"Therefore, if any one is in Christ,
he is a new creation;
the old has passed away, behold,
the new has come."
(2 Cor 5:17)

Hallelujah! Praise God for the new life that He has given to us through His precious blood. The moment that we received baptism, we left our old selves and began a life belonging to the One who paid a ransom for our sins. This is why we call Jesus our "Lord," because we are no longer our own. However, how do we carry on with our new lives in an acceptable manner to God? The Bible supplies us with plenty of answers to this question. We hope that through each Student Spiritual Convocation, we can learn as much as possible concerning how to live for Christ.

About Book 4:

"You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul; and you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be a s frontlets between your eyes."
(Deut 11:18)

Would you operate a piece of complicated machinary without reading its manual? Probably not. First, you would not know how it works. And second, you want to make sure that nobody gets hurt or nothing gets broken from your misuse. Similarly, the new life that we live in Jesus is everything but simple. We need a detailed manual to guide us through the path in this ever-changing world. Thanks to God that He has prepared for us the perfect manual of life—the Bible. It contains all the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven. All those who read of it and obey it will not only have their hunger be satisfied but shall also obtain the everlasting life (Jn 6:63).

Student Spiritual Convocation

Book 1
A Life of Prayers

Book 2
A Life of Love

Book 3
A Life of Servitude

Book 4
Living in the Words of God

Book 5
Living in Holiness

Book 6
Family Life

All Bible quotations are in RSV.

Recommended Lessons for Each Level

Elementary 2

1. Holy Communion
2. The Parables
3. The Word of God

Junior 1 & 2

1. Holy Communion
2. John 1-10
3. The Word of God
4. The Benefits of Bible Reading

Senior

1. Holy Communion
2. James
3. Fulfillment of the Word
4. The Benefits of Bible Reading

A Word to the instructors:

Lesson Division

We recommend the above lessons for each respective class level. If you would like to use lessons other than those recommended for the age level, please make appropriate modifications when necessary.

Assignments/Quizzes

Please be reminded that assignments and quizzes are NOT merely means to keep your students busy. Rather, they serve as a tool to reinforce what you have taught them and a way to assess how much your students know about the subject. Therefore, be sure to give your students feedback, as soon as possible, on all the assignments and quizzes so that they may learn from their works.

Questions

Questions are provided at the end of each lesson. These are divided into three levels of difficulty. Questions in level 1 are informational and students can usually find the answers from reading the text. Questions in level 2 require some explanation. Questions in level 3 involve analysis, comparison, or application. Depending on the class level you are teaching, you may use any combination of questions from each difficulty level. We advice that you assign more level 1 and 2 questions to Elementary 2 students and more level 2 and 3 questions for older students.

Every lesson can be tailored to a specific class depending on how you mix and match the questions.

Group Discussion/Activity

We encourage the students to be involved in the class as much as possible through group discussions. If possible, you may ask other instructors or adult counselors to participate in the group discussion as well. Group reports or presentations can help your students remember the material better. At the same time, they provide opportunities to foster fellowship and cooperative learning.

If the group discussion or activity is not possible for any reason, you may modify it into an individual writing assignment.

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Holy Communion

I. THE INSTITUTION OF THE HOLY COMMUNION

A. The Lord Jesus established the Holy Communion (Lk 22:19, 20).

B. The Lord commanded that Holy Communion be held (Lk 22:19)

C. After His ascension, Jesus revealed the indispensability of the Holy Communion to apostle Paul (1 Cor 11:23-25)

II. THE MEANING OF THE HOLY COMMUNION

A. Held in rememberance of the Lord Jesus' sacrifice (1 Cor 11:25)

1. The Lord Jesus became poor for us (2 Cor 8:9; Lk 9:58).

2. The Lord Jesus suffered and died for us (Mt 27:18-50; Ps 22:14-18; Heb 2:9).

3. With His bruises, lashes, and humiliations, we are healed and gain peace (Isa 53:4-6; 1 Pet 2:24-25).

N O T E S

B. At the Lord's Supper, we partake the flesh and blood of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor 10:16)

1. Breaking the bread signifies that the Lord gave up His body for us (1 Cor 11:24; Lk 22:19).

2. Pouring the cup signifies that He shed blood for us (Lk 22:20).

3. After consecration in the name of the Lord Jesus, the bread and the cup become the flesh and blood of the Lord Jesus (Mt 26:26-27; 1 Cor 11:27; 10:16).

4. Those who partake the flesh and the blood of the Lord will have eternal life and will resurrect at the last day (Jn 6:53-54).

C. All believers are one in the Lord

1. We share the one and same single bread, and so we must also be of one body (1 Cor 10:17; Jn 6:56).

2. Holy Communion is the Lord's Supper in which we are in spiritual communion with the Lord (Jn 6:56). We are also in

fellowship with the brothers and sisters. Everything must be done in love and truth.

D. We are looking forward to Jesus' second coming

1. The Holy Communion is a commemoration of the death of Jesus Christ until His second coming (1 Cor 11:26).

2. At the second coming those who are qualified for salvation will be invited to the marriage feast of the Lamb (Rev 19:7-9).

III. HOW TO HOLD THE HOLY COMMUNION

A. The material for Holy Communion

1. Unleavened bread must be used (Lk 22:14-19; Ex 12:8).

2. Only one bread must be used, regardless of the number of people in the congregation (1 Cor 10:16-17).

3. Grape juice must be used (Mt 26:29; Mk 14:25).

N O T E S

B. Frequency and the time for the Holy Communion

Since it is to commemorate the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, there is no restriction about the frequency (1Cor 11:26). Neither is there any fixed time; daytime or evening are acceptable (The Lord held the Last Supper at the Passover meal in the evening, but He was crucified in the daytime).

C. The administration of the Holy Communion

1. By the ordained ministers of God (cf. Ex 30:30).

2. Performed in the name of the Lord Jesus (Mt 18:20).

3. After consecration, the minister breaks the bread with his hands and then distributes to the congregation. After this, the cup is consecrated and distributed to the congregation (Mt 26:26-27).

D. The partakers of the Holy Communion

1. Everyone must be prepared and holy—without leaven (1 Cor 5:6-8; 11:27, 28).

2. Everyone must discern the Holy Communion as the flesh and blood of the Lord (1Cor 11:29, 20).

3. The congregation must be reverent and thankful and partake the Holy Communion in the same place (Mt 26:26-28; Ex 12:46).

4. Non-members (those who have not been baptized) may not partake the bread and the cup. The Holy Communion is a communion of the members in the body of Christ. Those who are not baptized are still outsiders of the body and should wait until they are baptized before partaking the Holy Communion (Ex 12:43, 45).

5. Believers who have committed mortal (deadly) sins shall never partake the Holy Communion (Gal 3:27-28; 1 Cor 12:13; 11:27-30).

E. AFTER THE HOLY COMMUNION

1. Must resolve to live for the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor 5:14-15; Rom 14:7-8)

2. Must lead a holy life (1 Cor 5:6-13)

3. Brethren ought to love and support one another in their heavenly pilgrimage (Heb 10:23-25).

4. Must strive to proclaim the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ, fulfill the mission entrusted to us, and look forward to His second coming (1 Cor 9:16-17; Rev 19: 6, 9)

N O T E S

QUESTIONS

1A. How was the Holy Communion estab-lished?

1B. What is the significance of the Holy Communion?

1C. What are the requirements for the person administering the Holy Communion?

1D. Who are eligible to partake the Holy Communion?

1E. What should one do after partaking the Holy Communion?

2A. Why do we partake the Holy Communion?

2B. How does the partaking of the Holy Communion relate to our salvation?

2C. Why do we use unleaven bread during the Holy Communion?

2D. What is wrong with using wine during the Holy Communion?

2E. How do the bread and the cup become the flesh and blood of the Lord Jesus?

3A. If we commemorate the death of our Lord Jesus, why do we not commemorate His birth?

3B. Why should not a non-member partake the Holy Communion with the members?

3C. What happens when someone partakes the Holy Communion without examining him/herself?

GROUP DISCUSSION/ACTIVITY

Defending My Faith

1. Have each student pair up with someone he/she is not very familiar with.
2. Each pair is to decide who will be the Evangelist from True Jesus Church. The other person will be the Truth-seeker (either with no religious background or a believer of another faith or Christian denomination).
3. Allow ten minutes for a question and answer session between the Truth-seeker and the Evangelist on the topic of Holy Communion.
4. Ask the Evangelists to write down all the questions that they cannot answer.
5. At the end of the ten-minute session, regroup the class and have each Evangelist share his/her unanswered questions and ask fellow classmates to help. If none of the students are able to answer the question(s) correctly or sufficiently, the instructor shall do so.
6. If time allows, pair them up with different partners and repeat steps 3 through 5.
7. Conclude and pray.

N O T E S

THE PARABLES OF JESUS

I. THE PURPOSE OF USING PARABLES

A. To make the teaching easier for the multitude to understand.

B. To hide the secrets of the kingdom of heaven (Mt 13:10-15; Mk 4:10-12)

II. THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER (MT 13:1-9, 18-23)

A. What do the seeds refer to?

B. Where do the seeds fall, and what happens to them?

C. What are thorns? How do we take them away? (1 Pet 5:7)

D. What kinds of fruit should we bear? (Gal 5:22-23; Rev 22:1, 2)

III. THE PARABLES OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE AND THE HIDDEN PEARL (MT 13:44-46)

A. What does the treasure represent? (Phil 3:8)

N O T E S

B. What does the pearl represent? (Mt 7:6)

C. What does a pearl of great price refer to? (Jude 3; Eph 4:4, 5)

D. What should one do once he/she finds the treasure and the pearl?

IV. THE PARABLE OF THE BREAD (LK 11:5-13)

A. For whom is the bread prepared?

B. Why will the man get up and give to his friend what he needs?

C. What are the three steps of asking (praying)?

D. What is the main teaching of this parable?

V. THE PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL (LK 12:16-21)

A. What does he think he can do with his wealth?

B. Why is he a fool?

C. At what point does the rich man become foolish?

VI. THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS (LK 16:19-31)

The Rich Man

A. He uses his wealth on what type of things?

B. Does he help the poor?

C. Where does he go after his death?

D. What does he ask for after his death?

E. When he realizes that his situation is hopeless, what does he ask for his brothers?

Lazarus

A. What does he encounter in life?

B. Who is there to comfort or help him?

C. Does he ever complain to God or man?

D. What hope does he have to help him endure all his sufferings?

E. Where does he go after his death?

N O T E S

VII. THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SON (LK 15:11-32)

A. Who does the father represent?

B. Who do the two sons represent?

C. If the lost son chose not to return home when he had nowhere to go, what would have happened to him?

D. Does the father see his lost son first or vice versa?

E. Does the father mind about the past wrongs committed by his formerly lost son?

F. What does "putting on the robe" represent?

G. What does "putting on the ring" represent?

H. What does "putting on the shoes" represent?

I. Having returned, how should the lost son serve his father?

VIII. THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS (MT 25:1-13)

A. Who does the bridegroom represent?

B. Who do the ten virgins represent?

C. What is the difference between the foolish and the wise virgins?

D. Why do all ten virgins fall asleep?

E. What does the oil represent?

F. Why do the lamps go out?

G. What happens to the foolish virgins?

H. What can we learn from this parable?

IX. THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS (MT 25:14-30)

A. Who does the man who goes off on a journey prefigure?

B. Who do the three servants prefigure?

C. What do the talents prefigure?

D. Why do the ones who gain five talents recieve the same praise as the ones who gain two?

E. Why is the one who receives one talent thrown out into the darkness?

F. What teachings can we learn from this parable?

N O T E S

X. THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS (MT 25:31-46)

A. What is the purpose of the Lord's second coming?

B. Why do the ones on the right get to enter the heavenly kingdom?

C. Why do the ones on the left have to enter into the everlasting fire (which is prepared for Satan and his messengers)?

D. To love other brethren is to love the Lord. Lack of love for other brethren is lack of love for the Lord. Where is this verse recorded?

E. What does this parable teach us?

XI. THE PARABLE OF THE BARREN FIG TREE (LK 13:6 - 9)

A. Who does the fig tree prefigure?

B. Who does the vineyard prefigure?

C. What does the fruit prefigure?

D. Who does the caretaker of the yard prefigure?

E. Who is the master?

F. What does "digging about and fertilizing" mean?

G. What does "keeping it for one more year" mean?

N O T E S

GROUP DISCUSSION/ACTIVITY

Parables in Action

1. Form groups of three to five members.
2. Each group is to choose one of the parables studied in this lesson and prepare to act it out as a play.
3. In each group, decide who will play which character and rehearse everyone's parts. Include a narrator if necessary.
4. Allot 10-15 minutes to rehearse and call out each group to present their respective plays.
5. Conclude and pray.

Gospel of John 1-10

INTRODUCTION

In the New Testament, the four gospel books were written for the purpose of proving that Jesus is the Savior and the Lord. The first three books in the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) are considered to be synoptic gospel books. Each book contains detailed descriptions concerning the birth of Jesus, His ministry, teachings, miracles performed, sufferings, resurrection, ascension, and so forth. Together, these three books cover the same events but from three different points of view.

The author of the Book of John had the same purpose in mind as the other authors of the synoptic gospel books. Its content is addressed to the members and non-members of the apostolic church as well as readers of all times. The Synoptic books deal with deeds of Jesus in detailed description but the Book of John tends to emphasize more on the godly aspect of Jesus.

THE AUTHOR

The disciple whom Jesus loved (Jn 21:20-24) is the author of this book. He is the disciple John who was among the original twelve. His father was Zebedee, his mother was Salomi, the sister of Mary (Mt 27:56). John's brother was James (Mt 4: 21-22). In his youth, John had a very bad temper which earned him the nickname "Son of thunder." John was the only disciple who followed Jesus to the crucifixion. During His last hours, Jesus entrusted to John the responsibility of taking care of His mother (Jn 19:26). Early Christians considered John to be one of the three main pillars of the apostolic church (Gal 2:9). After the death of Mary, the mother of Jesus, John lived in Ephesus to complete the writing of the book of John (approximately 90 A.D.) as well as other documents. At the time of Domitian, John was then exiled to the Island of Patmos. There he received revelations from God and wrote the book of Revelations (Rev 1:9).

N O T E S

Chapter

1 The Word Became Flesh

I. THE WORD

A. What is the Word?

1. In the beginning the Word was God (v. 1).
2. Everything was created through Jesus (v. 3).
3. Life is within Him. His life is the light of men (v. 4).

B. Why did God need to be manifested in flesh?

1. To save sinners (1 Tim 1:15)

2. Only through the shedding of blood can the sins of men be forgiven (Heb 9:22).

3. The blood of animals cannot wash away the sins of men (Heb 10:1-4).

4. Only the blood of a sinless person, Jesus, can redeem the sins of men (2 Cor 15:3; Jn 1:29; Acts 20:28).

C. God became a Man

1. Jesus is God manifested in the form of flesh (10:30; 14:8-10; 1 Tim 3:16).

2. Old Testament prophesy (Isa 7:14; 9:6)

3. New Testament fulfillment (Mt 1:18-25)

4. Jesus was the only sinless person (8:46; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:22).

Chapter

2 Cleansing of the Temple

I. THE FIRST MIRACLE (1-12)

The turning of the water to wine at a wedding feast in the city of Cana was the first miracle that Jesus performed. Weddings in Jesus' day were week-long festivals. To run out of wine was more than embarrassing; it broke the strong unwritten laws of hospitality. This miracle showed Jesus' power over nature. It revealed His glory and His disciples believed in Him (Jn 2:12).

N O T E S

II. CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE (13-17)

A. Temple prefigures the church as well as the individual body of members (Eph 2:19-21; 1 Cor 3:16) where the Spirit of God dwells (Eph 1:23)

B. It is a place of prayer and worship (Mt 21:13)

C. We need to keep it clean and never use it for evil purposes

D. We should examine ourselves and do a daily cleaning to remain holy so that God may dwell in us and we may manifest His glory (1 Cor 6:19-20)

Δ Things to be aware of :

1. The chapel: Is it being used correctly?
2. The church: Is it preaching the Truth? Does it follow the will of God?
3. The individual: Is the person holy or following the pleasures of sin? (Gal 5:19-21, 26; Rom 1:26-32)

Chapter

3 Born of Water and the Spirit

I. NICODEMUS VISITS JESUS (1-21)

What must one do to enter the kingdom of God?

II. "HE MUST INCREASE, BUT I MUST DECREASE." (22-36)

John the Baptist: a true worker of God

A. HE WAS NOT JEALOUS OF SOMEONE COMING AFTER HIM

B. HE ONLY CARED ABOUT THE WORK OF GOD

III. REBORN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT

A. REBORN OF WATER

1. The significance of water baptism
   a. Baptism of rebirth (Tit 3:5)
   b. The old person (sinner) is to be nailed on the cross with Christ so that the new person will resurrect with Jesus (Rom 6:3-9; Col 2:12).
   c. Original sins are forgiven through baptism (Acts 2:38; 22:16).
   d. To put on Christ and become one with Christ (Gal 3:27-28; 1 Cor12:13).
   e. To become a child of God (Gal 4:4-6; Rom 8:15-16).

2. The correct form of water baptism
   a. In the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 4:12)
   b. With the head bowed, in the likeness of Jesus' death (Jn 19:30; Rom 6:5)
   c. Fully immersed in living water (Mt 3:16; Jn 3:23)

      Δ Full immersion signifies death and burial with Jesus (Col 2:12).
      Δ It must be performed in a body of natural living water (Zech 13:1; Jn 3:23).

N O T E S

3. Requirements for those receiving the baptism
   a. Have faith (Mk 16:16) and believe that God is the only true God (Acts 4:12)
   b. Repent (Acts 2:38) of any religious sins (Acts 19:19) and moral sins (Lk 3:10-14)
   c. Be determined to carry the cross and follow Jesus until death and to fully serve God (Lk 14:25-33; Rev 2:10)

4. Requirements for the baptists
   a. Must have already been baptized in True Jesus Church.
   b. Must have already received the Holy Spirit and be sent by Jesus to do His holy work (Jn 20:21-22; Rom 10:15).

B. REBORN OF THE SPIRIT

1. Manifestations of receiving the Holy Spirit
   a. Speak in tongues (Acts 2:1-4; 10:44-46; 19:6-7)
   b. Have bodily movements (Acts 2:13, 33)

2. Functions of the Holy Spirit
   a. To receive inner help from the Spirit (Jn 14:16-20; 1 Jn 3:24).
   b. To prove that we are children of God (Rom 8:15-16; Gal 4:6-7).
   c. To serve as a guarantee to enter the heavenly kingdom (Eph 1:13-14).
   d. To reveal the Truth (Jn 16:12-13; 1 Cor 2:11).
   e. To provide us with strength (Acts 1:8; Lk 24:49).
   f. To bear the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23; Rev 2:1-2).
   g. To enable us to be victorious (Rom 15:16; 2 Thess 2:13).

C. The basic steps toward salvation

1. Baptism of regeneration (Acts 2:38-39; 8:36-38; 10:44-48; 16:31-33; 19:3-5; 22:16)

2. Renewing of the Spirit (Acts 1:8, 14; 2:1-4, 38, 39; 8:14-17; 10:44-46; 19:1-7; Gal 5:16-18, 23; Rom 8:13; 2 Thess 2:13)

Chapter

4 Jesus Speaks With the Samaritan Woman

I. JESUS AND THE SAMARITANS (1-42)

A. Jesus came to save sinners (Mt 9:13; Rom 5:8; 1 Tim 1:15)

B. Jesus alone has the living water that can give us eternal life (Jn 7:37-38; Rev 22:17)

C. Worship God in Spirit and in truth (Rom 12:1; Phil 3:3)

D. Give what you have received freely—Share the grace of the gospel (Mt 10:8; Acts 20:35; 2 Tim 4:2)

II. THE SECOND MIRACLE IN CANA (43-54)

Blessed are those who believe without seeing (Jn 20:29; 1 Pet 1:8)

N O T E S

Chapter

5 The Question of the Sabbath

I. JESUS HEALS AN INVALID (1-18)

A. The compassion of Jesus on the sick (Mt 4:23; 8:3, 16; 15:30; Lk 7:21).

B. God can do far more than what we can imagine (Eph 3:20).

C. Sin may cause illness (Deut 28:58-61; Mic 6:13).

II. JESUS' DEFENSE (19-47)

A. One must obey the will of God (Deut 26:16; 1 Sam 15:22; Mt 7:21; Acts 5:29).

B. Testimonies to Jesus

1. John the Baptist (33)
2. The works Jesus performed (36)
3. Heavenly Father (37)
4. The scriptures (39)
5. Moses (46)

III. KEEPING THE SABBATH

A. OTHER TIMES WHEN JESUS HEALED ON THE SABBATH (9:1-14; MK 1:21-27, 29-34; MT 12:9-14; LK 13:10-17; 14:1-6)

B. THE WAY THE JEWS KEPT THE SABBATH UNDER THE LAW

1. Cannot light a fire (Ex 35:3)
2. Cannot pick up wood for fire (Num 15:32, 36)
3. Cannot sow or reap (Ex 34:21)
4. Cannot do any type of work (Ex 20:10)
5. Those who work on the Sabbath shall be put to death (Ex 35:2)

C. INSTRUCTIONS OF JESUS REGARDING THE SABBATH

1. Can save others (Mk 3:4)
2. Can do good (Mt 12:11)
3. Offering and circumcision (Mt 12:5; Jn 7:23; 2 Chron 2:4)
4. Can conduct any holy event (Lev 23:3; Lk 4:16, 31; Isa 58:13)

D. SABBATH FOR CHRISTIANS

1. Jesus kept the Sabbath.
2. The apostolic church kept the Sabbath (Acts 13:14, 44; 16:13; 17:1-2).
3. It is one of the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:8-11; 1 Cor 7:19; Jas 2:10-11).
4. It was the Roman Catholic church that abandoned the Sabbath day and adopted Sunday to please the public.

N O T E S

Chapter

6 The Bread of Life

I. FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND (1-14)

A. SIGNS AND MIRACLES CAN DRAW PEOPLE TO JESUS (VS 2; JN 6:2, 24; 7:31; 12:18-19)

B. GOD CARES FOR BOTH OUR SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL WELL-BEING (VS 5; MT 6:32; LK 12:7)

C. GOD USES CRISES TO TEST OUR FAITH (VS 6; HEB 11:17; JAS 1:2-3; 1 PET 1:7)

II. WITHDRAW AND RECHARGE (15-24)

A. JESUS DID NOT SEEK GLORY FOR HIMSELF (JN 8:50)

B. IN QUIETNESS SHALL BE OUR STRENGTH (ISA 30:15)

III. THE BREAD OF LIFE (25-71)

A. Jesus is the bread of life that will satisfy all those who hunger (35)

B. Jesus is the living bread that will give eternal life (48-51)

C. Jesus and the Holy Communion (53-54)

1. His flesh (the bread) is our food (Mt 26:26; 1 Cor 11:24; 10:16).
2. His blood (the cup) is our drink (Mt 26:27; 1 Cor 11:25).

Chapter

7 Rivers of Living Water

I. MY TIME HAS NOT YET COME (1-9)

A. Jews sought to kill Jesus

B. The brothers of Jesus did not believe in Him

II. JESUS' IDENTITY QUESTIONED (10-36)

A. Teaching and wisdom from God (14-18)

B. Judge with correct judgment (24)

N O T E S

III. JESUS, THE THIRST-QUENCHER (37-53)

A. Jesus supplies all our needs

B. Rivers of living water

1. Jesus promised to give the Holy Spirit to those who believe in Him (Jn 14:16-18; Acts 1:4-5).
2. When we pray in the fullness of the Holy Spirit, we may sound like rivers of living water gushing out of our hearts (38).

Chapter

8 The True Descendants of Abraham

I. NO ONE STONED THE ADULTEROUS WOMAN (1-11)

A. Judge not, that you be not judged (Mt7:1)

B. We must sin no more after receiving the grace of God (Rom 6:11-14)

II. "I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD." (12-36)

A. We must walk in the light (Isa 2:5; 1 Jn 1:7)

B. We must do what is pleasing to God (vs 29; 1 Jn 3:22)

C. The truth will make us free (32)

III. TRUE DESCENDANTS OF ABRAHAM (37-59)

A. BIOLOGICAL DESCENDANTS

1. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and his twelve sons (Gen 21:12; Acts 7:8)

2. God chose them in the hope of setting a righteous people apart to establish the kingdom of God on earth (Deut 14:1-2; Rom 3:1-2).

3. They refused to obey God's teachings or heed God's warnings which resulted in the destruction of their nation and their captivity in foreign lands (2 Chron 36:15-21).

B. SPIRITUAL DESCENDANTS

1. God promised that Abraham's descendants would greatly multiply and through His offspring all nations would be blessed (Gen 22:15-18).

2. The promise was fulfilled when Jesus came to the world (Gal 3:16).

3. To become a spiritual descendant, one must believe in and be baptized into Christ (Gal 3:27-29).

N O T E S

Chapter

9 The Blind Can See

I. MANIFESTATION OF THE WORKS OF GOD (1-12)

A. DISEASES OR HANDICAPS ARE NOT ALWAYS THE RESULT OF SIN (VS. 3; 11:4)

B. OBEDIENCE BRINGS BLESSING (JAS 1:25)

II. THE SPIRITUALLY BLIND (13-41)

A. THE UNBELIEVING MIND IS BLINDED BY THE GODS OF THIS WORLD (2 COR 4:4)

B. THOSE WHO DO NOT BELIEVE IN GOD DO NOT SEE EVEN THOUGH THEY HAVE EYES (MT 13:13-15)

C. SEEK THE LORD TO HEAL SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

1. Holy Spirit is the medicine for the eyes (Rev 3:17-18; 1 Cor 2:10-11).

2. Holy Spirit reveals the truth and can see through all things (1 Cor 2:10-11; Acts 5:1-11; Eph 1:17-19).

Chapter

The Good Shepherd

I. THE THIEVES

A. They do not enter by the door (1)

B. They come to steal, to kill, and to destroy (10)

II. HIRELINGS

A. They are not shepherds because they do not own the sheep (12)

B. They flee when the wolf comes (12)

C. They do not care for the sheep (13)

III. THE GOOD SHEPHERD

A. Jesus is the good shepherd (11, 14)

B. He is willing to die for His sheep (11, 15, 18)

C. He knows His sheep and the sheep know Him (14, 15)

D. He knows the sheep by name and the sheep hear His voice and follow Him (3, 4, 27).

E. All who enter through Him, the door for the sheep, shall be saved (7, 9, 28).

N O T E S

QUESTIONS

1A. Why did God need to be manifested in flesh?
1B. How can we be reborn of water and the Spirit?
1C. Why do we need to be reborn of the Spirit?
1D. What did Jesus mean by "rivers of living water"? How can one obtain it?
1E. Why should Christians keep the Sabbath?

2A. What can we learn from the cleansing of the temple?
2B. Why is Jesus the "bread of life"?
2C. In chapter 7, how does Jesus quench the thirst of men?
2D. Why did no one stone the adulterous woman even though she was worthy to die under Moses' law?
2E. Why did the blind man receive his sight?

3A. Why was it unusual for Jesus to speak with the Samaritan woman?
3B. What were the differences between the ways the Jews and Jesus observed the Sabbath?
3C. What are the differences between the fleshly and spiritual descendants of Abraham?
3D. How can one be "seeing but does not see"?
3E. Compare the hirelings and the good shepherd.

GROUP DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN IN PICTURES

1. Prepare large poster boards or pieces of butcher paper and coloring markers.
2. Form small groups of three and distribute supplies to each group.
3. Divide each piece of blank paper into ten equal sections.
4. Each group is to cooperatively draw pictures or symbols that represent the main point or teaching for each of the ten chapters learned in the gospel of John.
5. After everyone is finished, ask each group to present its final product.
6. Conclude and pray.

N O T E S

N O T E S

The Book of James

I. INTRODUCTION

James, the eldest brother of Jesus (Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3; Gal 1:19; 2:19), is commonly believed to be the author of this book (Mt 13:55). He was very influential among the Jews and in the church.

* After the risen Jesus had appeared to him (1 Cor 15:7), James became a leader of the Church at Jerusalem (Gal 1:19; 2:9; Acts 12:17).
* He resolved the dispute at the conference in Jerusalem with a tolerant message to the Gentile Christians (Acts 15:13-29).
* He remained as sole leader of the Jerusalem church, working to maintain its unity with Paul and his mission when Paul visited Jerusalem for the last time (Acts 21:18).
* His life work was to win the Jews and smooth their transition to Christianity.
* He was stoned to death at the instigation of the high priest Ananus during the interregnum after the death of the procurator Festus in A.D. 61.

The heart of James' concern is for believers to be perfect and complete, to receive the wisdom of Christian maturity, and to grow up as disciples. However, James found the church of his day faced with a dangerous morality crisis. For example, many Christians were not growing up to be mature disciples. They attempted to separate belief from morality, faith from works, and hearing from doing. Their discipleship had thus become an empty self-deception. Having made his diagnosis, James proceeded to emphasize the necessary connection between what one believes and how one acts.

N O T E S

II. SALUTATION (1:1)

Greek letters of the 1st century commonly open this way.

A. James identifies himself as a servant

1. The Greek word "doulos" means slave. There are two kinds of slaves who serve either of the following:
   a. Sin (Jn 8:34)
   b. God (Rom 6:16, 22).
2. Slaves of God may apply to:
   a. The followers of Jesus (Mt 20:26-28)
   b. Christian leaders (Tit 1:1)
   c. Christians (1 Pet 2:16; Gal 4:1-7).
3. Ideal traits of a slave are:
   a. Absolute obedience
   b. Absolute humility
   c. Absolute loyalty
   d. A certain pride

   (1 Kgs 8:53; Josh 2:8; Deut 9:27; Isa 20:3; Amos 3:7; Zech 1:6; Jer 7:25).
4. We often identify ourselves with what we own, more than with that which we owe our allegiance.

B. The Lord is Our Master

1. A Christian is purchased and owned by the Lord (1 Cor 6:19-20; 1 Pet 1:18-19).
2. After a Christian acknowledges Jesus as the promised Messiah, he owes total allegiance to Jesus.

C. The Dispersment of the Twelve Tribes

1. Scattered throughout the world (Jn 7:35; Acts 2:5)
2. The Christians as pilgrims (Acts 11:19; 1 Pet 2:11; Phil 3:20), are the heirs of Israel (Gal 3:28-29; Rom 9:7-8).

III. TESTED AND TRIUMPHANT (1:2 - 4)

A. "Peirasmos" has two meanings: external trials and internal struggles with temptation (Mt 6:13)

James never suggested that the lives of Christians would be easy (Judg 2:22; 3:1, 4; 1 Thes 3:3; Heb 10:32). Christians should be ready to encounter trials (Prov 17:3; Ps 66:10; Mal 3:3).

B. Trials should be faced joyfully because they lead to beneficial outcomes

1. Trials refine our faith (1 Pet 1:6-7).
2. Trials produce good character (Dan 11:35; 12:10; Rom 5:3-5; Heb 12:9-13, 11:24-27; Num 10:3).
3. Trials push us towards perfection (1:4; Mt 5:48; Ps 119:67, 71).
4. We will receive heavenly rewards (Lk 6:22,23).

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C. To understand the meaning of a trial is the secret to seeing it as a joy (1:3).

IV. GOD'S BESTOWMENT AND MAN'S REQUEST (1:5 - 8)

A. Asking God for wisdom

1. Wisdom is neither philosophical speculation nor intellectual knowledge; it is simple-minded and steadfast faith in God (1 Cor 1:20-2:15).
2. King Solomon prayed to God for this priceless wisdom (Prov 3:13-20) and it was granted to him (1 Kg 3:4-13).

B. Those who ask must know:

1. How does God give (1:5)?

   He gives generously (2 Cor 1:19-20), to all of humans, His abundant grace (Jn 1:14,17).

2. How do we ask?
   a. Pray with faith (Heb 11:6; Mk 11:24).
   b. Pray without doubt (Mt 21:21; Mk 11:23,24)

V. THE MEANING OF WEALTH (1:9 - 11)

A. The Lord is the maker of both the rich and the poor (Prov 22:2; 1 Sam 2:7)

1. True status is not determined by financial conditions (Lk 12:15; 16:19-31; Mk 6:1-4).
2. The newly exalted status (Eph 2:19; 1 Pet 2:9-10):
   a. The chosen race

b. Royal priesthood

c. Holy nation

d. God's people

B. HUMILITY IN WEALTH

1. The true value of material prosperity (Lk 12:21; 1 Tim 6:17).

2. Frailty of the flesh:

   a. Like grass and flowers of the field (Isa 40:6-7; Eccl 8:8; Ps 103:14-16)

   b. Fades away (Ecc 2:10-11; 1 Jn 2:17)

VI. TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS (1:12-15)

A. TRIALS HAVE A LIMIT (1 COR 10:13) SO THAT THERE IS HOPE (DEUT 8:1-4; ECC 3:1-3)

1. Endurance is needed to survive trials (Rom 5:3-4; 1 Pet 1:5-7).

2. The reward of enduring trial is blessing (eg. Abraham, Joseph, Job.) The reward is the crown of life (2 Tim 4:8; Rev 2:10) given through Jesus (Jn 3:16; 1 Jn 5:10, 12).

B. THE WORD "PEIRASMOIS" IS TRANSLATED AS "TEMPT" BECAUSE IT EMPHASIZES INTERNAL DESIRES WHICH ENTICE A PERSON TO SIN

1. Temptation is not from God, but from man because there is no evil in God (1 Jn 1:5).

2. Temptation consists of evil desires (1 Jn 2:16-17) and evil tendencies (Rom 7:22-23).

3. Desire conceived in the heart, if nourished and encouraged long enough, will inevitably beget sin in action (Gen 3:4-6, 6:5,12; 2 Sam 11:2-24), which leads to death (1 Cor 15:56; Gen 2:17; Rom 5:12, 6:23).

4. There are three ways to resist temptation:

   a. To crucify the flesh with its passions and desires (Gal 5: 24, Rom 8:13).

   b. To walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:16) and the Word of God (Lk 4:4, 8,12; Gen 3:1-5).

   c. To engage oneself in good things so that there is no space left for desire (Rom 6:12-14, 18-20).

VII. GOD - THE AUTHOR AND GIVER OF ALL GOOD THINGS (1:16 - 18)

A. GOD IS THE SOURCE OF ALL GOOD AND PERFECTION (JAS 3:15-17; JN 3:31)

1. He is the Father of Light (Gen 1:14-18; Ps 136:7).

2. He gives all gifts to us to fulfill His own purpose (1 Cor 12:4-11; 14:1,12).

B. GOD DOES NOT CHANGE (MAL 3:6; REV 1:4; 4:8)

1. The light of His Truth and the light of His godliness remain constant (1 Jn 1:5).

C. HUMANS HAVE TWO KINDS OF BIRTHS: FROM MAN AND FROM GOD (1 COR 15:45-49; 1 JN 3:9; 5:1)

1. God begets us by the Word of Truth (Jn 1:13; 1 Pet 1:23-24; Gal 4:28; Eph 1:3, 13).

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2. We are born according to His will (Rom 9:14-22).
3. We are firstfruits (Jer 2:3) which are to be offered to God (Lev 23:10; Num 15:21; Deut 18:4; Rev 14:4).

VIII. HEARERS OF THE WORD (1:19 - 21)

A. What can we do in response to all of God's goodness?

1. Be quick to listen.
   a. Faith comes by hearing (Rom 10:14).
   b. Blessed are those who hear the Word of God (Lk 11:28, 42; Jn 5:24: Mt 12:42).
2. Be slow to speak.
   a. It is wise to be slow to speak (Prov 10:19, 17:28).
   b. Those who are quick to speak will cause destruction (Prov 13:3; 29:20) and be ensnared by their own words (Prov 6:2).
3. Be slow to anger (Prov 16:32; Ecc 7:9).
   a. Anger does not produce righteousness in the sight of God (vs 19; Mt 5:22).
   b. Anger easily results in sin (Eph 4:26; Gen 4:5-8)

B. Put away all filth and wickedness

1. They belong to the old self (Eph 4:17-24; Rom 13:12) and are against the standards of the Gospel (2 Tim 3:6-7).
2. The Holy Spirit and trials can remove all filth and wickedness (Isa 4:3-4; 1 Pet 1:2; Heb 12:7-11; 1 Pet 4:1-2).
3. Filth and wickedness choke the growth of the Word of God (Mk 4:19).

C. Receive the implanted Word with meekness

1. God's Word is life (1 Pet 1:23; Jn 6:63; 8:51).
2. The seed planted in good soil will produce much fruits (Mt 5:5; 13:3-9; Ps 37:11).
3. Good soil can be prepared by the Holy Spirit. (Isa 32:15)

IX. DOERS OF THE WORD (1:22 - 25)

A. Only a Hearer

1. One who hears the Word of God knows the ideal of what he ought to be and also his imperfections (vs 24) (Heb 4:12-13; Eph 4:20-24).
2. He gains neither profit nor blessings from what he hears (spiritual knowledge) (Mt 23:1-4).
3. He deceives himself by:
   a. Thinking that to hear the Word and to gain knowledge from the Bible is enough to be a Christian.
   b. Not knowing that without practicing the word of God, one cannot enter the kingdom of God (Mt 7:21-23).

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B. Both a Hearer and Doer

1. Holds to the truth of Jesus' teaching that gives liberty (Jn 8:31-33; Rom 8:2). The perfect Law (Ps 19:7).
2. Accompanies his belief with actions (Mt 7:24-27).
3. Receives blessings for doing good deeds (Jn 13:17; Lk 11:28; Rom 2:13; Deut 10: 12-14).

   E.g.

   - obedience (Gen 22:1-18; 26:1-5, 12)
   - hospitality (Gen 18:1-10; Josh 2:1-14)
   - offering (Gen 8:20-9:7; Mal 3:8-11)
   - observing the Sabbath (Isa 58:13-14)
   - loving thy neighbor (Mt 22:38; 25: 31-45)
   - loving God (Jn 14:21-24)

X. RELIGIOUS OBSERVATION (1:26 - 27)

A. Bridle the tongue (Ps 39:1, 141:3)

1. Find no transgression in speech (Ps 17:3; Isa 6:5; Jas 3:2; Mt 15:17-20).
2. Words of praise and thanksgiving instead of complaint (Heb 13:15; Ps 116:17; 1 Thes 5:18; 1 Cor 10:10; Jude 16)
3. Speak to edify (Eph 4:29; 5:3-4).
4. Words of grace (Prov 22:11; Ecc 10:12; Lk 4:22; Rom 2:1-3)

B. Remain Pure in Life

1. Live a holy life (Dan 1:8).
   a. God is holy (Heb 7:26-27; 1 Jn 1:5).
   b. God wants us to be holy (Lev 19:1-2, 20:26).
   c. Only the pure and holy can see God (Mt 5:8; Ex 19:9-15).
2. Keep oneself unstained by the world (vs 27) (Eph 5:11; Lev 22:21; 1 Tim 5:22)
   a. The world is filthy and evil (Jn 3:19; 1 Jn 5:19; Jude 18-19). It is destined to be destroyed (2 Pet 3:10-13).
   b. The world is against God (Jn 17:14-16).
   c. Don't follow worldly customs (1 Jn 2:15; Ex 23:23-33; Jas 4:4).
   d. Seek after things that will last (Col 3:1-3; Mt 6:33).

C. Have Compassion for and serve others (Mic 6:8)

1. God is love; those who love God must love others (1 Jn 4:8, 19-21).
2. Love widows, orphans (Ex 22:22; Zech 7:9-10), the poor (Zech 7:9-10), and those of low status.
3. Love those who are in need (Mt 25:36-43; Acts 10:2).

XI. RESPECT FOR THE PEOPLE (2:1 - 7)

A. Do not show partiality especially in light of your faith towards God (1)

1. God shows no partiality (Acts 10:34; Rom 2:11)
   a. Impartiality is one of His characteristics (Lk 20:21; Job 34:19).

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b. Mercy (Eph 6:9), appointment (Acts 10:34; Gal 3:28-29), judgment (Lev 19:15; Col 3:15), and human destiny is controlled by Him (Prov 22:2; 1 Sam 2:6-8).

c. He does not judge by outward appearances (1 Sam 16:6-7; Ps 139: 1-2; Jn 7:24).

2. Blessed are those who are poor (Lk 6:20)

a. Receive the salvation (1 Cor 1:26-28; Mt 11:5; Lk 7:22; 4:18).

b. Rich in faith (vs 5; Rv 2:9): possessing genuine faith (1 Pet 1:7), God (Josh 13:33; Ps 16:5), and abundant life (Jn 10:10).

c. Heirs of the Kingdom of God (vs 5; Lk 6:20; 12:32).

3. Woe to those who are rich.

a. Hard to enter the Kingdom of God (Mk 10:25; Mt 19:21-22).

b. Poor in front of God (Lk 12:21).

c. Show no sympathy to others (vs 6).

B. Partiality is sin (vs 9). Those Who Show Partiality commit the following:

1. Make distinctions among people (vs 4) and are against the true meaning of Christian fellowship (Eph 2:13-14, 19; Gal 3:28; Act 2:44,45; 4:34).

2. Judge with evil thoughts (vs 4; Mt 7:1; Rom 2:1-3).

3. Dishonor the poor (vs 6; Prov 14:31).

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XII. THE ROYAL LAW (2:8 - 13)

A. Fulfill the royal law (vs 8; Lk 10:29-37; Mt 25:31-46). Showing partiality is sin (vs 9) because it is against the law (1 Jn 3:4)

B. Breaking any part of the Law makes you a Law breaker (vs10). The Law is a unity; therefore the violation of any one part, is the violation of the entire Law.

C. Judgment according to the Law (vs 13) in the last day (Jn 12:48)

1. Live under the Law of Liberty (vs 12). Christians are not governed by man-made laws nor by threats of punishment, but by God's grace and love (2 Cor 5:14-15; Col 2:20-23).

2. Mercy triumphs over judgement (vs 13). He who finds mercy, must himself be merciful (Ps 18:25; Mt 5:7; 6:14-15; 7:1-2). A merciful man will blot out his own sins (Mt 18:22-35; Mt 6:12; 1 Pet 4:8).

XIII. FAITH AND WORKS (2:14 - 26)

A. Faith without work profits nothing (vs 14-17; Gal 5:6)

1. A man of faith without works cannot be saved (vs 14). Work is not a prerequisite for a man to be saved (Rom 3:28; Tit 3:5) on judgment day, but God will evaluate everyone according to the works performed in life (Ps 62:12; Rom 2:6-8; 2 Cor 5:10).

2. Sympathetic words without works of love cannot help the needy (vs 16; 1 Jn 3:17-18).
3. Faith without works is dead (vs 17).

B. WORKS ARE A DEMONSTRATION OF ONE'S FAITH (VS 18-20)

1. Faith and works are inseparable (vs 18).
2. Faith in God's existence involve personal commitment and communion with Him (vs 19).

C. EVIDENCE OF FAITH (VS 21-26)

1. Faith is active along with works, and faith is made whole by works (vs 22, 24).
   a. Abraham was justified by faith as well as by works (vs 21, 23; Gen 15:6; Rom 4:3-25; Gal 3:6-14; Gen 22:1-14).
   b. Rahab demonstrated her faith when she risked her life by sheltering the spies for the sake of Israel (Josh 2:7-21; Heb 11:31).
2. Without works, faith is no more alive than a body is without the spirit (vs 26).

XIV. INTEMPERATE SPEECH (3:1 - 12)

A. NOT MANY SHOULD BECOME TEACHERS (VS 1; 1 TIM 1:7)

1. High status of teachers (1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11)

   In the Christian church, teachers took the place of the rabbis of Jewish synagogues. They are just as susceptible to become proud of their spirituality and/or intellect.

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2. Different kinds of teachers:
   a. Teaching judaism (Rom 2:17-19)
   b. Teaching but without works (Mt 23:3-7; Rom 2:21)
   c. Teaching what one does not know (1 Tim 1:6-7; Mt 23:16-22)
   d. Teaching false doctrines (1 Cor 4:15; 2 Tim 4:3)
3. Those who do not teach the truth and who contradict their teachings with their hypocrisy will receive serious punishment (Mk 12:40; Gal 1:6-9).

B. MAKE NO MISTAKES IN SPEECH (VS 2-5A; PS 17:3)

1. No one is without sin (Rom 3:10, 23; 1 Jn 1:8; Ecc 7:20).
2. We sin the most with our tongues (Mt 12: 36-37; Prov 15:1-4; Isa 6:5-7).
3. Control the whole body by the tongue (vs 3; 1:26) just as a bit guides the horse and a rudder guides the ship (vs 4; Ps 32:9)
4. He who is blameless in speech is a perfect man (Ps 19:13-14; Jas 1:26).

C. THE TONGUE IS A DESTRUCTIVE FIRE (VS 5B-12; PROV 16:27)

1. The damage caused by the tongue is great.
   a. It defiles the whole body (Mt 12:33-36).

      The tongue expresses the evil characteristics of a fallen world (Mk 7:21-23).

b. It kindles a destructive fire which can destroy all life (vs 6).

The tongue is kindled by the fire of hell (Mt 5:22; 18:9).

2. The tongue is difficult to tame (vs 7-8).

The tongue is a restless evil, full of deadly poison (Ps 140:3; Rom 3:13).

3. Two kinds of fruits of the tongue (vs. 9-12):

a. Praising the Lord and cursing man (vs. 9)

b. Neither of them can exist simultaneously (1 Jn 4:20).

XV. TWO WISDOMS (3:13 - 18)

A. True wisdom (vs 13, 17-18)

1. It is the source of good life marked by meekness (vs 16; 2 Cor 10:1; Mt 11:29).

2. It is from above and it possesses good traits (vs 17).

a. **Purity** qualifies a man to see God (Mt 5:8; Prov 22:11); to serve the Lord (2 Tim 1:3); to have right conduct (Prov 21: 8; 2 Cor 7:11); and to receive blessings (2 Sam 22:24-25; Ps 73:1).

b. **Peace** is required in the relationship between God and man (2 Cor 5:18-19; Mt 5:9).

c. **Gentleness** to extend kind consideration to others (Phil 4:5; Tit 3:2).

d. **Open to reason** means willingness to yield to reasonable requests.

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e. To show **mercy** and bear good fruits is to show sympathy towards and help those who suffer or who are in need (Lk 6:36).

f. The **absence of uncertainty** enables us to give undivided allegiance to God.

g. The **absence of insincerity** means honesty without disguises (Rom 12:9).

3. The harvest of a good life is righteousness (vs 18; Prov 11:18).

a. It is sown in peace: the seed can flourish only in soil consisting of peaceful relationships with others (Isa 32:17).

B. Worldly wisdom (vs 14-16)

1. Examination of the would-be teacher (vs 14)

a. Free from two evils: bitter jealousy in regarding opponents as enemies rather than as friends (Phil 1:15) and selfish ambition; eager to display self rather than the Truth.

2. The traits of earthly wisdom (vs 15)

a. Earthly: uses worldly standards to measure success because it has worldly aims (1 Cor 1:20-21; 2:6; 3:19).

b. Unspiritual (2 Cor 1:12; Jude 19; 1 Cor 2:14)

c. Of the devil: comes from Satan and not from God (2 Thess 2:9; 1 Tim 4:1).

3. The effects of worldly wisdom (vs 16)

a. Jealousy (2 Cor 12:20; 1 Cor 3:3; Acts 13:45; Gal 5:19-21)

b. Self-ambition (Rom 15:1-2; Phil 1:17; 2:3)

c. Disorder (1 Cor 11:19)

d. Vile practice

XVI. FLESHLY AND SPIRITUAL SELF (4:1 - 10)

A. DESIRE-DOMINATED LIFE (VS 1-3)

Fleshly desires always consist of the following: gratification of physical pleasures, and pursuit after prestige, money, and worldly possessions.

1. The characteristics of worldly desires:

   a. Warring powers and the root cause of all evil (vs 1; Rom 7:23).

   b. They may eliminate God as the dominant concern in life (Lk 8:14; Rom 8:7).

   c. The overpowering desire will issue war and battle (vs 1-2; Rom 7:23) resulting in killings (vs 2; Jas 5:6).

   d. Life governed by desire will have not gain true satisfaction, peace, and joy.

2. Attitude towards prayer

   a. Prayer with wrong motives for the satisfaction of desires will not be answered by God.

   b. God will listen to prayers offered with the right attitude (Ps 34:15; 145:18; Lk 18:14; 1 Jn 5:14).

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B. INFIDELITY TO GOD (VS 4)

1. To be a friend with the world (Jas 1:27; Rom 12:2)

   a. To be enslaved by worldly desires (Tit 2:12; 3:3; 1 Tim 6:9)

   b. To live ungodly in this perverted generation (Acts 2:40)

   c. To identify the goal of life with the world (Phil 3:7-9; Col 3:1-4; 2 Cor 4: 18)

   d. As Christians, we need to live in the world but not conform with the world (Rom 12:21).

2. To be a friend with the world is to be an enemy of God (Rom 8:7).

   a. God opposes the world (Jn 15:19).

   b. The world hates God (Jn 17:14).

   c. No one can serve two masters (Lk 16:13; 1 Jn 2:15; Mt 6:24).

C. GOD IS A JEALOUS GOD (VS 5-6)

1. He desires our souls and our hearts.

   a. We belong to God (1 Jn 519; Gal 3: 29).

   b. He loves us jealously and cannot bear for us to have another love in our hearts (Deut 32:16; Ex 20:5; Zech 8:2; 1 Cor 10:22).

   c. God wants us to give Him love and devotion that surpasses all others (Mt 22:37; Gen 22:12).

2. He gives more grace (Isa 54:7-8) as a reward for full devotion.

   a. He gives grace to the humble (Ps 138:6; Prov 3:34; 1 Pet 5:5).

b. He opposes the proud: pride glorifies itself (Dan 4:30); pride confesses no sin (Lk 18:11-14).

D. Pursuit after godly attitudes (vs 7-10)

1. Submit to God (vs 7; 1 Pet 5:6).

   To receive blessings; to be righteous (Rom 5:19); and to receive salvation (Heb 5:9)

2. Resist the devil because he is the source of all evil and the cause of infidelity to God (1 Jn 5:19).

   a. Resist the devil with the Words of God (Mt 4:4), with strong faith (1 Pet 5:9), and with the full armor of God (Eph 4:27; 6:11).

   b. He will flee (Mt 4:1-11).

3. Draw near to God (vs 8; Ps 73:28; Ex 33:11) and He will draw near to you (2 Chron 15:2-4; Zech 1:3).

4. Strive to be pure (Ex 19:22) so that we can stand in the holy place (Ps 24:4) to see God (Mt 5:8).

   a. Clean deeds (Job 17:9; Isa 6:5-6; Lk 19:1-10)

   b. Purify our double-minded hearts (Jer 4:14; 1 Jn 3:3)

XVII. THE SIN OF JUDGING OTHERS (4:11 - 12)

A. Do not speak evil against others or judge others (vs 11; 2 Cor 12:20; Rom 1:30; Mt 7:1; Rom 14:4)

1. We are bound to one another spiritually and in love (Lev 19:18).

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2. Judge others, condemn ourselves (Rom 2:1-2; Ps 101:5).

3. That we be not judged (Mt 7:1-2).

B. If we speak against the law and judge the law (vs 11)

1. We are judges, assuming the place of God.

2. We are not doers of the law (Jas 1:22; 2:8).

C. God is the only lawgiver and judge (vs 12; Isa 33:22; 1 Cor 4:3-5)

1. He can judge (Jas 5:9) for His law has permanent significance (Rom 2:2; Jn 12: 48).

2. He can save or destroy. His judgment is eternal (Deut 32:39; Ps 68:20).

XVIII. TRUE AND FALSE CONFIDENCE (4:13 - 17)

A. False confidence (vs 13)

1. Regarding ourselves as the master of our own destiny (Acts 17:26; Ecc 7:13; Rom 9:16)

2. Not knowing what is the character of life (Lk 12:16-21)

3. Arrogant boasting (1 Cor 5:6)

B. The reality of life

1. We do not know our future (vs 14; Prov 27:1)

2. Life is like a vapor.

   a. Fragile: death can come at an unexpected time (Ecc 8:6-8; Lk 12:20).

b. Short: appears only a little while (Job 7:7; Ps 90:10).

c. Vain: we can take nothing with us when we die (Ps 103:15-16).

C. TRUE CONFIDENCE

1. God has a definite plan for all of His people (Acts 17:28; Ps 31:14-15; Prov 20: 24; Deut 32:39).

2. Man's duties are to:

   a. Completely trust God (Acts 18:21; 1 Cor 4:19; 16:7).

   b. Walk humbly with God (vs 15; Mic 6: 8).

   c. Do good (vs 17).

3. Lawlessness is sin (1 Jn 3:4).

   a. Sin is transgression of the law.

   b. Sin is failure to do what the law demands: sin of omission (Mt 25:14-30; 25:31-46; Lk 16:19-31).

XIX. RETRIBUTION OF THE RICH (5:1 - 6)

A. THE TRAITS OF THE RICH WHO MISUSE THEIR WEALTH

1. The misuse of wealth (vs 2-3)

   a. Ignorant of the limitations of worldly wealth and possessions (vs 2; Mt 6:19; 1 Tim 6:17)

   b. Ignorant of the responsibility entailed with wealth (Lk 12:21; 16:20-31; 1 Tim 6:18)

   c. Ignorant of the purpose of life (vs 3); treating wealth as the chief reliance and main pursuit in life (Lk 12:15)

   d. Possessions will cause the downfall of the possessor in the Last Day (vs 3; Rom 2:5).

2. Acquisition by dishonest means (vs 4)

   a. They withhold wages (Deut 24:14-15; Lev 19:13; 1 Tim 5:18).

   b. The victim's outcry reaches God (Gen 4:10; 18:20-21; Ps 18:6; Ex 2:23).

   c. God will judge (Mal 3:5).

3. Selfish use of wealth (vs 5)

   a. They gratify their lust and live in luxury and in pleasure (Lk 16:19; Ezek 16:49; Amos 6:1-6).

   b. Easy living destroys moral fiber and strength of soul (1 Pet 4:1-2).

   c. Will be slaughtered like animals on the Day of Judgment (Jer 12:3).

4. Oppression of the righteous even to death (vs 6)

   a. Condemnation and execution of the righteous (Jas 4:2; 1 Pet 3:18; Acts 3:14).

   b. The righteous do not resist (Rom 12: 19).

B. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE RICH WHO ARE WICKED IN THE LORD'S SIGHT

1. Misery will come upon the rich (Lk 6:24; 16:25; 1 Tim 6:9).

2. Rich people without understanding are like animals that will perish (Ps 49:20).

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XX. PATIENCE IN VIEW OF THE COMING OF THE LORD (2:1 - 7)

A. Wait for the coming of the Lord with patience (vs 7-9)

1. The source of patience
   a. The fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22); imitating others (Heb 12:1-2); holding fast to living hope (Mk 13:13; Heb 6: 12, 15; 10:36).
   b. Our hope lies in the Lord's coming (Acts 1:11; 1 Thess 4:16).
2. Imitate the farmer (vs 7)
   a. Wait for the fruit with patience (Gal 6:9)
   b. Until the down pouring of early and the late rain (Deut 11:14; Joel 2:23; Jer 5:24)
3. Have no complaints with each other (vs 9; Jas 4:11)
   a. We are one body in the Lord.
   b. Complaints will be judged.
   c. For Jesus is standing at the door (Mk 13:28-29; Rev 3:20; Mt 24:33).

B. The triumph of those who persevere (vs 10-11)

1. The examples of the prophets (Mt 5:11-12; Acts 7:52)
2. The example of Job (vs 11)
   a. He endured through all his sufferings (1:21; 2:10; 13:15; 16:19; 19:25, 28).
   b. He was rewarded with blessings (Job 1:21-22; 42:10-16; Mt 5:10; 10:22; 1 Pet 3:14).

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   c. God is full of compassion and mercy (Ps 111:4; Ex 34:6).

XXI. THE NEEDLESSNESS AND FOLLY OF OATHS (5:12)

A. Do not swear (Mt 5:34-37).

Do not allow it to become a habit as it was popular among the Jews and later among the Muslims also (Mt 23:16-22; 26:72).

B. Speech that is correct and pleasing to God

1. Let every word be true.
   a. God is true (1 Jn 5:20).
   b. Every word is spoken in the presence of God (Mt 12:31-37; Heb 4:13; Ps 19:14).
   c. Give honest evidence (Prov 12:17).
   d. We are members of one body (Eph 4:25).
   e. Truthful lips will be established forever (Prov 12:19).
2. Do not use special oaths to authenticate the truth of what we say.

C. Lest we fall into condemnation

1. Guilty of violating the divine law (Ex 20:7)
2. Dishonesty is a sin (Jn 8:44).

XXII. PRAYER UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES (5:13 - 18)

A. WHO SHOULD PRAY AND WHY?

1. The afflicted (vs 13; Job 1:20-21; Ps 50:15)
   a. To understand the meaning of suffering (Rom 8:28; Ecc 7:14)
   b. To obtain strength to face and endure suffering (Lk 22:44; 2 Tim 2:9; 4:5)
2. The joyous (vs 13; 1 Cor 14:15; Col 3:16)
   a. To praise God (Ex 15:1-21)
   b. To give thanks to God (1 Sam 2:1-10)

B. HOW SHOULD WE PRAY?

1. Intercede (vs 14; Lk 22:31-32; Job 1:5; Gen 18:23-32).
2. With faith (vs 15; Jas 1:6; Mk 11:24; Lk 17:5-6; Mt 21:22).
3. Confess sins (vs 16; Ps 51:17; Mt 3:6; Mt 5:23-24).
4. To be righteous (vs 16; 1 Jn 3:7; 1 Pet 3:12; Prov 15:8; 10:24).
5. Fervently and consistently (vs 17; Heb 5:7; Lk 18:1-8).

C. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PRAYER

1. Illness will be healed (vs 14).
2. Sin will be forgiven (vs 15).
3. Heaven will give forth rain (vs 18; 1 Kings 17:1; 18:1).

N O T E S

XXIII. RECLAIMING THE BACKSLIDER (5:19 - 20)

A. WANDERING FROM THE TRUTH (VS 19)

1. Truth is the path (Jn 14:6). The way is hard that leads to the narrow gate (Mt 7:13-14).
2. The backslider is easily devoured by Satan (1 Pet 5:8; Deut 25:17-18).

B. BRING THE LOST SHEEP BACK (VS 19)

1. Jesus wants to seek and save the lost (Lk 19:10; Mt 18:14).
2. Those who love God have the responsibility to tend the sheep of the Lord (Jn 21:15-18).
3. Intercession and consolation are effective ways (Gal 6:1-2; Lk 22:31-34).

C. THE RESULTS OF RESTORING A SINNER

1. Save his/her soul from death (Rom 11:14).
2. Cover a multitude of sins (1 Pet 4:8; Ps 32:1; Prov 10:12).
3. All will rejoice in the Lord (Mt 18:13; Lk 15:7).

QUESTIONS

1A. Why should we count our trials as joy?

1B. What does the crown of life represent?

1C. How can we avoid falling into temptation?

1D. Why is it that sometimes we do not receive what we ask for in our prayers?

1E. Why does being a friend to the world cause us to be an enemy of God?

2A. Why cannot we say that we are tempted by God?

2B. Give two examples from the Bible (aside from the ones mentioned above) of people who received God's reward after enduring tribulations.

2C. Why is it important that we do not show partiality?

2D. Why is the tongue so important?

2E. Why did James criticize the rich?

3A. God bestows blessings upon those who believe in Him, obey His Word, and do what is right. Why is it, then, that good people suffer?

3B. Compare the hearers with doers of the Word.

3C. Read Galatians 3:1-14 and compare it with James 2:14-26. What is the relationship between faith and works?

3D. How is earthly wisdom different from heavenly wisdom?

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3E. What can we learn about prayer from James 5:13-18?

GROUP DISCUSSION/ACTIVITY

Faith vs. Works

1. Cut small strips out of paper and write a few of each of the following on the strips:
   a. Having faith only
   b. Having works only
   c. Having both faith and works
2. Fold the paper strips and put them in a container.
3. Form groups of three or four members each .
4. Have one member of each group draw one piece of the paper from the container.
5. Allow ten minutes for each group to design a skit to portray the scenario indicated on their strip of paper.
6. Present the skits.
7. Conclude and pray.

The Word of God

I. THE WORD OF GOD AND THE TRUTH

A. The Word of God is the Truth (Jn 17:17)

B. The Truth rests in heaven (Ps 119:89)

C. The Truth remains forever (Ps 119:89; 1 Pet 1:24, 25)

II. THE WORD OF GOD IS THE SOURCE OF BLESSINGS (PS 112:1; 1:1 - 2)

A. God is the source of blessings (Ps 16:5; 73:26: Num 18:20)

1. The Word is God (Jn 1:1, 14, 17).

2. The pursuit of the Word of God is to seek after God (Hos 6:3; 1 Chron 28:9-10).

B. Blessed are those who hear and keep the Word of God (Lk 11:28)

1. Blessings for listening to the Word (2 Chron 9:7; Lk 10:42; 11:31)

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2. Blessings for practicing the Word of God (Deut 5:33; 11:26-27; Jas 1:22; Ps 19:11)

III. THE WORD OF GOD IS LIGHT (PS 119:130; 1 JN 1:5; ACTS 6:23)

A. The Light of life (Jn 1:4, 9; Lk 1:78-79; Jn 8:12; 1 Pet 1:23-25)

B. To direct the path (Jn 12:35-36; Ps 119: 105)

1. People are lost in darkness without the Word of God (Lk 19:10; Eph 5:8-14; Acts 26:18).

2. The transformation of Paul after being enveloped by the light (Acts 9:13; 1 Tim 1:12-16)

C. Recognition of its true value (Phil 3:7-9; Col 1:9-14)

D. Unfold to give true light (Ps 119:130)

The Word of God is sealed (Isa 29:11; Rev 5:1).

IV. THE WORD OF GOD IS THE BREAD OF LIFE (JN 6:35)

A. THE FAMINE OF EARTH (AMOS 8:11-13)

B. RECEIVE SATISFACTION IN THE LORD (IS 55:1-3)

1. The words of God are spirit and life (Jn 6:63).
2. The Word of God is like green pasture (Ps 23:1-2).
3. To receive renewed strength (1 Kgs 19: 3-8)

C. SPIRITUAL MANNA (JN 6:31, 58)

V. THE WORD OF GOD ENABLES AND HELPS US TO BECOME HOLY (PS 119:9)

A. THE DEPARTING PRAYER OF JESUS FOR THE DISCIPLES TO UNITE AS ONE AND BE HOLY (JN 17:14-18)

B. THE WORD OF GOD SETS THE STANDARD FOR ALL ACTIONS (PS 119:10, 33, 112; GAL 3:22; ROM 5:13; JAS 1:23)

N O T E S

C. THE WORD OF GOD CAN PURIFY US (JN 15:1-8; EPH 5:26)

1. Purification of thoughts (Ps 19:9; 12:6; Gen 6:5, 11, 12)
2. Purification of motivations (Ps 139:1-6; 1 Cor 13:3)

VI. THE WORD OF GOD ENABLES US TO KNOW GOD (JN 1:1)

A. THE MERCY OF GOD (PS 119:25, 107, 144, 154, 156, 159)

B. THE PROMISES OF GOD (PS 119:81, 82, 133; 2 COR 1:20)

C. THE COMFORT OF GOD (PS 119:28, 50, 52, 76; ROM 15:4)

D. THE WILL OF GOD (IS 55:8)

E. THE WORK DONE BY GOD (GEN 1:1; HEB 3:4)

VII. THE CORRECT ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE WORD OF GOD

A. LONGING AND DESIRE (PS 119:20, 72, 97, 113, 131, 163; 42:1; 63:1)

B. REGARD AS A PRECIOUS TREASURE (PS 119: 72, 111; 19:7-11)

C. JOY (PS 119:14, 16, 24, 47, 103; ROM 5:11)

D. PRESERVATION (PS 119:11; 18:30; LK 2:19, 51)

E. MEDITATION (PS 119:15, 59)

F. OBEDIENCE AND OBSERVATION (PS 119:5, 8, 31-40)

G. DECLARATION AND PROCLAMATION (PS 119: 13, 43)

VIII. SOME METAPHORICAL SYMBOLS FOR THE WORD OF GOD

A. GOLD (PS 19:10)

1. Gold is the most precious metal.

2. The Word of God is likened to pure gold (Ps 119:72, 127).

B. HONEY (PS 19:10)

1. Honey is sweet and gives refreshment and renewal of strength (Prov 24:13; 1 Sam 14:24-29).

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2. The Word of God is sweeter than honey (Ps 119:103; Prov 16:24; Ez 3:1-3).

C. SPIRITUAL MILK (1 PET 2:2)

1. Milk nurtures babies for healthy growth.

2. Babies refuse to take milk when they are ill.

D. SPIRITUAL FOOD (LK 4:4; JN 6:35)

1. As the physical body lives by consuming food, so does the spiritual body by consuming the Word of God.

2. We will live forever by taking in spiritual food (Jn 6:27; Col 3:16).

E. SEED (MK 4:14)

1. The human mind is likened to the soil of the earth.

2. The implanted Word received with meekness can save one's soul (Jas 1:21).

F. SHARP SWORD (HEB 4:12)

1. The Word of God is active and effective.

2. It pierces the human mind (Acts 2:37).

3. It is the only weapon in spiritual warfare (Eph 6:17).

4. The Word of God is the best way to overcome the enemy's attack (Lk 4:1-12).

G. Mirror (Jas 1:23-25)

1. Listening to the Word of God is like looking into the mirror.

2. We should look into the mirror carefully every day (25).

3. After looking into the mirror, we need to clean or fix what is not right.

H. Rain (Isa 55:10-11)

1. As rain comes down from heaven, so does the Word of God (2 Tim 3:16).

2. Rain gives moisture to the land so that it produces various fruits and crops. The Word of God in the human mind can produce spiritual fruits (Amos 8:11).

I. Fire (Jer 23:29)

1. Fire gives heat (Lk 24:32).

2. Fire burns away all impurities; it purifies.

3. Fire gives light (Ps 119:105).

N O T E S

J. Hammer (Jer 23:29)

1. A hammer has power to smash objects.

2. The Word of God has the power to make people submissive to God (Ref. Lk 19:8; Acts 9:4-6, 20-22).

K. Lamp (Ps 119:105; Prov 6:23)

1. A lamp gives light to show the way (Isa 8:20; Jn 5:39).

2. Light will lead us to the right path; without it, we will stumble in darkness (Prov 4:18-19).

QUESTIONS

1A. Why is the Word of God regarded as the Truth?

1B. What kind of blessings can we receive from the Word of God?

1C. Why do we need to eat the "bread of life?"

1D. What do we know about God from reading His Word?

1E. What kinds of attitudes should we have towards the Word of God?

2A. How can the Word of God be light?

2B. How can the Word of God help us to become holy?

2C. Why do we need to obey the Word of God?

2D. Why is the Word of God compared to a seed?

2E. How is the Word of God like a mirror?

3A. What happens to people who do not want to receive the Word of God?

3B. How could the Word be God in the beginning (Jn 1:1)?

3C. Choose one of the symbols of the Word of God. Using a real example, explain how you have seen the Word of God work in your life as described above in Section VIII.

N O T E S

GROUP DISCUSSION/ACTIVITY

THE WORD THAT HELPED ME

1. Divide the class into groups of four.
2. Each group member is to take turns to share an experience when the Word of God:
   - revived your faith
   - gave you comfort
   - gave you strength
   - gave you courage
   - gave you joy
   - inspired you to do something
   - or any other experience.
3. When sharing, be sure to include:
   a. Bible verse(s)
   b. How you came across each verse.
   c. The kind of condition or situation you were in.
   d. How the Bible helped you.
   e. The result.
4. When the rest of the group members are listening, feel free to ask the speaker questions for clarification.
5. After everyone is finished, conclude and pray.

N O T E S

Fulfillment of the Word of God

I. THE COVENANT OF GOD WITH ABRAHAM

A. The descendants of Abraham will be multiplied (Gen 17:6; 12:2; 15:4-5; 22:17)

1. At the age of one hundred, Abraham was given a son, Isaac (Gen 21:1-5).

2. Isaac became the father of Jacob and Jacob, in turn, had twelve sons (Acts 7:8).

3. The twelve sons of Jacob dwelled in the land of Egypt and multiplied beyond counting. At the time when Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, there were 603,550 Israelites above the age of twenty (Num 1:46).

B. The land of Canaan was given to Abraham and his descendants (Gen 17:8; 12:7; 15:7; 22:17)

1. After four hundred years of suffering, God sent Moses to deliver the Israelites out of the land of Egypt (Gen 15:13-14; Ex 3:7-12; 12:40-41).

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2. Joshua succeeded Moses in leading the Israelites to conquer the land of Canaan and destroying thirty-one kings (Josh 12:7-24).

3. According to the promise of God, Joshua divided the land of Canaan among the tribes of Isreal (Josh 21:43-45).

C. All nations on earth will be blessed because of the offspring of Abraham (NIV: Gen 22:18; 12:3; 17:6)

1. The descendant (offspring) of Abraham refers to one person, Jesus Christ (Gal 3:16; Mt 1:1).

2. To accomplish the great salvation of God, Jesus died on the cross for the sins of man (Heb 10:19-20; Mt 27:50-51).

3. According to the promise of God, those who believe and are baptized into Christ are considered to be the spiritual descendants of Abraham and will receive the heavenly inheritance (Gal 3:27-29; Mk 16:16; Acts 2:38-39).

II. PROPHECIES CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST

A. Christ will be born of a virgin (Isa 7:14)

Fulfillment: Having conceived by the Holy Spirit, virgin Mary gave birth to the Savior Jesus Christ (Mt 1:18-25).

B. Christ will be born as a descendant of Abraham and David (Gen 22:17; Jer 23:5; Mt 22:41-42)

Fulfillment: According to the genealogy in the Bible, Jesus is the descendant of Abraham and David (Mt 1:1, 20).

C. Christ will be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Mt 2:4-6)

Fulfillment: Jesus was actually born in Bethlehem (Lk 2:1-7).

D. Christ will be sold for thirty pieces of silver (Zech 11:12)

Fulfillment: Jesus was sold by Judas for thirty pieces of silver to the chief priest (Mt 26:14-15).

E. The hands and feet of Christ will be pierced (Ps 22:14-18)

Fulfillment: Jesus was nailed onto the cross by the Jews (Mt 27:22, 23, 26, 32-35).

F. Christ will be resurrected from death (Ps 16:10)

Fulfillment: Jesus resurrected on the third day (Lk 24:1-7; 18-27; Acts 2:25-33).

N O T E S

III. THE PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS (PART ONE)

A. The promise of His second coming

1. The promise of Jesus (Jn 14:1-3; Rev 22:20)
2. The testimonies of the apostles (1 Thess 4: 13-18; 1 Jn 3:2-3)
3. The prophesies of the prophets (Isa 66:15-16; Ps 98:9)

B. The scene of the second coming of Christ

1. Jesus will appear in flames with a host of angels (Jude 14; 2 Thess 1:7).
2. The saints who have fallen asleep will be resurrected first to meet with Jesus in the air (1 Thess 4:14-16).
3. The saints who are still alive will be transfigured and will meet the Lord in the air (1 Cor 15:52; 1 Thess 4:17).
4. Everyone will see Jesus Christ; all nations will mourn (Rev 1:7; Mt 24:30).

C. After the the second coming of Jesus Christ

1. The saints will enter heaven to enjoy everlasting life (Mt 25:31-34; 2 Tim 4:18).

2. The sinners will be cast into hell to receive everlasting condemnation (Mt 25:41-46; Rev 21:7-8).

3. Satan will be cast into the lake of eternal fire to be tortured forever (Mt 25:41; Rev 20:10).

4. The old heaven and earth will be dissolved and pass away with the appearance of the new heaven and earth (2 Pet 3:10-13; Rev 21:1).

IV. PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST (PART TWO)

A. SIGNS OF THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

1. In the worldly aspect
   a. Sins of the world will increase (2 Tim 3:1-5; Rev 18:1-5).
   b. The increase of knowledge (Dan 12:4)
   c. Battles and conflicts in the world (Dan 2:43-44; Isa 19:1-2; Mt 24:7-8)
   d. Great tribulation (Mt 24:21-29; Isa 33:12; Joel 2:2)

2. In the spiritual aspect
   a. The descending of the latter rain – the Holy Spirit (Jer 5:24; Jas 5:7; Joel 2:23, 28-32; Zech 10:1)
   b. The rebuilding of the True Church (Amos 9:11; Rev 7:2-3; 14:3; Hag 2:9)
   c. The rise of false prophets (Mt 24:4, 5, 11, 23, 24; Rev 13:11-13)
   d. The rise of cults and false religions (Rev 9:18-20; Isa 2:8-9; Jer 50:38)
   e. The rise of the anti-Christ (Dan 11:36-37; Rev 13:1-7)
   f. The spread of the true gospel of salvation to all the nations of the earth (Mt 24:14; Rev 10:10-11; 11:3-7)
   g. The great persecution of the True Church (Rev 6:9-11; 20:7-10)
   h. The success in rebuilding the True Church (Rev 19:7-8; 21:2)

N O T E S

V. HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

A. MUST BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HAVE GOOD DEEDS (MT 25:1-13; 5:14-16; HEB 12:14)

B. MUST MAKE FULL USE OF THE GIFTS AND TALENTS GIVEN BY GOD IN HELPING THE HOLY WORK (MT 25:14-30; 1 COR 15:58)

C. GRASP EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER (MT 25:31-46; 1 PET 4:7-8)

CONCLUSION

God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. His promise will surely be fulfilled at the appropriate time. For example, if we know that the first and second events have already occured, then we also know that the third and fourth events will eventually occur when the time comes. For the Lord said "heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away" (Mt 24:35). Therefore, we must have complete faith in the Word of God, obey His commandments, and also spread the true gospel of God (References: Prov 30:5-6; Isa 46:9-10; Rev 1:3; 10:8-11).

QUESTIONS

1A. How did God fulfill His promises to Abraham?

1B. Name two prophecies that were fulfilled concerning the life of Jesus.

1C. Who prophesied about the second coming of Christ?

1D. What will one seen during the second coming of Christ?

1E. What will happen just before Jesus' second coming?

2A. How do we know we will receive the heavenly inheritance as the descendants of Abraham?

2B. Despite the scary events that will occur at the second coming of Christ, why should we believers be joyful at this great event?

2C. Which of the prophecies concerning the signs of the second coming of Christ have already been/are being fulfilled?

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2D. How can we prepare ourselves for the second coming of Christ?

3A. Where does the Bible record Jesus' prophecies concerning His own death?

3B. Name at least two Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled in the New Testament time (other than the ones already mentioned here).

3C. What can you do with your gifts and talents to help with the holy work before the second coming of Christ?

GROUP DISCUSSION/ACTIVITY

God, the Promise-Keeper

1. Form groups with four members each.
2. Appoint one person in the group to be the recorder while the rest will be the researchers.
3. In a limited time, the three researchers will look through the Bible to find as many promises God made to us which the recorder will write down.
4. At the end of the alloted time, everyone will stop and count the number of promises each group has found.
5. Each group is to share its findings. Every group may write down the findings that it did not have.

*If time permits, also include one or both of the following steps:

6. Discuss how do we feel knowing that God will always fulfill His Word/ promises. What

can we learn from the fact that God always keeps His promises?

7. Let volunteers share how God has fulfilled His Word in their lives.

8. Conclude and pray.

N O T E S

N O T E S

THE BENEFITS OF BIBLE READING

INTRODUCTION

* The Holy Bible is the most precious, most important book of the world; it is also the most needed book of the human race.

* The Holy Bible is the best–known book. It is a best–seller and has been translated into the most languages.

* Lord Jesus said: "You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me." (Jn 5:39)

* Apostle Paul wrote Timothy: "When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments." (2 Tim 4:13)

I. AUTHORITY OF THE HOLY BIBLE

THE HOLY BIBLE IS NOT JUST A FAIRY TALE. IT CONTAINS THE WORDS OF GOD. GOD SPEAKS TO US THROUGH THE WRITERS OF THE BIBLE.

1. Honorability

   The Holy Bible is revealed and proclaimed by the Lord of Universe, the King of kings — the one true God (2 Tim 3:16; 1 Thess 2:13).

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2. Truthfulness

   God is a faithful God. "Not one word has failed of all the good promises He gave through Moses" (1 Kings 8:56; Deut 7:9; Ps 89:1).

3. Accuracy

   The Holy Bible contains prophecies which God has proclaimed, through His servants, about the future. All the prophecies have been fulfilled or are being fulfilled, which proves the accuracy of the Bible.

4. Universality

   The Bible is written for the entire human race without discrimination of nations, races, gender, different economical or educational backgrounds. It is also a book written for the people of the past, present, and future (Ps 19:1-4; Mk 16:15).

5. Everlasting

   God's words will last forever. Heaven and the earth will one day be destroyed but the words of God will remain forever (Ps 119:89; Isa 40:8; Mt 24:35).

II. THE BENEFITS OF READING THE BIBLE

A. Salvation (2 Tim 3:15; Jn 5:39)

1. The Word of God is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Ps 119:105).

2. Worldly knowledge makes people proud (1 Cor 8:1), but the Word of God grants people the wisdom of fearing God and leads them to salvation (Prov 9:10; 1 Cor 1:18-31).

B. Sanctification (Jn 17:17)

1. Like a mirror, the Word of God reflects our shortcomings so that we know what blemishes we must cleanse (Jas 1:23; Heb 4:12).

2. The Word of God helps us attain holiness (Ps 119:9; Eph 5:26).

3. Without holiness, we cannot see God. (Heb 12:14; Mt 5:8).

C. Spiritual growth (1 Pet 2:2)

1. The Word of God is our spiritual food. The more we partake of it the more abundant our spiritual life will be (Jn 6:63; 10:9-10; Jer 15:16).

2. The Word of God can renew our mind into maturity so that we will possess the full stature of Christ and the image of God (Rom 12:2; Eph 4:13, 21-24).

N O T E S

D. Spiritual weapon (Eph 6:17)

1. The Lord Jesus relied on the Word of God to overcome the temptation of Satan (Mt 4:1-10).

2. We are Christian soldiers (2 Tim 2:3) who must take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, to fight against evil and become victorious (Rev 12:11).

III. METHODS OF BIBLE READING

A. By book

1. It provides coherent themes or thoughts, making it more interesting.

B. By chapter

1. It may induce a more in-depth study which leads to better memorization and understanding.

C. By topic (individuals, histories, doctrines, poems, prophecies, epistles)

1. It is the most in-depth way to study the Bible.

2. This method may require additional Bible reference materials.

D. By a scheduled time

E. Others

1. Anytime, anywhere

IV. NECESSARY ATTITUDES FOR BIBLE READING

A. PRAY (JN 16:13; 1 COR 2:11; LK 24:45)

B. BELIEVE (HEB 11:6; 4:2; JAS 1:5-8)

C. BE ZEALOUS (MT 5:6; PS 119:103; JER 15:16).

D. BE CONSISTENT (ACTS 17:11; EX 16:21; PS 119:147-148)

E. BE HUMBLE (ISA 50:4-5; MT 5:5; ACTS 8: 30-31)

F. PONDER (PS 1:2; 119:97; JOSH 1:8)

G. STUDY (ISA 34:16; DAN 12:14; LK 2:46)

H. RETAIN (DEUT 6:6-9; PROV 4:20-21; COL 3:16)

I. PERFORM (REV 1:3; LK 11:27-28; JAS 1:22-25)

J. PROCLAIM (EZEK 3:1; MT 10:27; TIT 1:3; REV 10:8-11)

N O T E S

QUESTIONS

1A. What is the difference between the Bible and other books?

1B. Why should we honor or heed the words of the Bible?

1C. How do we know that the Bible is accurate?

1D. What are the benefits of reading the Bible?

2A. The Bible was written a long time ago by numerous Jews. Why is the Bible applicable to everyone today?

2B. What is the relationship between the Word of God and one's salvation?

2C. How can the Word of God help our spiritual growth?

2D. How can the Word of God become a spiritual weapon?

2E. How did Jesus use the words of God to overcome Satan?

3A. What does it mean to be consistent in Bible reading?

3B. Why is it important to read the Bible with a humble heart?

3C. What are some of the ways we can help ourselves to remember God's words?

3D. Cite three examples each from the Old and New Testament of people who proclaimed the Word of God.

3E. How can we proclaim the Word of God today?

GROUP DISCUSSION/ACTIVITY

My Favorite Bible Verse/Passages

a. Form groups of four to six and sit in a circle.

b. Think of one or two of your favorite Bible passages.

c. Have each member in your group take turns to share their Bible passages and explain why they are they meaningful to him/her.

d. If your group is small, ask each member to answer the following questions:

   1. Why do you read the Bible?
   2. How has reading the Bible helped you?
   3. Are you satisfied with your current Bible reading?

      If yes, please share with your group.

      If not, why do you fail to read the Bible as often as you need to? How do you think you can improve your Bible reading habit?

e. Conclude and pray.

N O T E S