

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IRELAND



**SENIOR
TEACHER'S
HANDBOOK**

Book 1

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IRELAND

**SABBATH SCHOOL
TEACHER'S
HANDBOOK**

SENIOR GRADE
BOOK 1

Copyright
Committee on the Instruction of the Young
Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland
Revised 2000

Contents

	Page
1. The omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence of God	1
2. The sixth commandment	4
3. The seventh commandment	8
4. The eighth commandment (1)	11
5. The eighth commandment (2)	13
6. The ninth commandment (1)	15
7. The ninth commandment (2)	18
8. The tenth commandment (1)	21
9. The tenth commandment (2)	24
10. The Word of God.....	27
11. The Son of Man	31
12. The Son of God	34
13. The one Mediator.....	37
14. The Redeemer.....	40
15. The King of kings.....	42
16. The Bridegroom of the Church.....	44
17. Why did Christ die?.....	47
18. The way to heaven.....	50
19. For whom did Christ die?	52
20. The Effectual Call	54
21. The new birth.....	56
22. Repent and believe.....	58
23. Justified by faith alone.....	60
24. Adopted	63
25. Assurance	66
26. The inner conflict and sanctification	69
27. Kept to the end.....	71
28. The glory that awaits us.....	73
29. The sovereignty of God	76
30. The unchanging God	80
31. The holiness of God.....	83
32. The love of God.....	86
33. The wrath of God.....	88
34. Man separated from God	91
35. The blessing of knowing God.....	94
36. Knowing God	98

P R E F A C E

THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IRELAND

Sabbath School Materials Published by

The Committee on the Instruction of the Young

Senior Course - Age 16 - 19

These materials form part of a three year course for senior students and are 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 each teaching period is devoted to helping the teacher master the biblical subject matter and to see that subject as it relates to the student. 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 student. Student hand-outs are available with each lesson to be used either in class or at home. This material is brief and aimed at securing the student's interest and enforcing the lesson with particular directness.

The Committee sincerely thanks the many members of the church who prepared these materials for publication. 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 OMNISCIENCE, OMNIPRESENCE AND OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD

Scripture Text - Psalm 139

AIM OF LESSON

To show that God is not limited in knowledge, in power or by space.

BACKGROUND NOTES

'Omniscience' - This is a word used to denote the infinite, perfect and all comprehensive knowledge which God has of all things past, present and future. This knowledge was not acquired by God but was always complete and present in His mind.

'Omnipresence' - This word means to be present everywhere at the same time and denotes the fact that God is not subject to any limitations but fills every part of space with His entire being.

'Omnipotence' - This word indicates that God has unlimited power and the mere exercise of His will can bring to pass whatever He wishes to do.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

The 139th Psalm is one of the most excellent of all the Psalms. In it the Psalmist deals with three very important characteristics of God.

1. His Omniscience

Ask the students if they have ever watched a quiz programme on television. Stress that even clever people frequently get an answer wrong. Help them to understand that at best our knowledge is very scanty and is limited to those things with which we are familiar or have read about. God is not like this. His knowledge of all things, present and future, is perfect. The word used to describe this kind of knowledge is **omniscience**. Using the Background Notes explain in more detail what this word means. Ask the students to read Ps.139:1-6 which deals with God's perfect knowledge. Stress that God knows

- (a) all our actions (v. 2),
- (b) our thoughts both now and in the future (v. 2) and
- (c) our words even before we speak them (v. 4).

The Psalmist was truly amazed at the profound knowledge which God had of him. In a later Psalm he describes God's knowledge as infinite (Ps.147: 5) and compared with Him our

knowledge is insignificant (Isaiah 40: 28).

Ask the students how we obtain knowledge. (Satisfactory answers would include reading books, talking with other people and from experience.)

God is not like this. He does not become more wise as time goes by because He is a God of all knowledge (1 Sam. 2: 3).

He never took counsel with anyone, nor did anyone ever teach Him the paths of judgement and knowledge or show Him the way of understanding (Isaiah 40: 14).

2. His Omnipresence

With the help of the Background Notes explain what this word means. It is slightly easier for us now with the advent of television and radio to appreciate the fact of someone being present in many places at the one time. For example, the newscaster presenting the national news on television appears simultaneously in homes as far apart as John o' Groats in the north and Land's End in the south or Enniskillen in the west and London in the east. Yet this analogy is totally inadequate to describe God's ability to be present everywhere at the same time. The newscaster's presence in the home is dependent on many factors totally outside his control and indeed his presence or absence can be controlled by the person in the home simply by switching the T.V. on or off. Moreover, although the newscaster appears to be in each home, he himself has no knowledge of it and cannot react to those things which are taking place in that home. In contrast, not only is God everywhere but He comprehends completely what is taking place throughout every part of the heavens and the earth. Unlike the newscaster no one can take steps to prevent Him being present. In fact, God is not contained even by space itself because He is above space (1 Kings 8:27). When we say that He fills space we should not get the idea that He is diffused through space like a drop of orange juice in a glass of water or that one part of Him is present in one place and another part in some other place. He is present everywhere although He may not be present to the same degree in every place.

Having explained the meaning of omnipresence ask the students to read Ps.139:7-12. Stress that these verses show that we cannot escape from God, no matter where we go, for He is everywhere both in heaven and on earth.

3. His Omnipotence

Explain to the students what this word means. Emphasise that God's power is (a) unlimited (Gen.18:14) and (b) unrestricted by space (Matt.19:26). It is shown in the works of creation (Ps.139:14-16, Jer. 10:12-13) and also in the marvellous work of salvation (Eph.1:17-21). However, there are things which God cannot do. He cannot do that which is contrary to His

own nature. For example, He cannot lie (1 Sam.15:29), He cannot change (James 1:17), He cannot be tempted with evil (James 1:13) and He cannot deny Himself (2 Tim. 2:13).

APPLICATION

1. We can hide things from men but we cannot hide anything from God who has a perfect knowledge of all things. We may deceive our fellow men concerning the true state of our hearts but we cannot deceive God. He knows us as we really are. Challenge the students to look at their own lives to see if there are any elements of hypocrisy in their daily living and if such should be the case help them to see that they are not fooling God by this.
2. It is easier to resist temptation when we are in the presence of, and have the support of, other Christians. God is always with us wherever we may be. He sees all our actions and we are constantly under His scrutiny. A true appreciation of this fact is a powerful deterrent when Christians are being tempted to sin.
3. God is all powerful. We can see this in the works of creation, e.g. the stars. The fact that God is all powerful should strengthen our faith in the ability of God to carry out His promises. It should also be a comfort to those who have sunk to the very depths of depravity that God can reach them and save them.

Complete the students' worksheet.

LESSON 2

Studies in The Shorter Catechism

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT

Catechism Questions - 67, 68, 69

Scripture Texts - Genesis 9:1-7; Exodus 20:13; 21:28-30; Numbers 35:9-34;
Deuteronomy 22:8; Matthew 5:21, 22

AIM OF LESSON

To teach the sacredness of human life, the duty of safeguarding our lives and the lives of others, and the seriousness of murder.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Catechism

Question 67 - 'kill' specifically means 'murder'. Judicial killing, i.e. execution for murder and killing in a just war are not forbidden.

Question 68 - 'endeavours' suggests that we 'make the utmost effort.'

Question 69 - the word 'unjustly' implies that there is a taking away of life that is done justly, e.g., capital punishment;
'whatsoever tendeth thereunto' refers to actions which may result in the taking away of life.

Scripture

Genesis 9:6 - This verse, interpreted in the light of Scripture (e.g Acts 25:11; Romans 13:4), contains a command that a murderer's life be forfeited. The reason given for this is that the victim was made in the image of God.

Exodus 20:13 - the Hebrew word for 'kill' is always used of unlawful killing, i.e. murder: 'You shall not murder.'

Exodus 21: 28 - 30 for 'ox' in this passage substitute a modern equivalent, something which can be as lethal if not kept under control, e.g., a car!

Matthew 5: 21, 22 Christ shows that the sixth commandment looks far beyond the actual committing of a murder; murderous thoughts and words are also heinous in the sight of God. In these verses Christ tells us that cherished anger is a form of murder and must be punished.

Showing contempt for a man by calling him 'Raca' or 'fool' must also be punished. Folly in the Bible does not mean silliness but rather moral corruption and godlessness.

These are three ways in which a man may be 'written off'; being angry with him unjustly, thinking of him with contempt, or, worst of all, thinking of him as valueless in the sight of

God. Each of these things, Christ says, is akin to murder, for it 'writes off' man made in the image of God, and for that there must be adequate punishment.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Some time ago a boy murderer in America blamed his crime on watching too many murders in television plays. His defence was not accepted, but it made the point that our assessment of human life can be influenced by what is portrayed in fiction. In real life, too, we have become accustomed to violence and murder. We are no longer shocked and appalled by violent death as we once were. This shows a real need for the study of the commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill', in order that we might recapture a sense of the value of human life.

1. THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

The sixth commandment rests on the principle that God has made human life sacred. From Genesis 9:6 we learn that this is so because man is God's image-bearer. 'Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed: for in the image of God He made man.' In this chapter we have three of God's decrees concerning life - the propagation of life (vs.1,7); the sustenance of life (2b, 3: cf., 8:22) and the protection of life (2a, 5, 6). We see that the protection afforded man is twofold: first with reference to animals and second with reference to man. The requirement that an animal be slaughtered when it has killed a human being, simply serves to accentuate the sacredness of human life.

Consider with the class some of the ways in which society ignores and undermines this sanctity, e.g. abortion, the taking of an unborn life; euthanasia, the ending of life to put someone out of pain or misery.

Complete students' worksheet No. 1.

2. THE STANDARD WHICH GOD SETS FOR HUMAN LIFE

Romans 13:9 tells us that a brief summary of the commandments relating to our neighbour is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' Here is the positive standard which God sets and, applying this to the sixth commandment, it means that we must in the first instance take care of our own lives. As the Shorter Catechism (Q.68) puts it; 'The sixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavours to preserve our own life, and the life of others.'

Discuss with the class the following points in relation to this:

- (a) Suicide

(b) Harmful habits (e.g. gluttony, smoking, drugs, etc.)

(c) Participation in dangerous sporting activities (e.g. boxing, motor racing, etc.)

See No. 2 on the worksheet.

Our concern must be not only for ourselves but also for our neighbour. We are not merely forbidden to kill him; we are commanded to love him. That is the ultimate fulfilling of the whole law, not simply the sixth commandment.

3. THE SANCTION WHICH GOD IMPOSES IN PROTECTING HUMAN LIFE

God's imposition of capital punishment (Gen.9:6) leaves us in no doubt of the seriousness with which He views the sin of murder. In any discussion of capital punishment it should be remembered that this is not a penalty which man imposes: it is God's requirement: 'For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practises evil'. Man is merely God's instrument in execution (Romans 13:4).

There has been much argument concerning capital punishment as a deterrent. This is not the issue. Capital punishment is to be imposed for murder, whether it deters or not, because it is the punishment which God has appointed for murder. That is the sanction which God imposes, to show how greatly He values human life.

(The teacher is advised to study Chapter 4 (pages 27ff) of the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland for a detailed discussion of this subject.)

4. THE SAFEGUARDS WHICH GOD PROVIDES FOR HUMAN LIFE

God's command against murder took note of forms of killing which were not deliberate. In Numbers 35:9-34 we are taught that manslaughter, i.e., unintentional killing, is very serious. For those who had killed accidentally there were cities of refuge to which they might escape from the avenger of blood. This illustrates the seriousness with which God viewed accidental killing. The one responsible was freed from capital punishment but he was compelled to live in exile until his death, or until the death of the high priest made it possible for him to return.

See Exodus 21:28-30. The responsibility of people for accidents, when they know they have neglected proper precautions, is the modern equivalent of a breach of the ancient statute in verse 29. For example, the driver of a car is in charge of something that can be far more lethal than an ox. If he fails to take care and drives recklessly, or drives when his

judgement is impaired by alcohol, is not the blood of his victim as rightly laid at his door as at the door of the owner of a dangerous animal long ago? The farmer or mechanic who ignores safety regulations when using machinery is equally culpable. God will hold us responsible for care we should have taken but did not take.

See Deuteronomy 22: 8. Here we have another example of the safeguards which God provides. There are precautions that parents must take for the protection of their children. Some modern equivalents would be the use of fire-guards, car-seat belts, the safe storage of dangerous medicines and chemicals, etc. If we neglect these precautions, God tells us that we may bring the guilt of blood upon our houses.

Complete No. 4 on the worksheet.

5. THE TEST WHICH CHRIST APPLIES TO OUR EVALUATION OF HUMAN LIFE

Read Matthew 5: 21, 22. Murder is not only an act. It is possible to commit murder in one's heart by having murderous thoughts or by saying cruel and unkind things about someone. In these verses Christ mentions three ways in which this may occur:

- (1) by being angry with a person unjustly;
- (2) by thinking of a person with contempt;
- (3) by thinking of a person as valueless, as a worthless, useless being.

Stress the importance of having a right attitude towards fellow human beings and consider with the class the questions posed in Number 5 on the students' worksheet.

CONCLUSION

We should remember the importance and value of human life and that God requires us to respect and protect it at all times.

LESSON 3

Studies in The Shorter Catechism

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

Catechism Questions - 70, 71, 72

Scripture Texts - Exodus 20: 14; 2 Samuel 11: 1-5, 14-17, 12:1-14; Malachi 2: 14-16;
Matthew 5: 26-32, 19: 3-9; 1 Corinthians 6 : 9 - 20; Ephesians 5: 3-7

AIM OF LESSON

To define adultery, and show the damage it does and how we can be delivered from impurity.

BACKGROUND NOTES

The teacher should familiarize himself with the story of David and Bathsheba as found in 2 Samuel Chs.11 and 12.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

In 1977 a daily newspaper, in an article on divorce in Britain, made the following comment: '... it's more complicated (now, in Britain) to sell a house than end a marriage.... all we need to do is fill in our application form, post it off - and for the price of a stamp our marriage will be officially tossed in the dustbin for ever.' How different this is from what God says regarding marriage: '...what God has joined together, let not man separate' (Matthew ch.19: 6). It is of the utmost importance then, that Christians should consider questions of sex and marriage and know what God has to say concerning them, so as to be able to speak out against marital unfaithfulness and, maybe more importantly, be kept from accepting and adopting (if even unawares) the standards of a permissive and sinful society.

Much of God's teaching regarding marriage and sexual purity is summed up in the seventh commandment: 'You shall not commit adultery.' The Bible leaves us in no doubt what adultery is.

1. DEFINITION OF ADULTERY

- (a) Adultery takes place when one partner in a marriage is involved in a sexual relationship with another person. (It is not adultery, but fornication, when two unmarried persons are involved in a sexual relationship.) We have a practical illustration of adultery in the story of David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel Chs.11, 12). In these chapters we are shown the disastrous consequences of adultery and the possibility of forgiveness for it. Note that David committed this sin at a time of

idleness. Instead of leading his men in battle, he stayed behind in Jerusalem and was lying on his bed in the evening when temptation struck. It is also worth asking whether Bathsheba was as careful and as modest as she might have been. Complete Nos. 1 and 2 on the worksheet.

- (b) Adultery takes place when there is divorce, except on Biblical grounds, followed by remarriage. Christ gives us this teaching in Matthew 5: 32 and 19: 9. Here He also gives the reason why adultery of this nature is a very serious thing: '.. what God has joined together, let not man separate' (Matthew 19: 6).

Emphasise the following points:

- (i) Marriage is a life-long relationship, dissolved only when one partner dies or there is divorce on biblical grounds.
 - (ii) Divorce is permissible on only two grounds:
 - Marital unfaithfulness, i.e. adultery (Matt.5:32, 19:9).
 - Wilful desertion by an unbeliever (1 Cor.7:15).
 - (iii) Divorce, even when on biblical grounds, is a great tragedy.
- (c) Adultery takes place when we have lustful thoughts. Read Matthew 5: 27, 28. God made men and women mutually attractive to each other. However, as far as the sexual relationship between them is concerned, it must be governed by God's Law. This excludes looking at a person lustfully and seeing him or her merely as an object of sexual gratification. Anyone who does this commits adultery 'in his heart.' In this present age we are all the more prone to be tempted to commit adultery in this way, especially as society has forgotten the God ordained purpose of sex and has placed on it a sordid emphasis along with using it as an object for commercial exploitation. Consider with the class the different ways young people could be tempted into committing adultery in their hearts e.g. nudity in magazines and newspapers, sexually stimulating films or plays on T.V., girls in immodest dress etc. Complete Nos. 3 and 4 on the worksheet.

2. DAMAGE DONE BY ADULTERY

'Look before you leap.' How often do we ignore the advice given in this proverb by doing something without realising the consequences of our actions? Too often we ACT first, and THINK later, sometime with sad consequences. This is usually the case with adultery. Those who commit adultery very seldom consider the harmful effects it will have on themselves and others.

- (a) Adultery strikes at the family

The family is the basic unit of society. God in His perfect plan for the world purposed that a man and a woman should get married, live as one flesh, remain faithful to each other and have children. The children then were to be raised in that home which was to provide for them a stable and loving atmosphere. In the home, children were to learn values: trust, obedience, responsibility, loyalty, decency etc.. This was, and still is, the plan of God for the family. Adultery undermines and destroys this plan. Read Malachi 2:14-16. Some Jews were divorcing their wives to marry foreign women. God was angry with them because, by being unfaithful to the marriage covenant entered into before God, they were ignoring one of the purposes of marriage, namely, to raise a godly seed. The breaking of the marriage covenant, whether by divorce or unfaithfulness, results in the breakdown of stability in the home. Instead of love, there is resentment; instead of trust, there is mistrust; instead of a warm, caring atmosphere, there is loneliness. It is also true that adultery results in the child being set a very bad example, especially regarding the family and its integral role for the well-being of society. If family life crumbles, society as a whole cannot survive. Complete no. 5 on the worksheet.

(b) Adultery is soul-destroying

Read 1 Cor. 6: 9, 10 and Eph. 5: 5, 6. Adultery, like any other sin, can destroy a person eternally. If adulterers persist in satisfying themselves, by continuing in their sinful state, they will bring upon themselves the judgement of God.

3. DELIVERANCE FROM ADULTERY

There is deliverance from adultery. Read 1 Cor. 6: 9 -11. The Corinthians, to whom Paul wrote these words, were living in a most permissive and promiscuous society. They had been guilty of grievous sins, including adultery (v.11). However, the gospel brought about a dramatic change in their lives: 'But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.' Jesus Christ can forgive the adulterer. He can wash away all sin and give that person a new start in life. What does this mean for the adulterer who has sought to use his body for the gratification of his own lustful desires? Read 1 Cor. 6:19, 20.

Complete the worksheet.

CONCLUSION

Adultery, even though an accepted practice in today's permissive society, has disastrous consequences, not only on the individual but also on the family and society. It undermines the plan of God for His world and, therefore, must come under His wrath. There is,

LESSON 4

Studies in The Shorter Catechism

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT (1)

Catechism Questions - 73, 74, 75

Scripture Texts - Exodus 20: 15; Exodus 22: 1-17; Leviticus 6 : 2-5; Amos 8: 4-6; Romans 13: 6

AIM OF LESSON

To show ways in which the eighth commandment may be broken by stealing from man.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Catechism Question 74 - Note the positive side of this commandment. Not only are we forbidden to steal, we are to advance the interests of ourselves and others.

Scripture : Amos 8: 5. This verse speaks of three ways in which dishonest business practices are a form of stealing: skimping the measure, boosting the price and cheating with dishonest scales.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Why is security (e.g., in factories, warehouses, large department stores, etc.) such big business nowadays? It is because people today are ignoring more and more God's commandment, ' You shall not steal.'

What is stealing? Stealing is acquiring something to which one has no right. Stealing may be from God or from man. In this lesson we look at some of the different ways men steal from each other.

1. Theft of property

Read Exodus 22: 1-5. Stealing someone else's property is a serious sin and must be dealt with firmly. This is clearly seen when considering the restitution to be made in each instance, in some cases four or five times the value of the property stolen.

Consider and complete No. 1 on the students' worksheet.

2. Dishonesty in business

Read Amos 8: 5. Here we see three forms of stealing: (1) short weight, (2) overcharging, (3) poor quality goods. This dishonesty is not simply the cheating of man but something which the Lord detests and abhors. See Proverbs 11: 1; 20: 10.

Complete No. 2 on the worksheet.

3. Stealing by finding

To find something and not try to restore it to its rightful owner is stealing (Lev. 6: 2-5). Is this the teaching of the little verse, 'Finders keepers; losers weepers' ?

4. Tax evasion

Read Romans 13: 6 and Luke 20: 25. These verses remind us that it is our duty to pay our taxes. To make a false income-tax return, therefore, is to steal.

Complete No. 3 on the worksheet.

5. Non-payment of debts

Read James 5: 4. If you withhold from a person that which is rightfully his, this is stealing. It is also wrong to borrow and not repay. Such a person is described as 'wicked' (Ps.37: 21).

Consider with the class No. 4 on the worksheet.

6. Gambling

In principle, gambling is also a violation of the eighth commandment. A man who gambles seeks to acquire something to which he is not entitled. Gambling, instead of providing gain earned by honest means, is something motivated by greed and a belief in chance.

Consider and complete No. 5 on the worksheet.

7. Cheating

Read Genesis 27: 35, 36. Recount briefly, from Genesis ch. 27, how Jacob 'stole' Esau's birthright and blessing. Stress the point that it was by deceit that Jacob acquired these. People still steal today by deceit, e.g. cheating in an examination, thereby gaining a higher mark or grade than that to which they would be entitled.

CONCLUSION

The eighth commandment is not merely negative in its application. It has a definite positive application. Read Eph.4: 28. Instead of stealing, one should work, produce and give.

Consider this with the class and complete the last section on the worksheet.

FURTHER BACKGROUND READING:

The Christian and Gambling

The National Lottery by Prof D J McKay

both published by the RP Church of Ireland Committee on Public Morals

LESSON 5

Studies in The Shorter Catechism

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT (2)

Catechism Question - 74

Scripture Texts - Ephesians 4: 28; 1 Timothy 5: 8

AIM OF LESSON

To teach the positive aspects of the eighth commandment.

BACKGROUND

While it is true that the commandment itself only contains the negative injunction, it is, nevertheless, quite legitimate to infer positive truths from the prohibition. If a person is not to steal it follows that there are certain things that he must do in order to take away the temptation to steal. The Shorter Catechism speaks of the '... lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others' and it is this aspect that will be looked at in this lesson. Wealth, in and of itself, is not considered to be sinful; it is the misuse and the sinful desire for riches that is condemned in Scripture.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Just like all the other commandments the eighth does not just tell us what we should not do, it also indicates some of the things that we ought to do. There are two verses that will help us to understand how we can truly keep this commandment. (Read Eph. 4: 28 and 1 Tim. 5: 8.) If the prohibition of the eighth commandment deals with the depriving another of his possessions, the positive aspects have to do with the obligation to make honest provision for ourselves and to seek the good of others.

1. MAKING PROPER PROVISION

We must seek to make adequate provision for our own well-being. If a person has a family to care for, he or she must also endeavour to provide what is necessary for their well-being. There are four things to consider:-

- a) The need for prayer to a covenant God (Matt. 6: 11; Prov. 30: 8).
- b) The obligation to work (Prov. 10: 4; 2 Thess. 3: 10). Help the students to see that work and paid employment are not the same.
- c) The necessity for careful stewardship (Prov. 21: 20). Discuss with the class how this stewardship affects everything that we have.
- d) The requirement of moderation in all things (Titus 2: 12).

Complete parts 1, 2 and 3 on the worksheet.

2. THINGS THAT UNDERMINE OUR WELL-BEING

If we are to 'further' our outward estate there are certain things that will have to be avoided.

- (a) Idleness (2 Thess. 3:10, 1 Tim. 5:13). Go back to discussion on 1(b) and reinforce the lesson that even those who are unemployed should be engaged in some kind of work. Discuss with the students how this applies to them during school or college holidays.
- (b) Failure to acknowledge God in all things (Deut. 8:17-19). There can be a temptation for young people to think that whatever they achieve is due solely to their hard work, initiative or brilliance! It is important that they realise their dependence upon God for all things.

Consider question 4 on the worksheet.

- (c) Anxiety about the provision of material things (Matt. 6: 31). Explain to the class that this does not mean that a person has a 'couldn't care less' attitude; it means that his life is not dominated by anxiety. Point out that such worry is a failure to trust in the living God who has promised to provide for His children.
- (d) Illegal or unworthy occupations. Discuss part 5 on the worksheet. Help the students to see why some occupations may not be suitable for Christians e.g. those involving unnecessary Sabbath working.

All the good things that God provides for His people are to be used not only for their own good but also for the good of others.

Discuss question 6 on the worksheet.

LESSON 6

Studies in The Shorter Catechism

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT (1)

Catechism Questions - 76, 77

Scripture Texts - Genesis. 9: 20-27; Exodus 20: 16; Proverbs 14: 5; 1 Peter 3: 16; 3 John :12

AIM OF LESSON

To show the importance of telling the truth and of safeguarding our neighbour's good name.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Catechism: the phrase 'especially in witness-bearing' in the answer to Question 77 reminds us that the commandment has a reference to the law-court where justice can be done only if witnesses tell 'the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth'. The administration of justice depends on truthfulness and the whole system of law is bound to collapse if evidence is not reliable. Note, however, that truth-telling between man and man and a concern for our neighbour's good name are also involved.

Exodus 20:16. The link with previous commandments is significant. The sixth commandment safeguards a man's life; the seventh commandment safeguards his home; the eighth commandment safeguards his property; the ninth commandment safeguards his good name.

Proverbs 14: 5 is amplified in Zechariah 8: 16, 17. This passage confirms that we must be concerned with truth-telling between man and man and also with true witness-bearing in the courts. Judgements that are true make for the 'peace' or 'well-being' of society. Falsehood is condemned as something that God hates.

Genesis 9: 20-27 should be studied as an illustration of the need to safeguard the good name of others. Ham rushes out to broadcast the news of his father's shame. There is a malicious delight in telling of the downfall of a good man. Shem and Japheth, on the other hand, were concerned to cover up their father's shame.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

C.H. Spurgeon said, 'If all men's sins were divided into two bundles, half of them would be sins of the tongue.' The Bible confirms this by its frequent references to sins of speech. The Epistle of James, for example, has a whole section dealing with this subject (James 3: 1-12).

Outline

1. WHAT THE COMMANDMENT REQUIRES

Read Exodus 20: 16; Proverbs. 14: 5; 1 Peter 3: 16; 3 John: 12 and The Shorter Catechism Questions 76 and 77.

The Larger Catechism gives a comprehensive and challenging list of the duties required: '...the preserving and promoting of truth between man and man, and the good name of our neighbour as well as our own; appearing and standing for the truth; and from the heart, sincerely, freely, clearly and fully, speaking the truth, and only the truth, in matters of judgement and justice, and in all other things whatsoever; a charitable esteem of our neighbours, loving, desiring and rejoicing in their good name; sorrowing for, and covering of their infirmities; free acknowledging of their gifts and graces, defending their innocency; a ready receiving of a good report, and unwillingness to admit of an evil report, concerning them; discouraging tale-bearers, flatterers and slanderers; love and care of our own good name, and defending it when need requireth; keeping of lawful promises; studying and practising of whatsoever things are true, honest, lovely and of good report.' Every item in that list of duties required brings its own challenge.

2. EXAMPLES OF THE WIDE-REACHING REQUIREMENTS OF THE COMMANDMENT

- (a) 'Sorrowing for, and covering of their infirmities.' Is that our response to a tale of someone's failure or weakness? Read Gen. 9: 20-27 with the class. There was a tragic day when Noah, who had known so much of God and of God's grace, planted a vineyard; 'and he drank of the wine and was drunk; and he became uncovered in his tent.' Ham, his second son, saw him lying there in his shame. And he just had to tell it. 'He told his two brethren outside.' But Shem and Japheth had no desire to gloat over their father's shame or to publish it abroad. They 'took a garment, and laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father.' Alexander Whyte comments, 'Let us henceforth begin to be the sons and daughters of Shem and Japheth. Let us refuse to look at, or to be told about, anything that exposes, not our own father or son or brother only, but all other men's fathers and mothers and sons and brothers. Let us keep our eyes shut to the sight of it, and our ears shut to the sound of it.'
- (b) 'Discouraging tale-bearers.' The proof text which the Westminster Divines gave for that injunction is Proverbs 25: 23 (read with the class): 'The north wind brings forth rain; and a back-biting tongue an angry countenance.' Our face can show clearly enough whether we want to listen to gossip or not. The law holds the receiver of stolen goods as guilty as the thief; to listen to gossip is just as bad as to relate it. In fact, if a person wants to pass on a piece of spicy gossip to us, he is giving his estimate of us, for he thinks we will be glad to hear it. If people gossip to us, it is time for us to search and try our own hearts; it is not too hard to make it clear that we are not really interested. Complete part 1 of the worksheet.

3. WHY DO WE BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST OUR NEIGHBOUR?

(a) Because of our pride.

The fact is that the simplest way to boost our own sense of superiority is to run down other people. A motor mechanic will try to prove how good he is by pointing out all the faults of his competitors. To belittle others is a cheap and easy way of exalting ourselves. Bearing false witness is twisted pride.

(b) Lack of love.

In Romans 13: 9 we read, 'You shall not commit adultery ... You shall not bear false witness ... You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' When we gossip, when we run down our neighbour, when we bear false witness, we do not love our neighbour as ourselves. Complete parts 2 and 3 of the students' worksheet.

4. WHY SHOULD WE KEEP THIS COMMANDMENT?

One reason is found in Eph. 4: 25 - 'Therefore putting away lying, each one speak truth with his neighbour.' Why? 'For we are members of one another.' We do not gossip about someone to whom we are joined by ties of love and kinship. We do not bear false witness, because, as Paul declares in Col. 3: 9 and 10, we are a new people - 'You have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man.' If we bear false witness against a neighbour, we cast doubt on the reality of our newness of life. If Christ has made us new people, we will live a new life, including the keeping of this commandment.

APPLICATION

- * Think about your own life and actions :-
- * Do you try to encourage the truth between people?
- * Do you spread gossip about people?
- * Do you always speak the truth, even if it hurts you?
- * Do you rejoice when people are doing well, and sorrow when they are having problems?
- * Are you always ready to listen to good things about people?
- * Do you discourage tale-bearers and gossip?

Complete parts 4 and 5 of the worksheet at home.

FURTHER BACKGROUND READING

WATSON, Thomas - The Ten Commandments

CATHERWOOD, Fred - First Things First (application of the commandment to social and political situations).

WALLACE, Ronda S. - The Ten Commandments, A Study of Ethical Freedom pp. 173 - 181.

LESSON 7

Studies in The Shorter Catechism

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT (2)

Catechism Question - 78

Scripture Texts - Leviticus 19: 16; Psalm 15: 3; Job 1: 6-11; Mark 14: 55-59; Romans 3: 13

AIM OF LESSON

To show the ways in which this commandment is broken; to show how false witness is still borne against Christ and how faulty witness to Him can be corrected.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Catechism

The phrase 'whatsoever is prejudicial to truth' suggests that the prohibitions of this commandment are very far-reaching. The Larger Catechism gives a very full list, including, 'all prejudicing the truth, and the good name of our neighbours as well as our own concealing the truth, undue silence in a just cause, and holding our peace when iniquity calleth for either a reproof from ourselves or complaint to others; speaking the truth unseasonably thinking or speaking too highly or too meanly of ourselves or others ...'

Lev.19: 16 - The prohibition of gossip in this verse is followed by a command not to do anything that would endanger another's life (his blood), suggesting that character assassination is on a par with other ways of threatening life.

Psalm 15: 3 - 'Backbite' is a very vivid word, suggesting, perhaps, biting someone behind his back. 'Slander' gives the meaning better. Literally it means 'going about as a tale-bearer'.

Job 1: 6-11 gives an illustration of how it is possible to bear false witness simply by raising a question: 'Does Job fear God for nothing?'

Mark 14: 55-59 gives the ultimate example of bearing false witness - against Christ.

Romans 3: 13 - Paul in this passage is quoting Old Testament passages which affirm the terrible nature of man's sin. It is significant that this verse from Psalm 5: 9 concentrates so much on sins of speech. The throat is like an open grave, waiting to devour; the tongue and lips are deceitful and poisonous.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Briefly relate the story of Joseph in Egypt. He was a young man who feared God, living in a

strange land. He served Potiphar faithfully and behaved himself well. When enticed by Potiphar's wife and tempted to sin, Joseph refused. As a result, she spread false stories about his behaviour and Joseph was put in prison.

There are many ways in which one can bear false witness against a neighbour. Ask the class to suggest some, such as perjury in court, telling lies about someone out of spite or jealousy, incriminating someone else to divert suspicion from oneself.

Outline

1. TALE-BEARING

One of the commonest and perhaps one of the worst forms of bearing false witness is what the Bible calls 'tale-bearing', in other words, gossip. You hear something about someone that is not very creditable. It is an interesting and spicy bit of news that you find difficult to keep to yourself. You tell it to someone else and on and on it goes, doing ever-increasing harm to the good name of a neighbour. The Bible forbids this, without exception. 'You shall not go about as a tale-bearer among your people' (Lev. 19: 16). The Book of Proverbs underlines again and again the harm that gossip does: 'A tale-bearer reveals secrets: but he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter' (11:13); 'Where there is no wood the fire goes out: and where there is no tale-bearer, strife ceases' (26:20). Complete parts 1 and 2 of the worksheet.

2. SUBTLE SUGGESTION

It is not necessary to pass on gossip to break this commandment. Read Job 1: 6-11 with the class. That is what Satan did and he is the father of lies. When the Lord spoke about Job's character, Satan did not dare to say anything against Job. He just asked a question, 'Does Job fear God for nothing?' and thereby sowed a seed of doubt about that good man. We wonder how much character assassination is done like that.

One can also break the ninth commandment by keeping silent when another's good name is being slandered.

3. FALSE WITNESS AGAINST CHRIST

The most serious false witness that can be borne is false witness against Jesus Christ. Read Mark 14: 55-59 with the class. When He was on trial, before His crucifixion, we are told, 'many bore false witness against Him,' (Mark 14: 56). That can happen still, not only at the hands of His enemies, but at the hands of His friends. Not to trust Him is to bear false witness against Him, for it suggests that He is not trustworthy. Not to stand by Him when His enemies are reviling Him is to bear false witness against Him for our silence is a kind of concurrence in what is being said. Not to commend Him as Saviour and Lord by the lives we live is to bear false witness against Him for every failure of ours is a denial of His

saving, keeping power.

There is an answer to our faulty witness. Christ Himself promised, 'You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you: and you shall be witnesses to Me' (Acts 1:8). We are not left to ourselves. The presence and the power of the Holy Spirit are available to us and by that power the fulfilment of this command, in our words about others and in our words about Christ, will be seen in our lives and we shall not bear false witness.

Complete part 3 of the worksheet.

APPLICATION

The temptation to bear false witness is such a real one that we need to pray continually the prayer of Psalm 141: 3: 'Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips.' Always think before you speak. Ask yourself, 'Is it necessary?' 'Is it true?', 'Is it kind?'

'Whatever you do, in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus' (Col. 3:17).

Complete part 4 of the worksheet.

LESSON 8

Studies in The Shorter Catechism

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT (1)

Catechism Questions - 79, 80

Scripture Texts - Exodus 20: 17; Romans 12: 15; 1 Corinthians. 10: 24; Hebrews 13: 5

AIM OF LESSON

To show how serious the sin of covetousness is and to indicate the positive answer to it.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Catechism and Exodus 20: 17. 'Covetousness' may be defined as:

- (1) 'discontentment with our own estate,' as opposed to 'full contentment with our own condition';
- (2) 'envying or grieving at the good of our neighbour,' as opposed to 'a right and charitable frame of spirit towards our neighbour';
- (3) 'all inordinate motions or affections' (desires) 'to anything that is his', as opposed to 'a right and charitable frame of spirit toward all that is his'.

The items detailed in the tenth commandment sum up a man's possessions - house, wife, manservant, maidservant, ox, ass. Some surprise may be felt that 'house' comes before 'wife'! The explanation is that 'house' is to be taken in the sense of 'household', including all that belongs to a family. 'Wife, servants, ox, ass' are then to be taken as details of what belongs to the household.

Romans 12: 15 shows we are to identify ourselves completely with the experiences of others and to enter into another's joy as if it were our own. That is the opposite of envying him.

1 Cor. 10: 24 shows that what we are to seek is other people's well-being rather than our own. Instead of envying their well-being we are to promote it in every way we can.

Heb. 13: 5 puts the commandment both positively and negatively. Contentment is the opposite of covetousness.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Every gardener knows to his cost that there is more to weeding than simply plucking off that part of the weed which appears above the surface. The roots must be taken out completely. Covetousness is like the root of a weed. It lies below the surface and produces a great

variety of sins. Yet every time we break any of the commandments we break the one 'Thou shalt not covet.' For example, before we steal, we covet what belongs to someone else; before we commit adultery we covet something that we are not allowed to have; when we break the Sabbath we covet time that belongs to God; the desire to have something that is not permitted is often the motive for murder. The truth is that every sin begins in thought and imagination. Christ said, 'Out of the heart proceed' all kinds of sins and coveting is just the turning of the heart's desire to what is forbidden.

Outline

(1) Covetousness is the beginning of every other sin.

It was so in the Garden of Eden. 'When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree able to make one wise she took its fruit and ate' (Gen. 3:6). It was so with Achan when he took of the spoils of Jericho, as he himself described it in his confession: 'I saw, I coveted, I took, I hid ...' (Joshua 7). It was so with David when he coveted another man's wife and coveting led on to adultery and adultery to murder.

The seriousness of covetousness is further seen in the company which it keeps in the Bible. In Eph. 5: 3, 5 Paul places covetousness alongside fornication and uncleanness and equates it with idolatry.

Complete parts 1 - 3 of the students' worksheet.

(2) The positive side of the commandment.

Read 'What is required in the tenth commandment?' (Question 80) and Hebrews 13: 5 with the class. 'Let your conduct be without covetousness: and be content with such things as you have.' If we are not content with what God has given us, then we are really in rebellion against Him and we are resentful of Him. That means that the things which we covet mean more to us than God. That, as Paul points out, is idolatry (Col.3: 5).

(3) How can we achieve contentment? Hebrews 13: 5

'For He Himself has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.' Verse 6 goes on, 'So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?' If we have that, then of course we will be content. When we think of all that we have in Christ, there is no need to covet anything or to envy anyone. One of the most practical secrets of victory over covetousness is thanksgiving. Paul writes in Eph. 5: 3, 4 'But ... covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints ... but rather giving of thanks.' He reminded the Corinthians of what they had: 'All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come - all are yours. And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's' (1 Cor. 3: 21-23).

Before his conversion Paul had been guilty of the sin of coveting (see next lesson): he had

broken this commandment but coming towards the end of his life, he could say to the elders of the church at Ephesus, 'I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content' (Phil. 4: 11). How had that conquest of covetousness been achieved? Paul goes on immediately (Phil. 4: 13) to give the secret: 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.' That is the secret of contentment; that is the secret of obeying this commandment: 'You shall not covet.'

Complete part 4 of the worksheet.

APPLICATION

In view of all the incitements to discontentment which are presented by the pressures of modern advertising, it is important to stress, as the Bible does, the seriousness of covetousness.

Two secrets of contentment should be stressed:

- (a) the satisfaction that comes from Christ and all His gifts and
- (b) the strength that Christ gives to conquer the temptation to covetousness and every temptation: 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.'

FURTHER BACKGROUND READING

SCHAEFFER, Francis True Spirituality pp. 19-25

WILLIAMSON, G.I. The Shorter Catechism Questions 79-81

LESSON 9

Studies in The Shorter Catechism

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT (2)

Catechism Question 81

Scripture Texts - 1 Cor. 10: 10; James 3: 16; 1 Peter 2: 1; Luke 18: 18-30; Rom. 7: 7-10; Gal. 3: 24

AIM OF LESSON

To show that this commandment deals with an inward attitude and to show from the apostle Paul's experiences how it can be a 'tutor' to lead to Christ.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Catechism

See Background Notes in Lesson 8

1 Cor. 10: 10 gives a solemn warning against the sin of 'murmuring' or discontentment. The Israelites in the wilderness had murmured against Moses and Aaron (Numbers 16: 41) and were punished by a plague which destroyed many of them.

James 3: 16 makes the point, underlined in Lesson 8, that the sin of covetousness or envy is the root of disorder and of all evil.

1 Peter 2: 1. The word 'therefore' links 1 Peter 2: 1 with the closing verses of chapter one, which teach that one of the evidences of being born again is sincere love of the brethren. That sincere love involves putting aside all malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and all evil speaking. Note that one of the things which is incompatible with the new birth is 'envy'.

Luke 18: 18-30. Note that when Christ challenged the ruler with the commandments which are concerned with our relationship to others - 'Do not commit adultery, Do not kill,' etc. - He omitted 'You shall not covet' but, without quoting the commandment, Christ went on to drive home its challenge. He challenged the ruler to go and sell all that he had to prove that he was not holding on covetously to what should have been given to the poor. The ruler was unable to face the challenge and went away sorrowful.

Romans 7: 7-10. Paul in these verses tells that it was the tenth commandment which convicted him of his sin. Before that commandment came home to him he was well satisfied with his life for the law did not condemn him - 'I was alive once without the law.' Then this commandment suddenly hit him: he realised that he was guilty of all kinds of covetousness and therefore condemned to death as a law-breaker.

Galatians 3: 24 is the next stage in Paul's conversion. The law had condemned him but the law's

inability to save led him to Christ. 'The law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.' The word translated 'tutor' did not describe a teacher, but rather a trusted servant who was responsible for taking the child to school. The function of the law is to bring us to Christ, by making us realise our sin and our helplessness.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

The tenth commandment is the most testing of all the commandments because it is concerned not with outward acts but with the inward desires of our hearts. There are two stories in the New Testament which illustrate this very clearly.

Outline

1. THE RICH YOUNG RULER

(It takes the three accounts, in Matt. 19: 16-22 ; Mark 10: 17-22 and Luke 18:18-30, to identify him as rich and young and a ruler). Read Luke 18: 18-30 with the class.

Christ challenged him with the commandments in response to his question. 'Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' 'You know the commandments: Do not commit adultery, Do not murder, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour your father and your mother.' Faced with that challenge, the young man's reply was given without hesitation, 'All these have I kept from my youth.' All the commandments that Christ quoted were from the second table of the law - the commands dealing with our relationship to our neighbour. Which one of these commandments did Christ omit? This one - 'You shall not covet.' If Christ had included the tenth commandment, perhaps the young man would not have been so ready with his claim. In the event, Christ went on, without quoting it, to drive home the challenge of this tenth commandment. He challenged the young man to go and sell all that he had, to prove whether he was not holding on covetously to what should have been given to the poor: he went away sorrowful.

The commandment challenges us not simply about our outward acts but about the inward set of our hearts. That is what makes it so testing.

Complete part 1 of the worksheet.

2. PAUL'S CONVICTION AND CONVERSION

Read Rom. 7: 7-10 and Gal. 3: 24 with the class.

It was the tenth commandment which led to Paul's conviction of sin and that brought him to Christ. If a man is going to be saved, he has to be brought to the place of realising that he is a sinner. How does that happen? It happens when he realises that he has broken God's law. Paul had thought that he, like the rich young ruler, had lived a good, moral and upright life.

Then suddenly this commandment hit him, 'You shall not covet,' and he realised that for all his good outward living, he was breaking one commandment, the tenth. 'I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet.''

So, as Paul puts it in Gal. 3: 24, the law became his 'tutor' to lead him to Christ. The tenth commandment brought him conviction of sin and led him to seek the Saviour. He turned from covetousness to Christ.

That does not always happen. There is a tragic illustration of the opposite in Luke 16: 14. Christ had challenged the Pharisees about their love of money and put the issues clearly before them: 'You cannot serve God and mammon.' What was their response? '... the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, ... derided him.' Quite literally it is, 'They turned up their noses at Him.' They refused to turn from their covetousness; their money meant more to them than Christ. Paul turned from his sin and trusted Christ to save him. Those are still the only alternatives.

Complete part 2 of the worksheet.

APPLICATION

The tenth commandment, perhaps more than all the others, helps us to realise that we are sinners before God. Luther in his Catechism pointed out that this was one of the purposes of the commandment. 'It is directed not primarily to the openly and avowedly bad people in the world such as robbers, adulterers and liars, but it is directed to the pious who tend to praise themselves that they have kept all the previous commandments.'

Perhaps, like the rich young ruler, or Paul, some of the other commandments have not really got home to us. But this one, by God's grace, can really convict us as we realise that God is not looking at our outward behaviour but at our hearts.

Complete part 3 of the worksheet.

LESSON 10

The Person and Work of Jesus Christ

THE WORD OF GOD

Scripture Text - John 1: 1-18

AIM OF LESSON

To show the Divine nature and glory of Jesus Christ as the Word which was with God from all eternity and who came into the world to save sinners.

BACKGROUND NOTES

The first eighteen verses of John's gospel are a preface to the whole book. They summarise the message of the Gospel in short, simple statements. Nowhere in Scripture are there such profound and simple statements about Christ's divine nature. Every word is important.

'Logos' in the original Greek is translated 'The Word' in English. The term 'Logos' was well known to the Jews as a name for God and John uses it here in order to prepare the way for his own presentation of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. The term 'Logos' conveys the idea of reason, wisdom and counsel. Words are the expression of our thoughts and minds. Some have suggested that Christ is called 'Logos' because He is in all the Old Testament promises and prophecies (Ps. 33: 6; Ps. 107: 20; 2 Sam. 7: 21). Christ is also the revealer, speaker and interpreter of God the Father's will (Heb. 1: 1, 2). Notice that it is not the Word of God but the Word who was with God and was God that we are considering.

- v. 5 'comprehended' in the original can mean grasping with the mind or grasping by force and overcoming. Both meanings are applicable.
- v. 6 'There was a man' literally translated means 'There appeared on the stage of history'.
- v. 9 The word translated 'true' has the meaning 'genuine' or 'real'.
- v. 14 The Greek word for 'dwelt among us' suggests 'tabernacled' or 'camped'.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

The passage can be divided into three sections:-

- John 1: 1- 5 The Word eternal - a distinct Person of The Godhead;
- 6-13 The Word- the light and life of the world;
- 14-18 The Word made flesh.

1. THE WORD ETERNAL vs. 1-5

Explain why John used the title 'The Word' rather than the name 'Son of God' at the beginning of his Gospel. Neither the Jews nor the Gentiles would have understood the title 'The Son of God' but they did know what 'Logos' meant. Consider with the class how appropriate was the use of this title for Jesus Christ. Ask them how they assess a person's

character i.e. by their words and by their actions. Words give expression to the innermost thoughts of a man and they reveal those thoughts to others. Eventually those thoughts result in action through the words spoken e.g. commands given or requests made. 'Logos' means a thought or concept and the expression or utterance of that thought. Jesus Christ is The Word of God in both respects:-

(a) He expresses or reflects the mind of God

In Christ is :

- a. The power of God (1 Cor. 1: 24; Matt. 28: 18)
- b. The knowledge of God (Col. 2: 2, 3)
- c. The wisdom of God (Eph. 3: 8-11)
- d. The fullness of God v.16 (Col. 1: 19; Col. 2: 9)
- e. The revelation of God (vs. 3-5, 9, 14-18; John 14: 9-12)

(b) He reveals God to man John 1: 18, Matt. 11: 27, Heb. 1: 3

God has revealed Himself through Jesus Christ (The Word) :

- a. By Creation (Rom. 1: 20)
- b. By the Scriptures
- c. By the Incarnation (John 1:14)

Make sure that the students understand and accept that John was referring to Jesus Christ when he used the expression 'Logos' or 'The Word'. Outline the main characteristics of the Word:

(i) The Word is eternal - 'In the beginning was the Word.'

The world was from the beginning but the Word was in the beginning.

The Word had an existence before the world had a beginning. As Matthew Henry puts it 'He that was in the beginning never began and therefore was ever!' 'He had glory with the Father before the world was' (John 17: 5). 'He is before all things' (Col. 1: 17).

(ii) The Word is a Person distinct from God the Father and yet one with Him. 'The Word was with God'. This means literally 'The Word was face to face with God' i.e. in the closest possible fellowship with the Father.

(iii) The Word was God - not created by, or inferior to, God the Father but He is God and nothing less than God.

(iv) The Word is the Creator of all things (v.3).

Notice two facts which are stressed:-

1. Christ Himself was not created but He was from all eternity.
2. All things without exception were created by Him.

(v) The Word is the source of all life and light (v.4).

It is spiritual life and light which is referred to here since physical life and light are referred to in v.3. He is that Word which Christ referred to in Matt. 4: 4. Notice v.4 'in

Him was life' - not through Him but in Him was life. See John 5 :26; 6: 48, 53; 11: 25.

Discuss with the students the question, 'What is darkness?' It is the absence of light. Life is dependent on light. Without it nothing will live. Darkness here refers to fallen mankind, darkened by sin and unbelief. It is synonymous with the world (v.10) which did not accept the light. Notice:

v. 5 The darkness did not comprehend Him.

v.10 The darkness did not acknowledge Him.

v.11 His own who were in darkness did not welcome Him.

This darkness is not merely indifferent to the light but actively hates it (John 3: 19; Eph. 6: 12).

Complete part 1 of the worksheet.

2. THE WORD - THE LIFE AND LIGHT OF THE WORLD vs. 6-13

God never leaves Himself without a witness in the world and so 'there appeared on the stage of history' a man called John the Baptist. He came at precisely the time ordained by God. He did not come to be a witness, as is so often thought, but rather He came to give or to bear witness, i.e. John the Baptist came with a message. John's function was to direct men's attention to the Word made flesh, to Jesus Christ the true (genuine) light who enlightens every man who comes into the world. Christ is to the souls of men what the sun is to the world. He is the centre and source of all spiritual light, life, health and growth. Like the sun He shines for the benefit of all mankind whatever race or colour. Many choose to reject the light and live in darkness (John 3:19; Rom. 1: 21).

Verse 12 is more correctly translated 'But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.' To receive Christ is to accept Him with a willing heart and to take Him as our Lord and Saviour (Gal. 3: 26).

We are not given 'power' to change ourselves into God's children but we are born again into God's family, not of right but of grace. Carefully explain that one becomes a child of God at conversion - a new creature with new appetites, wants and desires, and that saving faith and regeneration are inseparable (2 Cor. 5: 17; The Shorter Catechism Q. 34).

Complete part 2 of the worksheet.

3. THE WORD MADE FLESH vs. 14-18

Emphasize that though Christ became flesh in the fullest sense when He was born of the virgin Mary yet He never at any time ceased to be the Eternal Word.

It was essential that He should become man so that He might:

- (1) be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4: 15; Matt. 8: 17),
- (2) set us an example of holiness that we might walk even as He walked (1 John 1: 6-7) and
- (3) offer Himself a sacrifice for our sins (1 Peter 3: 18; Heb. 2: 9).

Verses 15-18 contain three great assurances about our Lord Jesus Christ.

- (a) Christ alone can supply all the spiritual needs of the believer (v.16). Christ's followers are constantly receiving grace upon grace. There is an infinite fullness in Christ (Eph. 3: 19; 4: 13; Col. 1: 19).
- (b) The effectiveness of the salvation offered by Christ compared with the law which was given by Moses. Note that the law was given by Moses but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. The law could only condemn, it could not justify.
- (c) It is Christ alone who has revealed God the Father to men (v.18). He is the only begotten Son. He is in the bosom of the Father and this indicates that He is loved by God and that He knows all God's thoughts and secret counsels. John has brought us back again to the thought with which he began in verse 1 ('The Word.....was God').

APPLICATION

Challenge the members of the class with verse 12 and their personal responsibility to either receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour or to reject Him.

Ask the students to complete their worksheet either in class or at home.

FURTHER BACKGROUND READING:

HENDRICKSON, William Commentary on John's Gospel
RYLE, J. C. Expository Thoughts on John

LESSON 11

The Person and Work of Christ

THE SON OF MAN

Scripture Texts - Daniel 7: 13, 14; Matthew 8: 20; Mark 2: 9, 10; 10: 45; John 3: 13

AIM OF LESSON

To show the significance of the title 'Son of Man' as it applies to the Lord Jesus Christ.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

In the Gospels, certain names or titles are given to the Lord Jesus Christ, each of which is descriptive of His character. One such title is 'Son of Man'. This is a title which the Lord Jesus uses of Himself, sometimes to indicate His humanity (Matt. 8: 20) but usually to denote some aspect of His Person and work, e.g., His pre-existence (John 3: 13) and His authority (Mark 2: 10).

1. The Son of Man - Origin of the Title

Read Daniel 7: 13, 14. In these verses, Daniel sees a vision of the Messiah who was to come, in which he is given a glimpse of His majesty and power. Note how he describes Him in verse 13: 'one like the Son of Man'. In using this title of Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ draws attention to these words in Daniel 7: 13. Thus, the picture He gives of Himself is of an authoritative, heavenly figure who is the perfect manifestation of humanity, who was pre-existent, and who will come at the end of the ages as Judge.

Discuss students' worksheet No.1.

2. The Son of Man - Significance of the Title

By using this title 'Son of Man,' the Lord Jesus seeks to declare His own heavenly nature and to reveal certain important truths about Himself.

(a) His Pre-existence

Read John 3: 13. In verse 12, the Lord Jesus refers to 'heavenly things' and in this verse points to the fact that in order to have first-hand information about those heavenly things, one would have found it necessary to have been in the presence of God when they were considered. But 'no-one has ascended to heaven'. There was, however, One present with the Father when He made His decree concerning man's salvation, the One who came 'down from heaven'.

(b) His Perfect Humanity

Read Matthew 8: 20. Whatever else this title means, there can be little doubt that it points to the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ possessed real humanity. He is the perfect

man. In Him, human nature is seen at its perfection, functioning as was intended when it left the hands of the Creator.

Discuss students' worksheet No. 2.

(c) **His Representative Manhood.**

Read Romans 5: 12 - 19; 1 Corinthians 15: 21, 22, 45. Christ, as the second Adam, through having a perfect and sinless human nature, was able fully to act as the representative of the people of God. He was able to fulfil all the requirements of the divine law on their behalf and, in so doing, succeed where the first Adam failed.

Discuss worksheet No. 3.

(d) **His Role as Saviour**

Read Mark 10: 45; Luke 19: 10. Why was it necessary for the Son of Man to give His life as a ransom for sinful man? Read Romans 8: 3, 4. Since sin came into the world through man, it was necessary for God to punish sin in a man. Only a perfect man, however, could offer up a sacrifice acceptable to God. For this reason, Christ 'made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.' (Phil. 2: 7, 8).

Discuss worksheet No. 4.

(e) **His Authority and Power**

Read Mark 2: 9, 10. Discuss with the class the significance of these two verses. Having been accused of blaspheming (that is, claiming to do what God alone could do) because He said to the paralysed man 'Son, your sins are forgiven' (v. 5), Christ then asked a question (v. 9). Ask the class how they would answer the question. Both options were difficult and, if anything, the latter was more so, in that the result of it could be seen. Thus Christ chose to demonstrate His power by healing the paralysed man and by so doing showed His authority to forgive sins.

(f) **His Humility**

Read Mark 10: 45. Note the humble position taken by the Son of Man. He did not come to be served, but to be a servant. By this He demonstrated that being self-centred and selfish does not belong to the nature of the true man, rather he seeks a higher good - the service of God and others.

(g) **His Coming as Judge**

Read Mark 14: 62; John 5: 27. Christ will return one day and, when He does, it will be as Judge. On that day, which will mark the end of the world, He will judge all men 'for we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive

the things done in the body,.....whether good or bad' (2 Cor. 5: 10).

Discuss worksheet No. 5.

CONCLUSION

While it may appear from Daniel 7: 13, 14 that the greater emphasis regarding the Son of Man is on His majesty and greatness, it must be remembered that He is being seen in His glorified humanity. The title 'Son of Man', therefore, points us to Christ as a man, a perfect man, and the only one able to be the representative of God's people. He, and He alone, is able to put right the devastation caused by man's first representative head, Adam.

APPLICATION

Emphasise the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ was the Son of God in order to be the Redeemer of God's elect.

LESSON 12

The Person and Work of Christ

THE SON OF GOD

Scripture Text - Hebrews 1: 1 - 2: 13

AIM OF LESSON

To show that though Christians are sometimes called 'the sons of God' (John 1: 12), Christ alone is unique as the Son of God.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Ask the class members what they understand by the term 'son'. To us, 'son' implies a relationship which involves obedience and submission. This is not the primary meaning of 'son' in Hebrew thought. In Hebrew, 'son of' means 'from the loins of', i.e., of the same substance and being. The predominant thought, therefore, is one of equality rather than obedience and submission. Since, however, the son is of the same substance and being as the father, he willingly renders obedience to his father. This is illustrated perfectly in Christ as the 'Son of God'. While angels are called the sons of God three times in the Book of Job, Adam is called the son of God (Luke 3: 8) and believers are called the sons of God (John 1: 12), Christ is unique as the Son of God. He was not just a mere man, but 'God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, for ever' (The Shorter Catechism Q. 21). Thus, as the Son of God, He is God. Nevertheless, though equal with the Father, He willingly submitted Himself to the Father's will.

1. THE SON OF GOD - THE FINAL REVELATION OF GOD

Before Jesus Christ came into the world, God spoke to His people through prophets and priests. His message through them was one which foretold the coming of the Messiah, the God-appointed Deliverer of His people. The people waited expectantly for Him. When 'The fullness of the time had come,' the Messiah appeared: 'God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law' (Gal. 4: 4, 5). Read Hebrews 1: 1, 2a. Note from these verses the uniqueness and finality of the revelation of God in His Son, Jesus Christ. This revelation stands both as a fulfilment of, and in contrast to, the old order of things. Like the former prophets, the Son spoke the Word of God, but unlike them He is the eternal Word, who became the Word Incarnate (John 1: 1-14). Before Christ came, God spoke in different ways through different men. This period of time was marked by incompleteness and anticipation. In 'these last days' (that is, this period of time between Christ's first coming and His second coming), Christ has brought completeness and fulfilment of revelation. (The tense used with the verb 'spoke' indicates that at a point in time past God spoke, and that His speaking is complete.) Thus, in the Son of God, God gave

His full and final revelation of Himself (John 14:7-9).

Discuss worksheet No.1.

2. THE SON OF GOD - HIS CHARACTER

Read Hebrews 1:2 - 2:4.

Jesus Christ was, in a unique sense, the Son of God. This is demonstrated by two aspects of His character.

(a) He was equal with the Father.

Just after the birth of a baby, the question is often asked, 'Who do you think he is like?' In many instances, a baby resembles either his father or mother. Christ, as the Son of God, does not merely bear a resemblance to the Father but is 'the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person' (Heb. 1: 3). He is identical with the Father in every respect. Read John 10: 30. The name 'Son of God' therefore, can be used to denote the deity of Christ. As such, it points to a pre-existent sonship, which transcends the human life of Christ and His official calling as Messiah. Christ is called the Son of God by virtue of the fact of 'a birth that never took place because it always was' (M. Lloyd-Jones). Christ is the eternal Son of God, who is in every respect God Himself.

Note from Hebrews 1: 2, 3 (also John 1: 3) that to the Son of God are attributed the works of creation and providence. Thus, like the Father, He is to be worshipped as Creator and Sustainer.

Complete worksheet No. 2.

(b) He was perfectly obedient to the Father.

Read Philippians 2: 6-8. Even though Jesus Christ was God, He showed true humility in leaving heaven's glory for a time to dwell among sinful men in order that He might save them from their sin. This condescension of the Son demonstrated His perfect obedience to the Father. In fulfilment of the Father's will, He willingly suffered the shameful and agonizing death of crucifixion. No-one could take His life from Him; rather He laid it down voluntarily (Matthew 26: 39; Ps.40: 8; John 10: 11, 17, 18; 15:10b).

Discuss worksheet No.3.

3. THE SON OF GOD - HIS WORK

Read Hebrews 2:5-18.

Throughout the Bible we see that God the Father had a plan of redemption for sinful men. Central in this plan was the work assigned to the Son of God. It was the Father's purpose that His Son should suffer and die for guilty sinners and appease the wrath of God against

sin. In fulfilment of this, Christ died as a substitute for sinful men, taking upon Himself the punishment due to them.

Why was it necessary for the Son of God to die for sin? Would it not have been possible for someone else to have undertaken this task? Nothing but a perfect sacrifice could atone for sin. Mere man could not offer a sacrifice to God that would have been acceptable. It was necessary, therefore, for the offended party, God, to provide a salvation by which men could be restored to fellowship with their Creator.

Not only did Christ, the Son of God, offer up Himself as a perfect sacrifice for sin and pay the huge debt owed by man because of sin but He continues as High Priest in that He daily intercedes for His people (Hebrews 7: 23-25).

Discuss worksheet No.4.

CONCLUSION

If the revelation of God through the prophets is accepted, how much more ought we to accept and treasure that perfect revelation of God through Christ, since He is not a mere prophet but the Lord of prophets; not a servant but the Son; not an angel but God. It is not merely our forefathers He is addressing, but us. There is, therefore, no excuse for unbelief.

LESSON 13

The Person and Work of Christ

THE ONE MEDIATOR

Scripture Text - Hebrews 3: 1-6; 7: 22 - 8: 13; 12: 18 - 29

AIM OF LESSON

To show that Jesus Christ is the only Mediator between God and men.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Mediator - This is the name given to a person who comes between two or more parties in dispute to remove their differences and to reconcile them. In everyday life the task of the mediator is to clarify, substantiate and highlight the issues separating the various parties in a dispute and to persuade them to accept a just compromise. The Scriptural meaning is much more profound. Christ, as Mediator, is never represented as seeking a compromise between God and man. His role is to reconcile God's people to God - not God to His people. To reconcile God's people to God requires:

- (a) that Christ takes upon Himself the guilt of sinners in order to terminate their legal guilt under the law and thereafter to make continual intercession for them and
- (b) that Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit, opens their eyes to see their true state before a holy God and then enables them to accept and receive the truth, lay it up in their hearts and practise it in their lives.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

1. THE NATURE OF THE DISPUTE

Emphasise that the Fall left mankind with two major problems which result in man's separation from God. The first of these is a legal one. Man is guilty before the court of God. Since he has nothing to commend himself he stands before God as one condemned and is subject to God's wrath and curse both in this life and that which is to come (Rom. 5: 12; 6: 23). His second problem is a personal one. Sin has so polluted every part of his being that there is nothing in him which would move him to ask God for forgiveness (Rom. 8: 7-8).

2. THE TYPE OF MEDIATOR REQUIRED

Help the students to see that these problems have to be resolved before man can enter into a right relationship with God. Since man stands condemned and cannot do anything about it himself, he needs a unique Mediator. Unlike disputes which occur in industry, compromise is not possible. God cannot change His nature. Thus for reconciliation to take place, the penalty for sin must be paid and the nature of the sinner changed so as to enable him to put his trust in Christ as his Saviour and Lord.

Discuss with the students what the Mediator in this dispute needs to have:

- (a) a complete understanding of God's mind and will so that He can make known to sinful man the will of God regarding salvation (a prophetic role);
- (b) the ability and willingness to pay the price demanded by God for man's sin (a priestly role);
- (c) the ability to bring men into subjection to Himself and to maintain His role over them until they die and go to heaven (a kingly role).

Complete worksheet No. 1.

3. THE ONLY ONE WHO IS CAPABLE OF FULFILLING THE ROLE OF MEDIATOR

Emphasise that Scripture makes it clear that only one person meets the requirements of Mediator and that this is the Lord Jesus Christ. In this role He acts as Prophet, Priest and King.

Complete worksheet No. 2 (a).

(a) Christ's qualification as Prophet

Read Heb. 3: 1-6. Explain that Christ is shown here to be greater than the Old Testament prophet Moses. Stress that Moses was very highly esteemed by the Jews, not only because he had led the Israelites out of Egypt, but more particularly because he had brought them the Law. By this he had demonstrated to them not only that he knew the will of God but that he enjoyed close communion with Him. Jesus is a much greater prophet than Moses (for reasons see verses 3-5). Moses was only a faithful member of Christ's Church; Jesus was the builder and owner of that Church who had been faithful to the One who had appointed Him. Since He was both God and Man, He was able perfectly to reveal God's will for man's salvation.

Complete worksheet No. 2 (b).

(b) Christ' qualification as Priest.

See Heb. 7: 22 - 8: 5. This passage explains the superiority of Christ's Priesthood over the priesthood of Aaron. Stress the following points:

- (i) Christ is eternal. The Aaronical priests, being mere men and therefore subject to death, could only serve for a period before handing the office on to someone else (v. 23).
- (ii) Christ is the possessor of a supernatural Divine power which enables Him to save completely those who come to God through Him. This the Aaronical priests could not do (v. 25).

- (iii) Christ is holy, blameless and pure. Even the best of the high priests were sinners (v. 26).
- (iv) The high priests had to offer annually a sacrifice for their own sin and then one for the sins of the people. Christ offered up His sacrifice once and for all (v. 27).
- (v) Christ sits at the right hand of God making continual intercession for His people (Heb 8: 1, 2).

Complete worksheet No. 2 (c).

(c) Christ's qualification as King

See Heb. 8: 1. This verse makes it clear that Christ is on God's throne. He has been entrusted with all power so that He may govern, cherish and sustain His Church (Eph. 1: 20-22). Emphasise that not only did Christ, through His death and resurrection, provide for man's salvation but He received the power necessary to keep and sustain those who belong to Him (John 10: 28, 29).

Complete worksheet No. 2 (d).

4. THE RESULTS OF CHRIST'S MEDIATORIAL WORK.

See Heb. 12: 18-29. Stress two points.

- (a) Through the mediatorial work of Christ, believers have their sins removed and are reconciled to God the Father and can have fellowship with Him. Not only that, but they are united as one with the people of God in every age (vs. 22-24).
- (b) Since those who rejected the Covenant in the Old Testament period could not escape the vengeance of God, there will also be punishment for those who reject Christ and the salvation He has purchased through His death on the cross.

APPLICATION

Nobody has any excuse for continuing in sin. Christ came as Mediator and, through His mediatorial work, has reconciled to God the Father those who put their trust in Him. Challenge the students to face up to this fact and also to recognise the awful consequences of rejecting Christ's mediatorial work.

LESSON 14

The Person and Work of Christ

THE REDEEMER

Scripture Texts - 1 Peter 1: 18, 19; Heb. 9: 12; Gal. 4: 4-7

AIM OF LESSON

To show man's need of a redeemer and to show Christ to be that Redeemer.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

In the 19th century in America there were thousands of black slaves, some brought from Africa and some born in captivity, the majority of whom spent the whole of their lives in slavery. It was a sad, horrible and often brutal existence. Slavery, of course, did not begin in the southern states of America; it has been carried out for many centuries and in many lands and was, indeed, common in New Testament times. Not all slaves, especially those in Biblical times, continued as slaves until they died. Many were able to obtain their freedom by the payment of a price, called a ransom. Thus they were redeemed, their debt to their master had been paid, and they were set free. It is easy to see how words like 'slave', 'redemption' and 'ransom' were very familiar to New Testament believers and were very meaningful when used to describe spiritual things.

Outline

1. MAN'S NEED OF REDEMPTION

Redemption has been described as 'the deliverance from some evil by the payment of a price'. John 8:34 makes it very clear what that evil is - note how the Lord Jesus Christ speaks of being a slave to sin (see also Rom. 6:16). Man needs to be delivered from sin and its awful consequences (consider with the class those consequences especially as seen in Rom. 6:23). There is no way that the sinner can purchase for himself redemption from this slavery (Tit. 3:5). The sinner is described in the Word of God as being in slavery to sin, under the sentence of death and with no hope of ever setting himself free. A redeemer is required, one who will pay the price of deliverance.

Complete worksheet No. 1.

2. REDEMPTION PROVIDED BY CHRIST

A Christian is described as somebody who has undergone a great change (Col.1:13). Verse 14 of the same chapter tells how that change comes about. God did not wish all men to remain in the kingdom of darkness forever; He planned to redeem those whom He had chosen in eternity. This redemption was to be accomplished by the death of His own Son

(Rom. 5:8). It was a costly redemption (1 Pet. 1:18, 19) and a redemption brought about by sacrifice (Heb. 9:12).

Complete worksheet No. 2.

3. THE BENEFITS OF REDEMPTION

(a) Freedom

When a person believes in the Lord Jesus Christ he is declared to be free (Gal. 5:1). He has been freed from the penalty of sin (Rom. 8:1); he is being freed from the power of sin (Rom. 6:14) and one day he will be free from the presence of sin (Rev. 21:27). Note the past, present and future aspects of redemption.

Complete worksheet No 3 (a).

(b) New Family

Redemption brings not only freedom from slavery but adoption into the family of God (Gal. 4: 4-7). There is a right to all the privileges of the sons of God (Matt. 7: 9-11). The new family also consists of a multitude of brothers and sisters - see John 13: 34, 35 and discuss how Christians should treat one another and the witness that this is in the world.

Complete worksheet No 3 (b).

(c) New Master

1 John 5:3 shows how the Christian is to serve his new Master - a service of love and not mere duty. If a slave in the Old Testament times could love his earthly master so much that he would not accept his freedom (Ex. 21: 5, 6) how much more should the one who has been redeemed from sin and death serve his heavenly Master with love and faithfulness!

Complete worksheet No 3 (c).

LESSON 15

The Person and Work of Christ

THE KING OF KINGS

Scripture Texts - Psalm 72; Revelation 19:11-21

AIM OF LESSON

To present the Kingship of Christ which is a present reality and also a future hope.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Psalm 72: 'A psalm of Solomon': setting out the ideals for which he was to strive in ruling over Israel. At many points Solomon fell far short of the ideal and it is right to see the perfect fulfilment of the psalm in the kingship exercised by the Lord Jesus Christ.

- v. 1. God alone can equip the king for his reign.
- v. 3. 'peace' - general well-being, realised in full only in fellowship with God.
- v.8. 'the river' - the river Euphrates.
- v.10. 'Tarshish' - perhaps in Spain.
'Sheba' and 'Seba' - perhaps in Southern Arabia.

Revelation 19 :11-21: one of several descriptions in this book of the events surrounding the return of King Jesus in glory to judge the world. The description of Jesus stresses His purity and righteousness:-e.g. the white horse He rides, the flaming eyes, the robe dipped in the purifying blood of His own sacrifice on the cross. It is by His sacrifice on Calvary that victory is won.

- v.12. 'many crowns' -indicating the comprehensive nature of His universal rule. The secret name reminds us that we can know only a little about the mystery of the person of Christ.
- v.13 'robe dipped in blood' - recalling His atoning work in His death and resurrection; 'the Word of God' - for this title see John 1.
- v.14. white linen indicates purity.
- v.15. sword coming from his mouth - see Revelation 1:16; Christ rules by His Word, which is like a sword - Hebrews 4:12; rule with a rod of iron - referring to Psalm 2:9; treading the wine press - see Isaiah 63:1-6, a description of God's final judgement on the world.
- vs.17-18. feasting on those who have endured God's wrath - Ezekiel 39:4,17-20. The overthrow of evil is total.
- v. 20. The beast signifies the powers of the world as opposed to Christ; the false prophet signifies all forms of counterfeit Christianity. Both have been at work all through the centuries and will not necessarily be individual persons at the end of their age.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

1. Consider some of the descriptions of the reign of Solomon such as 1 Kings 4:21, 25 and 1 Kings 10:1-10 and show how they are reflected in Psalm 72.

Show some ways in which Solomon failed to live up to the ideals expressed in the psalms: especially see 1 Kings 11: he married foreign wives, contrary to God's commandment and, under their influence, he followed other gods.

Complete part 1 of the worksheet.

2. Consider the present reign of the Lord Jesus Christ as described in the New Testament. The heart of His message was the coming of the Kingdom of God in His own person and ministry - an event demanding repentance and faith from sinners (Mark 1:14-15).

Show how the New Testament descriptions of the reign of Christ fulfil the prophetic picture of Psalm 72. Stress that Jesus Christ is presently ruling - He has all authority (Matthew 28:18).

Complete part 2 of the worksheet.

3. At present many resist the rule of Christ and so there is spiritual warfare, as depicted in Revelation 21:11-15. Stress that the victory of Christ's Kingdom is certain (v.16). No one can depose Him from His throne.

Consider the final victory of Christ over all His enemies, described in Revelation 19:17-21. Stress that this is poetic language and that we are not to look for its fulfilment in some great earthly battle: this is spiritual warfare between the Kingdom of Christ and the power of Satan. There is no doubt about Christ's ultimate triumph (1 Corinthians 15:25).

Complete part 3 of the worksheet.

LESSON 16

The Person and Work of Christ

THE BRIDEGROOM OF THE CHURCH

Scripture Texts - Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Peter 2:1-10; Revelation 19:7, 8; 21:2

AIM OF LESSON

To show how the relationship between Christ and His Church is similar to that which should exist between a bridegroom and his bride.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Some deny that 'Bridegroom' was a Messianic title in the Old Testament. Christ, however, applied it to Himself in the New Testament (Mark 2:19, 20), as did John the Baptist (John 3:29), thus confirming the Messianic nature of Psalm 45 which speaks of the bride adorning herself for her husband.

A study of those beautiful passages in the Song of Solomon which describe the bridegroom and his beloved would help one's understanding and appreciation of this lesson. Also, you could read or sing part of Psalm 45.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

The metaphor of bridegroom and bride is used frequently in Scripture to describe the relationship between God and His people. In the Old Testament, God is described as the husband of His people Israel. By this He is shown as the One who has a deep concern and care for them, even yearning for them in times of their unfaithfulness (Is. 54: 5, 6; Jer. 2:2; 3:14, 20; Ezek. 16: 8; Hosea 2: 16). In the New Testament, Christ is declared to be the Bridegroom of His Bride, the Church (Eph. 5:25-27, 32; Rev. 19:7; 21:2). What does the title 'Bridegroom' tell us about the Person and Work of Christ? What does it mean for the Church to be the Bride of Christ?

1. CHRIST AS BRIDEGROOM

(a) The Bridegroom is given His Bride by the Father.

In Western society, a man usually chooses his own bride, whereas the practice generally followed in Eastern countries is that a bride is chosen and given to a son by his father. The latter practice was quite common in Biblical times (in Genesis ch. 24 we read of Abraham sending his servant to the town of Nahor to choose a wife for his son Isaac).

The manner by which Christ has become Bridegroom of His Bride, the Church, is in some respects similar to this Biblical pattern for marriage. Read John 6:37-39; 17: 6,9; 18:9. What one theme is common to all these verses? It is that those who are

believers in Christ and belong to Him (i.e., His Bride) have been given to Him by God the Father. He has chosen those whom He has given to His Son, Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:4).

Complete worksheet No. 1.

(b) The Bridegroom has bought His Bride at a price.

Ask the class members if they know what a 'dowry' is. (A dowry is a piece of property or money brought by a bride and given to her husband at marriage.) Among many people of the East, however, it is customary, not for the bride to bring a dowry to the bridegroom, but for the bridegroom, by some means, to purchase the girl whom he intends to marry. Jacob had to work seven years for Leah and a further seven years for Rachel (Gen. 29:15-30).

Read 1 Corinthians 6:20; Mark 10:45; 1 Timothy 2:6. Christ, in purchasing His Bride, paid the ultimate price - He gave His life. Note how this same thought finds expression in Ephesians 5:25 where Christ is spoken of as the Bridegroom of the Church: 'Christ ... gave Himself for her'.

Complete worksheet No. 2.

(c) The Bridegroom enters into covenant with His Bride.

At a marriage ceremony, the bridegroom and bride exchange vows, by which they make solemn promises to each other. They enter into covenant with each other. (In the Scripture marriage is spoken of as a covenant relationship - Ezekiel 16:8; Malachi 2:14.)

Christ, in taking to Himself His Bride, enters into covenant with her. Stress to the class, however, that this covenant relationship is somewhat different from the covenant entered into at marriage.

(i) The marriage covenant is between two equal parties, whereas Christ establishes His covenant with His people, requiring of them loyalty and obedience. This covenant is established with a people who do not deserve the love and friendship of God: it is truly a covenant of love (Deut. 7:7, 8).

(ii) A marriage covenant may be violated and broken beyond repair, often ending in divorce. When Christ establishes His covenant with His Bride, it is permanent and cannot be broken. The Bride may prove unfaithful at times but the Bridegroom remains ever faithful (2 Tim. 2:13).

Complete worksheet No. 3.

(d) The Bridegroom loves His Bride.

Read Ephesians 5: 22-33. Note, from these verses, the stress laid on the love the husband must have for his wife. This is to be mirrored in the love Christ has for His Church. Note the intensity, purposefulness and sacrificial nature of Christ's love for

His Bride, the Church.

Complete worksheet No. 4.

2. THE CHURCH AS BRIDE

One cannot have a bridegroom without a bride. Thus, when we speak of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Bridegroom, it is with regard to His relationship to His Church, His Bride. It is appropriate, therefore, to consider briefly the Bride in this study. When a bride marries:

(a) She is adorned in beautiful clothes.

A bride gives great attention to how she will look on her wedding day. Thus, before the actual wedding ceremony, careful preparation is important in order that she will look her best. Read Psalm 45:13,14; Revelation 19:7, 8; 21:2. Note the significance of the fine linen. Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints. The Church, as the Bride of Christ, is worthy only by the righteousness of Christ which is imparted to her (Phil. 3: 8, 9).

(b) She receives a new name.

When a girl marries she gives up her maiden name and takes the name of her husband. When Lady Diana Spencer married Prince Charles, she became Princess Diana, a member of the Royal family. She was not born a member of the Royal family but by marriage became 'royal'. Read 1 Peter 2:9; 4:14, 16. Men and women are not born naturally into the family of God but, by that special 'marriage' relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, they become members of the family of God and have the right to bear the name of Christ, i.e., Christian.

(c) She takes on a new loyalty.

When a girl gets married, her love for her husband must come before her love and loyalty to her family and former associates. Read Psalm 45:10,11; Genesis 2:24. Likewise, the first loyalty of the Christian is to Christ. See Luke 14:26, 27; 1 Peter 2:9, 10.

(d) She adopts a new lifestyle.

Marriage not only brings new loyalties but a radical change in lifestyle. Each marriage partner no longer thinks only of himself or herself but must have consideration for the other. There are new responsibilities, obligations and duties. Indeed, a failure to recognise and accept these may result in a marriage breaking down. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:17, 22-24. Discuss with the class how being a Christian should affect a person's life and behaviour.

Complete worksheet No. 5.

CONCLUSION

The final picture in the Book of Revelation is of Christ as the Bridegroom accompanied by His Bride the Church glorious, radiant and complete. Ask the class to consider if they are a part

LESSON 17

A Complete Salvation

WHY DID CHRIST DIE?

Scripture Text - Romans 3:10-26

AIM OF LESSON

To show the reason why it was necessary for Jesus Christ to die on the cross.

BACKGROUND NOTES

The book of Romans is a letter from Paul to Christians living in Rome. It teaches the good news of salvation and how to live the Christian life. In Romans 1-3: 20 Paul sets forth man's need of salvation. From the time of Adam man has suppressed his knowledge of the fact that God exists and has worshipped created things (1:23). As a result 'God gave them over' (1:24, 26, 28) to sin and its disastrous consequences. Romans 1:32 shows the outcome of this 'giving over': not only do men continue in sin knowing that the result is death, they actively encourage others to sin.

Romans chapter 2 teaches that whatever is true of the pagan world is also true of the Jew, except that the Jews have less excuse since God has revealed Himself to them, not only through nature (1:20), but through law. Their failure to keep the law added to their guilt (2:12-15). They had been placed in a position of being 'a guide to the blind, a light for those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes' (2:19, 20) but they had failed miserably by committing the same sins which they taught others to avoid (2:21, 22) and in so doing brought dishonour to God's name (2:23, 24). In Romans 2:25-29 Paul shows that religious ceremonies or rites will not save a man from sin. The Jews trusted in circumcision, failing to recognise that it was only an outward symbol of that which had to take place in the heart.

In Romans 3:1-9 Paul answers the questions a Jew might ask in view of what is taught in Romans Chapter 2: e.g. (1) Is there any advantage in being a Jew? (2) If our sin shows up God's holiness more clearly, is God not being unjust in punishing us? The answer to the first is that lack of faith on the part of some does not cancel God's faithfulness to those who do believe (3:3,4). Secondly, Paul shows that sinful behaviour can never be justified even if the results of such action are good (vs.7, 8). The conclusion of Paul's argument is seen in verse 9. Both Jew and Gentiles are all under sin and therefore deserving death.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Read John 19:16-18. Ask the students if they have ever thought about those words in verse 18 'they crucified Him', especially in regard to what it must have actually meant for Jesus.

Explain to the class that death by crucifixion was slow and extremely painful. It was believed that only the worst criminals were ever crucified.

Why did Jesus have to die in this manner? Why did Jesus have to die at all? Confront the class with this question and then, using the following outline, explain the reasons why it was necessary for Christ to die.

1. Man is separated from God because of sin

Read Romans 3:10-18. Explain to the class that these verses comprise eight quotations from the Old Testament (Psalm 14:1-3; 53:1-3; Eccles. 7:20; Psalm 5:9; 140:3; 10:7; Isaiah 59:7, 8; Psalm 36:1) which describe man. Note:

- (a) all men are sinners ('There is none righteous')
- (b) they do not understand or have any interest in the things of God
- (c) the whole of man is corrupt; his whole personality (throat, tongue, lips, mouth, feet, eyes)
- (d) man is separated from, and an enemy of, God ('all have turned aside, the way of peace they have not known')
- (e) man does not give God His rightful place in his life ('There is no fear of God before their eyes').

Complete worksheet No. 1.

2. Man is under the condemnation of God

Read Romans 3:19. The whole world (all mankind) is guilty of breaking God's Law. All men, therefore, are under the wrath and curse of God. See Romans 6:23a.

3. Man cannot make himself acceptable before God

Read Romans 3:20. Man can only find acceptance with God by being declared righteous (sinless and holy). This man cannot do by his own efforts, because he is not able to keep God's Law perfectly. Even if he keeps the whole Law and yet stumbles at just one point, he is guilty of breaking all of it (James 2:10).

Complete worksheet No. 2.

4. God had to provide for man a means of salvation

Because of man's need of salvation on account of sin and his inability to save himself, God provided for man a way of salvation. Read Romans 3:21. Note the words 'But now'. Verse 21 starts a new section in the book of Romans. The word 'But' introduces not only the new section but also a ray of hope into the dark and hopeless situation of man, as outlined in the preceding verses. The word 'now' means that this hope is not something to be looked for in the future; it is a present reality. The good news is that, because man was totally sinful and could not please God or approach God, God Himself acted so as to provide man with the

righteousness necessary to make him God's friend. Only Jesus Christ could turn away God's wrath and pay the price for man's sin.

In order to provide salvation for sinful man a number of things were necessary:

- (a) the payment of the penalty due to man because of his sin (i.e. death);
- (b) the turning away of God's wrath and anger which had come about because of man's rebellion against God;
- (c) the removal of man's guilt.

This was because of God's holiness. God had commanded man not to sin; He had told him he would die if he did sin. Therefore, in order for God to be just and to be consistent in His own character, He demanded these three things (see above) before man could be considered righteous in His sight. Man, because of sin, could not fulfil these requirements (see 3:20). There was only one Person who could; God Himself. Therefore, God sent His one and only son, Jesus Christ, into the world to fulfil these demands. Read Romans 3:21-26. Note from these verses the following:

- Jesus redeemed sinful man, i.e. He paid the price that was due (3:24).
- Jesus turned aside God's anger (3:25).
- Jesus made atonement for man's sin by dying in his place (3:25).
- Jesus died in order that God's justice would be fully demonstrated (3:26).

Complete worksheet No. 3.

CONCLUSION

Jesus died because there was no other way by which man could be reconciled to God and seen as righteous by Him. Man can have this righteousness by putting his faith in Jesus Christ and His finished work on Calvary.

LESSON 18

A Complete Salvation

THE WAY TO HEAVEN

Scripture Texts - John 3:1-21; Acts 16:30, 31

AIM OF LESSON

To show that there is only one way to heaven, this way having been appointed and provided by God Himself.

BACKGROUND NOTES

John 3:1-21.

Read John 2:23-25. These verses give the context for Christ's discussion with Nicodemus. Our Lord was in Jerusalem. Many, we read, saw His miracles and believed in His name. That is, they accepted Him as a great prophet, perhaps even as Messiah. 'This, however, is not the same as saying that they surrendered their hearts to Him. Not all faith is saving faith' (Wm. Hendriksen). The Lord Jesus was not deceived by their intellectual assent. He did not regard all these individuals as being true believers. He knew what was in man (v.25). The following chapter teaches the difference between intellectual assent to the facts of the gospel and true faith in Christ.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Nicodemus was probably one of the observers of Christ's miracles in Jerusalem. He was a Pharisee and ruler of the Jews. One of the basic errors of the Pharisees was that they 'externalised' religion. Outward conformity to the Law seemed to be their goal in life. They virtually believed in salvation by works. It would seem that Nicodemus was attracted to Christ by the radical difference in His teaching. However, before he could put to Christ the question which obviously troubled him, our Lord knew what he wanted to ask - the way to Heaven.

'Jesus answered and said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Mere improvement in one's behaviour or scrupulous keeping of the Law was not enough. Here we see Christ teaching the necessity of the new birth (regeneration) before speaking about the need of faith.

Nicodemus' lack of faith is apparent in his reaction to Christ's teaching about regeneration. 'How can these things be?' (vs. 4, 9). Our Lord virtually reproves him. 'You do not believe' (v.12). The discussion now ends and there follows our Lord's teaching on the plan of salvation, the way to heaven (vs.14-21).

Christ uses the Old Testament story of Moses and the brazen serpent (Numbers 21:4-9) to illustrate the plan of salvation. From this story and its comparison with the crucifixion of Christ, we learn three vital things.

1. Death is the punishment for sin

The Israelites in the wilderness sinned against God by grumbling. Read Numbers 21:4-6. God punished them and many died. In this case, the punishment was physical death. But God had also said, 'The soul who sins shall die' (Ezekiel 18:4). Spiritual death (i.e., eternal separation from God) is the ultimate punishment for sin.

2. God Himself provides the remedy

God told Moses the remedy for the dying Israelites. Read Numbers 21:7-9. When they looked at the raised serpent they were physically healed. Similarly, we are told the remedy for our sinfulness. Read John 3:16. Note in particular the incomparable love of God. What do we learn here about this love? Its object is the world; its gift is His only Son; its purpose is salvation. God sent His Son to be lifted up (crucified on a cross) so that those who believe in Him will be spiritually healed. In both instances, God is the Healer.

3. Those who believe and trust are healed

In answer to the urgent question of the Philippian jailer, 'What must I do to be saved?', Paul replied, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, and your household' (Acts 16:30, 31). Paul was simply repeating the teaching of Christ Himself in John 3:16. Whoever believes and puts his complete trust in Christ, committing himself to Him will not perish. This is saving faith, 'whereby we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the Gospel' (The Shorter Catechism - Q. 86). Entering the kingdom of God, having everlasting life and having salvation are three ways of describing the same thing - the way to Heaven.

Complete worksheet Nos.1, 2 and 3 and write out the verses which should be memorized.

CONCLUSION

Christ concludes with a warning. Those who believe are not condemned. Those who do not believe are condemned already, even before the judgment day, for their own unbelief. There is an implied invitation to Nicodemus to put his trust in Christ as Saviour.

LESSON 19

A Complete Salvation

FOR WHOM DID CHRIST DIE?

Scripture Texts - Matthew 1: 21; Mark 10: 45; Ephesians 1: 3-14; 5: 25

AIM OF LESSON

To show that Christ died to save His people.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Ephesians 1: 3-14

Verse 5 - 'Predestined us ': in verse 4 the apostle stated that believers have been chosen in Christ before the creation of the world. Now he declares that God, in love, has destined His chosen ones, who have been redeemed through Christ's blood (v.7), to be members of His family (v.5). This is the purpose of God's choice of His people in Christ. Predestination, or foreordination, means that our salvation is not a matter of chance or speculation. It is grounded in the 'plan' and 'purpose' of God (v.11). God's good pleasure (v.9).

Verse 7 - 'redemption': the idea here is of deliverance achieved by the payment of a ransom. This ransom is the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus on the cross. This sacrifice delivers all those for whom it is offered and accepted. It is Christ who offers and the Father who accepts this ransom. Thus the apostle speaks of 'redemption through His blood'.

Verse 9 - 'the mystery of His will' : this is God's secret purpose; a purpose hidden for ages, but now graciously made known.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

For whom did the Lord Jesus Christ die? Some have suggested that the death of Christ obtained redemption enough for all men, if only they would believe. That benefit, however, is only given to a few, because only a few believe. Christ, they claim, provided salvation which is enough for everyone, but which actually saves only some. Is this what the Bible teaches? Let us consider the following evidence.

1. The Proclamation of the Angel

Read Matthew 1: 21. This was what the Angel of the Lord said to Joseph concerning the child to be born to Mary. Note the words '...He will save His people from their sins.' From these words we learn that Christ came to save a particular people. He did not simply come to make their salvation possible, but to make it certain. This is clearly taught elsewhere in Scripture. Complete worksheet No. 1.

Christ came to save His people. To make salvation possible is not to save. The proclamation of the angel is definite. The boy was to be called Jesus, which means Saviour, because He would actually save His people. Christ died on the cross for His people and that sacrificial death makes their salvation certain.

2. The Teaching of our Lord

Our Lord speaks of a people given to Him by the Father, to whom He would give eternal life. 'As You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him' (John 17: 2). Read Matthew 20: 28 and Mark 10: 45. The 'many' for whom Christ died are described otherwise elsewhere. Complete worksheet No. 2.

From all these different verses there can be no doubt that the 'many' for whom Christ died is a definite number. Therefore when we speak of their redemption, because it is certain, we refer to it as 'Definite Redemption'. While it is true that Christ died for a definite people, whose redemption He rendered certain, stress to the class that Christ died for 'many'; for 'a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues,...' (Rev. 7: 9).

3. The Doctrine of the Apostles

In Ephesians ch.1 the apostle Paul states a truth which all the apostles taught; that believers are a chosen people in Christ and destined by God to be His sons. Read 1 Peter 1: 2. In this verse Peter presents the same truth.

There are, however, statements in the epistles which, at a superficial glance, seem to teach that Christ gave His life a ransom for all men without exception. Read Titus 2:11 and 1 Timothy 2: 6. Taken out of context, such statements could be regarded as teaching that Christ died for all men; thus implying the salvation of all.

APPLICATION

- (a) **Thanksgiving for Redemption.** Given the enormity of man's sin, we can never understand why God stooped in mercy to save anyone. When confronted by the grace of God in Christ, we can only bow in wonder, repentance and gratitude. We can never regard salvation as something we deserve.
- (b) **Assurance of Salvation.** How can a person know that he or she is included in God's plan of salvation? By turning in faith and repentance to Christ and seeking forgiveness at the foot of the cross. Anyone who wants to be saved may be saved. 'Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely' (Rev. 22: 17). The sinner hears Christ's word of encouragement, 'the one who comes to me I will by no means cast out.' He comes, and afterwards he hears his Saviour say, 'All that the Father gives me will come to me.' (John 6: 37). All who would have assurance of salvation must come and all who earnestly desire it may come.

LESSON 20

A Complete Salvation

THE EFFECTUAL CALL

Scripture Text - Romans 8: 28-30

AIM OF LESSON

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

BACKGROUND NOTES

vs. 26-28 outline **two privileges** to which Christians are entitled.

vs. 26-27 deal with the help of the Spirit in prayer.

v. 28 gives the assurance that all things work for the good of those who are in Christ.

Note the character of these people: they love God. All that God does, He does for them, freeing them from the power of sin and bringing them nearer to Him.

vs. 29-30 state **the grounds for the happiness** of believers. They have been predestined to be His and, accordingly, effectually called to faith in Him.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

We all make plans. Sometimes they work but sometimes they go wrong. Ask the class what plans they made for the previous week and if they all worked out exactly right.

God also has plans but His always work out exactly as He intended. The Bible teaches that God has had a plan for each of us from all eternity, long before we were born, and that these plans will surely come to pass. Such knowledge is of great reassurance to those who believe in Jesus.

Outline and discuss God's plan in predestination.

(1) Foreknowledge v.29

(a) God has known that we were going to exist from all eternity. Our existence is not just a matter of chance, it is part of God's plan.

(b) God has chosen some (the elect) on whom He has set His special love.

Do part 1 of the worksheet.

(2) Predestination vs. 29-30

Those on whom God placed His special love He chose to have eternal life. Note:

(a) This choice was made by God alone.

(b) It was not affected by anything He foresaw in man because all men are sinful and enemies of God.

(c) His choice was 'according to the good purpose of His will' (Eph. 1: 5).

(d) His choice of us is the free gift of His grace.

Do part 2 of the worksheet.

(3) Calling v.30

God calls His people in two ways :-

(i) The effectual call

Everyone whom God predestined to salvation is called by Him at some time in their lives.

Note:-(a) God's call is necessary for salvation.

(b) Only the elect (predestined) are called.

(c) The only agent of the eternal call is the Holy Spirit.

(d) The called are regenerated and obey the call.

(ii) The external call

This comes through the preaching of the Word, witnessing, prayer and example. The Spirit uses the 'truth' as His instrument. It must be stressed that, while we have a clear duty to witness to others in every way possible, effectual calling and salvation can only come from God through faith in Jesus Christ. Do part 3 of the worksheet.

(4) Justification v.30

There is clear teaching here that those who are effectually called

(a) are declared righteous (justified) by God and their sins are pardoned and

(b) cannot at a later date fall from grace. Do part 4 of the worksheet.

(5) Glorification v.30

The power of sin is broken by the effectual call and the guilt of sin is removed by justification. This allows the final part of God's plan to take place. The elect will be taken to heaven and will share in Christ's glory. Do part 5 of the worksheet.

In some ways this is an amazing and extraordinary summary of Christian doctrine. Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones sums it up well, 'The apostle wants us to see that what matters ultimately is the 'purpose' of God. If we know... that we are in the purpose of God, then there is only one conclusion ... 'all things must be made to 'work together' for our good, otherwise God would fail and the devil would be triumphant.'

APPLICATION

(a) If it were not for God's plan everyone would suffer eternally for their sins.

(b) We must take part in God's plan by responding to the outward call and trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

(c) When a person is a Christian, nothing can separate him from the love of God.

SUGGESTED BACKGROUND READING :

Matthew Henry's Commentary,

The Confession of Faith - Hodge;

Romans - Martyn Lloyd-Jones (Banner of Truth);

Romans Chs. 1-8 - Hendriksen (Banner of Truth).

LESSON 21

A Complete Salvation

THE NEW BIRTH

Scripture Texts - John 3: 3-8; 1 John 5: 1-5, 17-21

AIM OF LESSON

To show that the effects of sin on human nature are so serious that without the new birth the sinner cannot see, let alone enter, the Kingdom of God.

BACKGROUND

The new birth (regeneration) may be defined as a dynamic act on fallen human nature by the Holy Spirit, leading to a change in the person's whole outlook. He can now be described as a new man who seeks, finds and follows God in Christ.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

1. The Necessity of the New Birth

Although Nicodemus had not asked Jesus a specific question about the new birth Jesus knew what he was thinking, so He said 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God' (John 3: 3). The word 'again' can also be translated from the Greek as 'from above'. Jesus made two statements about the Kingdom of God in John 3: 3-8: ('cannot see the Kingdom of God' and 'cannot enter the Kingdom'). How do they differ? What is the Kingdom of God? It is the spiritual kingdom over which God rules supreme.

2. The Author of the New Birth

What is said about God's subjects in today's lesson? Look up:

- (a) John 3: 8 ('born of His Spirit')
- (b) 1 John 5: 1 ('born of God')
- (c) 1 John 5: 2 ('children of God')

These verses all indicate that God, by His Holy Spirit, is the prime mover in our becoming His children and not the other way around. (A child does not choose his parents.) Complete parts 1 and 2 of the worksheet.

3. The Mystery of the New Birth (John 3: 8)

Before the new birth sin is in control of us and makes us rebel against God but after the new birth we are controlled by the Holy Spirit who directs us towards God.

The Holy Spirit operates like the wind. Nobody on earth can direct the wind, neither can it be seen, but you can see the evidence of its presence and power by hearing the sound and

seeing the movement caused by it.

The Holy Spirit, on the other hand, is directed by God. Although He cannot be seen with a human eye you can see evidence of His presence and power in the changed lives of those who are born again, for example, in their speech and actions. Complete part 3 of the worksheet.

4. Evidence of the New Birth (1 John 5:1-5)

The fact that a person believes 'that Jesus is the Christ' is proof that he / she is 'born of God' and has experienced the new birth.

Further proof is provided by the fact that a believer will also love his fellow believers as well as loving God and carrying out His commands - see 1 John 5: 1, 2. Complete part 4 of the worksheet.

5. Promises for those who have experienced the New Birth

- (a) Who has overcome the world? See 1 John 5: 4 - everyone born of God.
- (b) What victory has overcome the world? See 1 John 5: 4 - our faith.
- (c) Who is it that overcomes the world? See 1 John 5: 5 - only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.
- (d) Who is kept safe and the evil one does not touch him? See 1 John 5: 18 - The one who is born of God.

6. Perils to be avoided by God's children (1 John 5: 17-21)

Read Isaiah 42: 8 and 1 John 5: 17 and 21

Having outlined the benefits and blessings of being God's children, John in this epistle warns us that any wrong action (sin) is idolatry. What is an idol? - an idol can be defined as 'something which claims that loyalty which belongs to God alone'. Can the class think of any examples?

This passage also emphasises that there are two forces at work in the world, good and evil, God and the devil. God's children, having entered the Kingdom of God, are kept safe by Him even though they may be tempted at times by the devil. Hence the need to 'keep yourselves from idols' (1 John 5: 21).

Complete the worksheet.

LESSON 22

A Complete Salvation

REPENT AND BELIEVE

Scripture Texts - Isaiah 55: 7; Acts 2: 38; 17: 30

AIM OF LESSON

To show the necessity of repentance and faith in the whole work of redemption.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Ask the class what they understand by the words 'repentance' and 'faith' - ('repentance' literally means 'a change of mind' and 'faith' has to do with belief and trust). Read to the class sections 14 and 15 of the Westminster Confession of Faith.

1. REPENTANCE AND FAITH ARE DIVINE GIFTS (Acts 11: 18, Eph. 2: 8)

The Confession speaks of both repentance and faith as 'graces'. These graces are not natural to sinful man but are the fruit of regeneration. Although in the experience of the sinner it seems as though repentance and faith are the first things that happen in his conversion, in reality, the first thing that happens is that God gives life to the dead sinner (regeneration) and the first breathing of that new life is seen in repentance and faith.

2. THE NATURE OF REPENTANCE

There are two fundamental aspects of repentance:

(a) **Sorrow for sin.**

Point out to the class the difference between feeling sorry because wickedness has been found out or because of the consequences of evil and feeling genuine sadness because of the sin itself. Look again at ch.15 (2) of the Confession. True repentance grieves because sin has offended a holy and righteous God. When a man is brought face to face with the holy God through the preaching of the Word and recognises his own sinfulness, his reaction will be that of John on the island of Patmos '...I fell at His feet as one dead' (Rev.1: 17).

(b) **Turning from sin.**

The evidence of genuine repentance is that there is not just sorrow for sin but a forsaking of sin (Is. 55: 7). That this must be so is quite clear when it is remembered that repentance is a gift from God and is the first act of a soul that has been 'born from above'.

Complete parts 1 and 2 of the worksheet.

3. THE NATURE OF FAITH

Faith, or saving faith, is more than simple belief, for even the demons believe (James 2:19). It is the result of Divine election (Acts 13: 48) and is the 'act of a renewed soul'. It is not a natural act but one that is the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart (Eph.1: 19; Col. 2:12) and usually comes through the ministry of the Word (Rom. 10: 17).

Ask the class to consider what evidences there would be of true saving faith in a person's life. Attention should be given to the following:-

- (a) Faith involves an acceptance of, and submission to, all the truths revealed in the Word of God.
- (b) Faith must be faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. 'Saving faith is a believing on the person of Christ, or an appropriating of Christ Himself, with all the benefits and blessings included in Him.' (Shaw - The Reformed Faith). Such a believing is more than just a mental assent, it is a receiving and A RESTING UPON the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

Explain to the class that such faith, of necessity, excludes any kind of merit or good works.

4. THE NECESSITY OF REPENTANCE AND FAITH

It is through repentance and faith that the benefits of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ are applied to the individual believer. Without repentance and faith there can be no salvation (Acts 2: 38). This is the means that it has pleased God to use to bring men and women into His kingdom. Stress to the class that although repentance and faith are the gifts of God, yet men and women are commanded to repent and believe if they are to be saved (Acts 17: 30).

APPLICATION

Challenge the members of the class as to whether or not they have truly repented of their sins and have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ask the students to complete their worksheets.

LESSON 23

A Complete Salvation

JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE

Scripture Texts - Romans chs. 3, 4 and 5

AIM OF LESSON

To explain the doctrine of justification by faith.

BACKGROUND NOTES

The passage is long so there will not be time to read it all in class. Ask the class to read it at home. Summarise the chapters as follows:-

3: 1-20 Jewish righteousness is shown to be false. Both Jew and Gentile are sinners.

3: 21-31 The righteousness of God by faith described.

4: 1-25 The righteousness of Abraham.

- (a) It was all of faith. vs. 1-8
- (b) It was independent of circumcision. vs. 9-12
- (c) It was independent of the Mosaic Law. vs. 13-22

5: 1-21 The righteousness of the believer.

- (a) The benefits of justification. vs. 1-5
- (b) The security of the believer. vs. 6-11
- (c) His righteousness is of grace. vs. 12-21

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Tell the following story to the class -

'Two boys attended the same school. One worked hard and eventually became a judge. The other was a waster who drifted into bad company and eventually fell foul of the law. Standing in the dock he recognises the judge as his old school friend and he pleads guilty but asks for leniency. The judge explains the seriousness of the offence and awards the maximum penalty of £1,000 or six months imprisonment. Without friends and no money to pay the prisoner is taken to the cells. Ten minutes later the judge arrives and invites the prisoner to his home for a meal. Bewildered the prisoner asks for an explanation and is told by the judge that he himself had paid the fine in full and that the prisoner is now a free man.' (From 'Learning and Living the Christian Life' - John Blanchard)

Outline

1. WHAT IS JUSTIFICATION?

Tell the class that the above story illustrates the main principles of justification by faith alone -

- (a) it is an act of God's free grace, because we can do nothing of ourselves to deserve it;
- (b) it consists of two parts - pardon and acceptance by God;
- (c) Christ's righteousness becomes ours through faith.

In short, it is a declaration by God that a particular person is no longer guilty in His sight and therefore is not under condemnation. God justifies (declares righteous in His sight) guilty sinners and grants this justification, not as a result of man's efforts at good living, but purely as a free gift to be received by faith. Ask a student to read aloud Rom.3: 21-31 and 4: 4-5. Complete part 1 of the worksheet.

2. HOW CAN GOD JUSTIFY?

The first three chapters of Romans make it very clear that man cannot justify himself because of what he is or what he has done.

Ask the students to read out Rom. 3: 10 and Rom. 3:20. The only basis for justification is that God provided Jesus Christ as a substitute for the sinner. When He died on the Cross He was taking the place of others, bearing their sins, enduring their suffering, accepting their punishment and paying their penalty.

Ask a student to read Rom. 5: 6. When we say that God justifies a man we do not mean that He declares a guilty man innocent. That would be untrue. Rather, God is willing to accept the sacrifice of Christ on the sinner's behalf and to pardon him on the basis of Christ's perfect life and substitutionary death. In this way He shows Himself to be just by punishing sin, yet He is able at the same time to justify the sinner. Complete part 2 of the worksheet.

3. JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

In Rom. ch. 4 Paul turns to Abraham to prove that justification is not of works but by faith. Ask a student to read vs.1-8. Stress that 'Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.' It is only those who believe who are true children of Abraham and can be justified. Read vs. 9-12 with the class. Abraham was not justified because of his works or his adherence to the Jewish Law of circumcision, indeed he was circumcised after he was justified. What mattered was that Abraham believed and trusted in God, that is, he had faith. Verse 16 sums up this section. Complete part 3 of the worksheet.

4. THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW

The law is the Word of God contained in the scriptures. It shows us that we are guilty of sin and in need of justification. It is intended to turn us away from trusting in ourselves to trusting in Christ. Ask a member of the class to read ch. 5:1-5. Complete part 4 of the worksheet.

APPLICATION

The benefits of justification

- (a) Justification removes the guilt and burden of sin (2 Cor. 5: 21).
- (b) Justification removes the penalty of sin (Rom. 8: 1).
This does not mean that a Christian is perfect and does not need daily forgiveness and cleansing but justification is full, perfect and complete and assures the full and free pardon of all a Christian's sins in the past, present and future.
- (c) Justification brings all the benefits of being a Christian. God not only forgives but pours out His blessing (Luke 15: 22-23).
- (d) Justification gives peace with God (Rom. 5:1).

LESSON 24

A Complete Salvation

ADOPTED

Scripture Text - Galatians 3:26 - 4: 7

AIM OF LESSON

To explain what it means to be adopted into the family of God.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Because of their strict Old Testament laws relating to the passing on of property to their successors, adoption was almost unknown among the Jews. However, the Romans had detailed and complicated procedures built into their legal system which gave the adopted son a new name, a different legal standing and all the rights of an heir in his new family. The word 'adoption' is used by Paul in the New Testament only five times, three times in his epistle to the Romans, once when he was writing to the Galatians and once in his letter to the Ephesians.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

A husband and wife had no family and were unable to adopt children because of the strict legal requirements in this country. They could have fostered children but were not prepared to do so because they knew that their parents could claim them back at any time. Eventually after long negotiations and a great deal of expense they legally adopted a boy and a girl who were orphans from a South American state and flew out and brought them home. Those children, who were almost certainly destined for a life of poverty and deprivation, are now a son and daughter with a new name, living in a comfortable home with all their needs supplied. They are learning the language of their new parents and the customs of the country of their adoption and are heirs to a large business.

Outline

1. WHAT IS ADOPTION?

Read Gal. 3: 24 - 4: 7 with the class.

Adoption denotes the taking of a child who is a stranger into a family and treating him as a member of it. It should be pointed out that while God may be regarded as the Father of all in the sense that He has created all, and cares for all His creatures (1Cor. 8: 6) yet, because man has sinned, he has become estranged from God and is at enmity with God (John 8: 44-47). Hence the necessity for adoption and restoration of that broken relationship with God. By an act of God all those who are justified through faith in Christ are given the status of

sons and daughters. They become members of His family with all the rights and privileges involved. These include a change in the person's name, his standing and above all his relationship to God.

2. HOW IS A CHRISTIAN ADOPTED?

Adoption is an act of God's free sovereign grace (The Shorter Catechism Q. 34). Like the man and wife in the story in the introduction, God takes the initiative and does all that is necessary to adopt children into His family.

(a) God planned it.

Ask someone to read Eph.1: 3-5. God the Father in His great love and mercy predestined us to be adopted as His sons and daughters. He was pleased and willing to do so.

(b) God the Son procured it.

Ask someone to read Gal. 4: 4-5. God sent His Son to purchase and provide adoption for us. We saw in the story at the beginning that the man had to go to considerable trouble and expense to have the children legally adopted. So it cost Christ a great deal. He was born of a woman, took our nature, was born under the law and suffered the curse of the broken law, all that He might redeem us. It is through His death on the Cross that we are freed from the penalty of sin and that He has made it possible for us to become God's children.

(c) God the Holy Spirit applies it.

Ask someone to read Gal. 4: 6 and Rom. 8: 14-16. The Spirit was sent by the Father to dwell in our hearts and make real our adoption into His family. He is called the Spirit of sonship or adoption. He is also called the Spirit of Christ. He leads us in ways that are pleasing to our Heavenly Father. He helps and enables us to pray to Him. Above all He gives us the assurances that we are God's children.

Complete part 1 of the worksheet.

3. THE RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES OF ADOPTION

As we saw in the story, adoption confers rights and privileges of the family on adopted children just as if they had been born into it.

(a) A new family.

The Christian belongs to a new family (Read Gal. 3: 26).

(b) A new Spirit

When a person is spiritually adopted he receives the Holy Spirit. Read Gal. 4: 6. The Holy Spirit not only performs the work of bringing us into the family of God but He comes and dwells in our hearts.

(c) A new status

Paul tells the Romans that we can cry 'Abba, Father' and that the Spirit Himself 'bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God' (Rom. 8: 15, 16). He tells the Galatians 'God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out 'Abba, Father! ' (Gal. 4: 6). The word 'Abba' is an intimate, familiar word used by a little child speaking to his father.

- (d) A new sense of God's care.

The Christian not only has the power of the Holy Spirit within him but he also has the provision which the Heavenly Father gives (Phil. 4: 19) and protection (John 17:11).

- (e) A new likeness (Romans 8: 29).

We were not only chosen to be saved but to become like the Lord Jesus Christ in our daily lives. The Christian is not only commanded to 'grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ' (2 Peter 3: 18) but he is given the desire and the ability to do so (Phil. 2: 13).

- (f) A new discipline. (Heb.12: 6)

This tells us that the Lord disciplines those whom He loves and He punishes everyone He accepts as a son. The word 'discipline' means 'training'. God trains those who are adopted so that they can be prepared for that day when God will give them their full rights as His children.

- (g) A new inheritance.

As adopted sons of God and fellow heirs with Christ, Christians will reign with Christ and share in His glory forever.

APPLICATION

Ask someone to read John 1: 12, 13. The apostle John tells us that to those who were 'born of God', God gave the right to become children. Here we see God's sovereign grace at work. Yet v.12 clearly tells us of our responsibility. Ask the students to say what it is we have to do in order to become children of God, namely, to repent of our sins and entrust ourselves to the finished work of Christ alone for salvation.

Complete the worksheet.

LESSON 25

A Complete Salvation

ASSURANCE

Scripture Text - 1 John 4: 7 - 5: 5

AIM OF LESSON

To show that one result of growing faith is to come to a true assurance of salvation by the grace of God.

BACKGROUND NOTES

The epistle was written to guard against the danger of heresy, so John sets forth three marks of a real knowledge of, and fellowship with, God, without which all claims to be a Christian are false: (a) faith in Jesus Christ as God incarnate; (b) righteousness of life; (c) brotherly love.

Students today are taught to reason, to think things through. That is what the apostle urges (4:1).

- 4: 7-12 Love is the sign of rebirth from above for, as Christ's sacrifice demonstrated, **GOD IS LOVE**. Though we cannot see Him we know He is in us if we show love.
- 4: 13-16 The believer has assurance because of the witness of the indwelling Spirit.
- 4: 17-19 The indwelling Spirit wills in us that our love should be perfected, for such love inspires confidence (increased faith, holy boldness, assurance) before God.
- 4: 20-5:1 shows the mark of the new birth. Perfect love casts out fear but it must also cast out hatred. If we love God we ought to love His children. Conversely, we do not love God if we do not love those begotten of Him. What a challenge!

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

In Northern Ireland, after a certain number of years, a car has to undergo an M.O.T. test to ensure its roadworthiness. The essential parts of the car are checked for safety. Once the certificate has been obtained the owner knows that his car is in a fit condition to be driven on public roads. Many things are tested to ensure their safety and efficiency. In 1 John the apostle sets out a series of tests by which the individual is to examine his life. The purpose of these tests is to bring the believer to a full assurance of faith, to the certainty that he is a true child of God.

John gives these tests - belief in Christ; love towards brethren and obedience to God. It is the Holy Spirit who enables us to discern these marks of grace and who pours God's love

into our hearts. Assurance then is clearly a desirable possession.

Outline

Read 1 John 4:7 - 5:5 with the class and stress the following points.

1. THE NATURE OF ASSURANCE

A young student approaches his exams with a smug feeling that he will come out top of the class. In fact, he fails the exam altogether. He has been presumptuous and had no right to think the way he did. Assurance is not presumption. Nor is it pride in our own spiritual achievements. Assurance is the certainty that we are children of God. It is the awareness that God has pardoned our sin and has adopted us as His children. It is God's will that all His people should possess this full assurance (Heb. 10: 22). It is not intended to be the experience of only a few special Christians. Ask a student to read 1 John 5: 13.

2. DIFFICULTIES ABOUT ASSURANCE

There are three main difficulties -

- (a) The Bible speaks about the possibility of self-deceit. A person may, quite wrongly and without any evidence, feel that he is a Christian. Ask a student to read ch.1: 8.
- (b) A true Christian may live without having assurance of his salvation. Thus, though a true Christian, he is continually plagued with doubts and lives a timid, weak Christian life.
- (c) It is also possible that there will be times when a true Christian may lose his assurance. Like a man walking down the street on a sunny day he may sometimes be in bright sunlight and at other times in dark shadow. Since the believer still falls into sin he may as a consequence lose assurance.

3. THE BLESSING OF ASSURANCE

It is God's purpose that His people enjoy the blessing of assurance. To have this inward certainty that we are children of God and that God is our Heavenly Father directing our lives in every detail is a great blessing. It will fill us with joy no matter what the circumstances. It will make us bold in our allegiance to Christ; it will make us humble; it will help us to be patient in testing situations. We are then understandably commanded in Scripture to 'be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure'.

Complete the worksheet.

APPLICATION

How can this assurance be possessed?

1. Challenge the class to look at their own lives in the light of the tests set out in 1 John.
Are the marks found in their lives?
 - (a) Do they have faith in Christ?
 - (b) Do they love other Christians?
 - (c) Do they love righteousness and hate sin?
 - (d) Is it their desire to obey God in everything?

Look also at the cross and see what God has done for them in Christ.

'It is when the Christian is aware of the sinfulness of his own heart and also aware of the amazing grace of God that the Holy Spirit pours into his heart the great seal of assurance.'

2. Pray for that witness of the Holy Spirit in the heart (Rom. 8: 16).

FURTHER READING

Matthew Henry's Commentary
Tyndale Commentary on 1 John: J. R. W. Stott
The New Bible Dictionary (p.100)

LESSON 26

A Complete Salvation

THE INNER CONFLICT AND SANCTIFICATION

Scripture Texts - Romans 6: 1-14; 7: 18-25; 8: 1-14

AIM OF LESSON

To show that though throughout this life the Christian is involved in a conflict with sin, yet he is able by God's grace to grow more like Christ.

BACKGROUND NOTES

The word 'sanctification' is used in several ways in the Bible but in the New Testament it is used to describe the process by which the Christian is purified in heart and mind. There is no such thing as instant sanctification. It is a continuous work of God's free grace. See The Shorter Catechism Q 35.

God is the author of sanctification, not man. We are nevertheless commanded to strive for greater holiness of life by using the means which God has provided for us.

Sanctification involves us in conflict. There is the conflict 'without' i.e., with the world and the devil and the conflict 'within' i.e., with the flesh or the continuing presence of indwelling sin. In Romans 6-8 Paul teaches that though the Christian has died to sin this does not mean that sin has died in him. What has changed is not its presence but its status (it no longer reigns), and his relationship to it (he is no longer its slave).

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

The past century has been the age of guerrilla warfare - Cyprus, Malaya, Aden, Israel, Vietnam, El Salvador and Ireland have all experienced it.

There is another guerrilla war going on, not so obvious but far more serious. Every true believer is engaged in a continuous conflict with the remnants of sin which, like guerrillas with no hope of victory, continue to terrorise the believer. The government of Jesus Christ which rules in the Christian's life gradually subdues and destroys this enemy.

Outline

1. A New Government

The unbeliever is ruled by a cruel tyrant, Satan, and his government of sin. However when a person is born again the devil is deposed and the government of sin is destroyed (Read in class Rom. 6: 6 and Gal. 5: 24.) The Christian is now under a new government. By the new

birth, Jesus Christ is set on the throne of the believer's heart (Read in class Rom. 8: 9 and 2 Cor. 5: 17).

2. A New Policy

The new government of Jesus Christ in a believer's heart completely changes the direction of that person's life and gives a new objective. Read Rom. 6: 4; and Col. 3: 17.

3. A Continuous Conflict

Read Rom. 7: 20.

Paul explains the problem - though the controlling power of sin has been ended its presence has not been removed. The remnants of sin are still there in the believer's heart, like deposed tyrants who hide in the jungle and launch sneak terrorist attacks against the new state (Rom. 7: 22-23). Sin cannot and must not be tolerated, just as terrorism must not be tolerated. Sin must be resisted and put to death (Read Col. 3: 5).

4. A Certain Victory

We may deal with sin in our Christian life from a perspective of victory. We have good reason to enter the conflict with the enemy of sin in optimistic mood. The battle, however, will not be won consistently without 'blood, sweat and tears'. We are given strength for the battle. Though weak ourselves we are promised strength in Christ (Rom. 7: 24-25). We are provided with weapons: the Spirit and the Word (Rom. 8: 13, John 17: 17). We are to obey the orders of our King. Read 1 Peter 1: 2.

APPLICATION

The grace of Christ gradually subdues the remnants of sin as we 'grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ' (2 Peter 3: 18).

Sanctification means growth, therefore, although every Christian should be aware of the conflict with sin in his own life, he should be able also to see growth in righteousness.

Complete the worksheet in class or at home.

LESSON 27

A Complete Salvation

KEPT TO THE END

Scripture Text - John 6: 35-59

AIM OF LESSON

To show that those who are saved by Christ are also kept by Him and so are enabled to persevere to the end.

BACKGROUND NOTES

6: 39, 40, 44, 54 Note how frequently our Lord declares that He will raise His people up at the last day. This is God's work in the believer. Only He can preserve a person through this life and bring him safely to Heaven.

The Christian is assured that the life which he has in Christ is eternal and therefore can never be lost.

It is clear that the believer has a responsibility to persevere in the Christian life by using all the means of grace which God provides. This passage teaches that we are to feed upon Christ and His Word. If we continue to do so He will keep us and raise us up at the last day.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Try to imagine the Children of Israel on their journey through the wilderness to Canaan. They had been delivered from slavery in Egypt but the question now was - would they safely arrive in the Promised Land? We know that they did because God kept them in safety along the way, despite their sins, and so they were able to persevere until they eventually reached Canaan.

Outline

1. Preservation

Explain this part of the lesson and use the references indicated. Like the Children of Israel the Christian who has been delivered from sin is brought safely to heaven. This is God's work in preserving the believer. It is certain because:

- (a) This is God's will for the Christian. Read vs. 39 and 40.
- (b) We are kept by God's power. Read Jude 24 and Phil. 1: 6.
- (c) Christ is praying for us. Read Rom. 8: 34; Heb. 7: 25 and Luke 22: 32.

Read the story and complete parts 1 and 2 of the worksheet.

2. Perseverance

Read John 6: 48-59 with the class.

The Children of Israel were being brought safely to the Promised Land but this did not mean they had nothing to do. They had to keep following as God guided them, eating the food which He provided and trusting the promises which He had given. Similarly, the Christian must follow Christ and have fellowship with Him through His Word and by prayer. We must continue to walk by faith in Christ. In so doing the Christian will persevere and will reach heaven. Complete part 3 of the worksheet.

APPLICATION

Make sure that the class sees the connection between God's preserving the Christian and the Christian persevering in the faith. We can persevere only because we are being kept by the power of God.

The devil will try to tempt us away from the path of perseverance but we must counter this by the study of God's Word and by prayer, asking Him to preserve us and help us to persevere in faith. Complete part 4 of the worksheet.

LESSON 28

A Complete Salvation

THE GLORY THAT AWAITS US

Scripture Texts - John 20: 11 - 20; 1 Corinthians 15

AIM OF LESSON

To show that believers have assurance of the resurrection of the body and an entrance into glory.

BACKGROUND NOTES

John 20: 17 'Touch me not' is better translated: 'cease touching me'. Christ must ascend to the Father and Mary must not cling to the physical form of the Master.

vs. 19-20 The disciples were hiding in Jerusalem when Jesus came to them through locked doors. His body was not a phantom but what Paul calls a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15: 44).

1 Cor. 15 Paul is explaining the doctrine of the resurrection which some of the Corinthians denied (v.12).

vs. 1-11 Paul summarises the death and resurrection of Christ and stresses that the events are confirmed by many eye-witnesses.

vs. 12-19 Paul refutes those who did not accept Christ's resurrection. If this truth is not accepted then the preaching of the Gospel and our faith would be in vain.

vs. 20-34 Paul stresses the truth of the resurrection of the dead. All those who have died in Christ are united to Him through faith and by His resurrection are assured of their own resurrection.

vs. 30-50 The answer to the principal objection against man's resurrection. Just as God has the power each year to bring dead grain to life, so man, once dead, is made alive again. A spiritual body is promised.

vs. 51-58 Man's sin resulted in death, but Christ, by dying on the cross, has victory over death. Christians are to stand firm in the faith.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

The resurrection is the very heart of the Christian faith. It is mentioned more than 100 times in the New Testament. Without the resurrection there is no gospel (1 Cor. 15: 17).

The FACTS agreed by everyone are:-

- (a) Christ lived more than 1 900 years ago.
- (b) He was crucified and buried.
- (c) Three days later His body disappeared from the tomb where He was buried.

Outline

1. EVIDENCE OF THE RESURRECTION

(a) Direct Evidence (witnesses who saw the incident)

Read John 20:11- 20 with the class. On at least eleven occasions altogether more than 550 people saw the risen Christ. The witnesses saw Him, heard Him speak, touched Him, saw Him eat food and have recorded it in writing. Paul is the outstanding witness. Educated by Gamaliel, Paul was one of the most intelligent men who has ever lived. He was fanatically opposed to Christianity until he met Christ. His integrity is beyond dispute. He was stoned, flogged, imprisoned, shipwrecked and suffered death all because he insisted on believing in the risen Christ. Read 1 Corinthians 15: 1-11 with the class.

(b) Circumstantial Evidence

(i) The change in the disciples.

Shattered, leaderless, in despair, suddenly they were changed.

(ii) The existence of Christianity

Jerusalem knew the facts about Christ's crucifixion yet it was here that 3 000 became Christians a few days after His death (Acts 2: 41) followed later by 5 000 men (Acts 4: 4).

(iii) The unity of Christianity

The Jews were prejudiced against the Gentiles yet we find all barriers broken down by the belief in Christ's resurrection (Gal. 3: 28).

(iv) Christian Worship

The Jews were fanatical about keeping the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath. Yet from Christ's death the early Church, which consisted largely of Jews, kept the first day of the week as 'The Lord's Day' and abandoned the Jewish Sabbath.

(v) Could the early church have grown so rapidly and to such an extent on a myth?

(c) Real Evidence (evidence which can be produced for inspection)

The testimony of Christians all down the centuries. Complete part 1 of the worksheet.

2. OUR RESURRECTION

Read 1 Cor. 15: 22-23 with the class. The Christian's great assurance is that because Christ rose from the dead and is alive now, those who trust in Him will also arise with a spiritual body and will live forever with Christ. Because we are united to Him the power which once raised Him from the dead will flow from Him to raise up our mortal bodies.

Our Transfiguration

Read 1 Cor. 15: 42-49 with the class. Our mortal bodies will be transformed to be like Christ.

Paul uses three analogies to illustrate the transformation:-

- (i) Like a seed planted which disappears into the ground but from the soil comes a beautiful flower. There is continuity but also change. The mortal body is transformed to a resurrection body - still recognisable but now perfect with the deformities removed.
- (ii) Just as the planets are different from the earth and as man is different from animals, so there will be a dramatic change in the resurrection body.
- (iii) The resurrection body belongs to a different order from the body in which we now live. It is of the earth but it will be heavenly. It will be in all its characteristics like Christ's resurrection body, fitted to a new kind of existence and reigning with Christ in His Kingdom. Complete part 2 of the worksheet.

3. THE RESURRECTION

Read 1 Cor. 15: 51-58 with the class. At the resurrection those who have believed in Jesus will be blessed in the following ways:-

- (i) they will be raised up with glorified bodies,
- (ii) they will be acknowledged by Christ as His own people, declared free from guilt and
- (iii) they will be taken to heaven, where they will be happy with God for ever.

APPLICATION

The students should be challenged with the following:-

Do they believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead?

Many people accept that Jesus Christ rose from the dead but that is not enough.

- (i) If Christ rose from the dead He is alive today.
- (ii) We can know Him as our personal Saviour.
- (iii) If we know Him as our Saviour, our lives are changed now and our bodies will be changed at the resurrection.

Complete part 3 of the worksheet.

LESSON 29

Knowing who God is

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

Scripture Texts - 1Chron. 29: 10 - 13; Psalm 115: 1 - 3; Psalm 135: 1 - 13; Daniel 4: 28 - 37

AIM OF LESSON

To show that God exercises complete authority and control over all things, both great and small, in the universe which He created.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Sovereignty of God - This doctrine deals with the absolute authority and supremacy of God over His creation. It relates to His complete, undeniable and unalterable right and power to deal with His creatures as He sees fit. It recognises not only that He has this power but that He actually uses it to determine and control all events and things throughout the entire universe, irrespective of how great or small they are. In fact, it acknowledges that God rules the world which He created. Nothing can come to pass apart from His sovereign will.

The four passages for study deal with various aspects of God's sovereignty.

1 Chron. 29: 10-13 - Before his death, at the end of his farewell address to his sons and his subjects, David offered a prayer of thanksgiving and praise to God. In this he declares that all things are due to God's sovereign grace and control.

Psalm 115: 1-3 - In this Psalm the Psalmist acknowledges that all the good we do is through the enabling power of God's grace. He recognises that the God of Israel is not a visible god of wood or stone but an invisible God who is in the heavens, is totally independent and does what He pleases in heaven and on earth.

Psalm 135: 1-13 - This is a psalm of praise. In verse 5 the psalmist asserts the greatness of God and in verse 6-13 he refers to some of the various aspects of God's greatness:-

His absolute independence - He can do what He pleases both in heaven and on earth (v.6).

His control over the elements - He controls the clouds, the lightning and the wind (v.7).

His authority over nations - He destroyed individuals and slew mighty kings (vs. 8-11).

His authority over our possessions - He gave their land as an inheritance (v.12).

His infinity - 'Your name O Lord endures for ever' (v.13).

Daniel 4: 28-39 - This passage deals with the fulfilment of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Despite the fact that Daniel had revealed its meaning to him a year earlier, Nebuchadnezzar, by his arrogance, pride and cruelty to the captives, showed a disregard for the absolute authority and power of God. God had to teach him a lesson and through this lesson

Nebuchadnezzar was made to acknowledge that God is all powerful and unique both in heaven and on earth (vs.34 and 35).

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Ask the students what is their conception of God? To stimulate discussion use questions such as the following: Who regulates all affairs on earth, God or the devil, or do these things occur by chance? Does the fact that sin is rampant and lawlessness abounds mean that God has lost control? Has man supreme authority over his everyday activities?

Encourage the students to be frank in giving their answers. If this can be achieved it is likely that these answers may reveal a totally inadequate understanding of the majesty and sovereignty of God. It is a fact today that many people consider God to be a kind of benevolent being, higher than man, who is frequently frustrated in achieving His purpose by the activities of His creatures.

What does the Bible say about God?

1. GOD IS SOVEREIGN IN HIS DEALING WITH HIS CREATION

Some people believe that, while God may have created the world, He then left it entirely to its own devices to be governed by the so called laws of nature. People who hold this view, at best relegate God to the background, and at worst banish Him from His creation.

(a) God is sovereign in His dealings with non-living things.

Ps.135:7 indicates clearly that God controls the elements such as the wind, rain and lightning. Ask the students to give other examples to demonstrate God's power over non-living things such as these. Suitable examples would be:-

The flood - Gen.7: 4, 17-24; Sodom and Gomorrah - Gen. 19: 24;
the plagues of blood, hail and darkness - Ex.7: 20; Ex.9: 22 and Ex.10: 21;
the Red Sea - Ex.14: 21; the earth opening - Num.16: 31-33;
the fiery furnace - Daniel 3: 19-27; calming the storm - Mark 4: 35-41;
control over the sun - 2 Kings 20: 8-11.

These examples show clearly that God controls all inanimate matter. Help the students to see that when they complain about the weather they are in fact complaining against God's works.

(b) God is sovereign in His dealings with living things

Ask a student to read Ps.135: 8-9 and then ask the class to name the plagues which demonstrated God's power over living things. Answers: frogs, lice, flies, murrain on the animals, boils on man and beast, locusts and death - Exodus chs. 8, 9 and 10. Recall some other instances to show God's control of nature e.g. using the ravens to

feed Elijah (1 Kings 17: 2-4), closing the mouths of the lions (Daniel 6: 22), Jonah and the great fish (Jonah 1: 17).

Explain that there are many other references in Scripture which also show clearly that God reigns over the beasts of the field, the birds of the air and the fish of the sea.

(c) God is sovereign in His dealings with mankind.

Is God in control of all mankind? Some people claim that He is not because of the sin and evil that exist. To show the error of this ask the students to read Daniel 4: 28-37. Using the Background Notes explain how God humbled Nebuchadnezzar, that great heathen king, and brought him to recognise God as supreme in all things. If time permits, ask the students about other occasions when God exercised His power over evil men e.g. Pharaoh (Ex.14) and Balaam (Numbers 23:1-12).

(d) God is sovereign in His dealings with angels.

Using the Background Notes for 1Chron. 29: 10-13 and Ps.115: 1-3 explain that all in heaven is under God's subjection e.g. 1Chron.29: 11, 'for all that is in heaven and earth is Yours'. Show from Acts 12: 11 how God exercised authority over His angels by sending them to deliver Peter out of the hands of Herod.

2. GOD IS SOVEREIGN IN THE SALVATION OF MEN

This will be dealt with more fully in later lessons. Nevertheless a lesson on the sovereignty of God would be totally incomplete without some mention of this great fact. Jonah 2: 9 states that salvation is of the Lord. In Acts 13: 48 we are told that 'As many as had been appointed to eternal life believed'. In other words, it is God who causes a limited but complete number of the human race to believe in Him and as a result inherit eternal life. Stress the point that salvation is of God. It is God the Father who elects men, it is God the Son who has paid the price for sin on Calvary's cross, it is God the Holy Spirit who acts on the hearts and wills of men in a powerful and irresistible way and brings them to a point where they can freely accept the Lord Jesus as their Saviour and Lord. Ensure that the students recognise that, while salvation is of God, believers have a responsibility to acknowledge and obey God in every sphere and activity of their lives (1 Peter 1: 2). God must have the supreme place in the life of a Christian. Complete No.1 and No. 2 of the worksheet.

APPLICATION

Remind the students of the answers they gave at the beginning of the class. Correct any wrong impressions and stress the following:-

1. When we recognise that God created and controls all things in accordance with His own Divine will, we can only wonder at His almighty power and the marvellous nature

of His handiwork and praise Him.

2. The fact that all things were created by Him should influence our attitude to the living and non-living things around us. We should not complain, for example, about the weather or the weeds in the garden when we realise they are part of God's handiwork.
3. Sometimes it is easy to think that God is distant from us and does not concern Himself about this world and the evil that is in it. When we think this way we should remember Nebuchadnezzar and Pharaoh and how God controls all men including evil kings.
4. God is sovereign in the salvation of men. He it is who draws His elect people to put their trust in Him.

Challenge the students to look at their own lives to see if they can truly say that God has the pre-eminence in all their various activities.

See No. 3 of the worksheet.

LESSON 30

Knowing who God is

THE UNCHANGING GOD

Scripture Texts - Numbers 23: 19; Psalm 33: 9-11; Psalm 102: 18-28; Malachi 3: 1- 6

AIM OF LESSON

To show that God cannot change in any way.

BACKGROUND NOTES

'Immutability' - a word used frequently to describe a characteristic of God. It means 'unchangeable'.

Numbers 23: 19 Balak recounts to Balaam that God told him that He (God) would never break His promises or change His mind.

Psalm 33: 9-11 At a word God created all things. God's plans are always perfect and need no alterations.

Psalm 102: 18-28 The Psalmist finds encouragement in the midst of all his problems in the eternal existence of God. He stresses two points:-

- (1) Most people regard heaven and earth as stable and unchangeable and yet they have a beginning and will have an end unlike God who had no beginning and will have no end. He does not 'grow old'.
- (2) Since God is eternal and unchangeable, He keeps His Covenant promises and therefore God's chosen people and their descendants will enjoy His promised mercies (v. 28).

Malachi 3: 1-6 God promised to send a Messiah and He would keep His promise despite the unbelief and ridicule of the people e.g. Mal.2: 17. The Jews expected God to send a conquering prince who would defeat their enemies and endow them with wealth and glory but they did not desire a judge who would expose their sin. In verse 6 God gives the reason why the Jews had not been totally destroyed like some of the other nations around them. It was because of His unchanging character and His inability to break His promises.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

'Circumstances have changed'. This is often given as an excuse for a person or government breaking a promise. Of course, it is true that things do change for we live in a world of change. Ask the students for examples. Remind them that everyone of us changes

physically, emotionally and intellectually as we pass from childhood, through adolescence and adulthood, to old age. Not only do we change but the entire creation is also subject to change. This, however, does not apply to God.

1. GOD'S LIFE DOES NOT CHANGE

Ask the students to read Ps.102: 18-28. Using the Background Notes explain the meaning of these verses and in particular verses 25-28. Unlike created things God does not grow old and wear out. He does not get more powerful or less powerful. His wisdom does not increase or decrease nor does He grow stronger or weaker. He remains the same i.e. perfect (Ps.102: 27; Mal.3: 6).

2. GOD'S CHARACTER DOES NOT CHANGE

Discuss with the students how our characters can change. For example when things are going well we can be kind, thoughtful and loving, yet when we are put under pressure, be it from examinations or having a difficult task to do, we can become callous and difficult to get on with. God is not like this. His character does not change. He is and will always be:

- (a) A God of love. We see evidence of His love daily in the light and warmth we receive from the sun and the rain which also make the crops grow (Matt.5:45). God Himself is love (1John 4: 8,16) and His love endures forever (Ps.136).
- (b) A God of grace. He has bestowed and will continue to bestow His grace on believers (Titus 2: 11).
- (c) A God of mercy. He is a God of compassion who pities those who are in misery and is ever willing to relieve those in distress. His mercy is extended to those who fear Him from generation to generation (Luke 1: 50).
- (d) A God who is altogether holy. God is perfect and can never look upon sin (Hab.1: 13).
- (e) A God who is longsuffering. We often find it difficult to 'put up' with a person who wrongs us, yet God is not like that. He is longsuffering (2 Peter 3: 9).
- (f) A God who is just. He gives and will give just judgment (Gen. 18: 25).

See part 1 and complete parts 2(a) and 2(b) of the worksheet.

3. GOD'S TRUTH DOES NOT CHANGE

Frequently we hear accounts of men going back on their word after they had reached an agreement with another party. Ask the students if they can give an example from their own experience. While men may 'break' their word God does not 'break' His. He never breaks a

promise. At this point ask the students to read Numbers 23: 19 and, using the Background Notes, explain the meaning of this verse. Also read Mal.2: 17 - 3: 6 and indicate how this promise was fulfilled when Jesus came. Stress that not one of God's promises can be broken (John 10: 35b).

4. GOD'S WAY DOES NOT CHANGE.

God still continues to effect the work of salvation in the hearts and lives of certain people in the manner in which He has indicated in His Word. This does not change because Scripture says 'there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved' (Acts 4: 12). Heb.7: 25 states that 'He ever lives to make intercession for them'. This should be of great comfort to every Christian.

5. GOD'S PURPOSE DOES NOT CHANGE.

Ask the students what type of career they wish to follow and if they ever wanted to do something else. If any of them have changed their minds, ask the reasons. Establish that in many cases such changes are due to lack of foresight e.g. a person's G C S E results might not be sufficient to allow him to proceed to the career which he had previously planned. This is not so with God. He can foresee all things and consequently He does not need to change His plans or His purpose. This means that all the intentions mentioned in His Word will come to fruition in the way and in the manner which He has laid down. At this point ask the students to read Ps.33: 9-11 and explain, using the Background Notes, that God's plans are always perfect and therefore cannot be changed and will come to pass.

Complete parts 2(c), 2(d) and 2(e) of the worksheet.

APPLICATION

1. Since God cannot change, it means that the promises which He gave to mankind in both the Old and New Testaments are equally real and effective for us today. These promises relate to all aspects of our lives including the provision of our bodily needs, the continuation of seed-time and harvest, our salvation, sanctification etc. This should be a source of great comfort to each one of us.
2. While His promises are unchangeable so also are His requirements for our daily conduct. Challenge the students to examine their lives to see if their conduct meets the requirements laid down in His Word.

Complete the worksheet.

LESSON 31

Knowing who God is

THE HOLINESS OF GOD

Scripture Texts - Psalm 89: 6-7; Isaiah 6: 1-5; Habakkuk 1: 12,13; 1 Peter 1:15,16; 1 John 1: 5

AIM OF LESSON

To show the students that God is a holy God and to explain how this doctrine relates to their lives.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

'Holy' and 'holiness' are expressions used frequently in prayer and public worship, yet most people have only a vague idea of their meaning. Ask the students what they think these words mean. Explain that the words translated 'holy' in both the Old and New Testaments basically mean 'set apart' or 'separate'. Our English word 'holy' comes from 'wholly' meaning morally perfect.

At the beginning of his prophetic ministry Isaiah had a vision of the holiness of God. This made a deep and lasting impression on him (Isaiah 6: 1-5) and thereafter he frequently referred to God as 'the Holy One of Israel'. Using Isaiah 6: 1-5 as the basic text help the students to learn more about some aspects of God's holiness.

1. THE NATURE OF GOD'S HOLINESS

(a) It sets Him apart from His creation

God's holiness means that He is absolutely separate from all His creatures, being above them in His infinite majesty. Although we may speak about 'holy men of God', or the 'holy angels', the Scriptures make it abundantly clear that 'there is none holy like the Lord' (1Sam.2: 2). The angels (seraphim) emphasised this in Is.6: 3 when they described God as 'Holy, Holy, Holy'. The fact that they repeated this word three times was simply to stress that He is perfectly holy, holy above all others.

(b) It separates Him from sinful men

God is completely righteous and can countenance no sin. He is utterly separate from it. There is no spot or taint of evil with God nor can His glory be tarnished, because He is a holy God (Hab.1: 13). Indeed, holiness lies at the very 'foundation' of the Being and Person of God. 'Holiness' to quote Thomas Watson (one of the Puritans) 'is the most sparkling jewel of His crown'. All the other attributes of God may be said to be hinged on this. He is just, good, righteous etc., because He is holy. Complete No. 1 of the worksheet.

2. THE EVIDENCE OF GOD'S HOLINESS.

This is demonstrated to man in a number of ways:

(a) Through His law

God gave His Law to instruct Israel that He was holy and that He required them to live holy lives. His Law forbids sin in all its forms. Paul acknowledged this when he said in Romans 7: 12 'the law is holy and the commandment is holy, and just and good'.

b) Through the works of creation.

When God created the world we are told that He 'saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good' (Gen.1: 31). This meant that everything was perfect. There was no imperfection or unholiness in anything God had created. Even Satan himself was perfect in the beginning (Ezek.28: 15). Hence the Psalmist was able to say 'The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and gracious in all His works' (Ps.145: 17).

(c) Through the life of Christ.

Christ demonstrated the perfect holiness of God by His life here on earth. He knew no sin and was able to say 'I have glorified you on the earth: I have finished the work which you have given me to do' (John 17: 4).

(d) Through Christ's redemptive work on the cross.

Because God is holy He has a righteous anger towards all sin in His creatures. This righteous anger could only be quenched through the offering up of a perfect sacrifice. Nothing else would or could satisfy a holy God.

(e) Through its effect on His children.

God's holiness is the source of all holiness whether of angels or of men. When people are made aware of His holiness it brings about a change in their lives. For example, a vision of God's holiness caused the prophet Isaiah to see his own sinfulness (Is. 6: 5). This resulted (v.6) in the prophet being cleansed from sin and consecrated to God's service. In other words, Isaiah had no holiness of his own, his holiness was from God. Complete No.2 of the worksheet.

3. THE IMPLICATIONS OF GOD'S HOLINESS FOR US

(a) We must approach God in the proper way.

Read Ex. 3: 5. By telling Moses to take off his shoes God was emphasising that to approach Him required preparation. We cannot approach God without preparation. We must come reverently, recognising our sinful state, confessing our sins and in submission to His will.

(b) We must also be holy

'Be holy for I am holy' (1 Peter 1: 16). In Isaiah's vision he saw the infinite holiness of

God contrasted with his own sinful state. This led to his cleansing and prepared him for God's service. The contemplation of the holiness of God ought always to bring to us a deep awareness of our own sinfulness. At the same time it should stir us up to be more holy, more willing to love, obey and serve our Lord.

Complete No.3 of the worksheet.

APPLICATION

God commands His children to be holy. Using No. 4 of their worksheet show the students how this should affect their lives.

A proper appreciation of the holiness of God will show us our true state before Him and encourage us to love, honour and obey Him.

LESSON 32

Knowing who God is

THE LOVE OF GOD

Scripture Texts - John 3: 16; Deut. 7: 7, 8; Rom. 8: 32-39; 1 John 4: 7-12

AIM OF LESSON

To discover the nature of God's love as revealed in the Scriptures.

BACKGROUND NOTES

1. In the Old Testament two words are used for love.

- (a) The first means to bind, fasten or join together. This word is used in Deut. 7:7 to describe the love of God for His people.
- (b) The second means to breathe after, to long for strongly, to desire. This word is used to describe both the love of God for His people (Deut. 4: 37) and the love of His people for Him (Deut. 6: 5).

Combining the meanings of these Old Testament words gives a much fuller description of what is meant by the word 'love'. It is the spiritual bond of fellowship by which two parties cleave to each other and long after each other with mutual delight.

2. In the New Testament two different Greek words are used to express the love of God.

- (a) The weaker of the two words, 'phileo' means 'to have tender affection for'.
- (b) The stronger word, 'agape' means 'to seek the well-being of'.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Ask the class what they understand the word 'love' to mean. See No. 1 of the students' worksheet. Establish that most people consider it means to have special feelings for another person or persons. This is the view portrayed in many modern magazines. The dictionary defines it as 'a feeling of deep regard, fondness and devotion toward another person'.

1. GOD IS LOVE

The love of God is much greater than the love between human beings. Ask the students to read 1 John 4: 7-12. Using the Background Notes where necessary and No. 2 of the worksheet, show that

- (a) God is love. Love is an essential part of His character.
- (b) The source of all love, even among men, is God.
- (c) His love is perfect.
- (d) His sovereign love: (i) surpasses knowledge (Eph.3: 19),
(ii) is everlasting (Jer. 31: 3) and
(iii) is freely given (Hos.14: 4).
- (e) His love calls for a response from believers (1John 4: 11).

2. THE REVELATION OF GOD'S LOVE

Using No. 3 of the worksheet show that God's love is revealed in a number of ways.

(a) In His creative work.

Discuss this with reference to the beauty, intricacy and perfection of creation - this was all prepared for mankind (Gen.1: 31).

(b) In His providing care.

God's special love is only for His children, nevertheless He also demonstrates a general love in :

(i) The provision made for all His creatures (Ps. 36: 6).

(ii) The special provision for the needs of men (Gen. 9:13).

(iii) The establishment of family life (Ps. 68:6).

(iv) The ordering of lawful government (Rom. 13:1-7).

(v) The protection of the weak, needy and troubled (Deut.10:18).

(vi) The sovereign control of the events of history (Ps. 99; Rom. 8:28).

(c) In His redemptive work.

God's redemptive work is the expression of His special love for His people. The depth of this love is shown in that He did not spare His only begotten Son but put Him to death for their sins. The Holy Spirit brings God's people into personal experiences of this love. Read Rom. 8: 32-39.

3. THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S LOVE

There are at least three ways of knowing that God loves the believer. Using No. 4 of the worksheet show that these are:

(a) By what He says to them in the Bible. Ask the students to read the following passages to illustrate this point, Deut.7: 7, 8; Jer. 31: 3; John 3: 16 and 1John 4: 16-19.

(b) By what He has done for them in Jesus Christ. (1 John 4: 10 and Rom. 8: 32-39). Emphasise that the plan of salvation initiated by God was undeserved by sinful man.

(c) By His relationship with them as their heavenly Father. (1 John 3: 1; Rom. 8:15-17).

APPLICATION

Discuss with the students how the Christian can grow in his

(a) knowledge of God's love,

(b) experience of God's love,

(c) assurance of God's love,

(d) enjoyment of God's love,

(e) expression of God's love in his relationships with other people (1 John 4: 11, 12).

Complete No. 5 of the worksheet.

LESSON 33

Knowing who God is

THE WRATH OF GOD

Scripture Texts - Psalm 2: 9-12; Psalm 7: 8-17; John 3: 31-36; Rom. 1: 16-19; Rom. 2: 5-16;
Hebrews 12: 28, 29

AIM OF LESSON

To discover the nature of the wrath of God as it is revealed in the Scriptures.

BACKGROUND NOTES

This is a subject which tends to be avoided but it is one which needs to be studied in order to give a balanced understanding of the true nature of God. When thinking of God most people tend to concentrate solely on His love and tenderness yet in His Word there are more references to His anger, wrath and fury than to His love. Not only does the Bible emphasise that God is terrible to those who do not obey Him (see Nahum 1: 2-8) but it gives many examples of Divine retribution e.g. Achan (Josh. 6: 25, 26). Jesus Himself had more to say on this subject than any other New Testament writer. He made the point that retribution would be proportional to the individual's deserts (Luke 12: 47, 48).

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Human anger - discuss its nature and consider examples e.g. losing our temper, 'flying off the handle', throwing a tantrum etc. These are outbursts of human, uncontrolled, sinful anger. In human relationships we rightly regard such displays of uncontrolled anger as a defect of character, something to be ashamed of and for which an apology is necessary. There is, however, an anger which is right and proper, an anger which is really wrath against evil such as we see in certain psalms (Ps. 69: 24) or in Christ Himself (John 2: 15). At this point ask the students to consider No. 1 of their worksheet.

1. THE NATURE OF GOD'S WRATH

God's wrath is not to be equated with that of man. God's wrath is a righteous wrath and is therefore a just and necessary reaction to evil. God has an absolute hatred of all unrighteousness. If He reacted otherwise He would not be the morally perfect being that He is. His wrath, like all His attributes, is constant and controlled. It is the permanent, personal attitude of a just and holy God to sin. It is consistent with all His other attributes, such as love, goodness, justice, righteousness etc. The wrath of God always works out His righteous and sovereign purposes. The extent of His wrath administered to each person is precisely what he deserves. It is perfect justice. To emphasise this ask the students to read Rom. 2: 5-16. Also read the verses listed in No. 2 of the worksheet.

2. THE DIRECTION OF GOD'S WRATH

Ask the students to read Rom.1: 16-19. Verse 18 tells us plainly that 'the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men', i.e. against all sin. This is consistent with God's holiness and righteousness. He cannot be indifferent to sin. The wrath of God is clear proof of the gravity of sin. In effect, the wrath of God is really His holiness stirred into activity against sin. This is the moving force of every just sentence of God upon evil-doers.

Ask the students to complete No. 3 of their worksheet. Answers to 3(a):- worshipping idols; not worshipping Him in the appointed way; refusing to listen to His commands; doing evil. Answer to 3(b):- sin.

3. THE EVIDENCE OF GOD'S WRATH

God's wrath is first shown in Genesis 3 when mankind received God's curse for disobedience. As a consequence nature was thrown out of balance resulting in thorns and weeds flourishing where previously they did not. Pain and death also became realities for the first time. Later, God sent a flood and destroyed all animal life with the exception of that which was with Noah in the ark. Still later, the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were consumed by fire and brimstone - God's righteous judgment upon their sin.

The ultimate evidence of God's wrath is seen in the suffering and death of Christ - the fulfilment of the Old Testament sacrifices where blood was shed. Christ's blood was shed to propitiate God's wrath. It was because Christ was bearing the wrath of God that He cried out upon the cross 'My God, My God why have You forsaken Me'? He was bearing the righteous punishment of God due to the sins of His people. Scripture has much to say about the final day of judgment when all unbelievers will be judged at Christ's return. See John 3: 31-36; Ps. 2: 9; Ps. 7: 8-17.

Ask the students to complete No. 4 of their worksheet.

Answers: - (a) pain and death; (b) thorns and thistles; (c) destruction of all living creatures by the flood except those in the ark; (d) the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; (e) the death of Christ; (f) unbelievers given over to their own lusts.

4. THE ESCAPE FROM GOD'S WRATH

God has provided a means of escape from His wrath for His people through the death and resurrection of His Son. Ask the students to read Isaiah 53:4, 5. This message comes with the urgent command for people to flee to Christ (Ps. 2:10-12; Ps. 7:12).

Complete No. 5 of the worksheet.

APPLICATION

1. Challenge the students regarding their own personal need to escape the wrath of God. Stress that it is necessary for each one to come into the personal experience of a saving relationship with Christ which is the way of escape - the only way.
2. There is such a thing as righteous anger in the believer. Using No. 6 of the worksheet, discuss how man's righteous anger against evil and injustice in the world can be used in a just way to alleviate suffering and to seek to change unjust and oppressive situations. For example, we feel anger when we hear of food or money meant for starving people being given or sold to those who are not needy.

Examples in history tell us of Christians whose anger at the horrors of child labour, horrific prison conditions, slave trading etc., resulted in activities which led to important reforms.

LESSON 34

Knowing who God is

MAN SEPARATED FROM GOD

Scripture Texts - Isaiah 1: 1-20; 59: 1-8

AIM OF LESSON

To show that it is sin that separates man from God and that this must be repented of if one is to truly know God.

BACKGROUND NOTES

'And let us reason together'.

'This verse (v.18) contains an invitation to discuss the question whether God was willing or unwilling to show mercy, implying that reason as well as justice was on His side, and asserting His power and His willingness to pardon the most aggravated sins.' (Alexander)

'Inasmuch as God is thus willing to reason with the nation, the blame for its destruction falls back on itself.' (Edward J. Young).

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Refer to the story in No.1 of the students' worksheet. Discuss what caused the two brothers to separate. Show that it was Harry's greed, i.e. sin. Sometimes we, too, can feel separated from God. Ask the students if they have ever had this feeling and if so what caused it. Hold back any inclination you might have to tell them the answer in detail. Instead, point out that a feeling of separation from God has been a perennial problem of mankind and that the prophet Isaiah had something to say about it.

1. THE PROBLEM STATED

Read the two passages from Isaiah 1:1-20 and Isaiah 59:1-8.

Isaiah 1:15 shows the relationship between God and the Children of Judah. Such was the situation that He would not even look at them or listen to what they had to say. What had caused this separation? The answer is found in Isaiah 1: 1-14. The separation was due to their sin.

(a) They refused to listen to God's voice (v. 2a).

God appealed to the non-living creation i.e. sun, moon, stars, etc., because the people were wilfully deaf to His voice.

(b) They had been rebellious, ungrateful children (v. 2b).

God had been a father to them. He had given them existence, led them to the Promised Land, preserved them from danger, provided them with physical and

material needs and taught them how they ought to live. Yet they had not been at all grateful. They had disowned Him as their Father, departed from His laws, rejected His warnings and showed no desire to imitate His character.

(c) They had been ignorant of who God is (v. 3).

Unlike the ox or the ass they had wilfully refused to recognise their owner and master and were content to live in ignorance of God who had been so good to them.

(d) They were weighed down with sin (v.4., Isaiah 59: 1-8).

They had expressed their sinful nature in everything that they did. Enslaved to corrupt and corrupting forms of behaviour, they were powerless to set themselves free.

(e) They were unresponsive to discipline (v. 5a).

At different times God had sent trials and afflictions in order to bring them to their senses, e.g. drought to stunt the growth of their crops, storms to destroy their harvests and enemies to plunder their goods. Rather than learning from these adversities, as soon as God removed them they had returned to their sin. Therefore God said 'Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more.'

(f) They were insincere in their worship (vs. 11-15).

Their many religious activities were nothing but external ritual. They went through formalities of offering sacrifices, burning incense, holding solemn meetings and observing special feast days believing that this kept them in God's favour. But these did not impress God (vs. 13-15). God had removed Himself from them and would neither look at nor listen to them.

Ask the students to complete No. 2 of their worksheet.

2. THE PROPOSAL MADE

God had distanced Himself from these people yet He desired this separation to end upon certain conditions (vs. 16-18). Notice God called them to reason not to negotiate. He does not say 'You come with your terms and I will come with mine and we will try and reach a compromise.'

(a) He wanted them to see the fairness of the charges made.

Having accused these people of being ungrateful, rebellious children, ignorant of His person and, hypocritical in their worship, He wanted to show them the reasonableness of His charge. He wanted them to see that He was not being unfair or unjust in His charges. Was it not the height of wickedness for children to spurn their father as they were spurning Him? In His Word, when God calls us sinners, He is being totally reasonable.

(b) He wanted them to see the appropriateness of the repentance demanded (v.16).

These people wanted forgiveness but they also wanted to continue with their evil practices. But God required them to give up their sinful ways and begin to do right before He would forgive. Is that unreasonable? What father would forgive his son while he continued to rebel against him? Sin is a violation of God's law. Thus for

God to have forgiven them without repentance would have been to countenance their lawlessness and undermine the whole fabric of His moral government. Show the students the appropriateness and reasonableness of God's demand that we repent.

(c) He wanted them to see the genuineness of the mercy offered.

To some it seemed too good to be true that a holy God would pardon their transgressions but the fact that He issued this invitation (v.18) was proof that He was willing to forgive them. He was not playing games with these people; His word is His bond. Emphasise to the students the genuineness of the promises (v.18). Complete No. 3 of the worksheet.

3. THE PROMISE GIVEN (v.18)

Scarlet and crimson are two colours which immediately attract the eye. Some sins are like that; they are conspicuous and cannot be hidden. God's promise was that even though their sins were striking and glaring, yet they would be blotted out. In the expression that Isaiah used there is the idea of being doubly dyed. When the wool was dipped for a second time in the scarlet and crimson dye those colours became so ingrained that they could not be removed. Therefore God was saying that though their sins were deeply ingrained in their nature as scarlet and crimson in the wool, yet they would be removed. Here is a pledge of a full pardon for open and ingrained sins. The figures 'white as snow' and 'as wool' indicate that the cleansing would be thorough and deep.

How can God make such a promise? On the basis of the death of Christ that was to take place on Calvary. Since He is 'the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world', His death was, at this point, as certain as the purpose of God. In virtue of the perfect sacrifice that would fully atone for sin, God promised forgiveness and the gift of righteousness to those who repented of their sins and believed on Him. Now that Christ has died, God extends that promise to us. Complete No. 4 of the worksheet.

4. THE PERIOD SPECIFIED (v.18)

They were to remain in their sin no longer. Their state of separation had lasted long enough. 'Now' is God's time to repent of sin and believe in Christ. Complete No. 5 of the worksheet.

APPLICATION

Like Judah in the time of Isaiah, people today are separated from God because of their sin. The sins mentioned above are prevalent in our day. As the promise of cleansing from the defilement of sin and the offer of a perfect righteousness was made to Israel long ago, so that same promise and offer are made to us today. Emphasise to the students that God gives them the invitation (v.18) and calls upon them to repent of their sins now. Refusal will result in judgment (v.20). Apart from this, God will not be known in the intimacy of fellowship.

LESSON 35

Knowing who God is

THE BLESSING OF KNOWING GOD

Scripture Text - Psalm 73

AIM OF LESSON

To show that knowing God is the source of true blessing.

BACKGROUND NOTES

God's moral ordering of the world is a problem which has always baffled the minds of men. Psalm 73 is devoted to this theme. The problem can be simply stated. God has revealed Himself as good and just, punishing wickedness and rewarding goodness. If He is all-powerful, as well as all-good, why does He allow such a morally perverse state of affairs to continue on earth? Far from justice catching up on the wicked, they flourish like a luxuriant tree (Ps. 37: 35). They not only appear to get away with their wickedness but seem to be exempt from the troubles which befall other people. They seem to prosper while adversity overtakes the righteous. That is the background of the psalm.

In the opening section (vs.1-14) the psalmist relates his own experience, exposing his soul to our gaze in a most dramatic manner and then in the remainder of the Psalm he leads us step by step from near despair to final triumph and assurance.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Refer to No. 1 of the worksheet. Ask the students if they have ever had thoughts like that or heard anyone speak in a similar vein. Try to discover if the prosperity of the wicked or the apparent ease with which they get through life has ever posed a problem for them. Have they at any time envied the kind of life the unbeliever enjoys? Point out from vs. 4, 5 and 12 that the psalmist did.

1. THE PROBLEM STATED

The psalmist begins with the conviction held by all godly people, even when the evidence seems to be the contrary: 'Truly God is good to Israel, to such as are pure in heart' (v.1). The history of God's dealings with the true spiritual Israel (such as are of a pure heart) has shown this to be true. Observing that the ungodly have a greater share of prosperity and seem to have fewer afflictions than the righteous, the psalmist is now tempted to think that the reverse is true, i.e. God is good to the wicked!

What is it about the wicked that brings this man close to stumbling?

(a) He is troubled by their apparent freedom from disease and disaster. (vs. 4 and 5).

The wicked appear to enjoy good health, are exempt from many of the common calamities of life and pass speedily out of the world without prolonged illness.

(b) He is troubled by their pride and violence (v. 6).

As their prosperity increases the wicked become haughty and proud and display their conceit as openly and unashamedly as a girl wears a necklace. From their prosperous position they take advantage of those less prosperous than themselves, even to the point of violence.

(c) He is troubled by the comforts they enjoy (v. 7).

Their eyes bulge with abundance indicating that they feast luxuriously and have all that they could desire. Their hearts give expression to all kinds of folly.

(d) He is troubled at the way they mock God and appear to get away with it (vs. 8-10).

Not only do they speak haughtily about oppressing their fellow men but they speak arrogantly against God Himself. Far from being punished for their evil they continue to prosper.

(e) He is troubled by their denial that God sees and knows their sin (v.11).

Since their sin has gone unpunished, they claim that God knows nothing about it.

As the psalmist reflects on these things, serious doubts begin to arise in his mind (v.13). If disobedience results in enjoyment and obedience results in deprivation, why obey God?

If the wicked prosper, it is vain to be righteous. Righteousness does not pay; the big dividends go to the wicked. Such are his conclusions.

What is worse, in striving to obey God he has the additional burden of his conscience. The wicked are not so sensitive to the voice of conscience. They live for the most part unaware of the injustice and evil they have done. But not the psalmist. He is discouraged by the fact that while they can sin without a qualm, his conscience constantly rebukes him (v.15). Moreover, aware that his doubts betray the beliefs and faith of God's people, he says he is afraid to speak of his perplexity lest this undermines the faith of others.

He is troubled not only in his conscience but also in his mind. He has this intellectual problem which he cannot resolve (v.16). His problem is the problem of evil. If God is a righteous God then why does He allow the wicked to prosper? Is God really there? If so, why does He not punish evil and reward good? If He is not there, then why should I serve Him? Why should I be stricken with a guilty conscience because of my sin? Why should I not follow the example of the world and live as they do? This is one reason why doubting the existence of God or questioning His goodness can be so damaging. Once we begin to

doubt God's existence we might as well do as we please.

Ask the students to complete No. 2 of their worksheet.

2. THE MISTAKES MADE

The psalmist found himself in this dilemma because he made three mistakes -

(a) He was envious of the wicked (v.3).

It is always wrong to envy the sinner's activity. See Proverbs 23: 17.

(b) He became bitter against God (vs. 21 and 22).

To make his foolish complaints against God was to behave more like an ignorant animal and not like a rational man.

(c) He was tempted to give up (v.16).

When he tried to solve the problem, it proved wearisome to him. Unable to find the answer to the prosperity of the wicked, he was ready to give up in despair.

He allowed these things (a, b, c above) to crowd the assurance of verse 1 out of his mind.

Complete No. 3 of the worksheet.

3. THE SOLUTION FOUND

The psalmist does not remain in his state of doubt and perplexity. His dilemma is resolved when he approaches God in worship (v.17). Spiritual perception is granted to those who draw near to God and truly seek His face. When we are perplexed by the problems of God's providential rule in the world, we are neither to look at the wicked with envy nor at ourselves in bitter self-pity. Nor should we give up looking for a solution and lapse into despair but fall on our knees and look to God as He is revealed in His Word. In the presence of God we shall see things as He sees them.

Up to now the psalmist was looking at the problem from his own narrow-minded and short-sighted viewpoint. His perspective required adjusting. A mountain which appears menacing when we stand at its foot as it towers above us, shrinks into harmless insignificance when we look at it from a distance. So the problem of God's providence cannot be solved in the limited context of time on earth; its solution awaits the next world and eternity. Many of life's inequalities will remain now but wrongs will be righted, evil avenged and good vindicated in the final judgment. Here in the sanctuary of God the psalmist had his perspective adjusted to see things as they really were. What does he see?

He sees the end of the wicked (v.17). It is true that they flourish now, yet God has set them in slippery places (v.18). In the words of Jesus they are on 'the broad road that leads to destruction'. Ultimately death will claim them and while it may overtake them quickly (v.4), that does not remove its terror (v.19). They will come to a fearful end. Indeed even 'as a

dream when one awakes' the very memory of them will vanish away (v.20).

If that is the destiny of the wicked, he sees a very different destiny for the righteous: 'Nevertheless I am continually with you' (v. 23). That is, though the ungodly man prospers now, only to perish in the end, the godly man enjoys the presence of God continually, both now and forever: 'You will guide me with your counsel and afterward receive me to glory' (v. 24). God's people may suffer want and persecution but their abiding wealth is God Himself. What more can they want? (v. 25). In heaven and earth, in time and eternity, the living God is their portion forever (v. 26). Their communion with the eternal, unchanging God cannot be interrupted or destroyed by death. In the final two verses the psalmist summarises the contrasting destinies of the godly and the ungodly which he perceived in the sanctuary of God. No doubt, nearness to God does not appear 'good' to the man who sets his heart on material prosperity but those who prize true riches know that man's real and eternal 'good' is in God. Knowing God is the source of true blessing.

Complete No. 4 of the worksheet.

APPLICATION

Emphasise that to envy the sinful activity of the unbeliever can cause one to slip spiritually. If we are tempted to indulge in such envy we see how we may regain our faith.

- (a) By coming to God through His Word and reflecting upon the true end of the wicked.
- (b) By confessing our foolish ignorance and rebellion.
- (c) By being reminded that the greatest blessing is having communion with God and knowing His favour. This relationship is of greater value than anything one can own. The blessing of knowing God is now clear. There is nothing anywhere that is worth more. To know God is the greatest good.

Ask the students if there is anything they place above the blessing of being rightly related to God through Jesus Christ.

Consider the importance of public worship and preaching in particular in helping us to see life from a Christian perspective.

LESSON 36

Knowing who God is

KNOWING GOD

Scripture Texts - John 3: 1-8, 16, 17; Eph. 2:1 -10

AIM OF LESSON

To describe the person who truly knows God.

BACKGROUND NOTES

The Greek word (anothen) which is translated 'again' in John 3: 3 could also be translated 'from above'. This is the way it is translated elsewhere in John's gospel e.g. John 3: 31, 19: 11.

SUGGESTED PRESENTATION

Introduction

Tell the following story - 'Willie is a fan of Manchester United. In particular he admires the United captain and centre forward. His bedroom walls are decorated with photographs of his hero and he has collected as much information about him as he can get his hands on. Willie's father even took him all the way to Old Trafford to see him play. Willie and his father are very close. They do a lot of things together. Willie loves his father deeply even though from time to time his father has to discipline him'. Discuss which of the two people Willie really knows. Emphasise that Willie really knows his father whereas he only knows about his hero. It is also possible to know about God without really knowing Him. The previous lessons have all been about who and what God is. Today's lesson however, is about knowing God, not knowing about Him.

Outline

1. A PERSON WHO REALLY KNOWS GOD IS A CHANGED PERSON - Read John 3: 1-8. Nicodemus was mystified by Jesus' words. Jesus spoke of being born from above. Jesus is here referring to a spiritual birth and not a physical birth for He goes on to say, 'unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit' (John 3: 5, 6).

In saying this Jesus brings out the fact that we cannot know God unless He enables us to do so. The invitation to know God is extended to all men everywhere, yet only those brought to the new birth come to know Him. Our Lord speaks here of the mysterious sovereign activity of the Holy Spirit as being necessary in the lives of those who will believe (John 3: 7, 8). Clearly then these verses show us that the one who truly knows God has experienced an inward change of heart. This is what it means to be 'born again'. To use Paul's words he has been cleansed within 'through the washing of regeneration (rebirth) and renewing of the Holy Spirit' (Titus 3: 5). This change of

heart is absolutely essential to true conversion. If there is no evidence of this change of heart, then one may question whether a person is genuinely a Christian.

What is the evidence of this change? It is found in the Christian's new attitude toward sin in his life. Once he loved sin; now he hates it. Once he was indifferent to sin. Now, when he sins, he is filled with sorrow and seeks God's forgiveness. In this way the power of sin is seen to be broken in his life. This is why the apostle says that when a person becomes a Christian 'he is a new creation' and all things have become new for him (2 Cor. 5: 17). He is an altogether different person with new desires, new hopes, new aspirations and a new goal in life. Whereas he was in rebellion against God, now he seeks to do everything for the glory of God. Complete No. 1 of the worksheet.

2. A PERSON WHO TRULY KNOWS GOD IS A SAVED PERSON - Read John 3:16, 17.

Jesus now informs Nicodemus that this change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit also results in a change of status for the believer. Ask the students to note the things contrasted in these two verses. That is, between perishing and having everlasting life (v.16) and between being condemned and saved (v.17). These verses indicate that the man who knows God is a SAVED man. That is, he is delivered from the penalty and wrath of God which his sin and rebellion deserve.

To believe in Jesus is to receive forgiveness for sin and be set free from God's just and righteous condemnation. Since in obedience to His Father's will, Jesus suffered and died on the cross, receiving to Himself the punishment for sin - thereby satisfying Divine justice - God can and does forgive a person's sins when he puts his trust in Jesus for deliverance from them.

Ask the students to look up and read 2 Cor. 5:21 and Gal. 3:13 and then ask them to complete No. 2 of their worksheet.

3. A PERSON WHO TRULY KNOWS GOD IS AN OBEDIENT PERSON

Read Eph. 2:1-10.

Here this same change as in John 3 is described as being raised from the dead. Paul speaks of people who were dead in sins and trespasses but who have been made alive with Christ (vs.1, 5). Yet while the figure of speech has changed, the meaning of both passages is the same. Each stress the change of heart and attitude brought about by the saving work of the Holy Spirit which takes place once one becomes a Christian.

However, Eph. 2 goes on to show the change of life which results in salvation. Before the Ephesians were changed and became Christians, they were dead in trespasses and sins and they were slaves to sin and Satan. Now, having been raised from spiritual death, they have been given spiritual life by the Holy Spirit. They are no longer children of wrath but children enjoying God's favour. They no longer look ahead to punishment but to a future of kindness. Read Paul's

summary in vs. 8, 9.

To what purpose has God saved them? The answer is in v.10, 'we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them'. The Christian, therefore, is saved for the purpose of obedience; that he might do the works that God has prepared in advance for him to do. Once he served sin and himself. Now having been delivered from the power and penalty of sin he recognizes that he belongs to God and so seeks to serve Him. That is a very important aspect of what it means to know God.

Paul lays stress on the fact that the Christian is saved by the grace of God and not by trying to keep the Law. Yet the end of that salvation is holiness and not lawlessness. Since he has experienced God's love and forgiveness, the Christian seeks to live a life of gratitude to God for so great a deliverance. This he does by offering himself up to God as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God (Rom. 12:1) and by endeavouring to live a life pleasing to God (1 John 5:3).

Jesus warned that not everyone who says 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of God but only those who do the will of the Father (Matt. 7:21). Once a slave of sin, the Christian must now become a slave to righteousness (Rom .6:18). He has been bought with a price, therefore he seeks to glorify God in his body (1Cor. 6:20). See Gal. 2:20 for Paul's description of himself as a man who knows God.

Complete No. 3 of the worksheet.

APPLICATION

Our lesson has shown that the person who truly knows God is not merely a civilized person or a person who attends church regularly or has a thorough knowledge of the Bible and even knows about the God of the Bible. He is one who has undergone an inward transformation of heart by the Holy Spirit and is therefore a CHANGED person. He is one who has come as a guilty sinner to Jesus for salvation and having received forgiveness is a SAVED person. Having been redeemed from the bondage of sin by God he is an OBEDIENT person, seeking to live a life pleasing to the Lord. Such is the person who really knows God.

These three marks are extremely important because they provide a means whereby we can evaluate whether or not we know God, whether or not we are born from above. If one or more of these marks is missing we must give heed to the command of 2 Cor. 13: 5.

Ask the students to think of their own lives to see if they recognise these marks in themselves. They must face this honestly if they are to truly know God. It is easy for them to pay lip service to Christianity while giving no evidence of a change of heart.