for some wrongdoing. The guilty is almost always given some punishment. This practice underscores the need and importance of justice and fairness in relationship.

Question 1: How are earthly judgments different from the Great White Throne Judgment?

Our study deals with the final judgment that God will bring upon those who reject His word and live as they pleased. This is called the Great White Throne Judgment. In this study as in other studies of the events of the last days, the Lord is graciously revealing unto us His program for this present evil world. The doctrine opens our eyes to the time when all wicked and ungodly people (the living and the dead, small and great) who neglected God’s salvation will face the final and terrible judgment of the living God (Romans 14:12). It is important that we approach the study with the seriousness it deserves and not with doubtful disputations or view it as a fable or fiction. These things are written for our learning and admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come (Romans 15:4; I Corinthians 10:11).

JUDGMENTS IN THE SCRIPTURE (Isaiah 53:4-11; John 3:15-18; 2 Corinthians 5:10,11; 1 Timothy 5:24;

Jude 6)

That judgment is certain for all men is clear in every part of the inspired word of God. **“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment”** (Hebrews 9:27). However, contrary to general assumptions of a single judgment at a given time for sinners and saints alike, a number of separate judgments are clearly taught in Scripture for different classes of people and at different times. The Lord God has always been acquitting the innocent as He did in the case of the antediluvians, Sodom and Gomorrah and Korah’s company. Since He never changes (Hebrews 13:8), He will keep to the same principle in the future, final judgment.

Question 2: Mention different types of judgments in the Scripture, supporting your answer with references.

It is clear from the Scripture that believers have been judged in respect of their sin. This took place on Calvary’s cross when Jesus became the sinner’s Substitute (Isaiah 53:6; 2 Corinthians 5:21; John 3:18; Romans 8:1,2). Sin must be judged either in the sinner’s substitute or the sinner himself. And Christ has already borne the punishment for the sins of humanity in the hope that men would acknowledge His love and sacrifice and accept it, so they can be acquitted. When the penitent sinner personally appropriates this vicarious sacrifice, reposes his faith in the Savior and accepts His Lordship, he is declared justified by grace. This is the first type of judgment.

Then, as he lives the Christian life, he daily judges (or examines) himself in the light of God’s word (1 Corinthians 11:31,32; 1 John 1:7) to make sure he continues to abide in Christ. This is the second type of judgment. Failure in the same may bring temporary physical suffering or chastisement (Hebrews 12:5-11).

The third type of judgment will be experienced also by believers at the *“Bema”* seat of Christ (Romans 14:10; Revelation 22:12). This will be after the rapture and the

purpose will be to distribute rewards for **“the things done in the body”**. No believer at this judgment will be condemned, for all are saved. But rewards will differ and the works of some will be burnt (1 Corinthians 3:14,15).

The other types of judgment will be with the intent of punishing sin. These include the judgment of Israel during the Great Tribulation (Ezekiel 20:33-44; Jeremiah 30:3-11; Matthew 24:4-25) and the judgment of the (living) nations at Christ’s Second Advent (Matthew 25:31-46). Israel will be judged (for her many centuries of rebellion against God) by the cruel hand of the Antichrist. At the end of the ordeal, **“all Israel shall be saved”** (Romans 11:26) as they shall **“look upon me whom they have pierced”** (Zechariah 12:10). The judgment of angels for rebellion against God is identifiable as another type of judgment in Scripture (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6,7).

THE GREAT, TERRIBLE AND FINAL JUDGMENT (Revelation 20:11-15; Daniel 7:9,10, 12:2; Matthew 11:20-24; John 5:25-30; Acts 24:15)

The Bible clearly presents the order of events preceding the Great White Throne Judgment and constantly urges us: **“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”** (Revelation 2:7).

The world is corrupt and polluted. The fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden brought mankind to shame, guilt and condemnation. From Adam, sin came into everyone that was born into the world. God made provision for the salvation of man, but humanity has generally preferred to turn away from God’s call to repentance and pardon. Man has remained rebellious and disobedient. And it pains God that He made man on the earth for every imagination of the thoughts of man’s heart has been evil continually (Genesis 6:5,6). God promised judgment and punishment for the wicked. His word declares that, **“the soul that sinneth it shall die”** and that **“the wages of sin is death”** (Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 6:23).

<p>Question 3: Highlight past judgments of sinners in the Bible and what believers can learn from them.</p>

God has been judging sinners over the ages. He judged the world in the days of Noah when He destroyed all living beings with the flood with the exception of eight persons (Genesis 6:17,18; 7:10-13,21-24). He poured out His wrath and indignation upon Sodom and Gomorrah and destroyed all that were in them except Lot and his two daughters (Genesis 19:13,24-26). On other occasions, He brought judgment on Korah, Dathan and Abiram with their supporters and punished the Egyptians for refusing to let His people go. At various times, He brought judgment on Nadab and Abihu; on Uzzah; on Sennacherib and his 185,000 Assyrian soldiers (Isaiah 37:36-38); and on Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10). However, in the Great White Throne Judgment, all those who were destroyed in all those cases will still be judged.

What then is this judgment? It is the last and final judgment. It is the judgment that concludes the affairs of this present evil world. At the end of the millennial reign of Christ, the devil will be released from the bottomless pit for a while (Revelation 20:3,7). He will go out to deceive people again and will gather multitudes to fight against Christ and His saints. This is referred to as the Battle of Gog and Magog. Satan and his people will be defeated. Fire will come from God to devour them. After this, Satan shall be cast into the lake of fire; the stage then becomes set for the final judgment of sinful men.

Let us look carefully at the details concerning the setting of the judgment.

The Throne: The great God of heaven and earth, who is a great King cannot but sit on a throne. It is White, and it represents His purity. The setting is magnificent and of great splendor and glory that befits the eternal King.

The Judge: The Judge is God Almighty, the Omniscient and Omnipresent. He knows everything and so there will be no miscarriage of justice. He is everywhere so all things are open unto Him. His sight will be so terrible because it is judgment time.

Those to be judged: (Revelation 20:12,13). All those

who died in sin from the time of Adam till the time of the Great White Throne Judgment will be resurrected (Daniel 12:2; John 5:28,29; Acts 24:15). They will all stand before God for judgment. These include:

- (1) All categories of sinners, living and dead, small and great, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, male and female, the rulers and the ruled, will be judged for neglecting the salvation of God (Hebrews 2:3).
- (2) All backsliders who denied the faith of God who once redeemed them (Exodus 32:33; Hebrews 10:26-30,38,39).
- (3) All those who deny the deity of Jesus Christ (John 3:18,19).
- (4) All religious hypocrites who are like “**whited sepulchers**” (Matthew 23:27). The sea, death and hell will give up the dead in them. The bodies of all the dead will be united with their souls and spirits to stand before God to receive the just reward for their ungodly lifestyle. It will be a very great and sober gathering.

The Judgment: Everyone will be judged according to his works (verses 12,13). It will be done in righteousness. It will be open and everyone on trial will know why he or she is going to the lake of fire. It will be to judge

- (1) all unrighteous deeds of men (1 John 5:17). All unrighteousness that was not cleansed by the blood of Christ before then will bring condemnation, including unrighteous feelings and imaginations.
- (2) The secret deeds of men which others may not have known, done in darkness: secret bribery, immorality, pornography, drunkenness, abortion, whispering, etc. will be judged.
- (3) The words of men – every idle word, gossip, backbiting or slander will be brought to judgment; all foolish and unedifying words; corrupt,

graceless, defamatory and abusive words will be judged (Matthew 12:36,37; Ephesians 5:4). God's judgment will be fair, just and without partiality or respect of persons. **“For the Lord God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward”** (Deuteronomy 10:17). No one can influence or bribe Him.

The books: **“...and the books were opened”** (verse 12). These are the books of records that will contain everything done by men while on earth. It is according to the records written in these books that judgment will be delivered. This will remove all possibilities of arguments. There will be no room to say the sentence given was based on hearsay or guesswork. All things will be documented, and these, in many books.

The book of life: only one book (verse 12) **“...and another book was opened, which is the book of life”**. This is the book that contains the names of all those who are born again, those who have been washed in the blood of Jesus. Their sins had been judged earlier at Calvary when they repented of their sins, confessed them and received Jesus as their Savior and Lord. We must endeavor to make sure our names are in this book. All saints in all ages, from the time of Adam to the time of the judgment, have their names written in the book of life.

Question 4: Describe in detail the make-up of, and proceedings at the Great White Throne Judgment.

THE ETERNAL ABODE OF THE CONDEMNED
(Revelation 20:10,14; 19:20; 14:10,11; Mark 9:43-48; Matthew 25:41)

Question 5: Describe the plight of the condemned in the lake of fire.

“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15). An awful end awaits all those that have to appear before God in the Great White Throne Judgment for **“...God is a consuming fire”** and **“it is a fearful thing to fall into**

the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 12:29; 10:31).

The lake of fire is the eternal abode of the devil and his angels (Revelation 20:10; Matthew 25:41). The lake of fire was not meant for man but all those who reject God and side with Satan, by committing sin, will have no choice than to share in their master’s destiny. Death and hell (the abode of demons and evil spirits will be cast into the lake of fire (verse 14) where the beast and the false prophet had originally been thrown (Revelation 19:20). The fire will never go out; it cannot be quenched. It will burn forever and ever (Revelation 14:10,11; 20:10). Worms do not die in it. How then is annihilation of human beings possible in it as advocated by some groups? Between Revelation 19:10,11 and 20:10 is a period of over 1,000 years, yet the beast and the false prophet had not been consumed by the fire. The fire does not destroy but continuously torments. It is a terrible thing.

Whosoever was not found written in the book of life will suffer forever in the lake of fire. His companions, neighbors and co-tenants will be Satan, the beast, the false prophet, demons and evil spirits. What a company! The Scripture does not in any way support annihilation or purgatory but eternal burning of all sinners condemned to hell. There is, however, the possibility of escape from judgment through repentance from sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ while still here on earth.

ESCAPING THE DOOM OF THE CONDEMNED (2 Peter 3:9-14; 1 Peter 4:7; John 3:3,5,16; Mark 1:15; 1 Peter 5:8,9; 1 Timothy 4:16)

God gave His only begotten Son that “**whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life**”. The will of God is that all should repent, believe the gospel and be saved (2 Peter 3:9; John 3:16; Mark 1:15).

Question 6: How can one escape the Great White Throne Judgment?

Knowing that all ungodly people shall be brought to judgment “**what manner of persons ought ye to be in**

all holy conversation and godliness” (2 Peter 3:11). To escape the Great White Throne Judgment, you need to repent of all sins, confess them to God and receive Jesus as your Lord and personal Savior. Genuine salvation through repentance and faith in Christ is demanded from everyone who hopes to escape. Other conditions include living a holy life, making restitutions, following peace with all men and avoiding every appearance of evil. But for those who refuse to repent there will be weeping and wailing as they will be condemned to the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.

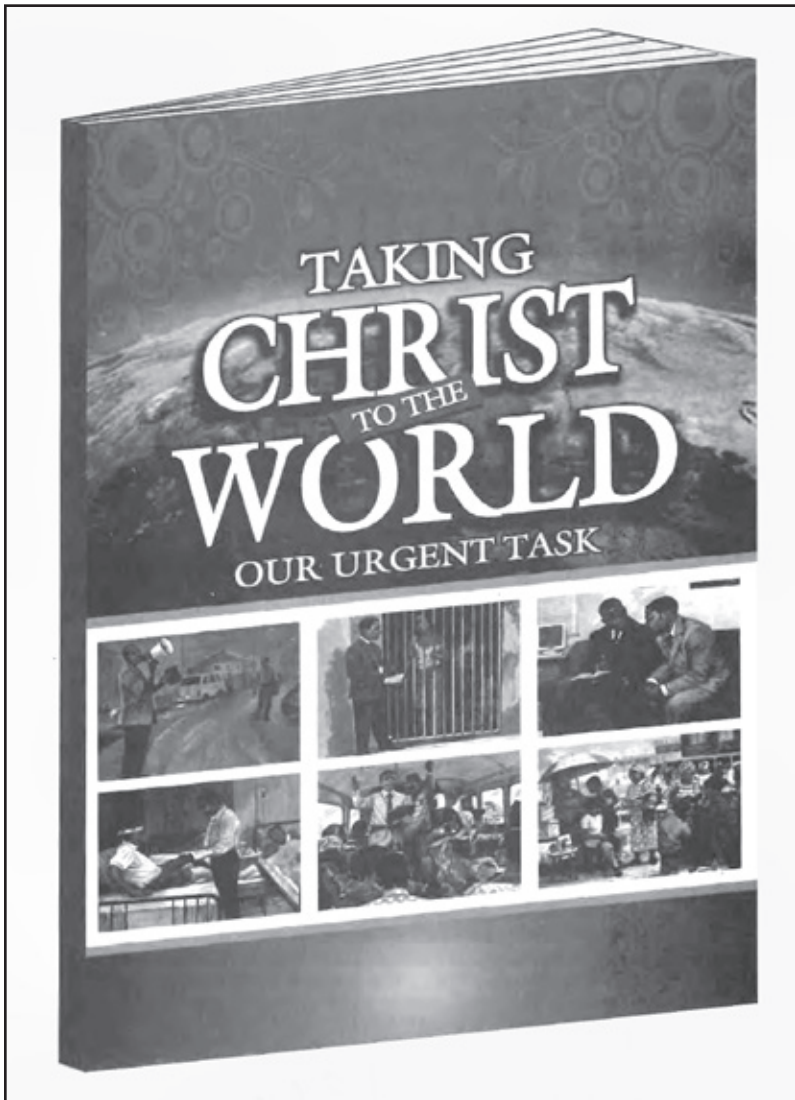
DAILY BIBLE READING

MORNING			EVENING	
MON	Luke	15-16	Genesis	20-21
TUE	“	17	“	22-23
WED	“	18	“	24
THUR	“	19	“	25
FRI	“	20	“	26
SAT	“	21	“	27
SUN	“	22	“	28-29

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

District Churches Directory

- 1. Bronx: 213 E. 144th Street (718) 292-7883**
- 2. Brooklyn: 140 Saratoga Avenue (718) 919-1166**
- 3. Queens: 188-21 Suffolk Drive, St. Albans, NY 11412 (347) 200-3301**
- 4. New Jersey: 23-39 South 20 Street, Irvington (973) 202-3989**
- 5. Staten Island: 144-146 Morningstar Road, Staten Island, NY 10303 (917) 238-2258**
- 6. Spring Valley: 95 North Main street, Suite 1 (845) 709-6058**





DEEPER CHRISTIAN LIFE MINISTRY, USA

www.dclm.org

DEEPER LIFE BIBLE CHURCH WEEKLY FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE

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

MONDAY BIBLE STUDY

Rockland County	7:00 PM
-----------------	---------

TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY

Bronx/Queens/New Jersey/Co-op City and Staten Island	7:00 PM
---------------------------------------------------------	---------

WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY

Brooklyn	7:00 PM
----------	---------

THURSDAY (REVIVAL SERVICE) FAITH CLINIC

Rockland County	7:00 PM
-----------------	---------

FRIDAY (REVIVAL SERVICE) FAITH CLINIC

All the Church Locations except Rockland County	7:00 PM
-------------------------------------------------	---------

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