

**REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IRELAND**



**I N T E R M E D I A T E  
T E A C H E R ' S  
H A N D B O O K**

**Book 1**

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IRELAND

**SABBATH SCHOOL  
TEACHER'S  
HANDBOOK**

INTERMEDIATE GRADE  
BOOK 1

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## PREFACE

### THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IRELAND

Sabbath School Materials Published by

The Committee on the Instruction of the Young

Intermediate Course - Suggested age 13 - 16

These materials form part of a three year course for intermediate students, designed to reach their minds and hearts with the Bible's message of salvation through Jesus Christ and to give them an understanding of the Word of God as their only infallible rule of faith and life.

Each lesson takes account of the two-fold aspect of teaching - the teacher's preparation and the classroom presentation. A proportion of the material for the teaching period (i.e. Background Notes) is devoted to helping the teacher master the biblical subject matter. Also included is a suggested lesson presentation and, while not intended to be given verbatim to the class, it discourages the verse by verse lecture method of teaching and provides a framework within which the teacher can effectively communicate the truth to the students. Students' worksheets are available with each lesson, to be used as indicated in the teacher's notes. This material is brief and aimed at securing the pupil's interest and enforcing the lesson with particular directness.

It is most important for teachers to get students to see the importance of the lesson being taught and its relevance to every day life. To help with this an Application section has been included at the end of most lessons.

The Committee sincerely thanks the many members of the Church who wrote and prepared these materials for publication. The Committee is especially grateful to all who undertook the revision of the materials in 2006. It is our earnest prayer that they will be used by the Holy Spirit to fulfil their aim.

## LESSON 1

Studies in the Psalms

### THE PROSPECTS OF THE BELIEVER

Scripture Text - Psalm 16: 8-11 (New Version)

#### AIM OF LESSON

To show how these verses are descriptive of Christ and applicable to the Christian.

#### BACKGROUND NOTES

Spurgeon comments 'We are not left to human interpreters for the key to this psalm, for, speaking by the Holy Ghost, Peter tells us 'David says concerning Him' (Acts 2:25). The Apostle Paul, led by the same infallible inspiration, quotes from this psalm and testifies that David wrote of the man through whom is preached to us the forgiveness of sins (Acts 13: 35 - 38). It has been the usual plan of commentators to apply the psalm both to David, to the saints and to the Lord Jesus but we shall venture to believe that in it 'Christ is all'; since in the ninth and tenth verses, like the apostles on the mount, we can see 'no man but Jesus only'. Although we agree with Spurgeon that the psalm has primary reference to Christ yet we feel it is also applicable to the believer.

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### A. Introduction

Life is full of prospects. Ask the class if they ever dream, for example, of the prospects ahead of them when they grow older? Perhaps girls dream of the day when they will be glamorous air hostesses or beautiful brides, and boys of climbing mountains, building bridges or exploring space. The subject of today's lesson is about the prospects of the believer. Even though these words were written by King David under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, yet we shall see that they have primary reference to the life, death and resurrection of Christ and every person who is a Christian can share in the benefits and prospects which Christ has bought.

##### 1. Verse 8

The words "The Lord continually I've set before my face to see" are just another way of repeating what the psalmist professes in verse 1 "I trust in Thee". Here the Psalmist confesses his faith in the Lord. Such trust Christ had in God even when the prospect of the Cross was inevitable when He said 'yet not as I will, but as you will' (Matt. 26:39). Likewise all those who seek to follow Christ must put their trust in God and keep on trusting in Him. The psalmist could say, "Because he stands at my right hand". Not only should we exercise trust in God, we must also give Him the place of honour in our lives. Does He have the priority in our lives and ambitions?

“I never moved will be”. Here is security at its best. Because he trusts in God the believer will not be shaken, dislodged or overthrown. David is perhaps recalling the words of Moses in his last speech to the Children of Israel. Complete No. 1 in the students’ worksheet.

### 2. Verse 9

Here David expresses his great joy because of his secure position. He is not only inwardly glad but he openly shows his joy. When people are very happy about something, what do they do? They just cannot wait to tell their best friend. Christians should be like David and the Saviour rejoicing and telling others what God is doing for them and what He has promised to do. Turn to No. 2 in the students’ worksheet and discuss.

### 3. Verse 10

We can see why this psalm is classified as a Messianic psalm because it clearly foretells of Christ’s death and resurrection. It is because of what Christ has done and achieved that the believer can have the wonderful prospect of everlasting life. Just as the body and soul of Jesus were not left in the grave to decay, so His resurrection has become the guarantee that every Christian will also be raised to live with Christ forever. Read together Acts 2:22-33. See also 1 Cor. 15: 17 and 20 - 22. Complete No. 3 in the students’ worksheet.

### 4. Verse 11

Here David speaks of joy - “great store of lasting joys” - the joy of being in God's presence. The prose version speaks of “fullness of joy”. See the joy Christ possesses now in heaven by reading Heb.12:2. Complete No. 4 (a) in the students’ worksheet.

While we can know the joy of God's presence with us every day of our lives, in the sad times as well as the happy times, our joy will be complete when we go to be with Him in heaven and we will experience the blessing of enjoying His pleasures for evermore. Between our time on this earth and when we go to be with Him we can be assured that He will show us the path of life i.e. He will guide us through our life’s journey on this earth and lead us, at last, to heaven. Turn to No. 4 (b) in the students’ worksheet.

(Answers - praying, acknowledging, trusting, heeding, obeying, following, loving, introducing, fleeing, exalting)

### APPLICATION

This has been emphasised all through the lesson.

## LESSON 2

Studies in the Psalms

### THE JOY OF FORGIVENESS

Scripture Text - Psalm 32: 1-5 (New Version)

#### AIM OF LESSON

To show how important it is for us to confess our sins to God and to experience His forgiveness.

#### BACKGROUND NOTES

vs. 1 - 5 deal with the great satisfaction and joyous freedom of the person whose sin has been covered, cancelled and cleansed by God.

There are four different words used with reference to sin:

**'transgression'** - a deliberate breaking of God's law

**'sin'** - a coming short of the mark

**'iniquity'** - the natural sin which comes from our fallen nature. (These three words are first found in Exodus 34:7)

**'deceit' or 'treachery'** - 'falseness' or 'hypocrisy'

vs. 6 - 11 deal with the confident prayer which can only be made by the person who has experienced God's forgiveness.

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### A. Introduction

John was having a French vocabulary test the following day. There was a great number of words to be memorised but John was very keen to watch a certain T.V. programme that evening. What was he to do? Suddenly he had a brainwave. Even though he knew that it was very dishonest he hid a list of the words inside his pencil case. Next day he referred to this list when he was in difficulties. When the results of the test came out he had the highest marks. The teacher gave him great praise but John's conscience was now working and he knew what he had done was very wrong. What course of action should he now take:

- (a) Should he enjoy the praise of the teacher and the admiration of his friends and stubbornly suppress any feeling of guilt?
- (b) Should he confess to the teacher that he had cheated even though he knew that the teacher would be very angry and might punish him?

Which course of action would make him feel happier in the long run? Complete Section A in the students' worksheet.

Let us compare this story with David's experience in Psalm 32: 1 - 5. David had sinned. At first he tried to hide his sin and stifle his feelings of guilt. However, this did not work, the

guilt became greater. He only found relief when he confessed his sin to God.

1. The blessedness of sin being forgiven (vs.1-2)

The psalmist was very conscious of the fact that he had sinned. In vs. 1, 2, and 5 he used four different words when referring to his sin. What were they? Complete No. 1 in the worksheet using the Background Notes to explain the meaning of these four words. Everyone has sinned (Romans 3: 10 - 12). Therefore this lesson has a message for each one of us.

Which expressions are used in verses 1-2 to explain how God deals with sin when it is confessed? Complete No. 1 in the students' worksheet.

What word does the psalmist use to describe the person who has been forgiven? ('blessed') What does this word mean? ('happy') If we experience this forgiveness then there is no deceit left in our spirit; in other words, we need not be hypocrites any more; we can now be honest with God.

2. The foolishness of trying to conceal sin from God (vs. 3-4)

In verses 3 - 4 we are shown in a very colourful way how the psalmist tried, at first, to cover up his sin. He attempted to stifle his guilt by keeping quiet. Verse 3 reads "My bones did waste away because I cried out all day long". His health was affected. Read verse 4. Even sleep brought no relief to him as God was constantly dealing with him ("day and night"). This sapped his strength like the withering of a tree in a prolonged drought.

There are many examples in the Bible of people who tried to conceal their sin. Can the class think of any? Complete No. 2 in the students' worksheet. Perhaps their deceit worked for a while but it did not bring lasting happiness. Similarly, we will not be happy while we disobey God by concealing our sin.

3. The confession of sin which leads to forgiveness (v.5)

The fact that we can be forgiven for our sins is great news. Verse 5 is the psalmist's personal confession of his sin. By completing No. 3 (a) in the students' worksheet note the three different ways in which he expresses this. We are told that God at once forgave his sin.

The Bible is full of promises which God makes to individuals, congregations and nations who genuinely seek His forgiveness. Complete No. 3 (b) in the students' worksheet.

4. Application

Write out and memorise 1 John 1:9.

The application comes out in the course of the lesson but at this stage it is beneficial to

summarise the main points:

- (a) Everyone of us has sinned so there is no point in thinking this lesson does not apply to me.
- (b) God is able and ready to forgive the sins of those who are truly sorry and confess their sins to Him.
- (c) Trying to conceal and forget about sin only leads to misery.
- (d) The person who has had his sins forgiven is happy in the deepest possible sense (blessed).

### LESSON 3

God makes a Covenant

#### **ABRAHAM: FRIEND OF GOD, FATHER OF BELIEVERS**

Scripture Text - Genesis 17: 1 - 14

#### AIM OF LESSON

To show that God made a covenant with Abraham and to see the response God required from him.

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### Introduction

'I'm entitled to it' is a common expression. Ask the class if they have ever heard any of their friends using this expression when talking about getting their own portable T.V. set or when referring to holidaying abroad.

Many grown ups also feel that they are entitled to all sorts of things such as shorter working hours, more pay, better houses etc. Often they think that they have a right to demand such things and so they go on strike.

Many people have a similar attitude towards God. They think that God, like the State, exists to help them and provide them with various benefits. Whenever they ask for God's help, it is because they assume that they are somehow entitled to it (even if they have not been as good as they might). As the singer Neil Diamond once put it, 'Reach out your hand to the man upstairs, because that's what He's there for.' But, is that really what God is there for? Are we really entitled to God's help?

##### 1. The covenant with Abraham

###### **(a) A personal God - 'I will be your God'**

Read Genesis 17:1-8. In the Lord's words to Abraham we learn a very important truth: no one has a fundamental right, in and of himself, to call God his God. Ask students to read again Genesis 17:7. What does God covenant to do for Abraham in this verse? ('to be God to you'). But wasn't God already Abraham's God and isn't He everybody's God? Why did God promise to be Abraham's God? The Lord is everyone's God in the sense that He is their creator, preserver and judge.

However, He is not everyone's Friend and Father. People often turn to God in times of trouble, feeling that they are somehow entitled to His help. Can the class think of some examples? (illness, danger, death, etc.) Now it is precisely in this sense that no one, not even Abraham, has the right to call God his God and Father. This is a privilege that God

offers to believers as a gift of His love. When God offered and promised to be Abraham's God (v.7), it was a promise to be a personal God to Abraham, someone with whom Abraham could enjoy a relationship of love and friendship. These words to Abraham summarise the heart of the covenant of grace. The Lord promises to be a personal God to those who deserve no God at all. Complete No. 1 (a) of the students' worksheet.

As Abraham's God, the Lord promised to give Abraham:

**(b) Two special blessings**

(i) A land for an everlasting possession.

Read verse 8. The important thing to notice is that the land was a promise of something everlasting. It was pointing forward to our eternal inheritance in heaven through Christ. Complete No. 1 (b)(i) in the students' worksheet.

(ii) Descendants

Read verses 4-6. The Lord promised to give Abraham many descendants. Why did the Lord change Abram's name to Abraham? (verse 5). (He would be the father of many nations.) It was very important for Abraham to have children. His name would live on through these children and his land would stay in his family. More than this, Abraham's name would live on because of his descendants. The Lord told Abraham that through his seed the whole earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18). This was the promise of the Redeemer through whom even Abraham would be saved. Complete No. 1 (b)(ii) in the students' worksheet.

Thus, in God's covenant with Abraham, more of the plan of salvation is unfolding. Genesis 3:15 says that the Saviour would be 'the seed of the woman'. We now know that the Saviour would also be of the seed of Abraham.

Note: In Genesis 17:2 when God speaks of His covenant with Abraham He is not introducing something new but rather confirming promises that have already been made. Complete No. 1 (c) in the students' worksheet.

2. The sign of the covenant: circumcision

This covenant is an agreement between two parties, the sovereign God and His servant man. God promised eternal life to man in the Garden of Eden and renewed that promise most graciously after the Fall to Adam and now to Abraham. God gave visible signs to remind man of His promises - the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When God revealed the covenant of grace to Abraham, He also gave him a sign - the sign of circumcision. Read verses 9 - 14.

**(a) Circumcision was a sign of what God was doing for Abraham**

It was a sign that God already considered Abraham to be righteous because of his faith in God's promises (Rom. 4:11). It was a sign that God had cleansed Abraham of his sins (Deut. 30:6). It was a sign that the Lord would be God to Abraham and his descendants. Circumcision was, thus, a sign of God's grace to man. Complete No. 2 (a) in the students' worksheet.

**(b) Circumcision was also to be a sign of something that Abraham would do in response to God's command and promise**

God had promised to be Abraham's God. Abraham was to respond to that promise by walking with God in a blameless way (17:1-2). He was not to bring reproach on the name of his God who had done so much for him. He was to separate himself and his family to God from the world. God commanded Abraham to observe circumcision as a sign of Abraham's commitment to walk with God and to teach his family to walk with God. Complete No. 2 (b) in the students' worksheet.

Those who believe in Christ for salvation, are under that same covenant of grace. They are, by faith in Christ, the children of Abraham' (Gal. 3:7), 'Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise' (Gal. 3:29). However, instead of having the rite of circumcision, we have a new sign of the covenant. Ask the class if they know what it is. (Baptism) This is because the blood ceremonies of the Old Testament (including circumcision) have been fulfilled by the shedding of Christ's blood. Complete No. 2 (c) in the students' worksheet.

3. Application

When God made His covenant with Abraham He said 'Walk before Me and be blameless'. The Hebrew word which is here translated as 'blameless' is also used in Psalm 26:1 where the psalmist goes on to explain it by saying 'I have trusted in the Lord; I shall not slip.' Thus God was asking Abraham to be unwavering in his devotion to Him.

Challenge the class with the importance of the Lord being their God. Are they trusting in Jesus, the seed of Abraham, for salvation? Are they unwavering in their devotion to God? Remember that He took the initiative in offering us His friendship and love. 'We love Him because He first loved us' (1 John 4:19). Encourage the students to learn this memory verse. Complete No. 3 in the students' worksheet.

## LESSON 4

God Makes a Covenant

### THE BIRTH OF ISAAC

Scripture Text - Genesis 21: 1 - 7

#### AIM OF LESSON

To show how God kept His covenant promise to Abraham.

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### Introduction

Appoint two students to read the following dialogue to the class. Allow them to have it prepared before class time.

(Scene: Two men sitting by the door of a tent)

First man: 'It's good to have you back; you've been away for a few years now'.

Second man: 'Yes, a lot of changes have taken place since I left'.

First man: 'See that little lad playing over there? That's Abraham and Sarah's son'.

Second man: 'You're joking! That child could be their great grandson, except that they never did have any children! Both of them must be nearly a hundred years old now!'

First man: 'It's their son alright! I wouldn't have believed it myself if I hadn't talked to some of Sarah's maids and the midwife who was present at the baby's birth. Funny thing is, Abraham seems the least surprised. He talks as though he always knew some sort of miracle was going to happen .....

#### 1. The covenant promise - a promise to Abraham

Did Abraham know that he was going to have a son? What was the covenant or agreement made by God with Abraham? Look up Genesis 12:2, 'I will make of you a great nation ....' If Abraham was to become the father of a great nation of people Abraham and Sarah would have to be parents. However, as far as Abraham and Sarah were concerned, there was one very big obstacle to their having children. Abraham was 75 years of age and as can be seen from Genesis 17:17 his wife, Sarah, was 10 years younger. They were long past the age when it was possible for them to have children. So God was promising them something which they knew was physically impossible for them. Sarah was too old to be a mother. However, God repeated His promise to Abraham many times during the next 25 years reassuring him that he would have a son. Complete No. 1 in the students' worksheet. At least eight times the promise came to Abraham, and each time a few more years had passed. Year after year, it seemed more and more impossible for this promise to be fulfilled.

## 2. Alternatives suggested - Reasoning #1

Often Abraham must have wondered, 'Have I misunderstood what God said? Perhaps God doesn't mean that Sarah and I will actually have a son. Maybe He means something different.' We see this in Genesis 15:1-6. What does Abraham suggest? Complete No. 2 (a)-(b) in the students' worksheet. He suggests that his trusted servant Eliezer is his heir, since he himself is childless. However, what is God's reply to this? (vs. 4-5) Did Abraham accept what God told him? (Genesis 15:6)

## 3. Alternatives suggested - Reasoning #2

However, ten years after the promise had been first made in Genesis 12:4 (Abraham was now 85 years old and Sarah 75 (Gen. 16:3)), Abraham and Sarah's hearts were again filled with doubt as to what God meant when He said they would have a son. Abraham, therefore, agreed to Sarah's suggestion that he should take Hagar, a young servant girl, and treat her as his wife and he could have a child through her. This was done and Abraham and Hagar had a son called Ishmael. 'Now,' thought Abraham, 'God's promise can be fulfilled through Ishmael. God will make a great nation through Ishmael's descendants.' (Turn to Gen. 17:15-21 and complete No. 3 in the students' worksheet). Abraham is saying in vs. 17-18 - 'Let Ishmael be my heir. I am nearly one hundred years old and Sarah is ninety. It is impossible for us to have children.' What is God's reply to this? (v.19).

## 4. The promise fulfilled

Although Abraham did not understand how God was going to fulfil His promise, he believed that it would be fulfilled and, after twenty-five years, God gave Sarah and Abraham a son. Read together the passage - Genesis 21:1-7. What joy and delight came to the hearts of Sarah and Abraham - a joy expressed in the name given to their son - Isaac. 'God has made me laugh, so that all who hear will laugh with me,' said Sarah (v. 6). The name Isaac means 'he laughs'. There was laughter because God had made the impossible and the incredible happen. Complete No. 4 in the students' worksheet.

## 5. Application

Believing God, in spite of what common sense tells us, is not easy. Abraham found himself on two occasions trying to work out alternative solutions to what God had said but in the end, he found that God kept His word in exactly the way He had said He would. Often we may find it difficult to believe that God's plans are being fulfilled in our lives and in the world today. No. 4 in the students' worksheet tells us certain things about God and about trusting Him that Sarah and Abraham found to be true when they totally relied on Him. We too, can experience the truth of the verses, Matt.19:26, Isaiah 55:8 and Hebrews 11:1.

## LESSON 5

God makes a Covenant

### GOD SPEAKS TO JACOB

Scripture Text - Genesis 28: 10 - 22

#### AIM OF LESSON

To show the students how God spoke to Jacob and to discover Jacob's reply.

#### BACKGROUND NOTES

Jacob was Abraham's grandson. Isaac, Abraham's son, married Rebekah when he was forty years old (Genesis 25:20). The marriage was blessed by God when, twenty years later, He answered Isaac's prayer for his barren wife in the birth of twin boys, Esau and Jacob (Genesis 25:24). Before the twins were born God made it clear to Rebekah that the younger twin (Jacob) would succeed his father (Gen. 25:23; Rom.9:10-13) and thus receive both birthright and blessing.

Isaac wanted Esau to receive the blessing but his wife Rebekah encouraged Jacob to lie and deceive his father into giving him the blessing (Genesis 27). When Esau found out that Jacob had received the blessing from Isaac, he was so angry that he threatened to kill Jacob, even though some time earlier he had, when hungry, sold his birthright to Jacob in return for some stew (Genesis 25:29-34).

So the scheming Jacob had to flee the country and go into a strange land. He went away with his father's blessing (Genesis 28:1-5) but not knowing what the future had in store for him.

v. 15 - 'I am the Lord God of Abraham ....' God's covenant promise is full and explicit, covering past mercies, future guarantees and present undertaking for immediate protection and care.

v. 17 - 'afraid' means 'filled with awe'.

v. 18 - 'a pillar' - this was an ancient custom for marking a special site of religious significance. God refers to this pillar when He tells Jacob to return to Canaan (Genesis 31:13). Jacob poured oil on the pillar. This was an act of consecration.

v. 19 - 'Bethel' means 'house of God'. The nearby city of Luz later took the name of Bethel.

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### A. Introduction

Ask the class if they have ever done or said something that they knew was wrong and that

they later wanted to undo but could not? How did they then feel? Did they wish they could do something to put matters right etc.? That is just how someone in the Bible felt as he went further and further away from home with its memories of his childhood, of his dearly loved mother, of his weak and blind father and of his very angry brother who was trying to kill him.

### 1. Jacob

To find out who Jacob was, ask the students to fill in the family tree in Section A of the students' worksheet. With the help of the Background Notes explain briefly why Jacob was fleeing from his brother Esau. You could perhaps read selected portions of the Bible references given in the Background Notes.

Jacob knew he had wronged his father and brother but had he wronged anyone else? What does Ps. 51:4 teach us? (He had sinned against God.) God had spoken to Jacob's father, Isaac (Gen. 26:1, 2), and to his grandfather Abraham (Gen. 17:1; Gen. 18:1) but since Jacob had sinned against God, he probably thought that God would not speak directly to him.

Jacob was caught by the results of his own actions. He had cheated his brother and deceived his father. Fear of his brother's anger drove him on but there was also fear of the future ahead in a strange land.

### 2. God speaks to Jacob

When night came he lay down to sleep. God spoke to Jacob in his dream. Read together Genesis 28:10-22. In his dream Jacob saw a ladder with angels ascending and descending on it. The ladder reached from where he was, right up to God. Although Jacob had rebelled against God, yet here was God communicating with him. The angels (messengers) on the ladder symbolized the freedom of communication between God and Jacob.

God made a number of promises to Jacob in the dream. Read Genesis 28:13-15 again and then complete No.2 in the students' worksheet.

### 3. Jacob's reaction

How did Jacob react to his dream? (vs.16-22) Had he forgotten all about it by the time morning came? Complete No. 3 in the students' worksheet.

### 4. Jacob replies to God

Jacob was not only overwhelmed by God's goodness in meeting his need but also so deeply aware of God's presence that he renamed the place 'Bethel' which means 'house of God'. He then made solemn promises to God. Read vs.20-22 and complete No. 4 in the students' worksheet.

### 5. Application

So God had spoken to Jacob, repeating to him the promises He had made to Abraham and Isaac and although Jacob still had much to learn from God before his name was changed to Israel (Genesis 32:28), yet that night he learnt that God had not rejected him because of his wrongdoing. Complete No. 5 in the students' worksheet.

We can learn the following lessons from Jacob:

1. God does not forsake those who trust in Him when they sin against Him. Do the students feel that God is far away because they have sinned against Him in this past week? Encourage them to confess sin. God is still there and will forgive them, just as He did Jacob.
2. Jacob was overwhelmed when God spoke to him. He responded to God. Perhaps God has spoken very clearly to the class through a sermon or during their Quiet Time. What have they done about it?
3. The vision of 'Bethel' was used by Jesus as a symbol and type of Himself (John 1:51). Someone has stated: 'As the ladder was to Jacob, so the Lord Jesus Christ is to mankind - a revelation of God's wonderful condescension and mercy.'

## LESSON 6

God makes a Covenant

### **GOD PREPARES JOSEPH AND USES HIM TO PROTECT HIS PEOPLE**

Scripture Text - Genesis 37:10-28; 39:1-22; 40:16-23; 41:14-40; 50:20

#### AIM OF LESSON

To show how circumstances in Joseph's life were all part of God's plan to protect His people.

#### BACKGROUND NOTES

Joseph was the eleventh of Jacob's twelve sons. He was born in Padanaram when his father was 90 years old. He was his father's favourite son. This favouritism was shown in his being given a coat of many colours, which was probably a token of rank, indicating that it was Jacob's intention to make Joseph the head of the tribe. This made his brothers jealous. Their ill-will was increased when Joseph, somewhat imprudently, told them two dreams he had had which suggested his future greatness and their subservience to him.

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### A. Introduction - Does God really know or care about what is happening in my life?

Ask the class if they have ever heard people complain, 'It isn't fair. Why does God allow this to happen to me?' or 'If God is a God of love, He shouldn't let this or that happen'. Certainly people who are not Christians are often heard to complain like this but many Christians complain just as much. Perhaps we have heard a Christian say, 'Here I am, trying to do my best as a Christian and yet I am having a very difficult time. There's Mr. X! He's not as conscientious about the Christian way of life as I am, and just look at the easy time he has. Why bother at all? Does God really know or care about what is happening in my life?' The fact is, God does know and care about us. The Bible tells us that God has a special plan for each individual and that no matter what circumstances arise in our lives, whether good or evil, God's plan will still be fulfilled.

Today we are going to look at the life of Joseph. We will discover that God had a very definite plan for his life. The plan was fulfilled even though Joseph faced many difficulties and met many situations which did not seem to fit into this plan at all. Read Gen. 37:2-3, 7-11 and complete Section B in the students' worksheet.

##### 1. Purchased

Summarise the early part of Joseph's life as found in Genesis 37: 1-11. Note how Joseph's two dreams pointed forward to a time when his family would have to submit to his authority. On one occasion Jacob sent Joseph to a place near Shechem to see how his

brothers and their flocks were faring. Unaware that his brothers were plotting against him, Joseph arrived.

Read Gen.37:14-28 to see what Joseph's brothers did to him. How do we know that they were totally unmoved by what they had done to Joseph? (v.25) They were eating. If they had shown any remorse for what they were doing, their appetite would have been spoiled. Joseph was sold for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites and taken to Egypt. Can the class give a reason why his brothers would most likely think their action of selling him would keep his dreams from coming true? (He would be taken far away into Egypt where he would probably be lost and never heard of again. If he were sold as a slave, he would have no chance of becoming a lord over them.) This event, however, was one link in a chain which God was using to work out His plan for Joseph's life. Complete No. 1 in the students' worksheet.

### 2. Prison

Read Genesis 39:1-23. Joseph was taken to Egypt and sold in the slave market to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh. Here he would become acquainted with public persons and public business and so be prepared for the job God had in mind for him.

God was with Joseph and enabled him to do his work well. Potiphar, realising this, made Joseph master of the household, entrusting all he had to Joseph's care. However, due to the false accusations of Potiphar's wife, Joseph was cast into the king's prison where the state prisoners were held. We wonder what Joseph thought of his dreams now. Complete No. 2 in the students' worksheet. God, however, was still with Joseph (v.21) and was continuing to work out His plan for Joseph's life.

### 3. Position

The jailer found that he could trust Joseph completely and put him in charge of the other prisoners. At the same time Pharaoh became angry with his cupbearer and baker and they too, were put into prison. They were assigned to Joseph's care. After some time in prison, they each had a dream. Read Genesis 40:6-23 to see what Joseph was able to do for them.

We will note two things which happened while Joseph was in prison:

- (a) Joseph was put in charge of the other prisoners.
- (b) Joseph was able, with God's help, to interpret the two dreams.

Later we will see how, through these things, God was preparing Joseph for future events in his life.

Joseph remained in prison for two more years. The cupbearer forgot Joseph's request to be mentioned to Pharaoh (Genesis 40:23) but God did not forget Joseph. He was still working

out His purposes in Joseph's life. After two years had passed Pharaoh had two dreams. Ask your students what these were (Genesis 41:1-7). No one could interpret these dreams. Suddenly the cupbearer, who had been restored to his original position, remembered Joseph. Here we see God's plan for Joseph working out. Since the cupbearer had been in the same prison as Joseph, he knew that God had enabled Joseph to interpret dreams.

Joseph was able to interpret Pharaoh's dream and suggest what he should do about the famine that was going to come. Read Genesis 41:33-40. What advice did Joseph give Pharaoh? What high position did Pharaoh confer on Joseph? Complete No. 3 in the students' worksheet.

Joseph's role had changed once again from that of prisoner to that of second-in-command throughout Egypt. Can the class suggest any ways God had prepared Joseph for the momentous task he now had? (He had been in charge of Potiphar's household and later in charge of prisoners. This experience would help him in his new role.)

#### 4. Purpose

The famine that Joseph had predicted affected not only Egypt but all the then-known world, so that all countries came into Egypt, to Joseph to buy corn. Joseph's brothers came too.

Now we are back to where we started, except that Joseph is an important governor and not an unknown slave as his brothers had imagined he would be. Read Genesis 45:1-7. Joseph made himself known to his brothers. What reasons did Joseph give them for being in Egypt? (See v.7 and Genesis 50:19, 20). Joseph realised that God had been working in his life and told his brothers that God had sent him to Egypt to save many lives. Pharaoh told Joseph that all his family should come and live in Egypt. This they did (Genesis 47:11, 12). Throughout all these events God was fulfilling the promise He had made many years before to Abraham (Genesis 17:5-8). Through Joseph, God saved the lives of His people, ensuring that they would become a great nation. Complete No. 4 in the students' worksheet.

#### 5. Application - Just like Joseph

Emphasise the following three points from today's lesson, when discussing Nos. 5 and 6 in the students' worksheet:

- (a) God has a plan for every life, just as He had for Joseph's life.
- (b) God will prepare us for future events, just as He did Joseph.
- (c) God is in control of our lives. We may not always understand why certain things happen to us but like Joseph, we should trust that God is in control and working out His plan for our lives.

## LESSON 7

God makes a Covenant

### **PASSOVER - SAVED BY A LAMB**

Scripture Text - Exodus 11: 1 - 12:30

#### AIM OF LESSON

To see the importance of the Passover for Israel and to see its relevance for us today.

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### A. Introduction

Nearly every country has some great historic event in the nation's history which is commemorated in the present day. For example, the United States of America celebrates Independence Day on the 4th of July every year, after it was granted independence from England in 1776.

In France the 14th of July is a national holiday because it was on that date in 1789 that the Bastille prison was captured which marked the beginning of the French Revolution. In Northern Ireland many people still celebrate on the 12th of July, the Battle of the Boyne, at which Prince William of Orange defeated King James II in 1690. Complete Section A in the students' worksheet. In today's lesson we see that the nation Israel also celebrated an important event - the Passover.

##### 1. The commemoration of an historic event

The Passover was for Israel the commemoration of an important historical event, i.e. her redemption from Egyptian bondage. Its name is derived from Ex. 12:23 'For the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two door-posts, the Lord will pass over the door ....' So the Passover is literally the passing-over of the Lord over the homes of the Israelites whose door-frames were covered with the blood of the sacrificial lamb. God commanded in Ex.12:14 that the Passover was to be a festival observed regularly. When the Israelites would come into the Promised Land and share in its goodness, they were to remember the Lord. They were to rehearse and retell the events of the great redemption God had worked for their fathers (Ex.12:25-27). They were to rejoice in His past and present blessings and look forward to what He would yet do, for and through them. Complete No. 1 in the students' worksheet.

##### 2. A celebration of deliverance

The Lord's redemption and deliverance of His people Israel needed to be stamped vividly on the minds and hearts of future generations. One of the clearest means of instruction is the use of object lessons. So God used everyday acts of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and

touching and made them His instruments for instruction.

(a) The lamb

Each family was to sacrifice a lamb. The lamb was to be a year old without defect (12:5). An animal this age, just approaching the prime of its life, was frisky and winsome. The family had to watch over it carefully and feed it for four days before the Passover to make sure it was healthy and perfect in every way (12:3 and 12:6). Obviously during this time the family became attached to it. Then after this time the lamb was slaughtered (12:6). God's lesson in all this is plain. He was showing the people that sin demands to be punished and that the punishment is costly, i.e. death. He is also a merciful God in that He provides a way of escape. God provided a substitute. A substitute is one who takes the place of another. So God intended the lamb to be the substitute for the Israelite sinner.

(b) The bitter herbs. (12:8)

The Passover lamb was to be eaten with bitter herbs. They were to be a reminder of the bitterness of the bondage of the Children of Israel in Egypt under the whips of Pharaoh's taskmasters.

(c) The unleavened bread. (12:8)

Together with the Passover lamb and the bitter herbs, they were to eat bread made without yeast. They were to eat no yeast for a full seven days afterwards (12:15). Eating bread without yeast was to remind the Israelites of the urgency and haste with which they departed out of Egypt (12:39). Yeast or leaven in the Bible is very often identified with corruption, sin, and evil (Lev. 2:11 and 1 Cor. 5:7-8). The fact that they were to clear their houses of all yeast during the feast of the Passover (12:15), was a clear indication that God wanted His people to rid themselves of every sin in their lives.

(d) Blood. (12:7, 22)

The blood on the door-frames was to be applied by using a bunch of hyssop. Hyssop was a thorny plant. Sprinkling with hyssop is normally connected in the Bible with purification (Lev. 14:49-52 and Ps. 51:7). Hyssop in this instance is merely the instrument which applied the blood of the lamb. It is the blood that cleanses (Heb. 9:22).

(e) Sandals and staff. (12:11)

The Passover meal was to be eaten with the cloak tucked into the belt, sandals on and staff in hand. The people were always to be ready and prepared to go where God might lead them.

The Passover celebration therefore clearly reveals God's redemption and deliverance of His people. Complete No. 2 in the students' worksheet.

### 3.(a) A confirmation and dedication

It is not without significance that the Passover was to mark the beginning of the Jewish year. (12:2) As the Exodus was to mark the end of their bondage in Egypt, so the Passover was to mark the entrance to a new era. It was to be the 'beginning of months'. As it was to be observed with cloak, staff and sandals ready, so God was saying, as I have delivered you in the past, so I will lead you and be your God in the future. The new year therefore was to be a celebration of past blessings and a confirmation of God's faithfulness.

What then is the meaning of the Passover for us today? We are no longer to celebrate the Passover because it has been superseded and fulfilled in Christ's perfect, once-for-all, sacrifice. For we are redeemed 'with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot' (1 Peter 1:19). There is no need now, therefore, for a lamb to be sacrificed because the Lamb of God has been sacrificed who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:19). So Paul is able to say 'For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us' (1 Cor. 5: 7). Complete No. 3 (a) in the students' worksheet.

### 4. Application

The Passover is still a valuable illustration for us of what sin is, of what substitution is and of what salvation is.

The Bible tells us that because God is holy, therefore sin needs to be punished and the wages of sin is death (Rom.6: 23).

However, the good news of the Gospel is that God, in grace and mercy, has provided a substitute for us that we might be redeemed (2 Cor. 5:21). For us to enter into this experience, we too, must enter the door that has been covered by the blood. That door is Christ Himself (John 10:9). Now complete No. 3 (b) in the students' worksheet.

## LESSON 8

God makes a Covenant

### **THE RED SEA: SAVED FROM A POWERFUL ENEMY**

Scripture Text - Exodus 13:17 - 14:31

#### AIM OF LESSON

To show that the crossing of the Red Sea was a demonstration of God's power to deliver and preserve His covenant people.

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### A. Trapped

Ask one of the students to read aloud the experience of Dr. Helen Roseveare found in the first part of the worksheet.

1. In today's lesson the Children of Israel find themselves in a situation somewhat similar to that of Dr. Roseveare. They feel trapped by a powerful enemy. The situation seems hopeless. Death seems certain. Are they going to be wiped out? Have the Children of Israel forgotten the covenant which God made with their fathers? Read the Scripture portion with the class and discuss the questions listed in the worksheet as you read. The points mentioned below should prove helpful in the discussion.

Read Exodus 13: 17 - 14: 4

Look together at the map in the worksheet. God knew that if the people took the direct route they would face fighting with the Philistines and turn back to Egypt. So He led them south-east by a much longer route through the wilderness. They were now in a very difficult situation. They had the Red Sea in front and impassable mountains on either side. However, God led the Israelites here in order to show His power in a more miraculous way. Complete No. 1 (a) in the students' worksheet.

Read Exodus 14: 5 - 9

Pharaoh had lost his slaves. Who would do his building for him now? More important, God had hardened Pharaoh's heart so that the Egyptians would know that He was the Lord (see also v. 4). Complete No. 1 (b) in the students' worksheet.

Read Exodus 14: 10 - 14

The Israelites complained against God and against Moses. They should have asked God's help. They showed neither gratitude nor faith. Moses, however, trusted God. He encouraged the Israelites to be still and wait for God to act. Complete No. 1 (c) in the students' worksheet.

Read Exodus 14: 15 - 18

God gave Moses step by step instructions. His reason is given in v.17 - 'I will gain honour over Pharaoh and over all his army.' Complete No. 1 (d) in the students' worksheet.

Read Exodus 14: 19 - 22

Some suggest this was not a miracle, as parts of the Red Sea in this area are shallow and easily forded. At low tide, if a strong wind is blowing, it would be easy to cross. We know that it is God who controls the wind. He made it blow at the right time. God moved the cloud between the two armies. The water formed two walls and these walls remained firm while Israel passed through. So this was a miracle. God directly controlled the forces of nature and fought for His people. Complete No. 1 (e) in the students' worksheet.

Read Exodus 14: 23 - 28

'The Lord looked down upon the Egyptian army.' It has been suggested that this may have been a thunderstorm which frightened the Egyptians. They knew that God was at work against them. Their chariots couldn't move in the muddy bottom of the sea. As they tried to flee, God told Moses to put out his hand again so that the waters returned, drowning the Egyptians. Not one survived. Complete No. 1 (f) in the students' worksheet.

Read Exodus 14: 29 - 31

The Israelites feared and trusted God. Compare this with their reaction in verses 11 and 12. Chapter 15 records their song of praise to God for their deliverance. Complete No. 1 (g) in the students' worksheet.

## 2. Application

Take time to stress the following points with the class:-

- (a) When we are in difficulties let us remember that God is in control of every detail. If we encounter difficulties this does not mean that God has forsaken us. Often, the more difficult the situation, the greater the opportunity to see God at work. God may permit difficulties in our lives in order to help us to experience His power in a greater way.
- (b) When difficulties come into our lives we should not be afraid or complain against God. Rather, we should be still and wait patiently to see how God will help us.
- (c) The Children of Israel were not wiped out by the powerful Egyptians. God delivered and preserved His covenant people. He kept the promises He made to Abraham and his descendants. God always keeps His promises.

## LESSON 9

Studies in the Psalms

### KINGLY STATURE

Scripture Text - Psalm 45 (2): 1-7 (New Version)

#### AIM OF LESSON

To present the glories of Christ - the Royal Bridegroom.

#### BACKGROUND NOTES

In the title of this psalm the 'Chief Musician' or 'Choir Director' would be the director of music in the temple.

'According to the Shossannim' or 'Lilies' may either refer to the tune name or to a temple instrument specially adapted to celebrate themes which were fresh, bright and beautiful. A 'Maskil' means a psalm which is at the same time written, contemplative and instructive.

- v. 1. The heart of the psalmist is bubbling over with a desire to tell of something wonderful.
- v. 3. 'Your sword gird on your thigh'. To gird means to surround. The warrior is about to put on the belt which contains a sheath for his sword.
- v. 5. God's arrows are so sharp as to be fatal when they strike.
- v. 6. 'The sceptre of your kingdom' is an ornate staff or rod which signifies authority.

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### A. Introduction

Ask the class if they have ever been to a wedding. It is most likely none of them has been to a royal wedding. The theme of this lesson is that of a royal wedding and celebrates perhaps Solomon's marriage. Being addressed to the king, much of the symbolism is drawn from the marriage of an Eastern king. Just as a husband and wife are joined to each other in their marriage, so the Christian is joined to Christ, the Royal Bridegroom of whom this psalm speaks. Read together Ps. 45 in the metrical version.

##### 1. The glory of Christ's royal person (vs. 1-5).

V.1. So enthusiastic is the writer of this psalm that he is bubbling over to tell of something which is good and delightful. He has been so moved by the qualities he has seen in his king that he has put his words into song.

V. 2 shows that the psalmist is excited about a wonderful Man of stature. He is described as, "most fair among men's sons" and gracious words fall from His lips. It is obvious that God has favoured this Man above all others. This is an accurate description of Jesus Christ.

V.3 speaks about the power and glory of Christ who is dressed like a warrior ready for battle with a sword in His hand at His side. When Christ came to earth He left the sword aside. No violence would be required to set up His Kingdom. We remember how Peter would use his sword in the Garden of Gethsemane and Jesus forbade him. Jesus' Kingdom would not be set up with literal swords but by the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God (Eph. 6: 17).

V. 4 describes the King riding victoriously. Not only is this Person strong and mighty, the psalmist also describes Him as meek and standing only for truth and what is right. This was His main mission. All these qualities can be seen in Jesus.

V. 5. The arrows of this warrior are so sharp that the psalmist describes them as being fatal when they strike.

Complete No. 1 in the students' worksheet.

### 2. The symbols of Christ's royal rule (vs. 6, 7).

This section of the psalm refers to some of the symbols of state which surround the royal person. The writer to the Hebrews (ch.1: 8, 9) uses verses 6 and 7 of this psalm to describe the character and work of Christ.

V. 6. The royal throne is described as everlasting and so all power is given to King Jesus. He will reign for ever and ever. The sceptre, carried by the monarch, is the symbol of authority or sovereignty. The king carried it in his right hand on royal processions or when sitting in state. For many kings in old times, their sceptres represented the military force which kept them on their thrones but Christ's sceptre speaks of righteousness, of His just and fair laws and of His perfect standard of justice.

V. 7. The Monarch described by the psalmist loved only what was right and hated all that was wrong. The anointing with oil signified holiness, or separation unto God. It also signified divine favour. Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit (Acts 10: 38). God pronounced His favour upon Him (Matt. 3:16, 17).

Complete No. 2 in the students' worksheet.

### 3. Christ's reign

Complete No. 3 (a)-(h) in the students' worksheet.

### 4. Application

All Christ's enemies will fall defeated and become His subjects. There are two ways in which the enemies will fall before Him:

- (a) in conviction of sin as the arrows of truth pierce the heart (see Heb.4: 12) and
- (b) in punishment for those who continue in their sins.

### 5. Reflect

Challenge the students to think about the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is not as some would wish to portray Him - a weak ineffective Person. God's Word presents us with a majestic royal Person, worthy of awe and worship, before whom we must bow in humble submission. If we do not give Him His place then He will punish us.

We must imitate Him. We must guard our language. Our words must always be gracious, never hurtful but always helpful and always standing for truth and what is right.

We must use the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God (Eph. 6:17). This requires knowing the Word and then the Holy Spirit uses it in our conflict with sin, the devil and the world (Luke 4: 1-13). Discuss the points raised in No. 5 of the students' worksheet.

## LESSON 10

Studies in the Psalms

### CONFIDENCE IN GOD

Scripture Text - Psalm 62A: 5-8 (New Version)

#### AIM OF LESSON

To show that the Christian should place his complete trust in God.

#### BACKGROUND NOTES

This psalm was written by David but it is not possible to assign it to any particular period or event in his lifetime. The psalm reveals an absolute confidence in God. It consists of three sections with four verses in each. Between each section there is a pause for reflection ('Selah').

There is a progression of thought in the psalm as follows:

**(a) Confidence in God, even when in distress** (vs. 1-4)

The Psalmist, in spite of opposition from his enemies, places his trust and confidence in God. These enemies, seeing him appear to be weak and therefore easily defeated, turn to lies and deceit in order to defeat him. However, by trusting in God whom he compares to a rock and fortress, he has the assurance that he will not be overcome.

**(b) An invitation to others to have confidence in God** (vs. 5-8)

The note of assurance is carried through into this middle section of the psalm on which our lesson is based. The psalmist also wants others to experience the confidence and assurance which he enjoys. He knows from his own experience that God Himself is the one who is the protector in times of trouble.

**(c) The futility of having confidence in anything or anyone other than God** (vs. 9-12)

This section is a contrast to the previous two. It sets out that in which man should not put his trust, either in people or in possessions.

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### A. Trust

So that the students may understand what it means to have confidence and trust, read, or relate in your own words, the story at the beginning of the students' worksheet.

Ask the class to complete Section A in their worksheet. Suggest they should have used such words as 'frightened' and 'helpless' in their answers to 1a and such words as 'trust', 'confidence' and 'strong' in their answers to 1b. Using the above illustration, explain to the class that, just as John had complete trust and confidence in his father, so the Christian can

have complete trust and confidence in God. This was how the psalmist felt about God.

### 1. Waiting upon God (v. 5)

The psalmist, waiting upon God, knows for certain that God can be trusted. Instead of trusting God, today many young people turn to such things as cigarettes, alcohol and drugs hoping to feel better and thus be able to cope with their problems. Such things have, however, only a temporary effect and are also harmful to the body. Those who indulge in these bad habits do not realise that God alone can answer their needs and so they turn elsewhere for comfort and help. David had proved from his own experience that he could put his complete trust in God. An outstanding example (1 Samuel ch.17) was when, as a youth, he went out to meet the giant Goliath, knowing that everyone else was terrified of him. He refused the king's armour, sword and shield and faced the giant with a sling and five stones knowing that God would use these to defeat this enemy. Complete No. 1 in the students' worksheet.

### 2. God is a rock (v. 6)

When we think of a rock we imagine something which is permanent and secure. Just as a house which is built on a rock can withstand the storm, so God is our Rock. If Christians place their faith and trust in Him then Satan will not overthrow them. (Ask a student to read 'The classroom scene' from the worksheet) Anne knew that she should obey her teacher and not do what her 'friends' were doing. However, it would have been all too easy to follow the crowd. She, therefore, sought help from God and was confident that He could help her in this difficult situation. Complete No. 2 in the students' worksheet.

### 3. God is a refuge (v. 7)

A dictionary definition of 'refuge' is 'a shelter from pursuit, danger or trouble'. An example of a refuge is a traffic island in the middle of a busy road or street. Here a pedestrian can wait safely until the road is safe to cross. (If time permits, read Psalm 91 and briefly show that this psalm describes how God is a refuge). Ask one of the class to read 'The farmyard scene' from the worksheet and then ask them to complete No. 3 (a) in the students' worksheet. The Christian should use God as a safe place to hide when Satan mounts an attack. How does Satan attack us? Complete No. 3 (b) in the students' worksheet. Examples: Satan tempts us to take God's name in vain, tell lies, use bad language, disobey our parents etc.

### 4. Spreading the good news (v. 8)

(Ask one of the class to read 'The scouting scene' from the worksheet) This incident shows how Robert, when he had discovered a safe means of crossing the stream, did not behave selfishly, but immediately told the other boys so that they, too, could cross safely. So it was with the psalmist. When he found refuge in God he told others. 'Trust in Him at all times; ye people ....' he declared. Complete No. 4 in the students' worksheet. Stress to

them that they should share with others how God has helped them in the past.

#### APPLICATION

Summarise the lesson using the following points:

1. The Christian should place his confidence in God alone.
2. The Christian, by placing his confidence in God, will overcome attacks by Satan.
3. The Christian should share with others his confidence in God.

## LESSON 11

Life in Christ's Kingdom

### A NEW KIND OF LIFE

Scripture Text - Romans 8:1-17

#### AIM OF LESSON

To help the students understand that true followers of Jesus will live a new kind of life.

#### BACKGROUND NOTES

The letter to the Romans is thought to have been written around AD 55 while Paul was at Corinth, preparing to go to Jerusalem. It is not known how the church at Rome was established but it is presumed to have been formed less than ten years prior to the writing of this letter. Paul had no part in the formation of this church nor had he yet been to Rome (Romans 1: 10 - 15 and 15: 20 - 22).

The previous chapters deal with God's plan of salvation with a great emphasis being placed upon justification by faith. Chapter 8 deals with the security of believers and the arguments put forward are to establish this point.

- vs. 1-4. In these verses there is set forth both the removal of punishment from the believer and also how Christ has delivered him from the power of sin so that he can serve God with a new spirit. The law pointed to the sinner's guilt but could not take away the desire to sin. By sending His own Son, God not only declared the believer not guilty, but also in the same sentence pronounced an end to the power of sin over the believer.
- vs. 5-11. These verses point out how salvation is accomplished in our hearts by the work of the Holy Spirit. We see the contrast between the desires of the sinful heart and the desires of those whose lives are directed by the Holy Spirit. The Christian chooses spiritual things which give him life (John 10:10) and peace, whereas the sinful man lives for the things of this world and is constantly at war with God. The rewards of both types of life are also put forward plainly. The spiritual life pleases God and will bring eternal life but the sinful life is at enmity with God and ends in eternal punishment.
- vs. 12-14. Christians are under an obligation to get rid of sin in their lives because they are now children of God.
- vs. 15-17. As children of God, believers are fellow heirs with Christ. They will be with Christ in glory and share eternal life. They are warned that being a son will not be easy and will involve suffering. However, they who have been given these privileges

ought not to be filled with fear but rejoice in the assurance that they are members of God's family.

## SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

### 1. A change

Read No. 1 in the students' worksheet, emphasising that there will be a change of life-style after a person trusts in Jesus. Look up 2 Cor. 5:17. This change can only come about by the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul tells us this in Romans 8. Read verses 1 - 17. Complete No. 1 (a)-(c) in the students' worksheet.

### 2. Why is the Holy Spirit necessary? (vs. 1 - 4)

The Holy Spirit is necessary because we cannot live for God in our own strength. When a person becomes a Christian, not only is he delivered from the penalty of sin and released from its power but he is also indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives the believer power to obey God's Law and enables him to live in a way that pleases God. Complete No. 2 in the students' worksheet.

### 3. What effect has the Holy Spirit on a Christian? (vs. 5 - 11)

Paul has given us clear distinctions between the lives filled with the Holy Spirit and those filled with the old nature of sin. Now complete No. 3 in the students' worksheet.

The believer with the Holy Spirit is interested in spiritual things. He will have a concern for the needs of his fellow men and he will possess an inner peace because he is following God's directions and is pleasing God. Now compare the unbeliever. He is concerned about his own possessions and goods, his power and position. He is a worldly person. He has no interest in God's will for his life and his end is eternal separation from God. Paul leaves us in no doubt that the difference should be quite obvious. We must put on the new man and leave off the old, just as the butterfly must leave off the old caterpillar shape and take on its new form.

### 4. What obligation rests upon the Christian? (vs 12 - 14)

Paul emphasises the importance of living this new kind of life by pointing out that Christ did not take our punishment for sin and cleanse us just so that we could go off and sin again. Occasionally on television advertisements we see a mother welcome home her sons in filthy clothes. She proceeds to wash these clothes in the latest brand of washing-powder. The boys go off and get dirty again. The mother is not too concerned because it gives her another opportunity to prove the effectiveness of her new brand. However, the person who trusts in Christ should not behave like this. He is obliged to strive after holiness in every area of life because he is now God's child. Complete No. 4 in the students' worksheet.

### 5. What benefits does the new kind of life hold? (vs. 15 - 17)

When we are cleansed from sin we become the sons of God. This is a very privileged position for it means that we will be with Christ in glory and share eternal life (1 John 3:1). Complete No. 5 in the students' worksheet.

### Application

It is not enough to make a profession of faith. There must be some evidence in the person's life of the Holy Spirit's presence. We must put on the 'new man' and strive towards the goal of eternal life (Phil.3: 12-14).

Points to emphasise:

1. When a person becomes a Christian he must adopt a new lifestyle.
2. We cannot achieve this new lifestyle on our own. We need the power of the Holy Spirit. We should pray daily for this.
3. We are helped by the Holy Spirit so that we can live as God's children and not become dominated once more by sin.

## LESSON 12

Life in Christ's Kingdom

### GOD'S PLAN FOR THE CHRISTIAN

Scripture Text - Romans 8: 28 - 39

#### AIM OF LESSON

To show that God has a plan for His people and to explain the outworking of this plan.

#### BACKGROUND NOTES

vs. 28-30: Verse 28 explains God's plan in a 'nutshell'. The steps in this plan are outlined in vs. 29, 30 and have been described as five links in the unbreakable chain of salvation.

1. **foreknowledge** (v.29)

This refers to God's knowledge of people prior to their existence in time and that there were some (the elect) on whom He set His special love.

2. **predestination** (vs.29 - 30)

Those on whom God placed His special love He foreordained to eternal life. This choice made by God was not determined by anything that He foresaw in man because all men in their sin are equally repugnant to a holy God. This choice was made by the sovereign Lord who 'predestinated us .....according to the good purpose of His will' (Eph. 1: 5).

3. **calling** (v.30)

Those whom God chose in eternity to enter into His plan of salvation He calls in 'time' to enjoy the blessing of salvation.

4. **justification** (v.30)

Those who are effectually called by God are declared righteous (justified) by God.

5. **glorification** (v.30)

The final part of God's plan involves the believer being taken to heaven to share in Christ's glory (Romans 8:17). This is God's plan for His people and because God is the author of the plan then it is certain to be fulfilled in every detail.

vs. 31-36: Paul now turns to the triumphal application of this teaching. His statement (v.31) 'If God is for us, who can be against us?' is more a shout of acclamation than a question. If God is for us then all our enemies count as nothing, for they cannot frustrate God's saving purpose. This fact is shown by God's supreme self sacrifice of His Son on our behalf. The God who gave up His Son to the death on the Cross could

not possibly withhold any gift of grace from those who are His people. Paul then asks three rhetorical questions designed to assure all those who are in Christ of their security.

1. 'Who shall bring a charge against God's elect?' (v. 33) Those who press charges against believers are doomed to disappointment for they fight against God's plan.
2. 'Who is he who condemns?' (v. 34) Christ's finished work on the Cross and His presence at the Father's right hand making intercession for His people are the guarantee of their security.
3. 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?' (v. 35). Nothing can stand between the true believer and Christ's love for His people. The afflictions mentioned serve to bring the believer into closer fellowship with Christ and are not, as the world sees them, the removal of Christ's favour.

Verses 37-39: This magnificent passage is used by Paul to affirm his persuasion that nothing can ever sever the Christian from the love of God. Death cannot separate us because Christ conquered death through His resurrection. No power in this world or out of it, nor anything that the future may hold can come between the believer and the promise contained in God's plan, i.e. eternal life in Christ.

## SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

### A. Introduction

Suggest to the class that everyone makes plans. At school the students may plan to meet their friends at lunch-time for a game of football or a chat. After school they may plan to go to a friend's house for tea. After tea, they plan to come home and do their home-work. No matter how well they plan, other factors may enter in to make them alter their plans. Complete Section A in the students' worksheet.

### 1. God's plan of salvation revealed (vs. 28 - 30)

We might think that if we only knew the future then we could plan properly. However, God not only knows the future but He also controls it. Therefore His plan is perfect. Before this world was created God knew that man would become a sinner. God, being a God of love, devised a plan which would save people from the penalty of sin (John 3:16; Eph. 1:5).

The people upon whom God set His love (i.e. those whom he foreknew) were chosen (i.e. those who were predestined) in Christ. It is only when people are in Christ (i.e. trusting in Christ as their Saviour and Lord) that they are acceptable to God. The people chosen by God before the world came into being are called to believe on His Son during their life on

earth. This call often comes through the preaching of the Gospel. As people respond to this call by turning from their sins and believing on Jesus they are declared righteous (i.e. justified). Since God's plan is perfect it is therefore complete and so those whom God declares righteous He eventually takes to dwell with Him (i.e. glorified). For us to enter into this great and wonderful plan we must obey the call of the Gospel. We must turn from our sin and believe on Christ as the One who suffered and died as our substitute. Complete No. 1 in the students' worksheet.

## 2. What can thwart God's plan? (vs. 31 - 39)

The passage ends in a note of triumph. The apostle Paul asks the question, 'If God is for us, who can be against us?' (v.31)

God who has devised such a plan to save sinners at such a cost to Himself, 'did not spare his own Son', will also give us all we need. God, who has been faithful in the greater, will also supply the lesser. We need not fear any accusation or condemnation (vs. 33,34). No one can undo God's work and we have the assurance that the Saviour is praying for those who are in the Father's plan. Verses 35 - 39 list several things that may lead us to doubt Christ's love. However, none of these things can separate us from Christ's love because it is constant. Complete No. 2 in the students' worksheet.

## 3. Application

Emphasise:-

1. Apart from God's plan everyone would suffer eternally for their sins.
2. The need to enter into God's plan by trusting Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.
3. When a person is a Christian, nothing can separate him from the love of God.

This is God's perfect plan. Complete No. 3 in the students' worksheet.

## LESSON 13

Life in Christ's Kingdom

### RESPONDING TO GOD'S PLAN

Scripture Text - Romans 12:1, 2.

#### AIM OF LESSON

To show that wholehearted service to God is the logical and proper response to His gift of salvation.

#### BACKGROUND NOTES

God's plan is clearly revealed in Romans chapters 1-11. The apostle Paul begins chapter 12 by issuing a practical exhortation to Christians to make a proper response to God's plan.

- v.1 'by the mercies of God' - The apostle issues his appeal on the basis of what God has done for the believer. This term 'by the mercies of God' is a reference to all the blessings enjoyed by the believer as outlined in chapters 1-11.
- 'present your bodies' - The word 'body' refers to the physical body.
- 'reasonable service' - This is service which is reasoned or rational. It is logical in view of what God has done for man.
- v. 2 'do not be conformed to this world' - 'Do not let the world squeeze you into its mould'.  
(J. B. Philips)
- 'world' - This evil age.

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### A. Introduction

Perhaps someone has been extremely kind to us. What is our response? We may buy the person a present; we may help them with their work; we will, however, express our thankfulness in whatever way we can, irrespective of the trouble involved. Romans 12: 1, 2 instructs us how we are to respond to God's great kindness and goodness to us. Read these verses. They refer to God's great love for believers and the command is given to make a suitable response. Complete Section A in the students' worksheet.

##### 1. The basis of Christian service (v.1)

When Paul speaks of 'the mercies of God' he is referring to God's great work of salvation outlined in Romans chapters 1-11. It is in view of what God has done for the believer that an appeal is now made for an appropriate response (hence the word 'therefore'). Complete No. 1 in the students' worksheet.

## 2. How can I serve God? (v.1)

### (a) My service must be voluntary

'Present your bodies ....'. The command for Christian service is issued as a challenge. The believer is not coerced into making a response to God's plan but an appeal is made to his will.

### (b) My service must be sacrificial

'Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God'. The consistent Christian will seek to serve God irrespective of what the cost may be. Service will be 'living', 'holy', and 'acceptable' to God if it is offered through Christ.

### (c) My service must be rational

When we consider that Christ died to make us right with God then it is entirely reasonable and logical that we should commit our whole lives in service to Him.

Complete No. 2 in the students' worksheet.

## 3. The challenge of Christian service (v.2)

### (a) What must be avoided

'Do not be conformed to this world' or, as J. B. Philips translates the phrase, 'Do not let the world squeeze you into its mould'. We all tend to be imitators. Because we are 'in the world' there is a temptation to follow the evil example of a corrupt society, e.g. using offensive language, singing vulgar songs, reading the wrong books, keeping bad company, etc. "Do not be deceived: 'evil company corrupts good habits'" (1 Cor. 15: 33).

### (b) What must be sought

'Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.' The active Person in this transforming work is the Holy Spirit. We are to seek His presence in our lives so that our minds (thoughts or intellect) may be renewed. Although the Holy Spirit is the active agent in transforming the life of a believer yet the person himself must strive to become like Christ (Col. 3: 12 - 14).

Complete No. 3 in the students' worksheet.

## 4. Application

The consequence of this challenge is: 'That you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.' (Romans 12: 2b). The more God's children live in accordance with God's revealed will the more they will come to realise (test and approve) its quality. They will come to see that it is good, pleasing and perfect. They will be led to exclaim like the psalmist 'I delight to do your will, O my God' (Ps. 40: 8). Complete No. 4 in the students' worksheet.

## LESSON 14

Life in Christ's Kingdom

### ALL ONE BUT DIFFERENT

Scripture Text - Romans 12: 3 - 8

#### AIM OF LESSON

To show the importance of evaluating one's gifts and using them for the good of others in the Church.

#### BACKGROUND NOTES

'prophecy' - the proclamation or preaching of the Word of God

'ministry' - serving

'gives' - contributes to the needs of others

'leads' - is in a position of leadership

'with diligence' - with earnestness and single-mindedness

'shows mercy' - helps others in distress

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### A. Introduction

Ask the class if they play in a football team or hockey team. If they do not play themselves perhaps they enjoy watching football, rugby, hockey etc.. In a team everyone has a specific role to play. The forwards may sometimes appear to be most important because they score the goals but, if the defenders fail to play their part, the whole team may suffer defeat. Complete Section A in the students' worksheet.

In the Church everyone has a role to play and the success of the Church depends on how faithful the members are in exercising their gifts. Paul has something important to say regarding this. Read together Romans 12:3-8.

##### 1. Spiritual gifts (v.3)

Too often, when people are asked to do something, we hear the reply 'Oh, I couldn't do that!' Have we ever said that ourselves? Do we really mean it when we say this, or do we use this phrase as an excuse? We learn from Ephesians 4: 7 - 8 that God gives at least one gift to every Christian. He gives gifts to His people for a special purpose (1 Peter 4:10). Gifts are to be used in the Church for the good of all the other members. Paul realised that, even among Christians, this could present a problem. What warning did he give those to whom he was writing? (v.3a) Those with many gifts may be tempted to become proud and so Paul warns each Christian 'not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think'. Each gift has come from God. The more gifts a person possesses the greater his responsibility to act as a servant to the Church in the exercise of his gifts. However, there is

a need for the Christian to assess realistically what gifts God has given him ('think soberly' v. 3b). It is dishonouring to God to say we have no gifts when God has given at least one gift to every Christian. Does the class know what gift or gifts God has given them? Complete No. 1 in the students' worksheet.

## 2. The variety of gifts (vs. 4, 5)

Look again at verses 4 and 5. Ask the class to consider the special function which each major part of the body has. No organ in the body can carry out the function of any other organ. Each must play its own part if the whole body is to work properly. If one part does not function properly it affects the whole body. Complete No. 2 (a)-(b) in the students' worksheet.

It is the same with the Church. God has given a variety of gifts to the members of the Christian Church so that the Church, as Christ's body, might be enabled to fulfil her task. No one can possess and exercise all the gifts and obviously it is impossible for every Christian to take the lead and occupy what seem to be the most important positions.

As the body has many members, so the Christian Church is made up of a large number of individual members, each with his own gift, or gifts, intended to be exercised in the proper place and way. The members have roles which are different but equally important to the proper functioning of the Church. Are we ever jealous of someone else's gifts? We should not be. We should thank God for the gifts He has given them and encourage them to use their gifts to the best of their ability. We ourselves should pray that God will show us clearly what gift He has given us and help us to use it whole-heartedly for His glory and the blessing of others. Read together 1 Cor. 12: 12-20, 27 and discuss briefly. Complete No. 2 (c)-(d) in the students' worksheet.

## 3. The use of gifts (vs. 6 - 8)

Read again verses 6 - 8.

With the help of the Background Notes explain to the class the meaning of those gifts mentioned in these verses. Point out that here we read of only seven gifts. Others are discussed elsewhere in the Bible. Complete No. 3 in the students' worksheet.

## 4. Application

1. God has given every Christian at least one gift.
2. We should seek to know what gift or gifts God has given to us personally.
3. We should not be proud of our gifts, they have been given to us by God.
4. We should use our gifts in the service of others in the Church.
5. We should encourage others in the use of their gifts.
6. We should work together with other Christians for the good of the Church.

## LESSON 15

Life in Christ's Kingdom

### PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LOVE

Scripture Text - Romans 12: 9 - 21

#### AIM OF LESSON

To show what it means to live out the 'love of Christ' in our lives.

#### BACKGROUND NOTES

- v. 9 'let love be without hypocrisy' - love must be sincere and genuine.
- v.11 'not lagging behind in diligence' - never lacking in zeal or enthusiasm.
- v.19 'give place to wrath' - leave room for the wrath of God.

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### A. Introduction — What is love?

Show the class a valentine card or magazine cutting which gives them the impression that love is all to do with arrows and hearts and the exchange of romantic endearments. Ask them to define love.

Explain that Christian love is a much richer and more beautiful quality than the concept of love held by society. The Bible has a lot to say about God's love and the love that Christians should show to others. Complete Section A in the students' worksheet.

##### 1. Why should we as Christians love one another?

- (a) Because God has commanded them to do so (John 13: 34).
- (b) Because of God's great love for them (1 John 4: 10, 11).
- (c) Because it is a sign to others that they are Christians (John 13: 35).

Discuss these verses with the class. Then ask them to summarise this for themselves by completing No. 1 in the students' worksheet.

##### 2. How should we as Christians love one another?

Romans 12: 9-21 is a practical description of how Christian love should be expressed. Read the passage together. We learn that:

##### (a) Attitude is important.

- i) They must be sincere (v. 9) - see the Background Notes and 1 John 3:18.
- ii) If their life is controlled by love they should hate everything which is evil and cling to that which is good (v. 9)
- iii) They should be enthusiastic in all their service to God (v.11)
- iv) They should endeavour to be joyful, patient during suffering and faithful in

praying for others (v.12). Complete No. 2 (a) in the students' worksheet.

(b) Love should be shown in practical ways. We should:

- i) honour others above ourselves (v. 10). We should consider other Christians better than ourselves (Phil. 2:3). Is this always this easy?
- ii) Share what we have with God's people who are in need (v. 13). In what ways can we do this?
- iii) Be happy to offer hospitality and welcome others into our homes (v. 13).
- iv) Pray for our enemies (v. 14). It is very difficult to have right feelings toward our enemies. It is also difficult to pray for them. But God has commanded this (Matt. 5: 44). With His help it is possible to do this sincerely.
- v) Be willing to identify with others, i.e. to come alongside and share with others in their sad experiences and in their joyful experiences (v. 15). Can the class think of a time when they have been able to comfort a friend at school who has been feeling sad, or a time when they were able to share a friend's success or happiness without feeling jealous?
- vi) Not to be snobbish (v. 16). The Christian should seek to live in harmony with all kinds of people and should make no distinction between rich or poor, high or low etc.
- vii) Not retaliate (vs.17, 19). The temptation often arises to get even with someone who has treated others roughly. (Ask the class for possible examples.) Temptation to take revenge must be resisted. Instead, the matter should be committed to God and left to Him to deal with.
- viii) Live at peace with others (v. 18). Christians should endeavour to do this in as far as it depends on them.
- ix) Repay evil with good (vs. 20, 21). Compare v. 20 with Proverbs 25:21, 22. The Christian is to repay enmity with every form of kindness. To treat a man with kindness rather than vengeance is the way to influence him. If Christians are kind to their enemies, says Paul, it will heap coals of fire on their heads. That means it will move them to burning shame (make them blush). To stoop to vengeance is to be conquered by evil. The only way to destroy our enemy is to make him a friend.

Complete No. 2 (b) in the students' worksheet.

Complete No. 2 (c) in the students' worksheet, discussing the quality of Christian love illustrated by each person.

### 3. Application

Complete No. 3 in the students' worksheet. Discuss examples of Jesus serving and giving during his time on Earth.

## LESSON 16

Studies in the Shorter Catechism

### PRAYER

Catechism Questions 98 & 99

Scripture Texts - Daniel 9:4; Matthew 6:9; John 16:23; Philippians 4:6

#### AIM OF LESSON

To help pupils understand what true prayer is and how they can learn to pray according to God's will.

#### BACKGROUND NOTES

Prayer is an activity of man and describes his communication with God. Man, because he is a sinner, can only communicate with God through Jesus Christ. It is, therefore, only the person who is a member of God's family whose prayers God has promised to hear - See Prov. 15:29 and John 9:31. We have many examples of prayer in the Bible, e.g. 2 Chron. 20:5-12; Nehemiah 1: 5-11; Daniel 9:4-19. These passages, along with many other references in Scripture, teach us much about prayer but our supreme example is the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9-13).

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### A. Introduction

Imagine that two men are praying and we are able to hear their prayers. Turn to the student's material, Section A, and choose two pupils, one to read out each prayer. Discuss the prayers briefly as suggested. We see from this example that prayer is talking to God - asking Him for what we want. However, is this all there is to prayer? Do we just ask God for what we want and He gives it to us - like a magician? What do you think? Complete Sections A and B in the students' worksheet.

##### 1. Prayer in relation to God's will

Your young brother wanted to use your father's saw but he refused to give it to him. Do you think your brother was pleased? Why do you think your father said 'No'? Was it then wrong for your father to refuse the saw? The illustration shows that father knew best and God always knows what is best for His children.

In the catechism question the words 'for things agreeable to His will' should now be clear. Ask the pupils what the word 'agreeable' means. (pleasing, acceptable) If we ask for things which are not acceptable or not agreeable to God He will not give them to us. What you think might be great e.g. wanting to go on holiday with a friend or going to a certain school,

may not be God's plan for you and so God answers 'No' to this prayer. Of course, God does not always say 'No' to our requests. To many of our prayers God says 'Yes' because we have asked for something which He does want us to have - it is agreeable to His will. Complete No. 1 in the students' worksheet.

### 2. Prayer should be in the 'Name of Christ'

Something very important we have not mentioned about prayer is this - How do we get in touch with God to pray to Him? Many people pray - but how many are praying real prayers?

Together look up Prov. 15:29 and John 9:31. What important principle do we learn from these verses? (See Background Notes) God promises to hear the prayers of His own people. There is no promise to hear the prayers of those who do not belong to Him, although God has the privilege of doing more than He has promised.

In John 16:23 we find the words 'Most assuredly, I (Jesus) say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My Name He will give you'. The important words here are 'in My Name'. When a Christian prays to God, depending on the Lord Jesus Christ, then he is praying 'in Jesus' Name' and his prayer God has promised to answer. Also we do not always have to say 'for Jesus' sake, Amen' at the end of every prayer. The important thing is that we know we are depending on Jesus for what He has done for us. Then we can come to God and pray. Complete No. 2 in the student worksheet.

### 3. Prayer should contain confession

When we come to pray to God and realise how holy God is and how sinful we are this should lead us to confess our sins. We need to tell God about the wrong things we have done, or said or thought, and say we are sorry, just like Daniel. Read Daniel 9:3-6, 17-19. Note also David's prayer in Psalm 51:1-2 - 'Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin'. Complete No. 3 (a)-(b) in the students' worksheet.

### 4. Prayer should contain thanksgiving

God is so loving that we must always thank Him for His goodness and mercy. After all, we deserve His wrath because of our sins. Another word for wrath is anger. God's anger is righteous. We deserve God's anger and punishment because we have sinned or done wrong. He needs to punish this. Yet Jesus took the punishment instead of us. So we always need to thank Him for His mercy and goodness in doing this. What are some of the other things for which we should thank God? Complete No. 4 in the students' worksheet.

### 5. Prayer should follow the example which Christ gave us

God has given us the Bible to help us learn how to pray. If we study it we learn more about

God and so learn the things for which we should pray and how we should pray.

There are many prayers in the Bible and we have read two of them - Daniel's and David's. But God has also given us a special prayer to teach us how He wants us to pray. What was that special prayer? (The Lord's Prayer) It is a simple prayer with no fancy phrases or 'big words'. It is not a long prayer either. Jesus said in Matthew 6:7 'But when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think they will be heard for their many words'. In the next few lessons we will be looking in more detail at The Lord's Prayer.

Complete No. 5 in the students' worksheet.

#### 6. Application

1. When we belong to God we want to ask for things which are in His will. The more we know God, the better able we will be to understand His will. So we will know what to ask for.
2. We need to confess our sins and thank God for all His love, mercy and kindness.
3. When we pray, we must mean what we are saying - a repeated prayer which has no meaning for us will not be heard by God. Prayer comes from the heart. Prayers can be very simple. They do not need to be long or full of 'big words'.

Let us be careful when we pray that we do not get into a habit of repeating the same prayers every night and not really meaning them, or doing it to ease our conscience before we go to sleep.

Complete No. 6 in the student worksheet.

## LESSON 17

Studies in the Shorter Catechism

### THE PREFACE OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

Catechism Question 100

Scripture Texts - Psalm 145:3; Romans 8:15; 1 John 3:1,2; Ephesians 6:18

#### AIM OF LESSON

To help the pupils approach God in the correct manner and to show that they should pray with and for others.

#### BACKGROUND NOTES

The preface of the Lord's Prayer 'Our Father which art in Heaven' helps us to understand something of the nature of the One to whom we pray.

**'Our Father'** indicates God's close relationship to His children. They can therefore approach Him with confidence, being assured of the Father's love and readiness to hear and answer prayer.

**'In Heaven'** indicates God's majesty and glory. This reminds God's children that He is the Sovereign Holy One and, as such, must be approached in the spirit of humility and reverence.

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### A. Introduction

Complete Section A in the student worksheet.

Imagine you are watching a play. Two of the characters in the play are a father and a king. The father has three children and is very loving. His children are very happy and do not hesitate to come to him if there is anything they need. The father does all he can for his children and they love him very much. The king, however, is a very powerful man. No one dares to enter his presence carelessly. His subjects have great respect for him and do not wish to disobey any of his commands. He lives far away in a great palace.

##### 1. How we should approach God

The two characters we have just considered can help us understand what it is like to come to God in prayer. They give us two different pictures of God.

(a) First picture of God — "Our Father"

We are told in the catechism that God is 'Our Father.' (See also Romans 8:15) In the play the father was seen as a loving man. How did his children approach him? - without fear. When they needed anything they simply went to him and asked,

knowing he would be able and willing to help them. He was never far away, but always there. So we can have confidence when we come to God in prayer. We know He is always there, He never goes away on a journey, so we can be sure that when we pray to God He is there listening. However, it needs to be remembered that not everyone can come to God as a Father. Only those who belong to God's family can call Him 'Father'. Complete No. 1 (a)-(b) in the student worksheet.

(b) Second picture of God — “in Heaven”

The catechism also says that 'Our Father' is 'in Heaven'. The fact that we know God is our Father does not mean that we rush into His presence. We need to remember that He is in Heaven - rather like the king in the play living in his palace. How did his subjects approach him? They had great respect for him and obeyed his commands. None of them would have dared to rush into his presence.

Ask the pupils if any of them know of examples in the Old Testament where people had to show great respect to their king. (Look up Esther 4:11; 5:1,2; Dan. 2:4-6; Nehemiah 2:1-3). Complete No. 1 (c) in the student worksheet. Today we should show respect to our Queen. People who meet her bow and curtsy indicating their respect for her.

So, knowing that our God is the King of Kings, we must give Him the respect due to Him - we must always come to Him in a reverent, careful manner. We must not treat God in a casual way. He must receive our obedience, respect and worship because of who He is. See Ps. 145:3 and Rev. 4:11.

In the Bible we can see these two pictures of God - both are needed to help see Him properly. Read together 1 John 3:1,2 and Ps. 145:1-3. Which reference gives the picture of God as a loving Father? Which speaks of God as a great King who is worthy of His subjects' worship and praise?

These two pictures of 'Our Father in Heaven' show us that God is both our Father, near to us, and our King in Heaven, demanding reverence and respect. Complete No. 1 (d) in the student worksheet.

2. We should pray with and for others

We note that the Lord's Prayer begins with the words 'Our Father' - not 'My Father'. If we are Christians, we are part of God's large family and so we should not be selfish in our attitude to God or in our prayers to Him. The catechism answer finishes with the words 'we should pray with and for others'.

Ask the pupils for examples in the New Testament where Christians prayed along with and for fellow Christians. (Look up briefly Acts 12:5-16; 2 Cor. 13:7; Col. 1:3,4.) Complete No. 2 (a) in the student worksheet. Now complete Section 3 in the student's material.

(Encourage the students to think of as many examples as possible - at family worship, in Sabbath School, in Church, at the Prayer Meeting, at C.Y. meeting, at S.U. in school, etc.) In our own family we are concerned for our father, mother, brothers and sisters - and so it should be in God's family.

Read together Eph. 6:18. What commands are we given in this verse?

When Christians meet together for prayer they should not limit their praying to prayer for other Christians. Complete No. 2 (b) in the student worksheet.

#### 4. Application

1. When we pray to God we need to come reverently.
2. If we are Christians, we can come to God with great confidence because He is our Father.
3. As well as praying by ourselves we should pray with other Christians.
4. God wants us individually to pray for certain other people. Are we doing this?

## LESSON 18

Studies in the Shorter Catechism

### THE FIRST PETITION

Catechism Question 101

Scripture Texts - Exodus 3:13-15; Revelation 4:11

#### AIM OF LESSON

To show the importance of having respect and reverence for God's name.

#### BACKGROUND NOTES

'Hallowed by thy name' - 'To hallow is to set apart a thing from the common use, to some sacred end. As the vessels of the sanctuary were said to be hallowed so, to hallow God's name, is to set it apart from all abuses, and to use it holily and reverently. In particular, hallowing God's name is to give Him high honour and veneration, and render His name sacred.' (Thomas Watson)

'dispose' - arrange

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### A. Introduction

Complete Section A in the students' worksheet.

##### 1. What is in a name?

Do you know what your name means? Do you know why you were called it? At school do you have a nickname, and if so, why? Names are important to each one of us whether it is our own, or a brother's, sister's or our friends'. When we think of a name we think of someone we know with that name and what they are like.

Yet a name is what you make it. If you are called 'lazy bones' you can by hard work show people that this is not the name you should be called. Similarly, you can be called 'greedy' or 'selfish' and yet by thinking of others your name will be changed to 'kind' and 'thoughtful'. Complete No. 1 in the students' worksheet.

##### 2. God's name

We recognise that our names are important, and yet how much more important is God's name. The first petition of the Lord's Prayer tells us to hallow God's name. To hallow means to honour as holy, or to hold it in reverence. That is, we are not to use God's name without thought, or to use it carelessly in our everyday speech. We are to reverence the name of God because of what it represents. Throughout the Bible we find many names used for God, each of them telling us who God really is, what He is like and the things He is able to

do for us. God revealed Himself as Jehovah, the self-existent one, 'I am that I am' (Exodus 3:13-15), which shows us that God always existed and always will exist. Complete No. 2 in the students' worksheet to find out other names by which God describes Himself.

Jehovah-jireh	The Lord will provide (Gen.22:14)
Jehovah-rapha	The Lord who healeth (Ex. 15:26)
Jehovah-nissi	The Lord our Banner (Ex. 17:15)
Jehovah-shalom	The Lord our Peace (Judges 6:24)
Jehovah-tsidkenu	The Lord our Righteousness (Jer. 23:6)

'Thy name' in the Lord's prayer contains these characteristics together with others such as - His power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

### 3. How do we hallow God's name when we pray?

- (a) When we pray we should think reverently of who God is by remembering His names and His attributes. Complete No. 3 (a) in the students' worksheet.
- (b) We should praise and honour and thank Him for who He is. You may be in difficulty or danger, or have some problem on your mind, but even then your greatest wish should be that God be honoured, worshipped and magnified. Throughout the Bible you can see this illustrated, e.g. 2 Chronicles 20:1-6. (Other examples are Nehemiah 1:1-5 and Acts 4:18-26.) Complete No. 3 (b) in the students' worksheet.

Every prayer should begin with an element of worship and these prayers give us a good example to follow.

If we are faithful in points (a) and (b) we are glorifying 'Him in all that whereby He maketh Himself known'.

### 4. Application

Complete No. 4 (a)-(e) in the students' worksheet.

We should be concerned that God 'would dispose (arrange) all things to His own glory' (see Romans 11:36). Do we pray that honour will be given to God when people see Him at work in our lives? Or do we want things to work out in such a way that everyone will give us the glory or credit? What was the Psalmist's prayer in Psalm 115:1? He wanted all the glory to be given to God - no one else was worthy of it. Encourage the pupils to memorise Rev. 4:11. Complete No. 4 (f) and No. 5 in the students' worksheet.

## LESSON 19

Studies in the Shorter Catechism

### THE SECOND PETITION

Catechism Question 102

Scripture Text - Romans 10:1; Revelation 22:20

#### AIM OF LESSON

To show that this petition involves praying for:

1. the conversion of people
2. increased personal submission to Christ's rule
3. the Second Coming of Christ.

#### BACKGROUND NOTES

This petition raises two questions:

1. To what is the word 'Kingdom' referring?
2. What is meant by the coming of the Kingdom?

Firstly, we shall see the kingdom referred to here is the Kingdom of God (the Kingdom of Grace) of which Christ is the appointed King and Head. It does not consist of great nations or vast empires, but is nonetheless real, because it is centred in Christ to whom all authority has been given (Matt.28:18). Those who have been born again and are submitting to Christ in their lives are members of that Kingdom (John 3:5).

Secondly, when we pray for the coming of the Kingdom, it is helpful to remember Christ's illustration of the mustard seed. The Kingdom of God has its source and origins in Christ. During His earthly ministry the Kingdom was 'miniature', being compared to a seed. Jesus promised His Kingdom would get considerably bigger, however, and would continue to grow until 'every enemy has been put under His feet'.

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### A. Introduction

Complete Section A in the students' worksheet.

Compare two earthly kingdoms - the United Kingdom and Spain, for example. What differences are there - of language, money, laws and customs? You need to know which kingdom you belong to because each has a certain language and particular laws. For example, you would not be safe cycling or driving on the right hand side of the road in the United Kingdom. The police would soon stop you if they saw you on the wrong side of the road. Each kingdom has a king or ruler, and laws which need to be observed. Complete Section B in the students' worksheet.

### 1. A Kingdom

The second petition of the Lord's Prayer talks about a Kingdom. This Kingdom is not to be identified with any earthly kingdom (John 18:36), 'My Kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight'. The Kingdom in Scripture is a concept which describes God's Kingship, or His Kingly rule and authority.

The King whom God has appointed is the Lord Jesus Christ in whom now rests all power and authority. The citizens in God's Kingdom are all those who acknowledge King Jesus as Lord and Saviour of their lives.

Complete No. 1 in the student's worksheet.

### 2. The conversion of people

When we are born we are born outside the Kingdom of God, because 'that which is born of the flesh is flesh' (John 3:6). In fact, because of sin we are born members of another kingdom - the kingdom of Satan. Although Satan has been defeated and condemned as a result of Christ's victory on the Cross, God still permits him to wield substantial power, and Satan uses this power to hinder the growth of God's Kingdom. One way he does this is by blinding the minds of men and women so they cannot see their need of Christ as their Saviour. For example, he might make people think that they are already good enough to be citizens of God's Kingdom, like the Pharisees (Luke 18:11,12) or might convince people that they have plenty of time and another opportunity to enter God's Kingdom, like Felix (Acts 24:25)

And so, when we pray, 'Thy Kingdom come' we pray that God would free men and women from the tyranny of Satan's dominion, and bring them into the light and liberty of the Gospel, establishing His Kingdom of Grace in their hearts.

However, the Bible tells us except a man be born again, or born from above, he cannot enter or experience the Kingdom of God (John 3:3.5). For this to happen we have to look toward Jesus in faith, and ask Him to heal us of our sin, to change our hearts and cause us to be born afresh by His Spirit. This is the only entrance into the Kingdom. Complete No. 2 in the student's worksheet.

### 3. Increased personal submission to Christ's rule

Once we have entered God's Kingdom then as good citizens we must be careful to observe the laws of God's Kingdom. This is something we must always strive to improve. It is as we submit our lives more and more to Christ's authority that His Kingdom becomes more evident in our lives. For example, are we concerned to honour God in our use of time, in the way we spend our money, in the control of our thoughts, in framing our ambitions and in dictating our relationships?

Discuss No. 3 in the students' worksheet.

#### 4. The second coming of Christ

The petition also implies praying for the day when Christ will return. With the Second Coming, the Kingdom comes to immediate perfection and lasts for ever; it will be a Kingdom of Glory. When Christ returns all sin and evil will be destroyed. All those who rejected Christ's Royal Rule will likewise be rejected by Christ, and will not be permitted to enter the Kingdom of Glory (Ps. 96:13; Matt.25:31-46; Rom.2:5-10; 2 Cor.5:10)

At the end of Revelation we read of Jesus saying 'Surely, I am coming quickly' (Rev. 22:20). Can we answer truthfully, 'Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus'?

Complete No. 4 in the students' worksheet.

#### 5. Application

Every Christian should be using the means God has commanded to bring about the answer to this prayer -

1. By speaking to others about Christ (Matt.28:18-20)
2. By seeking to be more obedient to Christ (Rom.12:1,2)
3. By being ready for Christ's Return (Matt. 25:13)

Ask the class if they are using these means to seek an answer to this petition. Discuss the points listed in No. 5 of the students' worksheet.

## LESSON 20

Studies in the Shorter Catechism

### THE THIRD PETITION

Catechism Question - 103

Scripture Texts - Psalm 103:20; 119:34-36; Matt. 26:39; Job 1:21

#### AIM OF LESSON

To help the pupils understand that when they pray this petition, they are praying that they might know God's will for them, and then, by God's help be able to obey it.

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### A. Introduction

Complete Section A in the students' worksheet. Imagine you are in school. You have a very good teacher who knows everything you need to know about your exam. subject and is willing to teach it to you. You decide not to listen to the teacher or even come to the class. Can you expect to pass the exam? Of course not! However you cannot blame the teacher for not teaching. She was always there, teaching those who wanted to learn. So it is with us and God. He knows everything and we certainly do not. We need to learn from Him. We need to find out His will for us so that we can live for Him as He wants us to. We sin and fail Him often, but we must continue to seek daily for His will. When we pray 'Thy will be done on earth', we are asking God to show us His will. How, then, can we know God's will for ourselves?

##### 1. God's will revealed

God has fully revealed His will to us in the Bible. This does not mean that there are texts giving specific instructions such as 'You shall stay at school until you are 18,' or 'You shall be a farmer' etc. but in the Bible are the guidelines which will help us meet any problem or difficulty we may have. Complete No. 1 (a) in the students' worksheet. What problems have you had recently? Maybe someone has hurt you and you do not know how you should react? Maybe you have been asked by a friend to go somewhere your parents have forbidden you to go? Maybe a non-Christian boy/girl has asked you to 'go out' with them? How can we find out what God's will is for us in these situations? As all the answers to these problems centre on how we are to please God, it is our duty then to go to God's Word and find out what His will is. How do we do this? Reading God's Word daily and praying are obvious ways (see Psalm 119:34-36). These keep us close to God even though we are sinners, and so when a problem arises the most obvious person to turn to is God. See what King Hezekiah did when he received a letter from Sennacherib, King of Assyria. He asked God what he should do about it. Read Is.37:9-20. Complete No. 1 (b) in the student's worksheet.

There is, however, one aspect of God's will which we on earth cannot pray to know. We

cannot pray to know what will happen tomorrow, next week or next year. We are not permitted to know these things. God's plan for the future is not known to any man and yet every day a little more of that plan is made known. It is wrong to try and foretell the future. The Bible condemns it. In Deut. 18 we are told that anyone who interprets omens or engages in witchcraft, who is a medium or who consults the dead is detestable to God.

How does this affect us today? Do we ever read our stars to see what is going to happen? Have we ever had our palms or teacup read, even as a joke? Such things are hated by God and He condemns them. No-one but God knows the future. If we are trusting Him to lead us each day of our lives then we have all we need to know. Complete No. 1 (c) in the student's worksheet.

### 2. God's will obeyed

When we pray this petition we are asking God to help us discover what His will is for us - but more than that - we are praying that God's will should not only be known, but also be done, in earth just as it is being done in Heaven. In Heaven the angels submit to God's will. Can you imagine what that is like? Let us go back to the school situation again. Have you ever been in a class where everyone always does exactly as the teacher says - all of the time? Probably not, - but if school was in Heaven this would be so. The angels there are happy to do God's will all the time and they know what that will is. There is no sin in Heaven to cause disobedience or unhappiness. However here on earth very few people want to do God's will and even those who do often fail.

Who was the only person on earth ever to obey God all the time and do exactly as God wished? Jesus is the only example of a person who totally submitted to God's will. Read together Matt. 26:36-44. Jesus was about to be led away to be crucified. He prayed that the situation might change, but above all He wanted God's will to be done. When we pray 'Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven', we are asking that we may be like the Lord Jesus - always putting what God wants before what we want. Complete No. 2 in the student's worksheet.

Finally, there is little point in asking God that His will should be done and then doing nothing about it. The catechism answer says that, by making this petition, we are asking God to make us able and willing to know, obey and submit to His will. When we think of submitting to someone, we may think of having to do something we do not want to do, but if we are Christians, then our greatest joy and desire should be to do what God wants. What was the attitude of the Psalmist in Psalm 40:8? This was true of Christ. He submitted joyfully to doing God's will. This should be our attitude too.

### 3. Application

Ask you pupils to consider the questions in No. 3 in the student's worksheet. Point out that

if we belong to God's family we will want to do His will, but since this is not easy, we need God's Grace to help us. In fact we cannot do God's will without His Grace. God is pleased when we obey his Word.

## **LESSON 21**

God builds His Covenant nation

### **THE LAW IS GIVEN**

Scripture Texts - Exodus 19: 1 - 20: 21

#### **AIM OF LESSON**

To show how God gave His laws to Moses and what they are.

#### **BACKGROUND NOTES**

##### **The People**

The Children of Israel have been brought out of Egypt and through the Red Sea (Exodus 12-14). Now they have arrived at Sinai and God intends to set them apart in a special relationship with Himself, if they obey Him and keep His Covenant. The people say that they will obey God and Moses, as their leader, acts as their 'go-between'. Only he is allowed to go up the mountain to speak to the Lord.

##### **The Preparation**

Although the people have agreed to obey the Lord, they are still sinful, and in order to come into the presence of a Holy God, they must consecrate themselves. Washing symbolises their need to be clean in heart before God. Solemn warnings are given about their behaviour. God knows their sinfulness and weakness and realises that they might be tempted to treat the occasion as a spectacle to satisfy their curiosity, instead of a holy meeting with their God.

##### **The Place**

Mount Sinai reflects the glory and power of God who appears in a thick cloud upon it to speak to Moses. There are strict boundaries placed around the foot of the mountain because God is emphasising His holiness to the people and showing them the solemnity and importance of what was going to happen. God speaks in thunder and causes the mountain to shake. He is holy and powerful and not to be approached in any casual or thoughtless way by His people.

In Exodus 20 we have the Ten Commandments given to Moses on Mount Sinai. They provide a perfect guideline as to how life should be lived. God knew that sinful man could not keep the perfect Law of God and one purpose of giving the Commandments is to show that man can never, by himself, attain the standard of holiness God requires.

Commandments 1-4 cover our relationship with God and commandments 5-10 cover our relationship with our fellow man. Christ came to fulfil the Law, not to render it obsolete and these Commandments are as relevant today as they were for the Israelites. It is only with the help of the Holy Spirit that we can hope to obey them. They are summed up in

Matthew 22: 37-40.

## SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

### A. Introduction

Discuss Sections A and B in the students' worksheet. We need rules to show us what is right and what is wrong. Ask the class to imagine they were playing a football match where no one kept any of the rules of the game. There would be complete chaos. Similarly in society, if there were no laws, everyone would do what he or she wanted.

#### 1. God gives his law (Exodus 19)

God gave His Law to the Children of Israel three months after they had left Egypt (Exodus 19:1). With the help of the Background Notes consider Exodus 19 under these three headings:

- (a) The People
- (b) The Preparation
- (c) The Place.

Complete No. 1 (a)-(c) in the students' worksheet.

#### 2. What is God's law? (Exodus 20:1-21)

God gave His people the Ten Commandments to govern their lives, but although there are only ten of them, they are very hard to obey. Discuss how we have already broken some of the Commandments. We don't always put God first. We don't always obey our parents. Sometimes we want something which belongs to someone else.

The first four Commandments deal with our attitude to God. Complete No. 2 (a) in the students' worksheet.

The next six Commandments deal with our attitude to other people. Complete No. 2 (b) in the students' worksheet.

#### 3. Application

God is holy and we must approach Him reverently. The Law which God gave to Moses is just as relevant for us today. Christ obeyed it perfectly and we should endeavour, with God's help, to obey it also. Read Matt. 5:17-48 and complete No. 3 in the students' worksheet.

## LESSON 22

God builds His Covenant nation

### ISRAEL SINS - MOSES MEDIATES

Scripture Text - Exodus 32

#### AIM OF LESSON

To describe Israel's sin of idolatry and Moses' prayers of mediation.

#### BACKGROUND NOTES

Verses 1-6

At the very time when God was giving the Ten Commandments to Moses, the Children of Israel were breaking the first two Commandments and clamouring for other gods than the Lord who delivered them from Egypt. These verses show how quickly Israel forgot God. Almost as soon as He stopped speaking directly to them they deliberately sinned against Him. Aaron encouraged and helped them to do wrong (vs. 2, 3). The Egyptians worshipped many gods and often depicted them in the form of animals. In making a god in the form of a calf, Aaron was encouraging the Israelites to recall the kind of religion they had seen practised in Egypt.

Verses 7-14

God sent Moses down from the mountain and told him to leave Him so that He, in His holy anger, could punish the people. He said that He would destroy the people and then make Moses into a great nation. Moses then mediated on behalf of the people. He was concerned for God's honour. What would the Egyptians think if God decided to kill the very people He had miraculously delivered from Egypt? He also reminded God of His promise to give Canaan as an inheritance to the Children of Israel. God did not bring on His people the disaster He had threatened.

Verses 15-24

Moses was very angry with the people when he saw the calf and the dancing; so much so that he broke God's tablets of commandments in pieces. Notice the feeble excuse made by guilty Aaron in the face of Moses' rebuke. First of all, he blamed the people in order to remove blame from himself and then he said that the calf made itself!

Verses 25-29

Moses saw that the people were running wild and had become a laughing stock to their enemies. He caused those who wanted to follow God, not only to 'stand up and be counted', but also to slay many of the people. Three thousand died that day.

Verses 30-34

Again Moses mediated on behalf of the people. In verses 31 and 32 he identified

himself with their sin and asked the Lord to blot him out of the book of life if that was to be the destiny of the people. However, God did not grant this request. Only those who had sinned against Him would be punished.

## SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

### A. Introduction

Discuss with the class the meaning of the word 'mediator'. A mediator goes between two opposing parties and represents both. Complete Section A in the students' worksheet. In today's lesson we will see how Moses acted as a mediator between God and the Israelites. See No. 1 (c) in the worksheet.

#### 1. Israel sins (Exodus 32:1-6)

Read verses 1-6 and use the Background Notes to explain these verses. What was Aaron trying to pretend in verse 5 when he said 'Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord'? Complete No. 1 in the students' worksheet.

#### 2. Moses mediates (Exodus 32:7-14)

Use the Background Notes to summarize these verses and then complete No. 2 in the students' worksheet.

#### 3. Moses and Aaron (Exodus 32:15-24)

Read verses 19-24. Why was Moses very angry when he came down from the mountain and what did he do? Look at Aaron's version of what happened and compare it with what we are told in verses 1-4. Complete No. 3 in the students' worksheet.

#### 4. Punishments (Exodus 32:25-29, 35)

God did not wipe out the nation as He had threatened to do (see verse 14). However, He punished the people in two different ways. What were they? Complete No. 4 in the students' worksheet

#### 5. Moses mediates a second time (Exodus 32:30-34)

Read verses 30-34. Moses again spoke to God on behalf of the people. He acted as mediator. God was angry with the Israelites because of their sin of idolatry and the Israelites were estranged from God. Moses hoped in some way to make atonement for the sin of the people. What was his amazing request (v.32)? This shows Moses' great love for the people. He was prepared to sacrifice even his own salvation if he could in some way atone for their sins. Complete No. 5 in the students' worksheet.

### 6. Application

Moses mediated between a just God and the sinful people. Jesus Christ is the perfect mediator between a just God and sinful man. His job of mediating goes on and He continually speaks to God on our behalf; having died for us. He is seen by God as having

taken our place and paid for all our sins, so that through Him we can be acceptable to a righteous God. Does the class know the importance of the Lord Jesus Christ as mediator? Complete No. 6 in the students' worksheet.

## LESSON 23

God Builds His Covenant Nation

### THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

Scripture Text - Leviticus 16

#### AIM OF LESSON

- To show the significance of some parts of the temple ritual.
- To show the special significance of the Day of Atonement.
- To show that God is holy and must be approached through a substitute sacrifice.
- To show how the pattern of the Day of Atonement was fulfilled in Christ's death.
- To help people have a proper motive in worship.

#### BACKGROUND NOTES

The teacher should read Hebrews 7-11 several times the previous week. There may be more material in this lesson than you can cover with your class. Feel free to use whatever suits the ability and maturity of the class.

The Day of Atonement was on the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month, around September/October, just five days before the feast of Tabernacles, when the Israelites were supposed to live in tents/booths/cabins for a week to remind them of how their ancestors had lived in temporary housing during the forty years in the wilderness. It was a reminder of the impermanence of life and how God provided for them in their uncertain conditions. It was a happy time, at the end of the harvest when the grapes and figs had been gathered in. It was also a time of praying for rain for the next year's planting, in a country that depended on heavy rains twice a year.

The Day of Atonement was a day of public humbling, recollection of sins of the past and special sacrifices for God's mercy and forgiveness for them in their sins. It could be a review of the past year as some do before communion or at the end of the year. The High Priest had a special and unique role that day, hinting at the special office of Christ.

#### *The purpose of the ritual*

- To remind the people of their need of forgiveness and a substitute.
- To have reverence in worship.
- To point forward to the coming of the saviour of the world in Christ.

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### A) Introduction

The Tabernacle was constructed on the principle of separation. There was the moveable fence around it. The outer court was for all men to worship. The inner court was for the priests to offer their sacrifices. There were several different items in it, each with a meaning.

### **1) IT ALL MEANS SOMETHING**

In the outer courts there were several items:

1. The bronze altar of burnt offering on which most sacrifices were burnt, representing that we must approach God through the sacrifice and death of Jesus Christ
2. The laver, a large basin with water for the priests to wash in, representing forgiveness and the need of a clear conscience in the worship of God, Hebrews 10.22
3. The seven branched candlestick representing God as light, holy and all seeing. Jesus also said that he was the light of the world. John 7.
4. The altar for incense from which the sweet smelling smoke went up, representing the prayers of the people ascending to God, Exodus 30.1-10, Psalm 141.2. The smoke also hid the Ark from the sight of the High Priest on entering the Most Holy Place. God is to be treated with reverence.
5. The table of showbread where fresh bread was placed every day and later eaten by the priests, representing that God provides the food for his people. Where does it say, 'Give us this day our daily bread'?

### **2) THE MOST HOLY PLACE**

The inner room, the Holy of Holies, was a cube about 4 1/2 metres. In it was the Covenant Box, the Ark of the Covenant. In the box were the two stone tablets with the Ten Commandments, a pot of manna (later) and Aaron's rod that had flowers, buds and fruit on it at the same time. (Hebrews 9.3-5). Over the box, (115 cm x 69 cm x 69 cm) was the mercy seat, a plate of gold with two angels on it. Popular accounts differ on whether the wings covered the box inwards, or spread from one side of the room to the other. God is holy (represented by the two tablets of stone). God is forgiving, represented by the gold plate for sacrifices. God is glorious and to be worshipped, represented by the presence of the angels. God was seen as present with his people there.

Before entering the Most Holy Place, the High Priest had to bathe himself, put on the sacred garments, Lev 16.4, and then prepare the sacrifices. You might think what these actions symbolise: the purifying of himself from anything unsuitable, then the taking up his uniform in his official role as the high priest for the people. He had to offer sacrifices first for himself before he could offer any sacrifice for the people:

1. A bull as a sin offering for himself and his household
2. Fragrant incense to burn in the most holy place to hide the mercy seat (the plate of gold on top of the covenant box) from his sight He had to hide his face from the glory of God. Christians have greater privilege. See 2 Corinthians 3. 12-18.
3. Sprinkling of the bull's blood on the front of and in front of the mercy seat
4. A goat as a sin offering for the people, taking the blood to sprinkle it also on the front of and in front of the mercy seat. As the goat is a less significant animal, it may indicate that the sins of the people were less in God's eyes than those of the priest. Should we think of our sins as greater than those of other people? We usually do the opposite. What did Paul call himself in 1 Timothy 1.15? How could this be?

The lesser place of sacrifice, the Tent of Meeting, was also to be purified with the blood of the sin offering. Sprinkling it seven times would indicate a complete perfect sacrifice.

Then the High Priest confessed the sins of the people over the head of the live goat and it was sent away into the desert to symbolise that the sins of the people were taken far away.

(See Psalm 103.12). The High Priest could then wash and change into normal priestly clothes to offer two further sacrifices. He offered a burnt offering for himself, a ram, symbolising the total consecration of his life to God, holding nothing back.

Then he offered a burnt offering for the people, symbolising that they would obey God fully. Then all that was left of the sin offerings was taken outside the camp and burnt. Heb 13.10-13. *We have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat. The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.*

This was done annually, but the sacrifice of Christ took place once for all and never needs to be repeated. We are free to enter into Gods' presence through being saved and in faith in Christ. <sup>HEB 10:19</sup> *Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence (freedom, boldness) to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

### **3) APPLICATION**

God sets the rules about how to worship him. You cannot add anything that appeals to you to his worship, if you feel like it. God is love but he is also holy and to be held in respect and honour.

We always need a mediator to approach him, which is through faith in Christ as dying for you.

We all need to accept Christ Jesus as our saviour, in a new birth, so that we can worship him freely.

He wants people to pray to him constantly and freely as God the Father in Christ.

## LESSON 24

God Builds His Covenant Nation

### THE COVENANT PEOPLE ARE DISCIPLINED

Scripture Text - Numbers 11, 13.1-14.45, Deuteronomy 8.1-5

#### AIM OF LESSON

To show the importance of trusting God at all times and in all circumstances

#### BACKGROUND NOTES

The Israelites repeatedly disobeyed God in the wilderness. It is important to see the frequency, the different situations and provocations for each and to see why they failed. God had been faithful, and they were always being cared for. They had seen miracles. Why were they so vulnerable and fickle? There is the modern application of how often Christians see the work of God but fail to keep to his promises or commands. The problem is why people fail.

Reasons given may vary from intimidation or fear of other people, especially peer pressure among teens. We dare not underestimate social pressure and temptation in schools. It may be forgetting the problems and troubles of the past when one was not a Christian, remembering with rose-tinted spectacles. It may be a wish for something novel and new. It may be possible to get the class to discuss some of the temptations they face in school dealing with disobedience to parents, drink, drugs and sex among others. The extent to which this is possible depends on the class and relationships.

It is important to make the connection between disobedience and punishment, suffering the consequences of one's behaviour. Sin and punishment are two sides of the one coin. 'Be sure your sin will find you out'.

Also they need to see how sin relates to God. It is an insult to him, disobedience and rebellion at some level and cuts a person off from the good that God wants the person to enjoy and the potential usefulness he has. You can mention the consequences of the disobedience at Kadesh Barnea. If God is good to us should we complain at all about anything? 'In everything give thanks... All things work for the good of those who love God... I have resolved in whatsoever state I am to be content...'

There is also the principle of the ways in which the people could have protected themselves from their own temptations and disobedience.

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### A) Introduction

What do others your age complain about? What do you sometimes complain about? Is it some possession you would like to have? Mobile phone? I pod? Some game or item of clothing? Brainstorm what your group tend to complain about. Think do you really need it,

as distinct from wanting to have it, to be like others. If you got it would you be really happy for long? What do other people complain about around you? Homework? Housework? Money? Friends? Weekends? Health?

What are some of the things for which you might thank God?

There are two episodes in this lesson.

### **1) ISRAEL COMPLAINS**

As the Israelites were constantly on the move they could not settle to grow crops so their diet was necessarily restricted. They got manna every morning and after Numbers 13 also quail every evening. Ask how they would like 'Frosties' or 'Sugar Puffs' every morning and later chicken every evening for years. Could the mums have cooked the food in many different ways? There was an element of sameness and boredom about food. Do you ever want something different for a bit of excitement of some sort?

They began to remember the 'good old days' in Egypt. Ask someone to read Numbers 14.4-5. How would these things have changed the diet? What could you have made with them? But what had they forgotten about Egypt? Were they happy in Egypt? Why had they forgotten the problems of slavery in Egypt?

Notice how the problem started with a discontented group, Num 17.4, 'the rabble' and then affected all the people. Do you have a moaner among your friends? Is it a good idea to be close to him?

Do we have a positive duty to thank God every day for what he will give us? *'At all times I will bless the Lord'*. Phil 2.14 *Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe* Eph 5.20 *always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

What difference would that make to our attitude and appetite?

### **2) MOSES PRAYS**

Notice the bad effect on Moses and his complaint against God. Notice his complaints. Why has this happened to me? Surely this is not my fault. Why has God not kept his promises to me? How can I cope? Moses was driven to the thought of dying. Sometimes teenagers are vulnerable to thoughts of suicide. Stress that God has an answer to any stress situation, as he did for Moses, with helpers.

### **3) GOD PROVIDES**

God answered their prayer for variety by sending quails, small birds they could easily catch nearby. There was the miracle that they were given them every day for the rest of their time in the wilderness so that they were never hungry.

God took them to the limit of testing to test their faith and devotion to him. Deut 6.2 *Re-*

*member how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. Ask who in the N.T quoted this verse and why. (Matt 4.3-4.)*

Also there is the general principle. Deut 8.5 Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you. God brings tests into your life to prove that you trust him and love him above all things. Should this also affect your attitude to your parents and to teachers?

Think also of the future benefits of the experiences God is bringing into your life now. See what he promised to the Israelites in the future if they trusted him. <sup>DT 8:6</sup> *Observe the commands of the LORD your God, walking in his ways and revering him. For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land--a land with streams and pools of water, with springs flowing in the valleys and hills; a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills.*

What was their reaction on the first occasion they collected quails? Numbers 11.32-34. Note that 10 homers may be about 2200 litres, a cube of about 2.8 metres. Have you ever eaten something so much it made you feel too full/sick? Perhaps ice-cream? How did you feel afterwards? If God promises us our daily bread is that enough for us? Is there anything you wanted desperately and found afterwards that it was not really as important, or wonderful, as you had thought? God punished their greed with a plague. <sup>PS 106:13</sup> *But they soon forgot what he had done and did not wait for his counsel In the desert they gave in to their craving; in the wasteland they put God to the test. So he gave them what they asked for, but sent a wasting disease upon them.*

Suggest that the pupils should be careful in the coming week not to complain about things, but somehow turn them to thanking God for some aspect of the situation.

#### **4) ARE LESSONS LEARNED? MOSES SENDS OUT SPIES INTO THE LAND OF CANAAN.**

Notice the good arrangements made. There was a representative from each tribe. They were given directions on what to find out. Num 13.17-20. Why did God tell Moses to send out spies into the land? To make them realise they needed his help? Give them a sense of anticipation and hope? To test their faith?

Note that this was the tenth time of complaining. Num 14.22. 'Often reproved, suddenly destroyed'. Ask from Numbers 13.26-30 what were the good points and the bad points in their reply. Was their description accurate on facts? What did it leave out? Jericho's walls may have been 7 ½ to 9 metres high and 5 metres thick, made of mud bricks unstable due to lack of binding straw. Its total population was no more than 1500 against potential army of 600 000. Their fears were unrealistic. They did not calculate that God had promised them the land and it was up to him to find a way of achieving it.

Do you ever face a problem in the future and dread it, but find afterwards that it is not so

bad. Have you ever felt that way about an exam, or a visit to the dentist, or whatever? Matt 6.30. *If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

Can you think of something that is worrying you and instead commit it to God for the future and do what he wants you to do with your life at the moment. *Seek first the Kingdom...*

Beware of someone who is always looking at the problems in the church, instead of seeing that God wants to work through the problems. Romans 8.36-37

The time had come for God to judge and punish the people of Canaan through the Israelites so they would be successful.

Ask what should have convinced the people that God had helped them and could help them further? E.g. delivery from Egypt, miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, daily miracle of providing food.

God offered to destroy the Israelites and make a replacement nation from Moses' family. How did Moses respond to this test? Numbers 14.13-19. He argued from the good reputation of God, on the basis of the nature of God himself as *slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, yet punishing, as having forgiven them before.*

Notice the two sides of God's reaction to their unbelief. Num 14.20-35. He forgave the sin but punished them by keeping that generation out of the land of promise. Even when forgiven, people have to suffer the consequences of their sins. People tend to forget this.

There is the danger in each of our lives that we live to please ourselves and miss what God wants to do in us, for us and through us in his church and world. Can you give any modern examples to the class?

You could mention how Joshua later became the great leader in Canaan, and Caleb is also mentioned as a man of faith in the book of Joshua.

## **5) APPLICATION**

Encourage the pupils to pray constantly that God will help them to be obedient to his commands and to live trusting in his power and grace to work out what he wants in their lives, because Jesus is raised from the dead with all power available to his people.

Memory verse.

Deut 8.2 *Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.*

## LESSON 25

God Builds His Covenant Nation

### ENTERING THE PROMISED LAND

Scripture Text - Joshua 1:1-9; 3:1-17.

#### AIM OF LESSON

To summarise the events of the entry into Canaan.

To set it in the broad perspective of their purpose and the covenant promises of God.

To consider some of the stages of Joshua's development before he became a leader, to remind pupils of the importance of education and development in faith.

To reinforce the principles underlying Joshua's success.

To show some application to the life of people today in their obedience in faith to Christ.

#### BACKGROUND NOTES

Some forty years had passed since the Exodus from Egypt. Apart from three, all the generation that left Egypt had already died, leaving their children to enter the Promised Land. Moses himself was barred from the Land, due to his unbelief, anger and scorn, at a further spate of grumbling of the people, which he could not handle. He had been asked to provide water desperately needed in the desert but struck (instead of asking) the elevated rock (representing Christ in his glory as provider, rather than at the first striking of the rock in his humiliation. 1 Cor 10.4) For his action he was barred from entry. The last straw had broken the back of the camel. Numbers 20.12.

The land was largely under-developed, '*flowing with milk and honey*' used for cattle, rather than for growing crops. There would be problems, as the rainfall was intermittent over two periods, unlike the constant supply of water they had from the River Nile. A 'Mediterranean' climate.

The River Jordan was stopped up some twenty miles up river, at Adam, perhaps by a fall of earth. God was able to block the river at the precise moment they needed it even though it was several days late from the original programme. Think also of the anticipation of the Israelites at eventually getting across the river and dread of what might happen if the river overcame the obstruction, and burst over them in the crossing as it did with the Egyptians at the Red Sea.

The events immediately after entry were also a severe test of faith as the Israelite men were all circumcised, putting them out of action, due to blood loss and pain, for days. The army of Jericho was less than ten miles away and could easily have killed many of the Israelites, but they trusted God. Cf. Genesis 34. 24-25. Consecration had its cost, but it showed faith. You may prefer to omit this point.

There may be too much in this lesson for a class, so feel free to select what is most relevant to the class.

## SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

### A) Introduction

You might begin with the anticipation before a birthday, or holiday, or a family wedding, where everything seems to be geared for the future event.

Or you might begin by showing a map of the area pointing out the natural direct entry point from the South, along the main roads, and then God's preferred route through the hostile nations of the East Bank, to enter mid-way in the country at a fortress point, Jericho.

Everything depended on the promise of God to take them across. Ultimately our lives must depend on God and his faithfulness.

### **Notice the various promises of God:**

God would give them the land.

They would own every place they walked so they had positively to claim all the area. It would not fall automatically into their hands. So the Christian must claim each of God's promises for himself and work them out in his own life.

Note the extent of the area promised, from the Euphrates to the Nile. Show this on a map. Israel never really controlled all that area due to the sins and unfaithfulness of the Kings especially from Solomon's time. The land they actually controlled most of the time was much smaller. Also the North and South spent so much of their strength in fighting each other that they weakened each other greatly.

Note that modern Jews take this promise to themselves so are very unwilling to give land to Arabs, thinking that they have God's promise of the land for them, in the narrower sense of the land occupied by the Twelve Tribes, as a homeland. (I do not agree with this interpretation of the promise.)

God gives the Christian many promises but they need to claim them, otherwise they will not get the blessing of God (2 Pet. 1:3, 2 Tim. 2:20). Encourage the pupils to consecrate their lives totally through faith to Christ.

God promised Joshua that he would be with him as he had been with Moses. Encourage pupils to think of how God helped other Christians to inspire them to be faithful in their own way. Encourage them to read Christian biographies and perhaps you might recommend some, (or give them as Sabbath School presents).

Joshua was promised that nobody could effectively oppose him, so he was not intimidated by any opposition. You might suggest that we are easily intimidated and silenced by some other person. You might be able to explore this area of teenage uncertainty. Paul asked his friends to pray that he would have courage to speak, as he should.

God would never forsake him. Where did Jesus promise the same thing to his disciples? (Matt 28.19-20)

### **1) REAL ENCOURAGEMENT Joshua 1.6-9**

You might talk about the ways God prepared Joshua, over a long period of time, for the job, as he did with King David before he killed Goliath or before he was accepted s king. The class may see the need for patient preparation for what God can do with them in the future. Joshua was the grandson of the chief of the tribe of Ephraim. Moses chose him as his personal assistant and gave him charge of a contingent to fight the Amalekites, in a battle won

through the continuing prayer of Moses. He was one of the twelve spies sent to Canaan, and one of the two who brought back a favourable report saying that they could conquer the land with God's help. Numbers 13,14. While Moses was on the mount at Sinai with God, Joshua acted as his representative. He spent time in worship in the Tabernacle, worshipping and praying to God. He must have learnt something from the patience, courage and faith of Moses. When he was appointed to cross the Jordan he must have been about seventy years old. The struggles that the people had in Canaan were examples for us of the types of struggles that God will bring into our lives to test and work through us. 1 Cor 10.11. Try therefore to give modern parallels that will relate to the life of the pupils.

Notice the priority and repetition of '*Be strong and very courageous*'. You might discuss how important standing up for what you believe is to the development of character and usefulness. You might discuss some examples relevant to the pupils' lives.

He had to be careful to obey all the commands God gave to Moses, basically what we find in Genesis to Deuteronomy. Then he would be successful, as he would have God's blessing. He was to talk about what he read in the Scripture, cf. Deuteronomy 6.4. He was to think about Scripture morning and evening. How can the class develop a regular pattern of Bible reading? You might mention the available Bible reading schemes for their level, and encourage their use. Some may be interested in memorizing more Scripture.

You might talk about success as based on godliness rather than how others assess success. Cf Psalm 37.4 *Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this:* Psalm 1. Joshua was told not to get discouraged. Some may be able to talk about getting discouraged about things. God here gives one reason for not being discouraged, as God is with Joshua. 1 Cor 15. 57-58 gives another reason. *But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.*

## 2) REAL HELP Joshua 3

1. The Covenant Box was to lead the procession. The principle is that God guides people.
2. There was a separation of a thousand yards before the army followed, reminding them of the holiness of God.
3. The priests had to walk to the flooding river in the faith that God would open the river for them with a miracle. We need to visualise what God can do for his people, even though they cannot see how, or when, he will work. Faith is essential.
4. The blessing only came as they were about to walk on the water, just as the leper was cleansed by Jesus only as he believed, obeyed and set off to see the priest for him to pronounce him clean. Naaman was cleansed only as he washed in the river Jordan. When you pray you need to claim God's promise and believe then God may act. (Some might like to see how difficult faith is by asking for a volunteer to be blind-folded and then told to fall backwards, in the faith that someone would catch him, to keep him from falling. Be careful!)
5. Discuss the faith of the priests as they stood for hours in the middle of the river as the people marched past. How must they have felt?
6. Think of the memorials they set up of twelve stones on the riverbed and twelve from the

river on the bank. How can we put down markers of what God has done for us to remind us later of his faithfulness? Does anyone think of keeping a diary? Is there anything that God has done for you that you could share with the class, or your friends? Is the Bible itself such a record of God in history for us?

7. Think too of how this miracle and answer to prayer must have affected the local people. How does the faith of the class affect their friends and show the reality of Christ's work in people's lives?

### **3) APPLICATION**

Suggest the class think of some verse, some promise they can claim, or some situation where they should stand up more for what they believe.

They might pray for some Christians living in Communist or Muslim countries where Christians are being persecuted and find it very difficult to 'Be strong and very courageous'.

#### **Memory Verse Joshua 1.8 (Other Bible versions are acceptable.)**

*Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.*

## **LESSON 26**

God sends His Covenant King

### **WHO IS THE COVENANT KING?**

Scripture Text - Matthew 1:1-25; Luke 1:30-33

#### **AIM OF LESSON**

To show that Jesus was the Covenant King whom God had promised to His people and for whom they had been waiting for hundreds of years.

#### **BACKGROUND NOTES**

The purpose of tracing the genealogy of our Lord is to show that the promises made to David, that he should be an ancestor of the Messiah, are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The promise had already been made to Abraham that, through one of his descendants, the whole world would be blessed (Genesis 22:18). This was a direct reference to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The generations listed in Matthew chapter 1 are divided into three eras of fourteen generations each (vs. 2-6, 6-11 and 12-16), ending with Joseph the husband of Mary, making him the legal father of our Lord.

The coming of the Messiah was all of grace and had nothing to do with any virtues shown in the Children of Israel. Note the four women mentioned in the genealogy: Tamar (a foreigner of doubtful reputation), Genesis 38:13-15; Rahab (also a foreigner and a prostitute), Joshua 6:17; Ruth (a Moabitess), Ruth 1:4; and Bathsheba (an adulteress), 2 Samuel 11:2-5.

The argument which Matthew wants to put forward here is that, although born of a virgin mother, Jesus was, nonetheless, a true descendant of David, because Joseph was in fact legally married (pledged to be married - v. 18) to His mother Mary.

#### **SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**

##### **A. Introduction**

Ask the class about their ancestors. Who were they? What did they do? Suggest that most of them may know personally only parents, grandparents and perhaps great-grandparents but not many others. Complete Section A in the Students' Worksheet. Ask the students if, for example, they think that having very rich parents, or a minister for a father, or someone who is very famous for an uncle, makes any difference to them as a person. Are they any better than the person whose parents are poor, or, perhaps, whose uncle is out of work?

The Jews took a great pride and interest in their ancestry and set great store by it. Matthew, being a Jew himself, knew that his readers would be very interested in what he had to say.

So what did he say? He told them that the Covenant King, for whom they had been waiting for so many years, had come and set out to prove to them, by means of Jesus' genealogy, that He really was the Messiah, the Son that God had promised to Abraham and to David. What then can we learn from this genealogy?

## **1. PROMISES CONCERNING THE COVENANT KING**

### **(a) Who were Jesus' ancestors?**

- (i) From Abraham to David, fourteen generations. Read together Genesis 22: 15-19 and explain in a few sentences the context of these verses. Note the promise which God made to Abraham in v.18. Explain that this is a direct reference to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was to be a descendant of Abraham.
- (ii) From David to the Exile, fourteen generations. Read 2 Samuel 7:12-17. In these verses God promises David that, through his seed (a descendant of his), He will establish an everlasting Kingdom. See also Psalm 89: 3,4 and 2 Samuel 23: 5. Use all three references to explain the significance of the promise of an everlasting Kingdom arising through the seed of David, i.e. the coming of Christ the King, whose Kingdom will be everlasting.
- (iii) From the Exile to the birth of Christ, fourteen generations. After the Exile God spoke through His prophets about the coming of Christ. Malachi was one such prophet. Read Malachi 3: 1-3. Complete No. 1a in the Students' Worksheet.

Each of these periods was important to the Children of Israel

- They were a chosen people from whom God would send His King.
- In David's reign the glory of the kingdom of Israel was at its height.
- The Exile brought Israel back to purity of worship.

Each pointed to Christ. The failure of human kingdoms showed their need for more than a human king. The Exile and events which followed, showed the power of sin in the lives of God's people and their need of a Saviour. The genealogy, then, shows that Jesus Christ is the promised King, for whom God's people had been looking.

Ask the class if this is the kind of ancestry they would expect the promised King to have. Imagine the reaction of the proud Jewish people in Matthew's time. Was he just trying to shock them? Or had he some other purpose? He wants to show us that, no matter what or who our forefathers were, we cannot earn grace from God. The Pharisees thought that, because of their wealth and religion, they would earn favour in God's eyes but Matthew helps us to see that these things are of no consequence. God has given us salvation, free, and it has nothing to do with who we are or what we can do ourselves. Jesus was born, not in a palace, like an earthly king, but in a stable. He was not wealthy, like earthly kings, so He understands us if we happen to be poor, or

appear to be worse off than many other people. He understands human weakness because He was human as well as Divine.

(b) God is faithful to His promises

Complete No. 1b in the Students' Worksheets.

## **2. THE BIRTH OF THE COVENANT KING**

Read Matthew 1: 18-25 and discuss these verses. Note the reference in v.23 to the promise given many years earlier in Isaiah 7: 14. Complete No. 2a(i and ii) in the Students' Worksheets.

## **3. THE PERSON OF THE COVENANT KING**

Read also Luke 1: 30-33, setting these verses very briefly in their context. Use these verses, together with Matthew 1:18-25, to complete No. 3 in the Students' Worksheets.. Point out that this same Jesus was the Covenant King, the Messiah, whom God had promised to His people at various points in their history. This is the One for whom they had been waiting for hundreds of years. Did all the Jews in Matthew's day believe that He was the promised King and Messiah? The Lord Jesus Christ is King and Saviour of the Gentiles as well as the Jews. Is He accepted as such today?

## **4. APPLICATION**

To be a Christian is to acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as the Covenant King, as our King and Saviour and to submit to His rule. Discuss what this means in our daily lives.

## LESSON 27

God sends His Covenant King

### THE KING UPSETS MAN'S STANDARD OF VALUES

Scripture Text - Matthew 5: 1-26, 38-48

#### AIM OF LESSON

To show what the Christian's character must be radically different from the world's and he must have a deep inward righteousness of the heart.

#### BACKGROUND NOTES

A jot - the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet

A tittle - a tiny projection in some Hebrew letters

Raca - you fool

Matthew 5:43 - shows the blatant distortion of the Law by the Scribes and Pharisees (Leviticus 19:18)

1 Samuel 16:7 - The Pharisees' righteousness was outward and formal. Only an inward righteousness of the heart will please God (Romans 3:10-13; John 3:3).

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### A. Introduction

Film stars, sports personalities, politicians, businessmen etc. are often envied by other people because of their fame, success, social standing, possessions, looks and popularity. In Matthew 5: 3-12 Jesus taught His disciples about the character of the Christian, the one who is truly happy and blessed. Jesus' standard of values is very different from those of the world. Complete Section A in the Students' Worksheets.

### 1. THE CHRISTIAN'S CHARACTER

Read Matthew 5:1-12

Briefly discuss each beatitude, highlighting the contrast with the world's values.

Verse 3: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit'

This means acknowledging our spiritual poverty before God: we have nothing to offer to God and so we look to Him in utter dependence. The 'poor in spirit' have submitted to Christ's rule as King in their lives and are citizens in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Verse 4: 'Blessed are they who mourn'

This is sorrow for sin which leads to repentance. We must be convicted of our sins and must mourn for them before we can experience the joy of sins forgiven, of being in a right relationship with God, and of being comforted by Him.

Verse 5: 'Blessed are the meek'

Meekness is not weakness in character but having a true view of ourself as God sees us. It is an awareness of being totally undeserving of anything from God and amazement that God thinks of us and treats us as He does. Read Romans 8:17 to explain the blessing promised at the end of this verse.

Verse 6: 'Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness'

Hunger and thirst are strong needs that demand satisfaction. Read Psalm 107: 9 and stress the promise. True happiness (blessedness) will be ours if we are concerned about being in a right relationship with God and living holy lives.

Verse 7: 'Blessed are the merciful'

'Merciful' means having a sense of compassion and a desire to relieve suffering, e.g. the good Samaritan. The person who has received mercy from God should in turn show mercy.

Verse 8: 'Blessed are the pure in heart'

'Pure' means being without hypocrisy, and being cleansed. Thus to be 'pure in heart' means that we have a sincere, undivided love for God, and we are cleansed from the guilt and power of sin. The Christian sees God in nature, in the events of history, through the Scriptures, and will see God face to face in glory.

Verse 9: 'Blessed are the peacemakers'

Every Christian is meant to be a peacemaker. This may mean learning to keep silent on certain occasions, e.g. not repeating things when you know they are going to harm. It may mean apologising to someone, or reconciling two friends who have fallen out. The peacemaker is a child of God, the supreme Peacemaker (Colossians 1:19,20): this shows the family character.

Verse 10: 'Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake'

Persecution is life-threatening for some Christians; for others it may come in the form of being ignored or being made fun of because of their love for Christ. We are not to retaliate, be full of self pity, or just "grin and bear it"; but we are to "rejoice and be glad", while focussing on Christ's suffering for us.

These eight qualities ought to describe every Christian. They are not describing eight separate kinds of Christians. Similarly, the eight blessings are for every Christian. Complete No.1 in the Students' Worksheet.

## **2. THE CHRISTIAN'S INFLUENCE**

Matthew 5:13-16

- (a) **Salt:** Consider the different uses of salt. It is used in cooking to add flavour, it preserves, it cleanses etc. Discuss how the Christian ought to function as the "salt of

the earth". For example, other people often modify their language or raise the level of their conversation when a Christian is present. Stress the potential of the Christian to influence for good those with whom he mixes. How can a Christian lose his saltiness?

- (b) **Light:** Consider the effect of light in a dark place. A Christian's deeds and words should be such as to show people their sin and to point them to Jesus 'the light of the world'. Complete No. 2 in the Students' Worksheet.

### 3. CHRIST, THE CHRISTIAN AND THE LAW

Matthew 5:17-20

God's Law is everlasting; therefore, the Christian must obey all that Law. Jesus did not abolish the Law: He came to fulfil it by obeying it completely; He also explained what obedience to the Law really means. It is easy to be kind to those who are kind to us; but Jesus says that this is not the sort of obedience that pleases God. He warns that outward, formal obedience is not sufficient - it is only self-righteousness. God is only pleased by the righteousness of His own Son, which becomes ours only by faith in Christ. Then, by walking in step with the Spirit of Christ we are enabled to live lives that are really God-honouring. Complete No. 3 in the Students' Worksheets.

### 4. THE CHRISTIAN'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

- a) Avoiding anger (Matthew 5:21-26)

It is too easy to restrict the application of the sixth commandment to murder. Jesus taught that a person who commits murder and someone who is angry with his brother are both sinners and both subject to judgment. Angry thoughts and insulting words are like murder in God's sight. Discuss the two practical examples, given in vv. 23-26, of how to avoid sinning in this area.

- b) Non-retaliation (Matthew 5:38-42)

The Pharisees extended the principle in Leviticus 24:20 to justify taking personal revenge. Jesus gives four examples of non-retaliation. He does not encourage dishonesty or teach that wrong-doers should not be punished; but we are not to seek *personal* revenge or take the law into our own hands. Vengeance must be left to God, while we must strive to overcome evil with good.

- c) Active love (Matthew 5: 43-48)

God expects Christians to be different from those around them. Jesus teaches us to love our enemies, and to pray for those who hate us: to be like our Father in heaven. How revolutionary this is! Complete No. 4 in the Students' Worksheets.

### 5. APPLICATION

- a) Reflect on the eight qualities of the Christian. Is this what you are like?  
b) Is your religion formal and outward and ritualistic?  
c) How will the world know that you have Christ's righteousness?  
d) How can you show love to those who do not like you?  
e) Is there someone to whom you are not speaking or against whom you hold a grudge?

Complete No. 5 in the Students' Worksheets.

## LESSON 28

God sends His Covenant King

### THE KING'S RADICAL IDEAS ABOUT ENJOYING LIFE

Scripture Text - Matthew 6: 19-34

#### AIM OF LESSON

To show that we can have true joy and peace in life only when we make the correct choices.

#### BACKGROUND NOTES

In Matthew 6: 1-18 Jesus is dealing with the private life of the Christian - giving, praying and fasting. In verses 19-34 He is dealing with the Christian's business in the world, questions of money, possessions, food, drink, clothing and ambition. He calls the Christian to be different from all those following the popular culture of materialism. He places two alternatives before us at various points in these verses:-

- a. Two treasures (on earth and in heaven) (vs. 19-21)
- b. Two bodily conditions (light and darkness) (vs. 22, 23)
- c. Two masters (God and mammon) (v. 24)
- d. Two preoccupations (our bodies and God's Kingdom) (vs. 25-34)

Jesus helps us to make the choice by pointing out the folly of the wrong way and the wisdom of the right.

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### A. Introduction

Ask the class if they ever worry. What sort of things do they worry about? (exams, maths, pocket money, friends etc.) On the other hand, what kind of things do they enjoy? Complete Section A in the Students' Worksheets. Most likely you will find that the worries come more easily to mind than the things enjoyed. In the lesson today Jesus talks about these things. Turn to Matthew chapter 6.

##### 1. A QUESTION OF TREASURE (vv.19-24)

Read these verses.

In verses 19 and 20 we are told about two types of treasure for which we can search. Give examples of the type of treasure mentioned in v.19, e.g. money, possessions etc. What two reasons does Jesus give for not looking for this treasure? For what treasure should we be seeking? Some of the treasures which God promises to His children can be listed on the worksheet.

Verses 19 and 20 do not mean that it is wrong for people to work hard and to save and make

provision for the future. We see this clearly from other passages of Scripture. Read the following references together and discuss each briefly in order to illustrate this point:-

- (a) Genesis 41: 33-36. God did not condemn Joseph for advising Pharaoh to store up grain for future use.
- (b) Proverbs 6: 6-8. Solomon pointed to the ant as an example of common sense in providing for the winter.
- (c) 1 Timothy 5: 8. Paul describes the believer who makes no provision for his family as being worse than an unbeliever.

Read verse 21. Here we are warned that 'where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.' This means that whatever type of treasure we decide to gather for ourselves, it will be in these things that we will place our love, our hope and our trust. Whether this will lead to true and lasting joy will depend on the treasure.

If we are to have true joy in our lives we must lay up spiritual and not earthly treasure. Complete No. 1 in the Students' Worksheets.

### **2. A QUESTION OF LIGHT** (vs. 22, 23)

Jesus now turns from comparing how well treasure lasts to comparing the benefit to be derived from two conditions i.e. whether we can see or whether we are blind. Read vs. 22 and 23. Here Jesus is saying that it is through the eye that man receives light. However, in order to function properly the eyes must not be diseased or affected in any way, otherwise blurring of vision and perhaps blindness will occur. Just as a person has natural eyes to receive natural light, so he can have a spiritual 'eye' to receive spiritual light. If we ask God to teach us and guide us then His light will fill our minds and hearts and our lives will shine out for Him. However, if this 'eye' remains darkened or blinded by sin and God's light is not allowed to shine into it, then man will not see God's purpose for his life. See the answer to Shorter Catechism Question 1. 'What is man's chief end?' It is a two-fold purpose. Complete No. 2 in the Students' Worksheets.

If God's light shines into our hearts and minds then we will have true joy and our lives will bring honour to Him.

### **3. A QUESTION OF MASTERS** (v.24)

Read this verse together.

Jesus now states the most basic choice of all, the choice between two masters (i.e. whom we are going to serve). It is a choice between God and mammon. 'Mammon' is an Aramaic word for wealth. It may therefore be interpreted as money or anything else which the world would regard as wealth or gain. Some people would suggest that it is possible to serve two masters simultaneously, e.g. God on the Sabbath and mammon on weekdays. God outwardly and mammon inwardly. However, Jesus declares that this compromise is

impossible. It is possible for a person to work for two employers but this is not what Jesus means. He is talking about slaves and masters. A slave is owned totally by his master and, therefore, no slave can be the property of two owners. Anyone who divides his allegiance between God and mammon has already given it to mammon, since God demands our entire devotion, i.e. placing everything, money, time, talents etc. at His disposal and in His service. Loving God is not a matter of emotion but of heart, soul, strength and mind (Mark 12: 30). This love cannot be shared with anyone else. Complete No. 3 in the Students' Worksheets.

We will experience true joy in our lives if we seek to love God with our whole being and put Him first in everything.

#### **4. A QUESTION OF AMBITION (vs. 25-34)**

Only when the above three questions are settled are Christians ready to hear how they should behave. They should not be anxious about mammon for it has been rejected but will concentrate their mind and energy on God for they have chosen Him. Read verses 25-34. Complete No. 4 in the Students' Worksheets. Why is it wrong for Christians to worry? Jesus uses three examples from nature around Him in His argument:-

- (i) v. 26 If God cares for the birds and feeds them, surely He will provide food for us who are created in His image.
- (ii) vs. 28, 29 If God provides the plants with such beautiful flowers, He will certainly give us our ordinary clothes.
- (iii) v. 30 If God provides for the short-lived grass, He will surely provide for His children who have eternal life.

In verse 34, the Christian is told not to worry about tomorrow. Worry is a waste of time, thought and nervous energy. So, if Christians are not spending time worrying about ordinary things, how should they spend their time? Jesus gives the answer in v. 33 (a). There are two things for which we should be seeking.

The Christian becomes a subject in God's Kingdom when the Holy Spirit makes him aware of his sin, confessing it, asking God to forgive him and believing that Christ died on the cross to make this possible. God then expects him to turn every department of his life over to Him, home, family, school, friends, pocket-money etc., so that He can show him how to deal with these. He will also give him a concern that those around him at home and abroad may become subjects in His kingdom too.

God is righteous and just. Christians should be scrupulously honest in everything. Their lives should be a challenge to others. Finally, when God demands that Christians do something for Him and they are obedient, He never makes them the losers. In v. 33 (b) Jesus gives a promise. Fill in No. 4 (d) on the worksheet. Give examples of what 'all these things' might be, food, clothing, provision for all our needs.

## 5. APPLICATION

Read Philippians 4: 19. This verse is a good summary of this section.

True joy and peace will fill the Christian's life if he concentrates on God and His work rather than worrying about his bodily needs.

## LESSON 29

God sends His Covenant King

### THE POWER OF THE KING

Scripture Texts - Matthew 8: 1-34

#### AIM OF LESSON

To show Jesus' power over sickness, nature and Satan.

#### BACKGROUND NOTES

The miracles which Jesus performed while on earth were not an end in themselves. They were a visual evidence of the power of the Kingdom of God. Jesus' aim was not to put an end to suffering and death at that time because the fullness of the Kingdom had not yet come. His miracles were primarily revelations of His amazing power.

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### A. Introduction

Complete Section A in the Students' Worksheets.

##### **1. THE POWER OF THE KING OVER SICKNESS (8:1-15)**

Consider the leper in verses 1-4. He knew that Jesus could heal him if He was willing. It was evident from his condition after Jesus said, 'I am willing, be clean' that his festering sores had disappeared instantly. This was confirmed by the priest, as implied in v. 4.

The healing of the centurion's servant and the healing of Peter's mother-in-law were some of the many miraculous signs which accompanied Christ's ministry on earth - visible signs of His power over sickness. Complete No. 1(a-c) in the Students' Worksheets. Ask the students if they think that Jesus' healing power was confined to Bible times, or do we still see it in evidence today? Explain that sickness and suffering will not end on this earth because there is still sin in the world. This does not mean that Jesus' power is any less today than it was when He was on earth (Romans 1: 4). It is only in heaven that God promises that there will be no more sickness or suffering (Revelation 21: 4).

We are often allowed to suffer to keep us living by faith so that we will realise more and more our dependence on God. From the example of Paul we see that Jesus' power can be manifest in weakness. When Jesus was on earth He showed His power to cure sickness and disease. The One who cleansed the leper is able also to cleanse the sinner (Matthew 9: 6).

##### **2. THE POWER OF THE KING OVER NATURE (8: 23-27)**

Ask the class why they think man has no control over nature. Read vs. 23-27. The answer,

of course, is that God created it and thus He has complete control over it. Jesus spoke and the wind and waves obeyed. No earthly king has power over nature as Jesus has. He controls the universe and every minute detail of life is under His power. Therefore we know that, when we trust in Him, we can turn to Him as the disciples did when they were in trouble, knowing that He has power to do all things. Complete No. 2(a-g) in the Students' Worksheets.

### **3. THE POWER OF THE KING OVER SATAN (8: 28-34)**

Complete No. 3 in the Students' Worksheets.

Discuss the power that Satan can have over people and relate this to your students, e.g.

- a. the danger of playing with ouija boards,
- b. going to have their 'fortune told',
- c. reading their 'stars' in a magazine,
- d. seance meetings and
- e. false cults, e.g. Hare Krishna, Divine Light, Moonies etc.

Impress on the class the dangers of these practices. They all originate from people who allow Satan to rule their lives. Satan is very wicked and is also very powerful and very subtle. But there is Someone who is more powerful than Satan. At this point read the account of the healing of the two demon-possessed men in vs. 28-34. Jesus' power was evident in the fact that the demons recognised Jesus as the Son of God; they were frightened and then the men were freed from the demons. Even though we do not hear much of demon possession today, Satan is still very active, as he was then.

### **4. APPLICATION**

Complete No. 4 in the Students' Worksheets.

If we have given our lives to Christ, we have already experienced this power because Jesus overcame the power of Satan on the Cross. Challenge the class as to whether they have the power of the King in their lives.

## LESSON 30

God sends His Covenant King

### RESPONSES TO THE MESSAGE OF THE KING

Scripture Text - Matthew 13: 1-23

#### AIM OF LESSON

To show the different responses to the message of God's Word.

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### A. Introduction

Many of the class will have seen a farmer sowing seed in the spring. The farmer drives his machinery into the field but as he sows the seed it may not all fall on good soil. So, when he gathers his harvest in the autumn, parts of the field may produce an abundant crop whilst others may not. One day Jesus told a parable about a farmer sowing his seed. The sower in Jesus' story entered his field on foot and scattered the seed by hand. Jesus then went on to explain the meaning of the parable. Read the Scripture passage. Complete Section A in the Students' Worksheets.

#### 1. THE DIFFERENT RESPONSES

##### a) Verse 4. Some seed fell on the path and the birds came and ate it up.

As the sower scattered his seed he could not avoid the edge of the field where there was a path. The ground was hard from many people walking on it. Thus the seed fell but lay exposed and the birds soon ate it up. A hard heart is not prepared to receive the message from God's Word. It does not listen attentively when God's Word is preached, and the message is neither remembered nor obeyed. Complete No. 1(a) in the Students' Worksheets.

##### b) Verses 5 and 6. Some seed fell on stony or rocky places.

Some fields have a large stony or rocky area in them. Because of this the soil in that area is very shallow. When the seed is sown and starts to grow, it has difficulty putting down roots from which it obtains its nourishment. It grows up too soon and, when the sun beats down, it quickly withers and dies. The shallow heart starts with good intentions to obey, but quickly forgets this resolve when under pressure. Complete No. 1(b) in the Students' Worksheets.

##### c) Verse 7. Some seed fell among thorns

As the sower continued scattering his seed some fell among thorns. Ask the students if they have ever sown seeds or planted young plants in the garden. To enable these to keep growing they must continually weed the area to give the young plants and seedlings a chance to mature. There is not enough nourishment in the soil for both weeds and plants.

The seed sown by the farmer germinates and starts to grow but, as time goes on, the thorns are stronger and they soon overpower the crop and choke it, making it unfruitful. The overcrowded heart is so distracted by the pleasures and possessions of this life that there is no time for God: He is squeezed out of daily life. Complete No. 1(c) in the Students' Worksheets.

d) Verse 8 Some seed fell on good ground and brought forth fruit.

The sower continues his work. He is now away from the edge of the field and his seed is falling on a well-ploughed and prepared area. He expects to reap a good harvest. Even here it will not be a harvest of equal return. Some parts will yield 100 times, other areas 60 times and still others 30 times what was sown. Complete No. 1(d) in the Students' Worksheets.

## 2. APPLICATION

Read Galatians 5:22-23 and complete No. 2 in the Students' Worksheets.

## **LESSON 31**

God sends His Covenant King

### **AN ASTONISHING FOUNDATION FOR THE KINGDOM**

Scripture Texts - Matthew 21:1-11; 26; 27

#### **AIM OF LESSON**

To help the students understand that the disciples of Jesus expected Him to set up an earthly kingdom but, by offering Himself as a substitute at Calvary, He bought redemption for sinners and so set up a heavenly Kingdom.

#### **BACKGROUND NOTES**

The Scripture portion for this lesson is long and no attempt should be made to read it all in class. Commentators generally seem to be agreed that the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem probably took place about five days before the Crucifixion. It is most important that the class understand that Jesus died on the Cross as a substitute. Instead of individual sinners bearing the wrath of God, Jesus has endured it on their behalf. As a consequence, Satan has been conquered and Jesus Himself has paid the ransom price. This is known as atonement and is a key doctrine of our faith.

#### **SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**

##### **A. Introduction**

Ask the students who they think is the most important person in the country. Who is responsible for making important decisions which will affect life in our country? Explain that a modern monarch may be only a figure-head, not having real power, but this has not always been so. It used to be normal and expected of the king that he led his people into battle and behaved very much as the leader of his people. The Jews, at the time Jesus came to earth, were under the control of an oppressive Roman Empire. They were not the nation they once were when they had their own ruler as we read in Old Testament times. They knew, having read the prophecies of the Old Testament, that a Messiah, or Saviour, would come. They were looking to this Messiah to overthrow their oppressors and set up a kingdom on earth. Read Section A in the Students' Worksheets.

##### **1. TRIUMPHANT ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM**

Read Matthew 21:1-11. Two of these verses are direct fulfilment of prophecies from the Old Testament. Ask the class to compare Matt. 21: 9 with Psalm 118: 26 and Matthew 21: 4, 5 with Zechariah 9: 9. Complete No. 1(a) in the Students' Worksheets. Discuss these verses. The disciples of Jesus could obviously see that He was the fulfilment of these prophecies. This was a joyful and moving occasion when the Jews welcomed Jesus as their King into their capital city of Jerusalem, fully expecting Him be the future deliverer of their nation.

Ask the students to complete Section I in the worksheet.

## **2. A SHATTERING TURN OF EVENTS**

How high were the hopes of the disciples that day when they confidently expected Jesus to set up His earthly kingdom in Jerusalem. What happened during the next few days? Complete No. 2 in the Students' Worksheets. Was this what they were expecting? Did this fit in with their hopes of a few days earlier? The crowds who had welcomed Jesus as their King only a few days before now changed in their attitude towards Him. How could all this be explained? What had gone wrong?

## **3. JESUS' ATTITUDE - SCRIPTURE MUST BE FULFILLED**

Jesus knew all the time how things were going to work out. He had come into the world for one specific purpose. 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners' (1 Timothy 1: 15). His whole life had been a preparation for this great task. Now that the time had come, He went forward steadfastly and in full submission to His Father's will (Luke 9: 51). When the disciples just could not understand what was happening Jesus gave them His explanation - 'This has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled' (Matt. 26: 56). Complete No. 3 in the Students' Worksheets.

## **4. GOD'S PLAN**

Jesus had to die. Hundreds of years earlier, when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, there arose a great barrier between God and man. Because God was a just God He had to punish sin and so every man, woman and child was condemned to die. God could have left things this way which is what man deserved, but in His great love, He gradually revealed to man His wonderful plan by which some would be saved from this punishment. God's plan was that His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was perfect and had never sinned, would die on a cross as a substitute for sinners, i.e. in their place. Complete No. 4(a) in the Students' Worksheets.

Even before Adam and Eve were sent from the Garden of Eden, God graciously gave them a wonderful promise (Genesis 3: 15). Read this verse together. Explain that God said He would put enmity between Satan and one special descendant of Adam and Eve, the Lord Jesus Christ. Satan would bruise Jesus' heel. This referred to Jesus' death on the Cross when Satan would use all his power in the fight against God's Son. However, Jesus would crush Satan's head. The Lord Jesus would have an overwhelming victory on the Cross over Satan and over death. Satan's power would be defeated and Jesus would set up His heavenly kingdom. Complete No. 4(b) in the Students' Worksheets.

## **5. JESUS SETS UP HIS HEAVENLY KINGDOM**

Therefore it was only by dying on the cross that the Lord Jesus could set up His heavenly Kingdom. That day, in the darkness, God's wrath poured down upon His Son, our substitute. God cannot look on sin and so He turned His back on His beloved Son as He bore the

punishment for our sins. Little wonder Jesus cried out in agony, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (Matt. 27:46). God the Father and Jesus His Son were both willing to go through this great agony so that the power of Satan could be broken and men and women, boys and girls, could become members of the heavenly Kingdom here on earth and then go to be with the King in heaven for ever. Complete No. 5 in the Students' Worksheets.

#### 6. APPLICATION

Complete No. 6 in the Students' Worksheets. Discuss the amazing grace behind God's promise in John 3:16.

## LESSON 32

God sends His Covenant King

### THE KING RISES VICTORIOUS

Scripture Text - Matthew 28

#### AIM OF LESSON

To show that Jesus Christ has overcome the last enemy - death, and is now Lord of all.

#### BACKGROUND NOTES

(i) The resurrection is understood to have taken place after sundown on Saturday night i.e. sometime after 6 p.m., just after the end of the Jewish Sabbath.

(ii) Some critics have tried to make it appear that there is conflict between the gospel accounts of this incident. Matthew mentions that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to the tomb. Mark adds Salome (16: 1). Luke adds Joanna and says that there were others (Luke 24:10). John mentions only Mary Magdalene but implies there were also other unmentioned women (John 20: 1, 2). What Matthew is doing is abbreviating the account for conciseness. Nor is there any conflict about the time when the women's visit to the tomb took place. John 20: 1 states 'while it was still dark', Mark 16: 2 states, 'when the sun had risen', Matthew 28: 1 states at 'dawn', and Luke 24: 1 states, 'very early in the morning'. The probable solution is that, when the women started out on their journey, it was still dark and, when they arrived at the tomb, the sun had risen.

(iii) Luke 24: 2 and John 20: 12 speak of two angels, while Matthew and Mark speak of only one. However, there need not be any conflict for neither Matthew nor Mark state that there was only one angel. They simply omit to mention the angel who was silent.

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### A. Introduction

Ask the students if they can recall the biggest disappointment or the saddest occasion of their lives. Complete Section A in the Students' Worksheets. Those people had either forgotten, or did not believe, that Jesus said He would rise again (26:32).

##### **1. THE RESURRECTION** Read vv. 1-10

After the Sabbath was over, the two women came to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body in order to prevent rapid decomposition (Mark 16: 1). Imagine their fear and excitement when they arrived at the tomb. Complete No. 1(a) in the Students' Worksheets. There was a violent earthquake (v. 2), the appearance of an angel of the Lord in shining white and the startling announcement that the Lord was risen. The women wasted no time in going to tell the disciples and we can imagine how overjoyed they were when they were met by the risen Lord. Complete No. 1(b) in the Students' Worksheets. The resurrection of Christ has

enormous implications for the believer. Paul enlarges on these in 1 Cor. 15. See especially vs. 12-26. Because Christ has risen and overcome the last enemy, which is death, it thus guarantees that all who die believing in the Lord will also be raised from the dead on the last day. Complete No. 1(c-d) in the Students' Worksheets.

## **2. THE GUARDS' REPORT** Read vv. 11-15

Complete No. 2(a-d) in the Students' Worksheets. The Jews were obviously concerned to conceal and discredit the fact of Jesus' resurrection. The Jewish ruling council, the Sanhedrin, met and bribed the Roman guards to say that the body was stolen by the disciples while they were asleep. The Sanhedrin then gave the guards an assurance that Pilate, the Roman Governor, would not harm them. Thus the Sanhedrin, after being responsible for handing Jesus over to death, are now resorting to lying in order to cover up what had taken place. However, for the thoughtful person, the guards' story is impossible to believe. If, in fact, all the guards were sleeping, then how did they know what had happened? Obviously, if they were sleeping, they would not have seen anybody. There have been many other attempts by sinful men to discredit the reality of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. There is the 'swoon' theory - this is that Jesus did not really die at all and that the cool tomb revived Him. There is the 'hallucination' theory - this is that those who apparently saw the risen Jesus were only suffering from hallucinations and did not see Jesus. However, the only reasonable and satisfactory solution is that Jesus arose triumphantly from the dead to be our Saviour and Lord and He continues to live to reign over us and make intercession for us (Heb.7: 25). The disciples were prepared to die for believing that Christ truly died and rose again. No one would be prepared to die for a known lie.

## **3. THE GREAT COMMISSION** Read vv. 16-20

Jesus had promised to meet His disciples in Galilee (26: 32). He kept His appointment but the disciples needed to be reminded (v.10). When the disciples saw Jesus they fell down before Him in an act of worship. Some however, doubted. From the very beginning even the disciples had difficulty believing that Jesus had actually risen from the dead (Luke 24: 10, 11). Thomas was the last doubter to believe in the resurrection (John 20: 24-29). Jesus' last words are words of command and comfort which have become known as 'the Great Commission'. Because of Jesus' life and death on our behalf the Father caused Him to be raised from the dead and to ascend to heaven where He is now 'King of kings and Lord of lords'. This gives Christ's disciples great confidence. They are to go and make other disciples in all nations. All of Christ's commands are to be observed. Christ has promised to be with His church always.

## **4. APPLICATION**

Because Christ reigns victorious He is able to save to the uttermost all who come to Him. Complete No. 4 in the Students' Worksheets.

## LESSON 33

Studies in the Shorter Catechism

### THE FOURTH PETITION

Catechism Question 104

Scripture Text - Proverbs 30: 8-9

#### AIM OF LESSON

To show that we need to depend on God every day to supply our needs.

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### A. Introduction

Display to the class some cut-out advertisements which encourage over-eating or over-indulgence. Alternatively, ask the class to describe some television advertisements which do the same. Then ask them to think about the quantity of food in their homes. Would there be enough for one day, one week, one month or six months? Do we need to ask anyone for our food? Now picture a beggar on the streets of Calcutta. He literally does not know where his next meal is coming from or if he is going to have a 'next meal'. He needs to beg for every meal. What a contrast! Yet Jesus told His disciples that they should ask God for their daily bread - not just expect to receive it (Matthew 6: 11). Ask a student to read Q. 104 and the answer to it. Complete Section A in the students' worksheet.

##### 1. 'Give'

A person who has to ask for something cannot afford to be proud. Jesus teaches that we must ask for our daily needs to be supplied. Thus we acknowledge humbly that we are dependent on God. A man once met a boy carrying a loaf of bread. He asked him where he had got the loaf. 'From the baker', was the reply. 'Yes, that is right, but where did he get it?' 'He made it,' said the boy. 'How did he make it?' 'With flour'. 'Where did he get the flour?' 'From the miller; he ground the corn.' 'Where did the miller get the corn from?' 'He got it from the farmer.' 'Yes, but where did the farmer get his corn?' 'Oh, from God', said the boy. 'Then you got your loaf from God.' God comes very far back in the story but in the end the boy saw that it was God who had supplied the bread. Complete No. 1 in the students' worksheet.

##### 2. 'Us'

Why did Jesus not say, 'Give me this day my daily bread?' He was teaching us never to be selfish in our prayers. There is more than enough food in the world for everybody. The problem is distribution. There are 'butter mountains' in Europe, grain surpluses in the USA,

fruit being ploughed into the ground in France etc. As we pray 'Give us our daily bread', we should remember that it is part of our responsibility to see that other people have enough to eat. How can we do this? Complete No. 2 in the students' worksheet.

### 3. 'This day'

Here refer to Exodus 16: 1-20. When the Children of Israel were starving in the wilderness and God sent them manna, He sent only one day's supply at a time. They were to gather only enough for their immediate needs. They had to learn to live one day at a time. What a lesson in trust and dependence on God! God does not give His gifts of grace in one great lump all at once. He gives to us in instalments to match our needs. When we pray, asking God for our daily bread, we are telling God that we are trusting Him for one day's needs at a time. Complete No. 3 in the students' worksheet.

### 4. 'Our daily bread'

A child once prayed, 'Give us this day our daily bread and sausages too.' He had grasped the point that this is a prayer for all kinds of food, not just bread. However, it is meant to cover more than this - all our material needs - everything that is necessary for the life of man in this world. Which phrase in the Catechism answer tells us this? ('... that ..... we may receive a competent (adequate) portion of the good things of this life ....') Isn't it wonderful that the God who dwells in heaven, whose name is to be hallowed, cares about us, even down to such details as our daily bread. However, we are not told to pray for luxuries or for more than we need, nor are we promised such things. Complete No. 4 in the students' worksheet.

### 5. Application

- (a) Do I trust God daily for all I need?
- (b) Do I thank God for my 'daily bread'?
- (c) Am I doing anything to see that others have enough to eat?

Consider the questions in No. 5 of the students' worksheet.

## LESSON 34

Studies in the Shorter Catechism

### THE FIFTH PETITION

Catechism Question 105

Scripture Texts - Psalm 51: 1; 66: 18; Matthew 6: 4, 15.

#### AIM OF LESSON

To show that not only do we need regularly to ask God to forgive our sins but that we should not expect Him to do so if we have an unforgiving attitude to other people.

#### BACKGROUND NOTES

The petition does not say 'Forgive us because we forgive.' It does not say 'Forgive us on the ground of the fact that we forgive.' The literal meaning is 'Forgive us our sins in proportion as we forgive those who have sinned against us.' This is very clearly illustrated by the parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18: 21-35. The importance of this petition is shown by the fact that at the end of the prayer our Lord comments on and enlarges upon it (Matthew 6: 14, 15). Our forgiveness of our fellowmen and God's forgiveness of us cannot be separated.

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### A. Introduction

Complete Section A in the students' worksheet.

Emphasise the following facts throughout the lesson:

- (a) Our need for forgiveness
- (b) Forgiveness provided by Christ
- (c) God's forgiveness of us is linked with our willingness to forgive others.

##### 1. Our need of God's forgiveness

Ask a pupil to read Romans 3: 23. Emphasise the ALL. We are all sinners and do not measure up to God's standards. The Bible says that God hates sin and will punish it. Read Romans 6: 23. Therefore, in order to come into a right relationship with God, we need to have our sins dealt with. We need God's forgiveness. Complete No. 1 in the students' worksheet.

##### 2. Forgiveness provided by Christ

Look up 1 Peter 2: 24. Jesus was punished for our sins. In the Lord's Prayer we refer to our sins as 'debts'. Debts are obligations that remain until payment is made. Payment for our debts has been made by Christ. God will forgive us our debts for Christ's sake when we repent and trust Him for salvation. Does this mean that we have no further need of

forgiveness? If our sins have been already dealt with do we need to pray each day 'forgive us our debts?' Read the answer to catechism question 82. We need to pray for forgiveness every day. As we go through life we become soiled and tarnished by sin. The problem of sin in our lives has already been dealt with by Jesus Christ but we must seek daily forgiveness for our failure to live up to the standards God sets for us. Complete No. 2 in the students' worksheet.

### 3. God's forgiveness of us is linked with our willingness to forgive others

Read the parable of the unforgiving servant (Matthew 18: 23-34), allocating four students to read the parts of the king, the two servants and the narrator. A great debt was forgiven. The debtor went free. Such a one ought to have been thankful, saying, 'What a wonderful thing to have my debt settled so that I am free.' This man should never have been the same again. But he was not changed. He was not prepared to forgive a man who owed him a comparatively small sum. Christ went on to say that if we have an unforgiving spirit towards someone else God will not forgive us our sins. See Matthew 18: 35 and 6: 14, 15. It is not easy to forgive others. How is a Christian enabled to forgive others? See the latter part of the Catechism answer - 'by His grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others.' We do not do this in our own strength. Complete No. 2 in the students' worksheet.

### 4. Application

Our attitude towards others ought to reflect God's attitude towards us. We ought to forgive as we have been forgiven. See Luke 7: 47 and 1 John 4:19. Discuss the questions in No. 4 (b) of the students' worksheet; then complete Nos. 4 (a) and (c).

Learn the Memory Verse on the worksheet.

## LESSON 35

Studies in the Shorter Catechism

### THE SIXTH PETITION

Catechism Question 106

Scripture Texts - Psalm 19: 13; Matthew 26: 41; 1 Corinthians 10: 13; Ephesians 6:13

#### AIM OF LESSON

To show the nature and source of temptation and how we can overcome it.

#### BACKGROUND NOTES

We are taught in the Lord's Prayer, to pray not only for provision of our present needs (4th petition), pardon for our past failures (5th petition), but also for protection and guidance in the future in this 6th petition. In the Bible the word 'temptation' is used in at least two different senses. It may mean 'to try', or 'to test', in the confident expectation that the temptation will be overcome, e.g. Genesis 22: 1; Hebrews 11: 17; Matthew 4: 1; James 1: 2, 12 or to 'entice to evil', in the hope that man will fall to temptation, e.g. 2 Samuel 11; Matthew 19: 3; 22: 18. Some cases like Joseph (Genesis 39) and Job may include both meanings. In this petition we ask that God will deliver us from the second kind of temptation that we might be spared the situation where we are tempted and are liable to fall. So we pray He will deliver us from the evil one.

#### SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

##### A. Introduction

Complete Section A in the students' worksheet. Ask the students what kind of tests they can think of - driving test, medical test, intelligence test, etc. Ask them to think of some situation or circumstance when their character or patience was tested. Point out the following:-

##### 1. The difference between being tested and being tempted

In the Bible temptation is used in at least two different senses.

- (a) The testing of our faith in some trying and difficult situation in order to strengthen and improve our faith in God, e.g. Abraham (Gen. 22:1); Jesus (Matt. 4:1).
- (b) Temptation that entices us to evil in order that we might sin, e.g. Jesus (Matt. 19:3; 22:18).

Jesus probably uses the word in this 6th petition to refer to the second meaning, i.e. temptation that leads to sin. However, to see a distinction in meaning in every case is not always clear, because in some situations temptation can include both meanings, e.g. Job. God allowed Satan to tempt His servant to deny his faith in God. At the same time, God was using the incident to test and eventually strengthen his faith. So we can see that God

can test us and bring good out of any situation. However, Satan can also use it to his advantage. He can, through it, tempt us to sin. Complete No. 1 in the students' worksheet.

## 2. The source of temptation

(a) The apostle James teaches emphatically that God is NOT the source of temptation to evil (James 1: 13). He goes on to tell us in James 1: 14-15 that one source of temptation to evil is our own evil desires, i.e. there is a sinful tendency in each of us. Complete No. 2 (a) in the students' worksheet.

(b) Matthew 4: 1-11 teaches us that the main source of temptation is Satan. Jesus was 'tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin' (Hebrews 4: 15). To be tempted is not sin, but when we yield to temptation, as we often do, it becomes sin. Satan is the Christian's chief enemy and comes to us in various forms. He can appear, for example, as a subtle serpent (Gen. 3: 1), as an attractive angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14), or as a hostile roaring lion (1 Peter 5: 8). He often also comes through another person (Matt. 16: 21-23). Complete No. 2 (b)(i)-(iii) in the students' worksheet.

Another source of temptation is the world and the things in it (1 John 2: 15-16). The worries, riches and pleasures of this life can cause us to turn aside from loving God. Complete No. 2 (b)(iv) in the students' worksheet

## 3. How to overcome temptation

The nature and source of temptation is not as important as how we react to it. For example, if a student is doing an intelligence test in school, it really doesn't matter who set the questions; it matters more how he / she answers the questions. Therefore time spent wondering who set the questions is time wasted. It is no different when we find ourselves tempted. However, we must be careful to:-

(a) Keep close to Christ and be filled with His Spirit. When Peter followed at a distance and mingled with Christ's enemies, he denied his Lord (Luke 22: 54-61). Complete No. 3 (a) in the students' worksheet.

(b) Memorise and meditate on Scripture. It was the sword of the Spirit which Jesus used to overcome Satan (Matt. 4: 4, 7, 10). Complete No. 3 (b) in the students' worksheet.

(c) Pray to God who is faithful and will provide a way of escape (I Cor.10: 13; Psalm 19: 13). Complete No. 3 (c)-(d) in the students' worksheet. (The answers are: common, controlled, conquered).

## 4. Application

Complete No. 4 in the students' worksheet. Discuss Psalm 19:13.

## **LESSON 36**

Studies in the Shorter Catechism

### **THE CONCLUSION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Catechism Question 107

Scripture Texts - 1 Chronicles 29: 11-13; Daniel 9:17-19; Revelation 4: 1

#### **AIM OF LESSON**

To show that the confidence we have that our prayers will be heard and answered is in God alone and not in ourselves.

#### **BACKGROUND NOTES**

This conclusion of the Lord's Prayer is not found in the earliest manuscripts. We do not know for certain whether our Lord uttered these words at this point or not. However, this conclusion is very appropriate and summarises what our Lord did teach and what Scripture generally teaches, namely, that we should express praise and thanksgiving to God on whom we are dependent for all our needs. It is fitting indeed that such a doxology of praise should conclude not only the Lord's Prayer but the whole of the Catechism on Scripture truth. 'Amen' in the Old and New Testaments was used by the people of God to express their assent to a sentence or charge and to associate themselves audibly with prayers offered on their behalf (Deuteronomy 27: 14-26; I Corinthians 14: 16; Revelation 5: 14). When we use the word 'Amen' (meaning 'So let it be'), we declare our assent to all that the Lord's Prayer contains, confirming the expression of our desires and signifying our belief that our petitions are heard by God.

#### **SUGGESTED PRESENTATION**

##### A. Introduction

Suggest to the class that if we have a problem we often go to our parents for help. They will do all they can to help us sort it out. However, sometimes even our parents are unable to resolve our problems completely. They are very willing to help but they do not always have all the answers.

If we are Christians, God is our heavenly Father. He wants us to pray to Him each day. He is always willing to help His children but, also, He is always able to help them. Knowing this, we can come in prayer to our Father with confidence that He will hear and will answer.

The conclusion to the Lord's Prayer should confirm to us why Christians should confidently expect their requests to God their Father to be granted. Read together the answer to Catechism No. 107. Complete Section A in the students' worksheet.

### 1. Confidence in prayer because of God's mercy

We should 'take our encouragement in prayer from God only.' This means that when we pray our confidence is not to be in ourselves but in God alone. We do not deserve to come to pray to God or to have our prayers answered by Him. It is only because of His love and mercy to us, His children, that we can come at all. Complete No.1 in the students' worksheet.

### 2. Confidence in prayer because of God's person

We should 'in our prayers .. praise Him, ascribing kingdom, power and glory to Him.' The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer is full of praise to God. The Lord's Prayer begins with worship. It is right that it should end with praise; praise three times over.

#### **(a) 'For Thine is the kingdom'**

Here we are encouraged to pray to God as our King. We can only do so if we are His loyal subjects, committed to doing His will in everything. If we can pray 'Thy will be done' and really mean it, then we can pray to God with confidence. Complete 2 (a) in the students' worksheet.

#### **(b) 'And (Thine is) the power'**

Our confidence here is in the power of God, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, that He will grant us our requests provided they are in accordance with His mind and will. Jesus demonstrated that Divine power in the miracles which He performed while He was on earth. He was willing and able to help all who came to Him in faith. He still is. Discuss with the class how little we stop to think of how powerful God is. The Bible tells us that 'even the wind and the sea obey Him' (Mark 4: 41). Do we pray in faith to God who 'is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think' (Ephesians 3: 20)? Complete No. 2 (b)(i)-(iv) in the students' worksheet.

#### **(c) 'And (Thine is) the glory'**

In all our praying our chief concern should be the glory of God. How often His Name is dishonoured, His day desecrated, His Word unread, His house neglected and His Son rejected. The glory of God is seen in His holiness, justice, mercy, wisdom, knowledge etc., revealed chiefly in His Son Jesus Christ. The apostle John was able to say Jesus 'dwelt among us and we beheld His glory' (John 1: 14).

Discuss with the class our concern for the honour and glory of God. This should be the ultimate motive for Christian living, witness and prayer. Complete 2 (c) in the students' worksheet.

In the Lord's Prayer we ascribe to God the kingdom, power and glory 'for ever'. That means these will never end, these will never decrease, these will always belong to God and to Him alone. Thoughtfully read together 1 Chronicles 29:11-13 and see how David was enabled to

express praise to God. Note that all three words, 'kingdom', 'power' and 'glory', are found in these verses.

### 3. Confidence in prayer summarised in one word

'And in testimony of our desire, and assurance to be heard, we say, 'Amen'. Use Background Notes to discuss the significance of the word 'Amen'. Complete No. 3 in the students' worksheet.

### 4. Application

- I am able to pray to God with confidence, not because I deserve this, but because of God's mercy to me.
- Each time I pray, thanksgiving and praise should be included in my prayer. This is one way in which I can glorify God.
- I will read over the memory verse each day this week and endeavour to learn it.

Complete No. 4(a)-(b) in the students' worksheet.